ANTECEDENTS TO SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER EFFECTIVENESS
by Monet Frank

A Senior Honors Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The University of Utah
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Degree in Bachelor of Science
In Marketing

Approved:

Abbie Griffin, PhD
Thesis Faculty Supervisor

Stephen Carson, PhD
Chair, Department of Marketing

Abbie Griffin, PhD
Honors Faculty Advisor

Sylvia D. Torti, PhD
Dean, Honors College

May 2020
Copyright © 2020
All Rights Reserved
ABSTRACT

Marketing is extremely susceptible to shifts within industry techniques, consumer receptivity, and general trends within the consumer-based world in which we live. It is therefore vital for businesses and their marketing applications to respond to the ever-changing dynamics within the industry in order to succeed. Digital marketing, namely the implementation of Social Media Influencers throughout digital channels, has revolutionized the way brands and businesses interact with consumers. Given the intent to shape consumer brand perceptions and influence purchase intentions, Social Media Influencers must be able to permeate social media channels in a way with which consumers are receptive and responsive. Businesses, brands, and firms must be vigilant when implementing the use of Social Media Influencers as a means of marketing because poor influencer performance has the potential to rapidly diminish and impair consumer perceptions and transactions.

This thesis evaluates the antecedents to Social Media Influencer effectiveness by assessing both consumer-based and Social Media Influencer-based characteristics that potentially affect the overall success of an influencer marketing campaign. A combination of both academic and marketing research will analyze the efficacy of Social Media Influencer marketing in the eyes of the consumer and explore the antecedents pertaining to a successful influencer and their associated campaign.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYSIS</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESULTS</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

*This section of the thesis aims to provide a general introduction of the topic. In summarizing the background and fundamental theoretical knowledge, I will define the problem at hand as well as the motivation behind my research.*

1.1 Background

The world has become inundated with marketing techniques that are constantly vying for a second of our attention. It seems as though everywhere we look, we are exposed to advertisements and promotions. In today’s competitive landscape, it is critical, now more than ever, for marketers to conjure up unique ways to communicate and interact with consumers that are memorable and actionable.

Many firms deploy marketing strategies that focus on above the line advertising, which refers to mass market advertising, often used to push specific promotional messages out to large audiences or build a brand (Kingsnorth, 2019). This form of marketing is commonly implemented through campaigns that focus on traditional channels such as television, radio, press, display, and outdoor advertising. Other firms prefer below-the-line marketing which is used to tailor communications to individuals or segments in order to ensure a more powerful message (Kingsnorth, 2019). This form of marketing is prominent throughout digital strategies that include SEO, paid-search, e-mail, and many forms of direct selling. With the influx of data collection capabilities and the resulting direct targeting opportunities, many firms have combined the above
strategies and implemented through-the-line techniques that take consumers on a wide-reaching yet targeted journey that does not end at their purchase actions.

Marketers, brands, and businesses alike are in a never-ending battle to find the most effective way to cut through the advertising noise, grasp consumer attention, and evoke a call to action, all while attempting to camouflage their efforts as a natural means of communication. Influencer marketing has seen an increased prevalence among firm strategies as a through-the-line technique that naturally influences consumers without being perceived as noise.

The digital revolution rapidly changed the way businesses market their products and services and how global consumers behave. Shifts in technology have revolutionized the speed at which we obtain and share information. They have also changed the way we communicate and interact with each other on an individual level as well as with businesses on a commercial level. However, both the digital space and consumer behaviors are constantly evolving. This change is both push and pull in that the consumer is pulling the changes toward them by desiring faster, simpler, more authentic, multi-channel accessibility and is being pushed by rapid changes in technology (Kingsnorth, 2019). Therefore, businesses must, “keep their finger on the pulse,” by continuously assessing their audiences’ shifting needs and behaviors while providing them with messaging, customer journeys, and products and services that are tailored to their needs. This strategic mentality encouraged a widespread adoption of influencer marketing as businesses recognized that consumers were increasingly numb to the inundation of advertisements they were receiving on a day to day basis.
With the rapid expansion onto digital platforms, the mere adoption of social media and an online presence is not enough for a firm to establish a sustainable competitive advantage (Lin, Brunning, & Swarna, 2018). It is therefore imperative for companies to generate content that represents their unique brand personality and voice while organically speaking to and interacting with potential consumers.

Digital influencers are considered to be more authentic and credible in comparison to traditional brand-generated forms of advertising; hence, people are expected to be less resistant to the messages they pass (de Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). This heightened sense of authenticity and credibility is attributable to a number of things, namely the personal aspect of their individually-generated content. Consumers don’t see this as a form of marketing deluge, but rather an insight into the influencer’s personal life, experiences, and opinions. Given the consumer’s glimpse into a day in the life and the seemingly conversation-based message quality, influencers establish a general sense of amiability in building rapport with consumers (Berger et al. 2016), especially for businesses that interact with and target digital natives.

Influencer marketing has continued to provide advertisers with authentic opportunities to tell their brand story to consumers. By leveraging the creative expression and organically grown audience from an influencer partner, a brand can reach new consumers and cultivate loyalty (Rakuten Marketing, 2019). It is much cheaper to maintain a customer than acquire one, therefore it is extremely beneficial for businesses to align with an influencer that already has an extensive following and captive audience. This will allow for the business to draw off of the pre-existing influencer audience and convert many of them into consumers of their own unique brand.
A social media influencer is first and foremost a content generator: one who has a status of expertise in a specific area, who has cultivated a sizeable number of captive followers - who are marketing value to brands – by regularly producing valuable content via social media (Lou & Yuan – 2019). This gives brands a wide-reaching, organic, and cost-effective means to communicate and interact with consumers thus shaping overall brand perceptions and influencing purchase intentions. With personalized content generation and a unique captive audience, influencers provide brands with a strategic marketing tool that establishes a sense of trust and converts niche segments that are considered captive audience members for the influencer into consumers that purchase from and become loyal to the brand itself. Thus, when selecting digital influencers, brand managers must ensure that the influencer conveys the right meaning and represents the brand personality and voice through their unique and individually-generated content (Torres, Augusto, & Matos, 2019).

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The underlying philosophy behind influencer marketing can be better understood through the presentation of three preexisting theories; Word-of-Mouth Advertising, Opinion Leadership, and McGuire’s Persuasion Matrix.

W.O.M Advertising

Consumers are increasingly relying on peer-to-peer communications; for this reason, influencer marketing has continued to grow in importance as a key component of firms’ digital marketing strategies (Association of National Advertisers 2018). Influencers engage in this form of peer-to-peer communication through their various forms of content
creation. Through blog posts, written content, and live videos, influencers are able to authentically share product and service recommendations that they have been exposed to either organically or through a brand partnership. This, in turn, increases consumer perception that the recommendations are in the form of one that is from a family member or friend rather than in the form of a business advertisement.

This concept is called Word of Mouth (W.O.M), and is defined as an oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a good or service (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017). While the implementation of W.O.M through influencer-generated content allows the content to come off as authentic and un-biased, it also poses a threat to the brand itself in that the influencer has complete control over the message of the advertisement and the overall brand perception. However, if implemented correctly, W.O.M can expose the brand at hand to numerous niche segments that would have been extremely costly to seek out and acquire through a standard advertising/marketing strategy. Consumers are now being regarded as active co-producers of value and meaning, and W.O.M communications are thus co-produced in consumer networks (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017). This synergy allows for a constant line of communication between consumers and the brand that has the potential to organically enhance content reach and broaden the brand’s target market.

**Opinion Leadership**

Digital influencers can also be considered online opinion leaders (Casalo, Flavian, & Ibanez-Sanchez, 2018). Opinion leaders are derived from product category experts that have obtained superior knowledge, opinion, and expertise through extensive exposure to
the products and brands within their segment. The literature has established that opinion leaders can influence others’ behaviors due to their personal appeal or connection with their audience, as well as their specialized knowledge or authority on a given topic (e.g., Lin et al., 2018). However, many social media influencers have a broad product and brand portfolio that crosses various segments of expertise. Therefore, in the digital landscape as it pertains to social media, influencers can potentially be perceived as opinion leaders in multiple related topics.

**McGuire’s Communication-Persuasion Matrix**

Communication efficacy is not solely dependent upon the message sender, whether it be an influencer or the brand itself, but rather a full array of various factors. McGuire’s communication-persuasion matrix argues that various input components in persuasive communication – such as source, message, channel, receiver, and destination – determine its effectiveness (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Brands around the world have increased their influencer marketing budgets in hopes of extending their targeting scope, increasing the acceptance rate of their messaging, influencing purchase intention, and nurturing their customer relationships, however the efficacy of the messaging is susceptible to numerous factors that could be detrimental to the brand and the intended message.
Within social media influencer marketing, the overall content success is potentially susceptible to content features, influencer features, and consumer features alike. It is therefore imperative for marketing strategists to evaluate all of the factors that could potentially affect their content messaging in order to better understand the antecedents for a successful influencer marketing campaign.
1.3 Research Question

*Research Question: Are there consumer-specific, influencer-specific, and/or content-specific features that affect the overall success of an influencer marketing campaign?*

The research regarding influencer marketing is relatively sparse, especially given the global marketing landscape’s rapid expansion into the implementation of influencers as strategic marketing tools to expand reach and deepen engagement. Globally, 59% of marketers said their budget for influencers has increased and 71% said they were able to tell when an influencer is performing. Additionally, 39% of brands in the U.S said they would be encouraged to invest more in an influencer program if they could see the impact of their activity across the wider consumer purchasing journey (Rakuten Marketing, 2019).

Global businesses have recognized an immense increase in their overall influencer marketing budgets as well as the associated transaction costs attributable to the search, acquisition, negotiation, and management processes, however, their understanding of the building blocks and identifiable key performance indicators of a successful influencer marketing campaign remain unknown. Previous literature has not only elicited mixed findings concerning the effects of influencer marketing but also reveals a lack of basic understanding of the mechanisms by which influencer marketing content and influencers themselves affects consumer behavior. (Yuan & Lou 2019). This thesis aims to investigate the antecedents to social media influencer effectiveness by assessing consumer-based features, social media influencer-based features, as well as content-specific features that potentially affect the overall success of an influencer marketing campaign.
2. Method

This section of the thesis will describe the processes of research study preparation as well as survey drafting and implementation.

2.1 Research Preparation

To prepare for study design and implementation, the CITI Program Group 2-Social/Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel course was completed (Exhibit 1). This course consisted of seventeen modules that covered topics including ethical principles, research with human subjects, federal regulations, risk assessment, informed consent, privacy, and a number of other fundamental research topics. This CITI Program provided an all-encompassing understanding of basic research processes, study design, and research subject principles that were implemented as the survey and research study were implemented.

2.2 Survey

The research study associated with this thesis was designed to be distributed through the David Eccles School of Business Marketing Department OOCP Student Respondent Pool Program. Upon seeking out and obtaining IRB approval, the survey was implemented alongside other surveys analyzing a wide array of topics. The research study spanned a four-day period that had hours of operation during the normal school day.

The survey investigated the attitudes of consumers towards brand implementation of social media influencers as a means of marketing while, also, examining the determinants
of user engagement. In essence, the survey evaluated three categories of potential antecedents to social media influencer effectiveness (the dependent variables of interest).

1. Evaluate the factors that make an influencer most effective and believable in the eyes of the consumer. (Social Media Influencer-based characteristics)
2. Evaluate if/how certain characteristics within the consumer-base effect the messaging and overall impression that influencers have on their audience members. (Consumer-based characteristics)
3. Evaluate the influencer’s content and message features that are high-performing and well-received by consumers. (Content-based characteristics)

An online questionnaire was created using the Qualtrics platform to collect the data for the study. The questionnaire began with a consent document that defined the purpose of the study and outlined what the study would involve (Exhibit 2). The survey consisted of 26 questions that evaluated the respondent pool’s familiarity with social media influencer marketing, social media utilization and engagement, as well as assess overall behavioral tendencies when interacting with influencer marketing content (Exhibit 3).

2.3 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables within this study were designed to examine the overall effectiveness of an influencer marketing campaign. A variety of questions within the survey led to the establishment of three multi-item variables that are measured. Below the multi-item variables are listed along with the subcategory topic titles associated with each distinct variable.
1. Overall Ability to Influence
   a. PurchaseInfluencerBrand
   b. PurchaseInfluencerRecommendation
   c. PurchaseFromSponsoredLink
   d. PurchaseInfluencerDiscount
   e. SearchFromInfluencerRec
   f. SearchFromInfluencerAndUseCode

2. Belief of Social Media Influencer Effectiveness

3. Propensity to Share
   a. ShareInfluencerContent
   b. ShareCompanyContent

2.4 Independent Variables

The independent variables within this study were designed to examine the characteristics within the influencer, the consumer, as well as the influencer’s content/message that could potentially enhance or diminish the effectiveness of a social media influencer and the associated campaign. Below the multi-item variables are listed along with the subcategory topic titles associated with each distinct variable.

1. Influencer-Based Characteristics
   a. Broadly Active
      i. PurchasesInfluenced
      ii. ConsideredFromInfluencers
      iii. ActivelySeekInfluencer
      iv. InfluencerOverCompany
      v. BroadInfluencer
      vi. ActiveInfluencer
   b. Openly Sponsored
      i. NoTrustHashAd
ii. NoBuyHashAd

c. Fame Through Focus
   i. FamousInfluencer
   ii. Limited Influencer
   iii. SingleBrandInfluencer

2. Consumer-Based Characteristics
   a. Shopping Importance
   b. Shopper Type
   c. Gender
   d. Age

2.4.B. Shopper Types

Within the survey, the respondents were asked to select the shopper type with which they most closely identified. The respondents were provided with a brief descriptive summary for each shopper type. Below, the shopper type summaries are shown (Otnes, 1995).

- **Social Catalyst**
  - Planners and organizers
  - Take pride in their friendship status
  - Consider themselves the expert within their social circle
  - Tend to be the “influencers”
  - Almost 80% of this group think a night on the town is money well spent
  - But - they are likely to seek out bargains to keep up with the latest trends

- **Natural Hybrid**
  - Stable and poised
  - Operate in a continual state of equilibrium
  - Know there’s a time and place for everything - a time to spend and a time to save
  - Approach to shopping falls between safe, practical purchases and splurges
  - Tend to purchase classic products: long-lasting items that aren't too trendy
• **Content Responsible**
  o Neither set nor spread trends
  o Tends to treat shopping as an errand or chore, rather than a fun experience or an adventure
  o Tend to be lifelong and increasingly loyal customers
  o 80% do not consider social status an important part of their life
  o Like most men, these practical, responsible, loyal customers crave a hassle-free shopping experience

• **Cultural Artist**
  o “Super shoppers”
  o Constantly try different things and start new trends
  o They are the group companies actively seek for new products

### 2.5 Institutional Review Board Approval

The Institutional Review Board is charged with the review of all research projects that involve humans to ensure they comply with local, state, and federal laws, as well as the high ethical standards set forth in University policy. This research study involved humans and therefore required board approval prior to study implementation. As part of the application process, the processes of the research study had to be disclosed in full detail. As per the application, details regarding the study purposes and objectives, location, participants, vulnerable populations and foreseeable participant risk, data monitoring, and additional processes were to be included (Exhibit 4).

Vowing to protect human research subjects, any reasonably foreseeable risk or discomfort to the participants must be disclosed. After assessing the survey and research processes, the only foreseeable risk we determined was that we asked people to relate some personal information such as gender, shopping characteristics, and shopping
importance. We saw this as minimal risk, however, presented respondents with an option to opt out at any time during the survey.

Following the application submission, the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board. Upon approval, a partnership with the Marketing Department’s Research Program was formed and the survey was administered.

2.6 Survey Implementation

The study procedures for this research included subject recruitment, consent/enrollment, data collection, and data analysis. For this survey, we utilized the David Eccles School of Business Marketing 3010/3011 respondent pool. This pool presented a demographic that would be viable to assess in regard to social media influencer utilization and effectiveness given their age range (18-45 years old), existing interaction with social media platforms, and potential exposure to influencer marketing when browsing their various social media channels.

This was one of multiple research studies that the Marketing 3010/3011 respondent pool was exposed to throughout the semester of their enrollment in the course. The respondent pool was required to participate in a specific number of hours of Marketing Department research studies throughout the semester for their final grade. The Antecedents to Social Media Influencer Effectiveness survey was designed to be one of several studies that would be administered during a one-hour session that the respondents would attend. Upon attending, the students received participation points for their final grade.
For this research study, students arrived at the Behavioral Lab within the David Eccles School of Business. Upon entering the room, students were told by the survey administrator to sit at a private cubicle with a computer for the survey. The student then logged into the computer using their university credentials (uNID) and was sent to the initial survey screen. Here the student was presented the consent document and was asked to give consent to participate in the survey. If the student gave their consent, the survey was initiated. An opt out arrow was present for students that did not wish to participate in the research study. If the opt out arrow was clicked, the student was taken to the end of the survey. Essentially, the student was guaranteed to receive the participation points for their course whether or not they gave consent and participated in the survey. The survey administrator proctored the survey and was available to clarify any participant questions.
3. Analysis

This section of the thesis will discuss the processes of data recording, cleaning, and statistical analyses that followed survey administration.

Following survey administration, it was necessary that the data was processed and cleaned to eliminate any extreme response variants such as rapid response times, skipped questions, etc. In utilizing the Qualtrics software to write and administer the survey, the data from all participants was automatically collected and documented in a form that was easily imported to another platform for statistical analysis. For the data cleaning and statistical analysis pertaining to this research study, the SSPS statistical analysis software was utilized. The SSPS software platform enabled advanced statistical analysis, text analysis, integration with big data and seamless deployment into applications (IBM, 2020).

Throughout the data cleaning process, it was determined that there were no extreme response variants that would inaccurately skew the data. This suggested that all 87 survey respondents thoughtfully and responsibly participated in the research study. See below for basic respondent pool demographic information.
The SSPS statistical software platform enabled a variety of tests to be performed that allowed for a better understanding of the data collected from the survey. The first statistical analysis test that was implemented was Factor Analysis to create multi-item variables. Both the dependent and independent variables within this research study incorporate various sub-variable components. Factor Analysis allowed for the creation of variables that seamlessly accounted for the data associated with each sub-variable.

The next test that was implemented was a Pearson Correlation test. This examined the relationship between two variables. Through the implementation of this statistical analysis, the correlation coefficient attributable to the two variables was disclosed and was utilized to determine which variables within the research study had positive or negative correlations with one another.

Following the Pearson Correlation Test, a Linear Regression test was performed. This test allowed for a visualization of the relationship of the multi-item independent variables...
with the multi-item dependent variables. In essence, it allowed us to understand whether SMI effectiveness can be predicted based on the antecedent variables being tested.

Finally, an ANOVA Test of Means was performed to analyze the variable relationship strength as well as determine if there were statistically significant discrepancies between the group means. A value less than or equal to 0.05 suggested statistical significance. This test was followed by a Post Hoc test to analyze which variable means differed from the others and determined where the differences took place between groups.
4. Results

This section of the thesis will examine the statistical analysis results and discuss the implications of those results as they pertain to the research question.

Following the statistical analysis that was performed through the SSPS platform, the results were entered into a Summary Statistics Table format that highlighted the variable relationships that were deemed statistically significant. This table is included below (Figure 5).

![Summary Statistics Table](image)

**Figure 5: Post Statistical Analysis Summary Statistics Table**

Upon analyzing the correlation coefficients, it was determined that three independent variables were found to be relevant to our research question examining if there were features within the consumer and social media influencer that either enhanced or detracted from overall influencer campaign effectiveness.
4.1 Consumer Shopping Importance

Statistical results showed that the consumer-based independent variable, Shopping Importance, had a statistically significant correlation pertaining to all three dependent variables – Overall Ability to Influence (0.366**), Propensity to Share (0.243*), and SMI Effectiveness (0.281**). This result suggests consumer shopping importance or in other words, the degree to which a consumer would rate the importance of shopping in their life, is an antecedent to social media influencer effectiveness. With this understanding, it is implied that consumers that have a high affinity for shopping will be more receptive to influencer marketing campaigns as opposed to consumers that do not find shopping to be relevant or hold importance within their lives. Results also suggest that consumers that exhibit a high shopping importance will be more likely to share the influencer generated content that they consume throughout their various social media channels to their social and familial circles. In conclusion, shoppers that value the shopping experience are captive audience members that will consume, value, and share influencer marketing content.

4.2 Consumer Shopper Type

Consumer Shopper Type was a categorical variable; therefore, the statistical correlation values were not included in the Summary Statistics Table (Figure 5) but rather included in an ANOVA Test of Means Table (Figure 6).
When performing the statistical analysis related to Consumer Shopper Type, it was deemed necessary to eliminate Shopper Type 4: Cultural Artists as this category did not hold enough statistical power, attributable to only two respondents identifying as that shopper type. Upon eliminating Shopper Type 4, an ANOVA Test of Means was implemented. In analyzing the results from this test, it is suggested that those identifying as Social Catalysts are much more likely to be influenced by a social media influencer campaign than those identifying as Natural Hybrids. This result was extremely interesting given Social Catalysts, by definition, do the influencing within their social circles. In understanding this, it can be assumed that Social Catalysts are a receptive shopper type that will present influencers with a campaign reaction that has a trickle-down effect, initiated by Social Catalysts and dispersed to other shopper types throughout the Social Catalyst’s social circles.

4.3 Consumer Gender and Age

Throughout statistical analysis, it was determined that neither consumer age nor gender had statistical significance within the research study. This implied that Social Media Influencer effectiveness is not age specific nor is it gender specific. The lack of gender-
specificity allows influencers the ability to broadly target all genders without facing the repercussions of one gender population not being receptive to their content and messaging efforts. In terms of the lack of age specificity, this could potentially be attributable to the limitation of our sample. Our respondent pool was derived from a university setting and 95% of respondents were under the age of 30. Given this sample characteristic, it is reasonable to assume that the respondent pool was comprised of a majority of digital natives that have seemingly grown up with cell phones in hand and have, in turn, been exposed to social media influencer marketing through their various social media channels. This presents a potential limitation of the sample.

4.4 Broadly Active Social Media Influencer

The influencer-based independent variable, Broadly Active, was also determined as a statistically significant independent variable with correlation coefficients as follows: Overall Ability to Influence (0.513) and Propensity to Share (0.488). The Broadly Active variable was a multi-item variable consisting of multiple sub-variable topics:

**Broadly Active**

- **PurchasesInfluenced**
  - I make purchases based on influencer recommendations.

- **ConsiderfromInfluencer**
  - If an influencer I follow makes a recommendation regarding a brand or product, I am more likely to consider trying it.

- **ActivelySeekInfluencer**
  - I actively seek out influencer reviews and recommendations before making a purchase.
• **InfluencerOverCompany**
  - *I am more likely to be influenced by influencer generated content over brand/company generated content.*

• **BroadInfluencer**
  - *I am more likely to engage with an influencer that promotes a broad brand/product portfolio.*

• **ActiveInfluencer**
  - *I am more likely to engage with an influencer that is constantly introducing me to new brands/products/services.*

Together, these results suggest that social media influencers that generate their own unique content, promote a broad brand and product portfolio, and are constantly introducing their audience members to new brands, products, and services will generate a much more effective campaign that is well-received by consumers. This understanding provides influencers with an incentive to not limit their unique personal brand and content creation to a single brand. The data from this research study suggests that consumers may see a single brand influencer as a sales tactic for a specific company whereas a diversified brand influencer that is constantly sharing new brands, products, and services as a friend sharing their personal experiences and recommendations.

### 4.5 Openly Sponsored and Fame Through Focus Social Media Influencer

Throughout the statistical analysis, it was determined than neither openly sponsored nor fame through focus social media influencer attributes had statistical significance within the research study. Although it is apparent that the Openly Sponsored SMI-variable had a
negative correlation coefficient for both Overall Ability to Influence and Propensity to Share, the variable did not have the statistical significance to conclusively determine a strong, negative relationship.
5. Discussion

This section of the thesis will elaborate upon the research study findings and will connect these findings with the study purpose.

Influencer marketing has revolutionized the marketing world, forcing brands and marketers to cut though the noise of ad inundation and uniquely speak to and connect with consumers around the globe. Social Media Influencers have presented the marketing landscape with an ability to permeate social media channels in a way with which consumers are receptive and responsive, thus effectively influencing brand perceptions and purchase intentions. However, with the seemingly rapid uptake of Social Media Influencer marketing, many businesses are completely unaware of what makes an influencer marketing campaign successful. The lack of understanding the antecedents to Social Media Influencer success poses an extensive amount of threat to these businesses because poor influencer performance has the potential to rapidly diminish and impair consumer perceptions and transactions. It is therefore imperative for businesses and marketers to vigilantly pursue a deepened understanding of the antecedents of influencer success.

This research study aimed to evaluate the antecedents to Social Media Influencer effectiveness by assessing both consumer-based and Social Media Influencer-based characteristics that potentially affect the overall success of an influencer marketing campaign. After implementing a survey in partnership with the David Eccles School of
Business Marketing Department, we were presented with captivating results that had the potential to optimize a business’s influencer marketing campaign if utilized correctly.

Our key findings are as follows…

1. Consumers that value the shopping experience are captive audience members that will consume, value, and share influencer marketing content.

2. Social Catalysts are a receptive shopper type that will present influencers with a campaign reaction that has a trickle-down effect, initiated by Social Catalysts and dispersed to other shopper types throughout the Social Catalyst’s social circles.

3. The lack of gender-specificity allows influencers the ability to broadly target all genders without facing the repercussions of one gender population not being receptive to their content and messaging efforts.

4. Social Media Influencers that generate their own unique content, promote a broad brand and product portfolio, and are constantly introducing their audience members to new brands, products, and services will generate a much more effective campaign that is well-received by consumers.

In reviewing these key antecedents to social media influencer success, it is apparent that both consumer-based features and social media influencer-based features greatly impact a campaign. It is therefore vital for brands utilizing influencer marketing campaigns to deepen their understanding of their consumers and the social media influencers they are implementing as Word of Mouth Advertisers and Opinion Leaders. These brands should target consumers that exhibit a high shopping importance and could potentially be categorized under the Social Catalyst shopper type. Consumers exhibiting these features
present brands with a unique target opportunity that will optimize their campaigns within that specific demographic while also extending the reach of their campaign through the sharing and social influence features that accompany this demographic.

Brands must also be careful that the consumer-base continues to maintain receptivity toward the influencers that are being implemented. Through this research study, it was determined that consumers prefer influencers that are continuously generating their own content, exploring broad brand portfolios, and are constantly introducing their audience members to new brands, products, and services. This solidifies the theory that consumers see influencers, not as a marketing tactic, but rather a friendly and authentic relationship that holds their welfare at heart. Moving forward, it is therefore critical for brands to pursue relationships with influencers that present these qualities while simultaneously ensuring that the influencer will promote their brand in its best light and will not allow for their content to diminish the brand or come off as a third-party marketing effort.

In conclusion, an exhaustive understanding of the antecedents to social media influencer effectiveness has still not been attained, however, with the key ideas derived from this research study; brands have a basic understanding that will help drive further research. With the widespread adoption that the world has recognized, influencer marketing is a vital marketing tool that must be understood in order to capture the value that it presents to brands, businesses, and marketers alike. Those businesses and industries that fail to engage and effectively leverage the social influencer antecedents will unequivocally miss out on a key strategic marketing initiative, thus compromising their growth potential in a highly competitive global environment.
6. Appendix

Appendix

Exhibit 1: Monet Frank CITI Program Completion Certificate

This is to certify that:

Monet Frank

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research
Group 2. Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel.
1 - Basic Course

Under requirements set by:

University of Utah

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w8382e32e-d72f-440b-a85b-7d6d39306652-34205256

Completion Date: 06-Jan-2020
Expiration Date: 05-Jan-2023
Record ID: 34205256
Exhibit 2: Survey Respondent Consent Document

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to proceed and participate, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what the study will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and ask us for clarification or if you would like more information on the research study itself.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitude of consumers towards company/brand implementation of social media influencers as a means of marketing. The survey will evaluate what makes an influencer most effective/believable in the eyes of the consumer and evaluate if/how certain characteristics within the consumer-base effects the messaging and overall impression that influencers have on their audience members. This study is being conducted by a marketing undergraduate student in partial fulfillment of her requirements in the honors program, under the supervision of a marketing professor.

The anticipated time for your participation in this research is approximately 10 minutes. This research will ask you to fill out a survey of questions about your reactions to social media influencers as well as questions about yourself and some of your personal and attitudinal characteristics. The risks of this survey are minimal: some individuals may feel some discomfort in revealing personal information or information related to their shopping behavior and engaging with social media influencers. These risks are similar to those someone might experience when discussing personal information with others. If you feel upset by these survey questions, please speak with the researcher and she will assist in pursuing whatever means of reparation is deemed necessary.

Please take time to decide whether you want to volunteer to take part in this study. Research studies should include only people who choose to take part. You can tell us that you don’t want to participate in this study. You may also start the survey and then choose to stop at any point in time. Following the protocols of the DESB Respondent Pool, you do not have to participate in this study to receive participation points for your class.

Your responses in the survey are and will remain completely anonymous—we do not ask for your name or any form of identifying information. Further, all results will be reported only in aggregated form, reporting statistical responses obtained across the entire sample collected. We will not contact you later with any follow-up questions.

There are no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study. However, we hope the information we get from this study may help develop a greater understanding of the antecedents to social media influencer effectiveness, which may allow businesses and brands to better identify and serve both the consumption and digital content needs of consumers in the future.

Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. If you have further questions about the research after participating, please contact Professor Abbie Griffin at (801) 585-1772 or abbie.griffin@eccles.utah.edu. You may also contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do
not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu.
Exhibit 3: Research Study Survey

Social Media Influencers are a type of independent third-party endorser that shapes audience attitudes and influences their behaviors through the content they share on various social media channels. How familiar are you with the concept of Social Media Influencers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all familiar</th>
<th>Somewhat familiar</th>
<th>Extremely familiar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you consider yourself a Social Media Influencer?

- Yes - If so for what brands?
- No

On which of the following accounts are you subscribed to/follow influencers? (please check all that apply)

- Instagram
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Blogs
- None of the above
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Never 0</th>
<th>Weekly 3</th>
<th>Daily 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make purchases based on influencer recommendations.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If an influencer I follow makes a recommendation regarding a brand or product, I am more likely to consider trying it.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I actively seek out influencer reviews and recommendations before making a purchase.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If content is marked as #ad or #sponsored, I am less likely to trust it.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If content is marked as #ad or #sponsored, I am less likely to buy the product/brand that is being promoted.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If an influencer is famous (has a large number of followers) in their respective category, I am more likely to be influenced by their content.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to be influenced by influencer generated content over brand/company generated content.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to engage with an influencer that promotes a broad brand/product portfolio.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to engage with an influencer that promotes a limited number of brands/products/services.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to engage with an influencer that is loyal to a single brand/product/service.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am more likely to engage with an influencer that is constantly introducing me to new brands/products/services.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How effective do you believe social media influencer marketing is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness Rating</th>
<th>1 Very Ineffective</th>
<th>2 Ineffective</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Effective</th>
<th>5 Very Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely are you to share influencer generated content?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing Likelihood</th>
<th>1 Very Unlikely</th>
<th>2 Unlikely</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Likely</th>
<th>5 Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How likely are you to share brand/company generated content?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing Likelihood</th>
<th>1 Very Unlikely</th>
<th>2 Unlikely</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Likely</th>
<th>5 Very Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many times in the last 6 months (since August 1st) have you purchased an influencer's own branded product/service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Frequency</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of times you have purchased an influencer's own brand</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many times in the last 6 months (since August 1st) have you purchased any product/service that an influencer has spoken about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase Frequency</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of times you have purchased something an influencer has spoken about</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please respond with how many times you have done the following in the last 6 months (since August 1st).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Frequency</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many times have you used sponsored links that an influencer has promoted in their content to purchase something?</td>
<td>□</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many times have you used discount codes that an influencer has promoted in their content to purchase something?

How many times have you seen a product/brand that an influencer has spoken about on their account and searched for it on your own?

How many times have you seen a product/brand that an influencer has spoken about on their account, searched for it on your own, and used the influencer's discount code?

How many times have you followed a brand directly from an influencer’s post?

How many times have you unfollowed an influencer’s account because they post too much sponsored content?

How many times have you unfollowed an influencer’s account because they post too frequently?

How many times have you followed an influencer just for their product/service discount?

---

Do you believe you are more receptive to influencer marketing over traditional advertising like TV advertisements, print advertisements, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutely Not</th>
<th>Not Likely</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Definitely Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you more receptive to influencer marketing over traditional marketing
Where do you find new influencers to follow? (Please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Platform Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand/Retailer Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Circle Recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giveaways (follow this account and tag friends to receive prize)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rank each content format in order from most effective to least effective. (Rank by dragging and dropping)

- Social Media Posts
- Social Media Videos (IGTV, YouTube, Facebook Live, etc.)
- Social Media Stories
- Blog Posts (written content)
How many influencers do you follow within each category?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Fitness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many hours a day do you spend on social media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent on social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What percentage of your shopping do you do at each of the following? (Values must sum to 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brick and Mortar</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combo</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What percentage of your shopping do you do at each of the following store categories? (Values must sum to 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Store</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Store</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malls and Shopping Centers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discount Stores</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To what extent do you consider yourself a shopper - On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the importance of shopping in your life?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>1 The Least Important Thing</th>
<th>2 Not Very Important</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Very Important</th>
<th>5 The Most Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In which category of shopper would you classify yourself as?

Social Catalyst: Planner, organizer, takes pride in friendship status, consider yourself an expert within your social circle, tend to be the “influencer”, thinks a night out on the town is money well spent, likely to seek out bargains to keep up with the latest trends.

Natural Hybrid: Stable and poised, operated in a continual state of equilibrium, know there is a time and place for everything - a time to spend and a time to save, approach to shopping falls between safe/practical purchases and splurges, tend to purchase classic products - long lasting items that aren’t too trendy.

Content Responsible: Neither set nor spread trends, tends to treat shopping as an errand or chore rather than a fun experience or an adventure, lifelong and increasingly loyal customer, does not consider social status an important part of your life, practical, responsible, loyal, and values a hassle-free shopping experience.

Cultural Artist: “Super shopper”, constantly trying different things and starting new trends.

For each category, what percent of the time would you consult an influencer’s reviews/recommendations before purchasing?

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Fashion Trends/Clothing

Beauty products and services (makeup, haircare, spa services, etc.)

Home products and services (furnishing, decor, cleaning, etc.)

Electronics/Technology products (phone, computer, etc.)

Health products and services (fitness, diet, supplements, etc.)

Travel products and services (hotels, experiences, etc.)

Other
Please rank which influencer qualities are most important to you when determining whether or not to follow them/engage with their content. (Rank from most important to least important by dragging and dropping)

- Core values align with yours
- General sense of authenticity
- Providing something of value to you
- Unparalleled content offering
- Passionate about their respective category and content offering

Please rank which influencer qualities are most likely to prompt you to unfollow/disengage with an influencer and their content? (Rank by dragging and dropping)

- Losing interest over time
- Influencer’s loss of content/persona uniqueness
- Influencer supporting too broad of a brand and product portfolio
- Influencer supporting too small of a brand and product portfolio
- Influencer having too much sponsored content
- Influencer posting too often

Which do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary

Please enter your age
Exhibit 4: IRB Application Form and Approval

1. Responsible Investigator:
   Abbie Griffin
   
   Email: abbie.griffin@business.utah.edu
   Training: 2/11/2020
   Col Date: 1/21/2020

   a. Position of the Investigator:
      - Faculty or Non-Academic Equivalent
      - Student
      - Staff
      - Resident/Fellow
      - Other

2. Contact Persons for the Responsible Investigator:
   Name: Monet Frank
   Email: monetfrank11@gmail.com
   Training: 1/6/2020

3. Guests of the Responsible Investigator:
   Last Name: 
   First Name: 
   E-Mail: 
   There are no items to display

4. What type of application is being submitted?
   New Study Application (or Amendment/Continuing Review)

5. Title Of Study:
   Antecedents to Social Media Influencer Effectiveness

6. Study Purposes and Objectives:
   This survey will investigate the attitude of consumers towards company/brand implementation of social media influencers as a means of marketing. In this survey, I will also evaluate what makes an influencer most effective/believable in the eyes of the consumer and evaluate if/how certain characteristics within the consumer-base effects the messaging and overall impression that influencers have on their audience members (aka determinants of user engagement).

7. Is this a multi-site study, where more than one site needs IRB approval?
   - Yes
   - No
8. **Background and Introduction:**

Influencer marketing has revolutionized the way businesses/brands communicate with consumers, however, the antecedents to successful influencers and social media influencer campaigns are unclear. As the world virtually connects and builds an extensive network of digital touch-points, consumers seek value through organic and authentic peer to peer communication. In essence, social media influencers provide this desired form of communication between businesses/brands and consumers. Through social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, social media influencers are able to create branded content that is relatable on a day to day life scale with their own unique and extensive following.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Investigators Name</th>
<th>Covered Entity</th>
<th>Sub Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U of Utah</td>
<td>Abbie Griffin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Study Location and Sponsors**

1. Add all locations applying for approval of research via the University of Utah IRB or Human Research Protection Program (HRPP).

   Click the appropriate button(s) below to add locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Investigators Name</th>
<th>Covered Entity</th>
<th>Sub Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U of Utah</td>
<td>Abbie Griffin</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Will a Central IRB (CIRB) or Single IRB (SIRB) model be used for review of this study for the sites listed in this application?

   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No

3. Indicate the source(s) of funding obtained or applied for to support this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Sponsor Type</th>
<th>Sponsor Contact Information</th>
<th>Prime Sponsor</th>
<th>Prime Sponsor Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   There are no items to display

4. Does this study have functions assigned to a Contract Research Organization (CRO)?

   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No

5. Does this study involve use of the Utah Resource for Genetic and Epidemiologic Research (RGE)?

   Examples: Utah Population Database (UPDB), Utah Cancer Registry (UCR), All Payers Claims Database (APCD), etc.

   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No
Title: Antecedents to Social Media Influencer Effectiveness

Addition of a Site

1. Site Name:
   University of Utah

2. Site Principal Investigator
   Mark if Same as Responsible Investigator (syncs with investigator on the first page)
   Abbie Griffin
   Email: abbie.griffin@business.utah.edu
   Training: 2/11/2020
   Col Date: 1/21/2020
   
   a. Position of the Site Principal Investigator
      Faculty or Non-Academic Equivalent
   
   b. Will the Site PI consent participants? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Site Contact Persons, if different from the Site PI:
   Mark if Same as Contacts for Responsible Investigator (syncs with contacts on the first page)
   Name: Monet Frank
   Email: monetfrank11@gmail.com
   Training: 1/6/2020

4. Site Staff and Sub-Investigators
   Name: Monet Frank
   Email: monetfrank11@gmail.com
   Training: 1/6/2020
   Obtaining Consent: ☐
   Col Date: 1/21/2020

5. Site Guests:
   Name: 
   Email: 
   Training: 
   There are no items to display

6. Select HIPAA coverage for this study:
   Study procedures will be conducted outside a HIPAA Covered Entity at this site (HIPAA Privacy Rule does not apply)

7. Select the study procedures that will be conducted at this site:
   Recruitment
   Consent/Enrollment
   Data collection
   Data analysis
   Do you have an enrollment goal or anticipated enrollment number for this site?
8. Select the University of Utah department responsible for this research:
MARKETING DEPARTMENT

9. Add any additional sites that are part of this performance group
There are no items to display

3. Participants

1. Ages of Participants:
18 and older  (Consent form needed)

2. Specific age range of participants (e.g., 7-12 years old, 60+, etc.):
18-45

3. Indicate any vulnerable participant groups (other than children) included:
Students, staff, or faculty of the research institution
If 'Other', please specify:
If 'None' and no children are involved, answer the following question.
Has the participant selection process overprotected potential subjects who are considered vulnerable so that they are denied opportunities to participate in research?
Yes  No

4. Number of participants to be included and/or enrolled in this entire study, across all study locations: 250

5. Characteristics of Participants/Inclusion Criteria:
We will be using the David Eccles School of Business Marketing 3010 respondent pool for two reasons
1. They are the right types of people to be assessed in regard to social media influencer effectiveness
2. I am an undergraduate and don't have funds to conduct research with another set of respondents that we would be required to pay to participate

6. Participant Exclusion Criteria:
None

7. Is a substantial percentage of the participant population anticipated to be non-English speaking?
Yes  No
Vulnerable Populations

Justification Requirements for the Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations

1. How does the nature of the research require or justify using the proposed subject population? The student population is the right demographic and as a student, I don't have funds for a paid set of respondents who are not a vulnerable population.

2. Would it be possible to conduct the study with other, less vulnerable subjects?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No
   If yes, justify the inclusion of vulnerable subjects:

3. Is this population being included primarily for the convenience of the researcher?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [x] No
   If yes, explain:

4. Does the scientific merit of the study warrant the inclusion of subjects who may either be susceptible to pressure or who are already burdened?
   - [x] Yes
   - [ ] No
4. Study Information

1. Design of Study (select all that apply):

☐ Non-Experimental and/or Descriptive Research Design:
   Survey/Questionnaire Research

☐ Experimental and/or Interventional Research Design:
   There are no items to display

☐ Development of a research resource (repositories, databases, etc.)

☐ Other

2. Does your study involve the use of any placebo?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Length of entire study, from initiation through closeout:
   6 months

4. How will participants be recruited or identified for inclusion in the study?
   a. Select all methods that will be used:
      ☐ Other

b. Describe the recruitment/participant identification process in detail (e.g., who will review charts or
   records, who can refer participants to the study, where will flyers be posted, how often will recruitment
   letters be sent, when will follow-up phone calls be made, etc.):

   This will be one of multiple surveys/experiments that the Marketing 3101 respondent pool is exposed to
   throughout the semester. This respondent group is required to participate in a specific number of hours of
   experiments for their final grade. This survey will be one of several experiments administered during a 1-hour
   session. Upon attending, the students will receive participation points for their first grade.

5. How will consent be obtained?
   ☐ Informed Consent Process (with or without a document)

6. Describe all the procedures chronologically, from screening/enrollment through study closeout, which will be
   completed in the research project.

After providing consent by moving to the next page, the survey will begin. It is made up of a series of questions about
social media influencers and their influence on the respondent's consumption process and attitudes. After filling out
questions associated with our hypotheses, students will provide some demographic information about themselves.
Please see the attached survey to see all of the questions.

7. Are all procedures for research purposes only (non-standard or non-standard of care procedures)?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

   If no, list the procedures that are performed for research purposes only (non-standard or non-standard
   of care procedures):

8. Is there a safety monitoring plan for this study?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Provide a summary of the statistical methods, data analysis, or data interpretation planned for this study.
   Factors for determining the proposed sample size (e.g., power) should be stated.

   We will be utilizing:
   Regression

   Difference of means for anonymized data at the aggregate level

   Sample size of 250 because that will give sufficient statistical power.
Consent Process

1. The following investigators and internal staff will obtain consent (as indicated on the Study Location and Sponsors Page):
   Abbie Griffin (PI) University of Utah

   List by name, role, and affiliation any others who will obtain consent (e.g. Dr. John Smith, Co-Investigator, etc.).

2. Describe the location(s) where consent will be obtained.
   In the respondent pool lab on computers. After reading the consent page, respondents will give consent by proceeding to the next page, which starts the survey.

3. Describe the consent process(es), including the timing of consent. Describe whether there is a waiting period between the consent process and obtaining consent from the participant (i.e., any time between informing participants and actually obtaining consent).
   Consent is obtained before students begin the survey. The undergraduate thesis student will be present during the survey administration to answer any questions students may have after reading the consent page and before proceeding to the survey. After reading the consent document, students will give consent by clicking to proceed to the first page of the survey. An opt out arrow will take them to the end of the survey and they will still be given participation points.

4. Describe what measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence.
   Opt our button on same page as the continue button and they still get participation points even if they opt out of finishing the survey.

5. Describe the provisions that are made to allow adequate time to exchange information and questions between the investigator and participant.
   The consent will be given at the beginning and the investigator will be there to answer any questions. This will not be a timed experiment.

6. Will a legally authorized representative (LAR) be used?
   ○ Yes  ☐ No

7. Will a language other than English be used to obtain consent?
   ○ Yes  ☐ No

8. Are you requesting that documentation of informed consent be waived by the IRB (a consent process in place, but no documentation of consent, e.g. questionnaire cover letter, web-based consent, consent without signature, etc.)?
   ● Yes  ☐ No

If yes, complete the following:

   a. Explain why the waiver of consent documentation is being requested.
      Use of cover letter

   b. Justification for the waiver is one of the following:
      The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.
5. Data Monitoring Plan

1. Privacy Protections: Privacy refers to persons and to their interest in controlling access of others to themselves. Privacy can be defined in terms of having control over the extent, timing and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually) with others. What precautions will be used to ensure subject privacy is protected?

Select all that apply:
- The collection of information about participants is limited to the amount necessary to achieve the aims of the research, so that no unneeded information is being collected
- Allowing for anonymous submission of surveys and questionnaires

Other or additional details (specify):

2. Confidentiality Precautions: Confidentiality is an extension of the concept of privacy; it refers to the subject's understanding of, and agreement to, the ways identifiable information will be stored and shared. Identifiable information can be printed information, electronic information or visual information such as photographs. What precautions will be used to maintain the confidentiality of identifiable information?

Select all that apply:
- Storing research data on password protected computers or in locked cabinets or offices
- Complete de-identification of study data
- All data that will be transferred or transported outside of the institution will be encrypted

Other or additional details (specify):
- Neither names nor any other identifying information (e.g., unids) will be collected as part of the survey.

3. Will photos, audio recordings, or video recordings, or medical images of participants be made during the study?

- Yes
- No

If yes, describe the recording/images and what will become of them after creation (e.g., shown at scientific meetings, stored in the medical/research record, transcribed, erased, etc.):

4. How will study data and documentation be monitored throughout the study?

Select all that apply:
- Other or additional details (specify):

Other additional details (specify):
- We expect to collect data only once and the consent document will be in the survey (no need for periodic review). One wave of data collection.

5. Who will be the primary monitor of the study data and documentation?

Select all that apply:
- Principal Investigator
- Research Assistant
- Other or additional details (specify):

6. How often is study data and documentation monitoring planned (e.g., monthly, twice a year, annually, after N participants are enrolled, etc.)?

Just once as there is only one wave of data collection.
6. Risks and Benefits

1. Describe the reasonable foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participants:

   We are asking people to relate some personal information such as gender, shopping characteristics, and shopping importance. We believe this represents minimal risk and participants can opt out at any time.

2. Describe the potential benefits to society AND to participants (do not include compensation):

   Participants get participation grade for their required marketing 3010 class.
   Companies may better understand what kinds of people to engage as influencers and what campaigns are most effective in the eyes of consumers.

3. Are there any costs to the participants from participation in research?
   - Yes ☐ No ☑
   If yes, specify:
     Time to participate (offset by participation points)

4. Is there any compensation to the participants?
   - Yes ☐ No ☑
   a. If yes, answer the following:
      Specify overall amount:
      Partial participation points for Marketing 3010/3011 courses.
   b. Specify when participants will be paid (e.g. at each visit, at end of study, etc.):
      Participation points are awarded when students sign into the behavioral lab before completing any research protocols.
   c. If applicable, please specify payment by visit or other time interval (e.g., $10 per visit, etc.):
      Per Visit
   d. If applicable, explain plan for prorating payments if participant does not complete the study:
      Even if participants do not complete the survey, they will still receive participation points for their class.
8. Resources and Responsibilities

1. State and justify the qualifications of the study staff:
   Abbie Griffin; PhD in Business, CITI Certification, 30 years of publishing business based research
   Monet Frank: 3.5 years of undergrad business training and CITI Certification

2. Describe the training that study staff and investigators will receive in order to be informed about the protocol and understand their research-related duties and functions:
   Protocol was developed jointly through complete collaboration of PI and research assistant

3. Describe the facilities where the research activities will be performed (e.g. hospitals, clinics, laboratories, classrooms/schools, offices, tissue banks, etc.).
   Behavioral Lab in SFEBB - students using computers.

4. Describe the medical or psychological resources available at this site (and other participating sites, if applicable) that participants might require as a consequence of the research. If not applicable, please state.
   Not applicable, we do not anticipate any psychological or physical risks.
IRB: IRB_00128946
Pt: Abbie Griffin
Title: Antecedents to Social Media Influencer Effectiveness
Date: 1/21/2020

The above-referenced protocol has received an IRB exemption determination and may begin the research procedures outlined in the University of Utah IRB application and supporting documents.

EXEMPTION DOCUMENTATION

Review Type: Exemption Review
Exemption Category(ies): Category 2
Exemption Date: 1/21/2020

Note the following delineation of categories:

- Categories 1-8: Federal Exemption Categories defined in 45 CFR 46.101(b)
- Categories A-E: Non-Federal Exemption Categories defined in University of Utah IRB policy in Investigator Guidance Series. Exempt Research

You must adhere to all requirements for exemption described in University of Utah IRB policy in (Investigator Guidance Series. Exempt Research). This includes:

- All research involving human subjects must be approved or determined exempt by the IRB before the research is conducted.
- All research activities must be conducted in accordance with the Belmont Report and must adhere to principles of sound research design and ethics.
- Ongoing accounting and monitoring of research activities must occur.

Ongoing Submissions for Exempt Projects

- Continuing Review: Since this determination is not an approval, the study does not expire or need continuing review. This determination of exemption from continuing IRB review only applies to the research study as submitted to the IRB. You must follow the protocol as proposed in this application.
- Amendment Applications: Substantive changes to this project require an amendment application to the IRB to secure either approval or a determination of exemption. Investigators should contact the IRB Office if there are questions about whether an amendment consists of substantive changes. Substantive changes include, but are not limited to:
  - Changes to study personnel (to secure Conflict of Interest review for all personnel on the study)
  - Changes that increase the risk to participants or change the risk-benefit ratio of the study
  - Changes that affect a participant's willingness to participate in the study
  - Changes to study procedures or study components that are not covered by the Exemption Category determined for this study (listed above)
  - Changes to the study sponsor
  - Changes to the targeted participant population
  - Changes to the stamped consent document(s)

- Report Forms: Exempt studies must adhere to the University of Utah IRB reporting requirements for unanticipated problems and deviations: http://irb.utah.edu/submit-application/forms/index.php
- Final Project Reports for Study Closure: Exempt studies must be closed with the IRB once the research activities are complete: http://irb.utah.edu/submit-application/final-project-reports.php
7. References


