



Department of Business and Management

Degree Program in Marketing - Market Relationship and  
Customer Engagement

Course of Digital Marketing

The Role of Authenticity and Transparency  
in Influencer Partnerships:  
Mitigating Perceptions of Manipulative Intent.

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Academic Year 2023/2024

## **Abstract**

Influencer marketing has gained significant traction as a pivotal tool in digital marketing strategies. This thesis explores the complex dynamics between authenticity, transparency, and consumer perceptions in influencer-brand collaborations. Specifically, it examines how the transparency of such partnerships impacts perceived authenticity and consumer trust, as well as their susceptibility to perceptions of manipulative intent. Drawing on both theoretical and empirical literature, the research utilizes a quantitative experimental design to assess the effects of altruistic versus manipulative messaging on consumer attitudes. An experimental design with two scenarios (high vs. low transparency) was employed, and 198 participants were recruited to evaluate consumer responses to brand-influencer collaborations. The findings underscore the mutual responsibility of brands and influencers to maintain transparency and authenticity in their collaborations, as these factors directly influence consumer perceptions. Results contribute to a deeper understanding of influencer marketing's role in modern consumer behavior, offering practical implications for brands seeking to optimize their influencer strategies to maintain credibility and long-term consumer loyalty. This study contributes to the growing literature on influencer marketing by providing practical insights into how brands can strategically manage transparency to build long-term consumer trust and minimize the risk of perceived manipulation.

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## Introduction

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most potent tools in brand communication, leveraging the substantial influence that individuals with significant online followings, often referred to as social media influencers, can exert over consumer behavior. This marketing strategy has shifted the dynamics of traditional advertising by placing emphasis on authenticity, trust, and relatability, values that resonate strongly with today's digital audience. At the heart of successful influencer marketing campaigns lies the ability to bridge the gap between commercial objectives and the authenticity that consumers demand, making the perceived credibility of influencers critical to a brand's success.

This thesis explores the intersection between altruistic versus manipulative messaging in influencer marketing and its impact on consumer perception within the fashion and beauty industry. Specifically, it examines how the transparency of brand-influencer collaborations influences the perceived authenticity of these partnerships and, consequently, consumer perceptions of manipulative intent. By focusing on the moderating effect of transparency and the mediating role of perceived authenticity, this research aims to offer a nuanced understanding of how these elements shape consumer trust in influencer-endorsed messages.

The motivation for this study stems from the increasing consumer skepticism surrounding influencer marketing. As social media platforms like Instagram become saturated with branded content, consumers are becoming more critical of the motives behind influencer endorsements. Brands are no longer just judged by the quality of their products, but also by the transparency and ethical standards of their marketing strategies. This shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity for marketers to innovate in how they build relationships with consumers through influencers.

Through a quantitative between-subjects experimental design, this study investigates how different types of messaging (altruistic vs manipulative) affect consumer perception of authenticity and manipulative intent. The study further evaluates how varying levels of transparency in influencer-brand collaborations influence these perceptions. The data

collected via a self-administered questionnaire distributed through social media channels in Italy provides insight into the behavioral responses of consumers to different advertising scenarios, allowing for a deeper understanding of the role that message framing and transparency play in shaping consumer attitudes.

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing by offering empirical evidence on the critical role of perceived authenticity and transparency in reducing consumer skepticism. This thesis also highlights the practical implications of these findings for brands aiming to cultivate long-term relationships with their target audiences through influencer marketing. By exploring these dynamics, this research not only sheds light on the current trends in digital marketing but also offers strategic recommendations for enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of influencer collaborations.

In the chapters that follow, a comprehensive review of the literature will be provided, alongside a detailed explanation of the research methodology, data analysis, and the theoretical implications of the findings. Through this exploration, the thesis aims to present a holistic view of how brands can effectively communicate their values and motivations to consumers through authentic and transparent influencer partnerships.

# **Chapter I**

## **Influencer Marketing**

### **1.1 Definition**

Social media influencers (SMIs) commonly encompass individuals who have gained popularity through online activities such as blogging, videoblogging, or engagement on social networking sites. Their social influence is attributed to the substantial number of followers or subscribers they have (Jin & Phua, 2014). The role of an influencer has evolved into a pivotal figure in contemporary marketing strategies, representing individuals who wield considerable sway over their audience's opinions and behaviors. An influencer, often with a strong online presence on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or blogs, possesses the ability to shape consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. They are typically characterized by authenticity, relatability, and a niche expertise that resonates with their followers. Influencers leverage their personal brand to connect with audiences on a more intimate level, fostering a sense of trust and authenticity that traditional advertising struggles to achieve. Their content often combines promotional material with genuine insights or personal experiences, making it more engaging and persuasive.

Brands strategically collaborate with influencers to tap into their established communities, seeking to benefit from the influencers' perceived credibility and ability to authentically endorse products or services. The influencer's role extends beyond being a mere promotional channel; they become conduits for storytelling and relationship-building, creating a bridge between brands and consumers in an era where genuine connections hold significant value. In marketing, influencers play a pivotal role due to their ability to establish authentic connections with audiences. Their authenticity builds trust, a valuable currency in an age of advertising skepticism. By having a well-defined niche, influencers offer targeted reach, allowing brands to connect with specific demographics. The dynamic engagement between influencers and their audience enhances the impact of promotional content. Furthermore, influencers serve as a form of

social proof, validating a brand's quality through personal recommendations. Their prowess in content creation contributes to visually appealing and shareable material, elevating a brand's online presence. Studies show that influencers significantly influence consumer decisions, impacting purchasing behaviors. Additionally, influencers exhibit adaptability, staying abreast of digital trends and technologies. Their cultural relevance enables brands to connect meaningfully with consumers, making influencers indispensable in crafting effective and persuasive marketing strategies.

In today's digital landscape, influencer advertising has emerged as a transformative force, fundamentally altering the dynamics of how brands communicate and engage with consumers. This dynamic marketing approach leverages influencers, including bloggers, vloggers, YouTubers, and key opinion leaders (KOL), who boast loyal online fanbases with shared interests. The strategic utilization of these influencers enables marketers to not only reach targeted audiences effectively but also to build credibility organically, grounded in the trust that followers place in these influential figures.

One of the pivotal aspects of influencer advertising lies in its adaptability to different social media platforms, allowing for precise audience targeting based on social media profiles. Moreover, the performance of influencer campaigns can now be meticulously measured through sophisticated tools, enabling marketers to analyze and optimize each influencer's contribution. The primary goals of influencer advertising encompass driving traffic, raising brand awareness, cultivating brand image, increasing engagement, and boosting sales. By utilizing measurement tools, marketers can exercise control over budgets, assess return on investment, and ensure alignment with overarching brand objectives.

In the realm of digital marketing, influencers on Instagram have emerged as a distinctive category of opinion leaders, positioned between traditional celebrities and friends. Termed "microcelebrities," these influencers are self-made and primarily known for their social media activities. Unlike celebrities, their reputation stems solely from content posted on social media, usually in collaboration with their followers. Influencers often cater to a more specific audience, fostering a sense of trustworthiness and credibility. They serve as opinion leaders in various fields, influencing followers' purchasing decisions. The continued growth of influencer marketing campaigns on Instagram,

especially in sectors like fashion, reflects brands seeking positive returns on their investments, such as enhanced purchase intentions, recommendations, engagement, favorable attitudes, and increased brand awareness.

Instagram's visual features, including functionalities like Stories, Instagram TV, and shoppable options, contribute to the effectiveness of influencer marketing. As influencers maintain a prominent presence on various social media platforms, particularly Instagram, there is a growing need to specify and clarify their effects on customer behaviors and the underlying mechanisms at play. The alignment between an influencer's image and followers' interests is identified as a crucial determinant. Previous research highlights factors like follower count, hashtag usage, activity metrics, and message characteristics influencing the efficacy of influencers on Instagram. Some studies also explore fit along specific links in the triadic influencer marketing context, emphasizing the importance of congruence across the influencer, the customer, and the promoted product. (Belance, Arino, Flavian, & Sánchez., 2021)

Their social influence is attributed to the substantial number of followers or subscribers they have (Jin & Phua, 2014). Currently, research on SMIs is in its early stages, as evident from our examination of key studies in this field. Studies adopting an organizational perspective focus on current practices related to managerial decisions regarding the utilization of SMIs in brand communications. From a consumer perspective, albeit limited, other studies emphasize the positive impacts of influencers on brands. For example, there is evidence suggesting that SMIs can more effectively influence the purchase decisions of female consumers compared to celebrity endorsers (Djafarova & Rushworth., 2017). Additionally, recommendations from bloggers have been shown to improve consumer attitudes and purchase intentions when perceived as trustworthy and useful.

## **1.2 Consumers trust**

Despite the power of influencer marketing, instances of influencer-brand partnerships going awry highlight the importance of responsible behavior in sharing information. Gen



Z expects influencers to provide genuine information and values truthfulness from both influencers and brands. Discrepancies, such as disingenuous endorsements or the promotion of unrealistic lifestyles, can lead followers to avoid or unfollow influencers.

Studies delve into the phenomenon of influencer avoidance, a concept rarely explored in marketing literature. Those identify perceived brand control as a significant factor influencing both brand and influencer avoidance. Drawing on the theory of moral responsibility, the study “What makes followers loyal? The role of influencer interactivity in building influencer brand equity.” posits that negative moral emotions, particularly anger, mediate the relationship between brand control and avoidance behavior.

The advent of social media has been instrumental in the emergence of influencers, to the extent that influencers have evolved into distinct brands themselves (Jun & Yi, 2020). Traditional brands have extensively employed influencers to cultivate positive relationships with Generation Z (Gen Z) and shape a desired brand image (Chapple & Cownie, 2017; Harrison, 2018). Influencer recommendations wield a more significant impact on Gen Z's purchase and consumption behavior compared to traditional advertisements, underscoring the importance of influencers in shaping consumer decisions (Scholz, 2021; Dunkley, 2017). Gen Z places an expectation on influencers to provide accurate information on subjects of interest, emphasizing the perceived authenticity of influencer communication.

Distinguishing characteristics of influencer brands include originality, ordinariness, and interactivity, where consumers anticipate noncommercial and authentic communication similar to recommendations from fellow consumers (Jun & Yi, 2020; Ki & Kim, 2019; Leung et al., 2022). Lee et al. (2009) outline four reasons for brand avoidance, encompassing undelivered brand promises, symbolically unappealing promises, socially detrimental promises, and functionally inadequate promises. Gen Z regards influencers as peers providing honest opinions, positioning them as contrasting figures to opportunistic hegemonic brands (Reinikainen et al., 2021). However, when influencers are perceived as being controlled by brands, Gen Z considers it a moral transgression, leading to negative emotions and subsequent moral avoidance behavior (Cocker et al., 2021; Jun & Yi, 2020).

Establishing credibility can be achieved by showcasing knowledge, competence, and making references. Sustaining credibility involves prioritizing transparency and being discerning in both editorial content and partnership selections. (Mainolfi & Vergura, 2022) Several studies have identified a positive correlation between a blogger's credibility and the intention to make a purchase (Santos, Medina, Carey, & Bellido-Pérez., 2018); Mainolfi & Vergura, 2022); (Bazaki & Cedrola, 2023). The study “Examining the impact of brand transgressions on consumers' perceptions of celebrity endorsers.” argues that negative feelings toward influencers can arise not only from deliberately misleading information but also from a perceived control of influencers by brands. This perception alone is sufficient for Gen Z to develop unfavorable sentiments, extending the culpability to the endorsed brands by association (Thomas & Fowler, 2016). Introducing the concept of influencer avoidance, the study defines it as followers actively choosing to shun influencers by avoiding or unfollowing their social media pages.

Gen Z's emphasis on truth, originality, and ethics in their relationships with influencers and brands aligns with the theory of moral responsibility, which focuses on ethical norms in interpersonal relationships. Both influencers and traditional brands are considered moral agents, accountable for their actions in a morally responsible manner. Gen Z reacts negatively to any moral transgressions by influencers, holding brands responsible for the actions of their stakeholders. Brands and influencers are expected to uphold ethics in their relationships with followers, and violations trigger negative moral emotions, leading to brand avoidance.

Applying the theory of moral responsibility, the study “Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers’ credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing” argues that when Gen Z perceives a brand exerting high creative control over an influencer's content, both the brand and the influencer are considered guilty of a moral transgression, violating the ethics of autonomy and community. The subsequent section examines the relationship between brand control and avoidance behavior. (Garg & Bakshi., Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers’ credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing, 2024)

This comprehensive study delves into various aspects of the influencer-consumer dynamic, shedding light on consumer motivations, spending behaviors, and the influencer-brand relationship. The research identifies three primary factors driving consumers to follow influencers: attractiveness, power, and source trust. Additionally, deal-seeking, entertainment, and inspiration emerged as key motivations through exploratory focus groups, offering crucial insights for tailored marketing strategies.

The influencer-brand relationship has evolved significantly, with brands strategically selecting influencers based on their connection to the brand and relatability to the target audience. Benefits include authentic content, cost-effectiveness, and increased consumer trust. Meanwhile, the influencer-consumer relationship is characterized by relatability and parasocial connections, fostering personal bonds that enhance purchasing behaviors and continued engagement.

The study reveals consumer heterogeneity, categorizing individuals into six segments ranging from silent followers to super fans. It also identifies three general spending behavior levels (high, medium, and low), highlighting the highest spending segments as influencer enthusiasts valuing content and recommendations.

Significantly, attractiveness is found to be a key motivator for high-spending segments, emphasizing the importance of physical appearance in influencer success. The study introduces three new motivations for following influencers: deal-seeking, entertainment, and inspiration, suggesting their incorporation into influencer marketing campaigns.

Practical implications include tailoring marketing messages to address unique motivations within each segment, efficiently allocating resources, and leveraging new motivations for follower engagement. Additionally, the research emphasizes the importance of beauty vloggers' credibility attributes in the Indian context, highlighting the mediating role of trust and the impact of parasocial interactions on purchasing intention. Marketers are encouraged to collaborate with trusted influencers to enhance message credibility and influence consumer behavior, considering cultural nuances and unique attributes of beauty vloggers.

While acknowledging limitations such as sample demographics and geographical focus, the study opens avenues for future research, urging exploration into different age groups,

regions, and vlogging segments. It also suggests considering virtual influencers and comparing their impact with traditional beauty vloggers. (Garg & Bakshi., Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing, 2024)

### **1.3 Managerial Relevance**

According to the Datareportal January 2024 global overview, we can see that social media growth has continued to increase:

- More than half of the world is registered on social media (62.3%)
- 5.04 billion people around the world now use social media, 266 million new users have come online within the last year.
- The average daily time spent using social media is 2h 23m.

Within these platforms, users engage in content sharing, creating a vast information source. This sharing culture has given rise to word-of-mouth marketing within the social media landscape. The rise of social media has led corporate brands to engage online figures who endorse and shape followers' perceptions through their communications (Warc, 2019)). Referred to as social media influencers (SMIs), these personalities have significantly boosted the global prevalence of influencer marketing (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Reports suggest that over two-thirds of multinational brands worldwide are planning to increase their investment in influencer marketing in the coming years. (World Federation of Advertisers, 2018)The global expenditure in this domain is projected to reach \$15 billion by 2022 (Archer, Wolf, & Nalloor, 2021). Word-of-mouth marketing involves informal communication about a product, occurring either in person or through various communication channels (Goyette, Ricard, Bergeron, & Marticotte, 2010). The dissatisfaction of consumers with traditional advertisements, perceived as intrusive and unreliable (Wenzel, Dobson, & Hays, 2016),has paved the way for the rise of influencer marketing, an alternative form of word-of-mouth marketing (Barta, Belanche, Fernández, & Flavián, 2023). Influencers, described as individuals with a substantial following who

are considered trusted tastemakers in specific niches (Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2016), contribute significantly to shaping purchasing decisions by addressing the information needs of potential consumers through social media content (Barta, Belanche, Fernández, & Flavián, 2023; Stephen, 2016). Consequently, brands have adapted their marketing strategies and allocated budgets towards influencer-generated content (IGC) and consumer-generated content (CGC) (; (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). This shift is evident in the substantial investment of over \$15 billion in influencer marketing by brands in 2022.

On a global scale, the Influencer Advertising market has witnessed exponential growth, reaching a staggering \$28 billion in 2022, constituting 3% of the total advertising market. This impressive figure is projected to maintain a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13.2% by 2027. Notably, China has emerged as the epicenter of the influencer marketing phenomenon, generating revenues of about \$15.7 billion in 2022, while Europe and the United States contributed \$3.6 billion and \$4.2 billion, respectively. These figures underscore the pervasive influence and economic significance of influencer advertising across diverse markets. (Statista, 2023)

Businesses make **\$6.50 in revenue**, on average, for every **\$1 spent on influencer marketing**, a 2019 survey by the Influencer MarketingHub studied. (Flyant, 2023)

Delving into the managerial implications, the success of influencer marketing campaigns hinges on strategic decision-making by marketing professionals and corporate strategists. Furthermore, the integration of Influencer Marketing into overall marketing and communication strategies is deemed essential for maximizing impact and ensuring message consistency. Beyond the strategic and relational aspects, the regulatory landscape adds another layer of complexity to influencer marketing. Regulations vary across countries, and compliance is crucial for both marketers and influencers. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) mandates clear disclosure, requiring influencers to transparently reveal sponsored content. In Europe, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national directives impact the management of personal data in influencer marketing programs, imposing restrictions and requiring explicit consent for data collection and processing. Individual countries, such as Italy, further enforce specific regulations like the Consumer Code, demanding transparency in

online advertising and imposing sanctions for nondisclosure of the advertising nature of content: the multifaceted nature of influencer marketing demands a strategic, relational, and legally compliant approach. Understanding the nuanced interplay between influencers, audiences, and regulatory frameworks is pivotal for crafting effective and sustainable influencer marketing campaigns. Integrating these insights with strategic decisions related to influencer selection, relationship management, crisis preparedness, and regulatory compliance can elevate the impact and success of influencer marketing initiatives in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The study: “Do the importance of influencer- and customer-generated content on social media affect willingness to pay more for potential customers?” written by Tuncer and Kartal in 2023 explores the relationships between information quality, willingness to pay more (WPM), source credibility, the importance of participant sharing (IPS), and the importance of non-participant sharing (INPS). Analyzing data from 323 participants, the study reveals a positive link between information quality and both IPS and INPS. Source credibility is associated with both INPS and IPS by influencers. Moreover, a positive correlation between INPS and WPM is identified. The findings suggest that e-commerce companies should encourage customers and influencers to share content from their profiles to enhance overall consumer engagement.

In summary, the study emphasizes the pivotal role of information quality in shaping Influencer-Generated Social Media Posts (INPS) and Customer-Generated Social Media Posts (CGC). It highlights the importance for businesses to prioritize sharing accurate, reliable information on social media platforms, influencing consumer perceptions and interest. Additionally, the research underscores the substantial impact of source credibility on both INPS and CGC. Establishing credibility in information sources, especially during the information search process, can enhance consumer interest, particularly in INPS. Collaborating with credible influencers and encouraging customers to share opinions on reputable platforms are recommended strategies for businesses.

The study also reveals that both customer and influencer posts positively affect consumers' willingness to pay more. Businesses can leverage this by encouraging influencers to post on personal social media accounts, fostering a closer connection with consumers. Encouraging diverse content sharing about product experiences from both

customers and influencers enhances the perceived value of Influencer-Generated Content (IGC) and CGC, potentially influencing consumers' willingness to pay more. These strategies contribute to increased consumer engagement and business profitability. (Tuncer & Kartal, 2023)

The paper “What Drives Consumers To Engage with Influencers?: Segmenting Consumer Response to Influencers: Insights for Managing Social-Media Relationships.” By Sands and Camobell delves into the pivotal role of social-media influencers in contemporary digital marketing, emphasizing the intricate dynamics of influencer-brand and influencer-consumer relationships. Consumer motivations for engaging with influencers are categorized into attractiveness, power, and source trust, with additional factors like deal-seeking, entertainment, and inspiration identified through exploratory focus groups. Recognizing these diverse motivations is crucial for tailoring effective marketing strategies and identifying distinct consumer segments.

Social-media influencers are characterized as content generators with unique skills, including audience cultivation, social-media management, and selective endorsement, making them cost-effective and relatable marketing conduits. The influencer-brand relationship has evolved significantly, with strategic brand partnerships considering influencers' connections and relatability to target audiences. Benefits include authentic content, reduced costs, and increased consumer trust.

The influencer-consumer relationship is marked by relatability and parasocial connections, creating personal bonds akin to friendships. This digital bond enhances purchasing behaviors, establishing emotional ties that encourage continued engagement. Despite extensive research on influencers, gaps exist in understanding consumer heterogeneity, prompting the study to explore how consumers differ based on motivations for following influencers and the derived value. (Sands & Campbell., 2022)

The study's methodology involves exploratory focus groups and a large-scale online survey across multiple social-media platforms to answer three research questions related to consumer segments, motivations, and spending behaviors. The segmentation analysis reveals six distinct consumer segments with variations in motivations, behaviors, and demographics, providing valuable insights for advertisers to target specific consumer

bases effectively. The implications for advertisers are significant, emphasizing the need to tailor influencer marketing strategies based on consumer motivations and behaviors. Understanding these nuances can enhance the impact of influencer advertising, recognizing the dynamic landscape of this marketing approach. . (Sands & Campbell., 2022) In conclusion, this literature review contributes to bridging existing gaps in understanding consumer heterogeneity and offers valuable insights for advertisers navigating the influencer marketing realm

The emergence of social media platforms has opened new avenues for effective customer relationship management (CRM) strategies. Unlike traditional CRM methods, social media-based CRM allows brands to communicate directly and effortlessly with their clientele, thereby enhancing customer loyalty. The public nature of social media presents a novel approach for brands to interact with and oversee their customer relationships, leading to heightened brand recognition and easier outreach to potential customers. However, engaging with customers on social media also carries inherent risks, such as the rapid spread of negative feedback resulting from poor customer interactions or brand responses. Despite the widespread adoption of social media platforms for customer engagement, it remains uncertain how a brand crisis can impact a brand's social CRM endeavors. Through a natural experiment, we examine the repercussions of the United Airlines crisis on three aspects of social CRM: providing information, responsiveness, and attentiveness. Contrary to traditional CRM strategies, our findings indicate that while a brand crisis may increase efforts to provide information, it tends to decrease responsiveness and attentiveness. (Balawi, 2023).

## **1.4 Crisis Management**

The widespread use of Instagram, boasting over 1 billion active users, has made it a key platform for brands and influencers, particularly in the fashion industry. Influencer marketing, where influencers promote brands on their social media pages, has seen significant growth and is predicted to double in value by 2022. While Instagram and influencer marketing offer strong consumer engagement, maintaining authenticity



remains crucial. Failed collaborations, like Ferragni-Balocco one, highlight the importance of congruence between influencers and brands. Challenges also arise from identifying unethical influencers with fake followers. To address these issues, brands need exhaustive processes to find suitable influencers, and influencers must create natural campaigns to maintain followers' trust. Researchers emphasize the need for insights into factors influencing the success or failure of influencer marketing campaigns. (Belance, Arino, Flavian, & Sánchez., 2021)

Corporate crises refer to unexpected incidents that pose a threat to a brand's perceived ability to deliver anticipated benefits (Sujay & Chris, 2011). These crises, being negative events, can serve as indicators of a brand's unfavorable character, jeopardizing its reputation. Driven by the necessity to uphold a positive reputation in the market and retain their customer base, companies typically adopt a response strategy following a crisis. (Coombs, 2013)

Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory, well-established in this context, outlines four primary crisis response strategies – diminish, deny, rebuild, and bolster. While diminish and deny responses aim to persuade the public that a crisis isn't real, the rebuild response focuses on enhancing goodwill by offering compensation or atonement. Simultaneously, the bolster response aims to reduce the offensiveness of the crisis by leveraging the company's existing goodwill.

Studies examining the drawbacks of influencer marketing are limited; however, recent findings indicate that revealing sponsorship agreements associated with social media influencers' (SMIs) posts triggers followers' awareness of persuasion tactics. This heightened awareness, in turn, contributes to increased negative word of mouth. (Hwang & Zhang, 2018) The adverse effects appear to lessen when followers perceive a valuable relationship with the influencer and when the recommended products' attributes can be easily verified. (Lu, 2014)

We argue that the disadvantages of influencer marketing become apparent when brands rely on SMIs to garner support in crisis management. Given the extensive exposure to SMIs, consumers are aware of their affiliations with brands. Consequently, when evaluating crisis responses involving SMIs, consumers might suspect that the brand's

efforts are a manipulative strategy to persuade them that the crisis is less severe or damaging than it appears. (Kapitan & Silvera, 2015)

The effectiveness of ingratiation as a crisis response strategy is subject to mixed findings, with some studies supporting its efficacy in building support and positive perceptions. However, contrasting evidence suggests that ingratiation might be less effective, especially following severe crises. In organizational contexts, ingratiation is recognized as a means for employees to cultivate positive relationships with supervisors, fostering favorable opinions and performance assessments.

The study “‘To trust or not to trust’: The impact of social media influencers on the reputation of corporate brands in crisis” proposes that, in the aftermath of a corporate crisis, ingratiation responses may be less advantageous when a social media influencer (SMI) supports the brand's crisis management efforts. Consumers, being active thinkers with persuasion knowledge, may perceive the influencer's involvement as manipulative, diminishing the credibility of the ingratiation message. Consequently, this may lead to comparable outcomes to a "no response" strategy regarding brand trustworthiness and manipulative intent inferences.

The research further suggests that, in the absence of an SMI, the ingratiation response strategy can positively influence corporate reputation by sequentially reducing manipulative intent inferences and enhancing perceived trustworthiness. However, when an SMI is present, this serial mediation effect is not expected, as enhanced persuasion knowledge may lead to skepticism and diminish the positive impact of ingratiation on corporate reputation. (Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue., 2020)

. The study proposes that conveying the altruistic motives of the SMI-brand partnership can offset the downsides of using SMIs in crisis communications.

The study presents empirical support for its conceptual model through experimental studies. It finds that while ingratiation alone is effective in crisis response when compared to no response, its effectiveness changes when an SMI supports the brand. The presence of an SMI raises suspicions, leading to comparable manipulative intent inferences and perceptions of brand trustworthiness between ingratiation and no response when the SMI is present. However, disclosing values-driven motives behind the SMI-brand partnership

counterbalances the negative effects, diminishing manipulative intent inferences and enhancing brand trustworthiness. This disclosure contributes to positive corporate reputation ratings.

In summary, the study suggests that actively communicating altruistic motives behind SMI-brand partnerships can mitigate the negative impact of using SMIs in crisis communications, providing valuable insights for managers facing these challenges. (Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue., 2020)

## **1.5 Chiara Ferragni's Relevance**

“How much is a post worth from the world's Instagram celebrities? To find the first Italian personality, you need to go down to the 65th position in the international ranking, where Chiara Ferragni stands out with an estimated value of around \$59,700 per post. Among other Italians on the list, the second position is held by Gianluca Vacchi, who could earn approximately \$47,600 for each sponsored post. Further down is the other half of Italy's most social couple, Fedez, with \$31,200. The Ferragnez and Vacchi are the only Italians within the top 100 internationally.” (Forbes.it, 2020)

Highly imitated, with over 7 million followers on Instagram and nearly 400,000 on Twitter, awarded Blogger of the Year in 2015, this entrepreneur and fashion designer initially rose to fame as a fashion blogger and later achieved success as an influencer. With an initial investment of a mere 10 euros for the internet domain and 500 euros for a camera, she shared her life by presenting herself as the girl next door, yet always captivating the opinions of fashion enthusiasts. With a keen entrepreneurial sense, she gave rise to the "Ferragni phenomenon." Her wedding alone, with 67 million interactions on related posts, generated a Media Impact Value of 36 million dollars: astute social engagement has turned her into a powerhouse of followers and revenue. (Brancaccio, 2019)

“Chiara Ferragni according to Forbes, is the #1 fashion influencer in the world (Forbes, 2022), with such a level of influence that Harvard Business School wrote a case study

looking into her success in building a personal brand and turning a blog into a profitable business (Keinan et al., 2015).” (Bazaki & Cedrola, 2023)

Chiara Ferragni, initially known as a fashion blogger, has evolved into a renowned fashion icon and businesswoman. She started her career in 2009, creating "The Blonde Salad Blog," and later ventured into her fashion brand, the Chiara Ferragni Collection. Her success primarily stemmed from her lucrative shoe line, generating significant revenue. Over the years, she expanded her brand into various product categories, including a successful pop-up launch and exclusive styles with key retailers.

Despite facing challenges in 2016 and 2017, Ferragni strategically took on the role of President and CEO at The Blonde Salad to revitalize the business. Her wedding to Italian singer Fedez in 2018 garnered substantial media attention and contributed to her influential status. In 2019, she celebrated the 10th anniversary of The Blonde Salad with a documentary.

Chiara Ferragni has consistently expanded her brand through collaborations and licensing agreements, including ventures into beachwear, children's wear, and ready-to-wear fashion. Beyond her entrepreneurial success, she became a cultural ambassador, actively contributing to charitable initiatives, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her philanthropic efforts, alongside her husband Fedez, included a significant donation to Milan's San Raffaele hospital and fundraising campaigns.

In 2021, Ferragni signed deals with Safilo Group, Hublot, Bulgari, and GHD, showcasing her diverse brand collaborations. She also joined the board of Tod's, a move that positively impacted the company's sales and market share. The "Ferragni Effect" revitalized Tod's brands, contributing to a significant increase in sales and overall success, particularly in appealing to younger demographics. This collaboration ended in 2022. In 2021, Ferragni acquired full ownership of the TBS Crew, responsible for managing The Blonde Salad. The TBS Crew S.L.R. achieved sales of 6.8 million euros, marking a notable 42% increase from the previous year. (Bazaki & Cedrola, 2023)

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 The Alignment among influencers and followers**

In the contemporary digital landscape, characterized by the pervasive presence of social media platforms, the profound influence exerted by these channels on everyday life and consumer behavior has become markedly evident. Amidst the myriad dynamics unfolding within the realm of social media, the phenomenon of influencer marketing, particularly on platforms like Instagram, has emerged as a focal point of burgeoning interest among scholars and marketing professionals alike. A wealth of scholarly inquiry has been dedicated to scrutinizing the multifaceted impact wielded by influencers on consumer behavior, as well as evaluating the efficacy of marketing endeavors that leverage the persuasive power of these influential figures. The intricate interplay between influencers and their audience, the mechanisms underpinning consumer engagement with influencer-generated content, and the nuances of consumer decision-making processes within the context of influencer marketing campaigns have all garnered substantial scholarly attention. This burgeoning body of research underscores the significance of comprehensively understanding the dynamics at play within the realm of influencer marketing and underscores the imperative for continual exploration and analysis within this evolving domain.

To better understand the significance of alignment among influencers and followers, it is fundamental to do an analysis on previous studies, for example “Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers” by Daniel Belanche, Luis V. Casalo, Marta Flavian and Sergio Ibanez-Sanchez” published of “Journal of Business Research” explains that in the era of social media dominance, Instagram stands out as one of the most popular platforms, boasting over 1 billion active users and attracting numerous brands seeking to tap into its extensive consumer base. Among these brands, fashion labels find Instagram particularly advantageous,

capitalizing on its high engagement rates. Concurrently, influencer marketing, a strategy where influencers promote brands on their social media pages, has witnessed exponential growth, projected to nearly double by 2022.

This marketing approach holds sway over traditional celebrity endorsements due to its ability to foster a sense of closeness and resonance with consumers. However, challenges such as authenticity and identifying unethical influencers have emerged, underscoring the need for congruence between brands and influencers. Failed collaborations, like the one between influencer Chriselle Lim and Volvo, serve as cautionary tales, highlighting the importance of authenticity and alignment between influencer content and brand image. To address these challenges, researchers and practitioners are delving deeper into the factors influencing the success or failure of influencer marketing campaigns, drawing upon theories like balance theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and congruity theory.

These theories underscore the significance of aligning influencers, brands, and consumers for effective communication and consumer engagement. By investigating the interplay between these elements, studies aim to provide insights for designing more impactful influencer marketing campaigns and fostering positive collaborations between influencers and brands. Influencers, positioned between celebrities and friends, have emerged as influential figures in the digital age, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram. Described as "microcelebrities," influencers build their reputations solely through social media engagement, often focusing on niche audiences with whom they share interests. Their credibility stems from their perceived closeness to their followers and their expertise in specific fields. This has led to the proliferation of influencer marketing campaigns, especially in sectors like fashion, where expertise is valued.

Brands leverage influencers to enhance purchase intentions, recommendations, engagement, attitudes toward the brand, and brand awareness. Instagram's visual features further enhance influencer marketing opportunities, inspiring and engaging consumers. The match between an influencer's image and followers' interests plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. Previous research has explored various factors influencing this match, including the number of followers, use of hashtags, message characteristics, and fit between influencers and products. While some studies have focused on specific links in the influencer marketing triad, there is a

need to consider congruence across all elements, including the influencer, the customer, and the advertised product. The Cognitive Dissonance Theory, proposed by Festinger in 1957, suggests that individuals experience mental discomfort when they hold conflicting beliefs or engage in actions that contradict their beliefs. This discomfort motivates them to resolve the inconsistency by changing their beliefs or behaviors. Balance Theory, introduced by Heider in 1946, posits that individuals seek cognitive consistency and psychological balance. When congruence exists between oneself, another person, and a novel stimulus, individuals accept this pattern and consider the novel stimulus congruent with themselves too. Congruity Theory, developed by Osgood and Tannenbaum in 1955, focuses on communication and persuasion contexts, suggesting that people prefer elements that are cognitively consistent. These theories apply not only to interpersonal relations but also to relations between individuals and products. Consumer-product congruence, driven by self-congruence, influences consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. Positive attitudes toward products lead to greater intentions to purchase and recommend them.

Overall, congruence between consumers, influencers, and products predicts positive evaluations and behavioral intentions. The study conducted an online experiment using a well-known fashion and beauty influencer, Zoe Sugg, to investigate the relationship between influencer-product congruence and consumer behavior. Participants were presented with hypothetical scenarios featuring Zoe Sugg wearing either highly congruent or less congruent outfits. Pretests confirmed the manipulation, ensuring that participants perceived the outfits as either congruent or incongruent with the influencer's image.

The main experiment involved 396 female British followers of Zoe Sugg, who completed an online survey assessing their perceptions of influencer-product congruence, consumer-product congruence, attitudes toward the product, and intentions to purchase and recommend the product. The study found that higher influencer-product congruence led to greater consumer-product congruence, which in turn positively influenced attitudes and intentions to purchase and recommend the product. Additionally, attitude partially mediated the effect of consumer-product congruence on purchase and recommendation intentions. Overall, the findings suggest that congruence between influencers, products, and consumers plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. The study explores

the impact of congruence among influencers, products, and consumers on consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in influencer marketing campaigns on Instagram. Results indicate that high congruence between influencers and consumers leads to increased congruence between consumers and products. This alignment, in turn, fosters more positive attitudes toward the product and higher intentions to purchase and recommend it. The research contributes by focusing on real influencers rather than traditional celebrities, examining joint effects of congruence among all three elements of influencer campaigns, and offering insights rooted in cognitive dissonance, balance, and congruity theories. Overall, the findings emphasize the importance of influencers maintaining consistency in their endorsements to maximize their influence over followers.

The study's findings offer valuable insights for fashion industry managers considering influencer marketing campaigns. It emphasizes the importance of congruence between influencers, their followers, and the promoted products. Aligning these elements increases the credibility and effectiveness of campaigns, while incongruence may lead to reduced effectiveness. Managers are advised to carefully analyze potential influencer partnerships to ensure alignment with target audiences and product offerings. Influencers should seamlessly integrate products into their personal narrative to maintain authenticity and effectiveness. Limitations include the sample being limited to UK women following a specific influencer, suggesting the need for broader studies across different demographics and countries. Further research could explore the evolving dynamics of influencer-follower relationships and the optimal format for influencer marketing campaigns across various social networking sites. Additionally, investigating the level of incongruence followers are willing to accept and exploring alternative models for explaining behavioral intentions are avenues for future inquiry. (Belance, Arino, Flavian, & Sánchez., 2021)



## **2.2 Impact of influencers on purchase intention**

Having understood the importance of the influencer sector in the world of marketing and of a brand's relationship with its consumers, it is now useful to understand and analyze how incisive and relevant the impact these new social media figures have on the intention of public purchase. A study by Kyoto University, published in "Technological Forecasting & Social Change", analyzed it.

This study delves into social media influencer marketing, particularly focusing on the role of parasocial relationships (PSR) between influencers and followers in driving purchase intentions. It compares PSR against other relationship marketing constructs, exploring its relative weight in influencing consumer behavior. The research model is based on persuasion theory, investigating the impact of PSR along with personal attributes and characterizations of influencers on purchase intentions. Data collected from a survey of consumers who made purchases after viewing YouTube advertisements by influencers reveal that PSR significantly influences purchase intentions and is related to personal attributes. The study emphasizes the need for fine-tuning influencer marketing strategies based on personal attributes, characterizations, and influencer types. It provides theoretical insights into the role of PSR in social media marketing and practical implications for optimizing influencer-based marketing strategies.

It explores the role of digital and social media marketing in contemporary business environments, emphasizing the need for companies to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and preferences. It discusses the rise of influencer marketing as a key strategy in digital marketing, highlighting influencers' credibility, expertise, and authenticity as important factors in influencing consumer behavior. The theoretical background section introduces the theory of persuasion and its application to social media influencer marketing, distinguishing between influencers' personal attributes and followers' characterizations. It identifies trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and parasocial relationships (PSRs) as critical constructs influencing followers' purchase intentions in influencer marketing. Trustworthiness is particularly emphasized as positively associated with followers' purchase intention, forming the basis for subsequent hypotheses. Subsequently, it delves into the role of personal attributes of social media influencers,

such as perceived expertise, parasocial relationships (PSR), attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness, in influencing followers' purchase intentions. Perceived expertise, defined as the level of understanding, skills, and knowledge perceived by followers, positively influences followers' attitudes and purchase intentions. PSR, characterized by an enduring relationship between followers and influencers, also positively affects purchase intentions. A section distinguishes between personal attributes, which are exhibited by influencers, and characterizations, which are the perceptions of followers. Three personal attributes - attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness - are discussed, with hypotheses proposed regarding their associations with trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and PSR.

Finally, a research model is presented, incorporating these personal attributes and characterization constructs, along with control variables, within the theory of persuasion framework. This study utilized a cross-sectional analysis conducted in South Korea, focusing on the influence of influencers and followers' personal attributes on purchase intentions in the context of video advertising on YouTube. The sample consisted of YouTube followers in South Korea who had experience purchasing products or services after watching influencer videos. Data were collected through a web-based survey, resulting in a final sample size of 313 respondents. This study offers substantial theoretical contributions and practical implications in the realm of social media influencer marketing. The research highlights the diverse impact of Parasocial Relationships (PSR) on purchase intentions across various contexts of influencer marketing, emphasizing the need for nuanced optimization strategies based on the specific marketing context. Furthermore, it uncovers how different types of influencers influence the formation of PSR among consumers, shedding light on the complex dynamics involved in influencer marketing and providing insights into effective targeting strategies. Additionally, the study suggests that PSR can be a critical factor in emerging marketing channels like those involving artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR), indicating its potential relevance in future marketing endeavors.

From a practical standpoint, companies can leverage PSR to enhance marketing effectiveness, particularly in influencer video marketing, by optimizing strategies based on the impact of PSR and credibility on key performance indicators (KPIs) like purchase

intention. Insights into formulating PSRs effectively are provided, understanding how various constructs such as attitude homophily, physical attractiveness, and social attractiveness influence PSR formation, enabling companies to optimize marketing strategies accordingly. Moreover, PSR could be examined as a marketing KPI, especially in the context of utilizing new technologies in marketing strategies, such as AI-based interactions and virtual avatars.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations and suggests future research directions. Further subdividing influencer types and consumer attributes could allow for a more detailed analysis of PSR formation and its influence on marketing effectiveness. Incorporating product/service categories in future research could help understand their impact on PSR formation and purchase intention. Additionally, exploring cultural differences in marketing effects based on influencers and consumers' cultural backgrounds could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of influencer marketing. In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of PSR in influencer marketing and offers valuable insights for both theoretical understanding and practical application in marketing strategies. (Masuda, Han, & Lee, 2022)

### **2.3 Feeling of betrayal after a campaign**

The bond between influencers and consumers, built on a foundation of trust, undoubtedly holds significant sway in the realm of social media marketing. Yet, paradoxically, it is equally remarkable how swiftly this bond can be ruptured, leading consumers to reconsider their allegiance to a brand or content creator. With just a single misstep, one communication error, or a misguided strategy, the delicate fabric of trust that binds influencers and their followers can unravel, giving rise to feelings of betrayal and disillusionment.

In today's hyper-connected digital landscape, where information spreads rapidly and opinions are formed at the click of a button, the margin for error is razor thin. Influencers wield considerable influence over their followers, often seen as relatable figures or trusted advisors in the online sphere. As such, any perceived deviation from authenticity,

transparency, or alignment with followers' values can trigger a swift erosion of trust. Whether it's a poorly thought-out promotional campaign, a tone-deaf response to a social issue, or a blatant disregard for ethical standards, the repercussions can be swift and severe.

Moreover, the transient nature of online interactions exacerbates the fragility of trust. Unlike traditional face-to-face relationships, where trust is built over time through repeated interactions, the digital realm offers little room for redemption. A single misstep can tarnish an influencer's reputation irreparably, leading followers to question not only the authenticity of past interactions but also the integrity of future engagements.

Similarly, brands that align themselves with influencers run the risk of collateral damage in the event of a trust breach. Given the symbiotic nature of influencer-brand collaborations, any negative association with an influencer's fall from grace can tarnish the brand's image by association. In an era where consumers demand accountability and transparency from the brands they patronize, even a perceived betrayal by an influencer can have far-reaching consequences for brand loyalty and reputation.

In essence, while the influencer-consumer relationship thrives on trust, it remains inherently fragile, susceptible to the slightest misstep or misjudgment. In this digital age where perceptions can shift in an instant, maintaining trust and authenticity is not just a strategic imperative but a moral obligation for influencers and brands alike. Only by prioritizing transparency, integrity, and ethical conduct can they hope to safeguard the sacred bond of trust that underpins their relationship with consumers in the ever-evolving landscape of social media.

In the study “Making and breaking relationships on social media: the impacts of brand and influencer betrayals” by Hanna Reinikainen, Teck Ming Tan, Vilma Luoma-aho and Jari Salo delve into the multifaceted dynamics of social media influencer relationships with followers and brands, highlighting both the positive and negative aspects. It emphasizes how social media platforms facilitate new forms of relationships, including those with influencers and brands, often leading to intimate connections and communities. Collaborations between influencers and brands can yield positive outcomes such as increased purchase intentions and enhanced follower engagement. However,

mismanagement of these relationships can result in negative emotions, especially when trust is breached, or integrity compromised. Influencers and brands must carefully navigate these dynamics to maintain trustworthiness and reputation.

The study aims to explore the impact of perceived betrayal by either influencers or brands on follower attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions. It introduces concepts like influencer coolness and influencer betrayal, drawing parallels with brand coolness and brand betrayal. The findings have practical implications for understanding collaboration responsibility between influencers and brands, suggesting a shift towards mutual accountability for each other's reputation.

Overall, the passage underscores the complex interplay between influencers, followers, and brands in the realm of social media, shedding light on both the positive and negative ramifications of these relationships.

The concept of influencer coolness, akin to brand coolness, is explored within the context of social media influencers, with an emphasis on their desirability and positive autonomy. Influencer coolness encompasses traits such as originality, energy, appeal, status, iconography, and popularity, mirroring the characteristics of cool brands. This attribute is crucial for influencers as it not only attracts followers but also appeals to brands seeking associations with cool influencers for endorsements.

Brand and influencer transgressions have been extensively studied in the context of celebrity endorsements, where scandals negatively impact attitudes toward endorsed brands and even competitors. However, research on the effects of transgressions involving social media influencers remains limited. While controversies involving influencers and brands are common, there is a gap in understanding the dynamics and consequences of these transgressions within the influencer-brand relationship.

Similarly, the concept of brand betrayal, defined as feelings of betrayal arising from a brand's moral violation, has garnered attention in research due to the increasing humanization of brands. This phenomenon, characterized by feelings of being misled and exploited, has significant implications for brand-consumer relationships. In a parallel vein, influencer betrayal, defined as feelings of betrayal stemming from moral

transgressions by social media influencers, may also fracture the relationship between followers and influencers, yet this aspect remains relatively unexplored in the literature.

In conclusion, the study investigates the impact of influencer and brand betrayals on the relationships between social media influencers, brands, and individuals. It reveals that influencer betrayal negatively affects the follower's parasocial relationship with the influencer, subsequently impacting brand attitude, trust, and purchase intention. Similarly, brand betrayal negatively influences brand attitude, which in turn affects brand trust and purchase intention. These findings underscore the interconnectedness between influencers, brands, and individuals on social media, highlighting the potential risks associated with trust violations. The study suggests that such breaches of trust could have broader societal implications, potentially contributing to decreased levels of general trust in society. (Reinikainen, Tan, Luoma-aho, & Salo, 2021)

## **2.4 Impact of influencer on brand in a partnership**

The text “‘To trust or not to trust’: The impact of social media influencers on the reputation of corporate brands in crisis”, by Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina and Xue on the Journal of Business Research, highlights the increasing utilization of social media influencers (SMIs) by corporate brands to endorse products and shape consumer perceptions, particularly in crisis communication scenarios. Despite the popularity of influencer marketing, there is limited scholarly research on the impact of SMIs in crisis management. Drawing on persuasion knowledge theory, the study suggests that consumers perceive crisis responses involving SMIs as manipulative, leading to decreased brand trustworthiness and potentially damaging corporate reputation. However, disclosing altruistic motives behind influencer partnerships can mitigate negative consumer reactions. The research contributes to crisis management and influencer marketing literature by uncovering the downsides of employing SMIs in crisis communication and proposing strategies to mitigate consumer skepticism. These findings have practical implications for SMI marketing and corporate crisis management strategies. The text explores the role of social media influencers (SMIs) in corporate crisis

communication strategies. It outlines the Situational Crisis Communication Theory and various response strategies adopted by brands, such as diminish, deny, rebuild, and bolster. While past research on crisis response strategies yields inconsistent results, the study focuses on the effectiveness of ingratiation, a bolstering response strategy, particularly when coupled with the presence of SMIs. SMIs, known for their significant online influence, are increasingly utilized by brands in crisis communication efforts. However, limited research examines the downsides of influencer marketing, particularly in crisis situations. The study aims to address this gap by investigating how consumers perceive crisis responses involving SMIs and how such perceptions impact corporate brand perceptions. It hypothesizes that consumers may perceive crisis responses involving SMIs as manipulative, which could negatively affect brand perceptions.

The text discusses consumer perceptions of crisis response sources, particularly focusing on the effectiveness of ingratiation as a crisis response strategy and the role of social media influencers (SMIs) in this context. It reviews existing evidence on the efficacy of ingratiation, highlighting mixed results from previous studies. While some research supports the effectiveness of ingratiation in enhancing brand reputation and goodwill following a crisis, other studies suggest negative consequences, particularly when ingratiation is perceived as manipulative.

The text argues that the presence of SMIs in crisis communications can amplify consumer skepticism and suspicion of manipulative intent, potentially undermining the effectiveness of ingratiation as a response strategy. It suggests that consumers may view SMIs as endorsing brands for financial gain rather than genuine belief in the brand, leading to increased perceptions of manipulative intent. Consequently, the text proposes hypotheses regarding the impact of ingratiation response and SMI presence on brand trustworthiness, manipulative intent inferences, and corporate reputation perceptions.

Furthermore, the text explores the potential mitigating effect of communicating altruistic, values-driven motives behind the SMI-brand partnership in crisis communications. It suggests that conveying such motives could counteract consumer skepticism and enhance positive perceptions of the crisis response source. The hypotheses propose that the effectiveness of ingratiation response and its impact on manipulative intent inferences

and perceived trustworthiness would be influenced by the level of emphasis on values-driven motives.

Overall, the study provides insights into the complexities of consumer perceptions in crisis communication scenarios involving SMIs and suggests strategies for improving perceptions of crisis response sources.

The research conducted two experiments to investigate the impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on consumer perceptions of corporate crisis responses. The first experiment focused on the potential downsides of crisis communications involving SMIs, while the second explored how conveying altruistic motives behind the brand-influencer partnership could mitigate these drawbacks. Both experiments supported the conceptual model proposed by the researchers.

The findings revealed that while ingratiation alone was effective in crisis response compared to no response, its effectiveness changed when SMIs were involved. The presence of an SMI led to heightened suspicion of the brand's manipulative intent, resulting in similar perceptions of manipulative intent and trustworthiness across ingratiation and no response strategies. Manipulative intent inferences and perceived trustworthiness sequentially influenced corporate reputation perceptions, but only when the SMI was absent. Moreover, the second experiment demonstrated that disclosing values-driven motives behind the brand-influencer partnership could offset the negative effects of SMIs' presence in crisis communications. When altruistic motives were emphasized, ingratiation response led to reduced manipulative intent inferences and increased perceptions of brand trustworthiness, ultimately improving corporate reputation ratings.

Theoretical contributions of the study include advancing knowledge on the role of SMIs in crisis communications, highlighting the drawbacks associated with their presence, and providing insights into remedies for mitigating these drawbacks. It contributes to understanding how SMIs influence brand-consumer relationships in crisis situations and sheds light on the mechanisms underlying post-crisis perceptions of corporate reputation.

Managerial implications suggest a cautious approach to using SMIs in crisis communications, emphasizing the importance of conveying values-driven motives to



mitigate suspicion and enhance brand credibility. Marketing and communications managers are advised to ensure transparency and authenticity in brand-influencer partnerships to optimize their impact on crisis communications.

The study acknowledges several limitations that could inspire future research directions. One key area is the sequential mediation of manipulative intent inferences and perceived brand trustworthiness in explaining the ingratiation-corporate reputation link. Future research could explore whether these mediators have similar effects when considering other aspects of corporate brand management, such as corporate image. Additionally, individual traits of consumers, such as self-control depletion or trait-based skepticism, could be investigated to further understand motive attributions and manipulative intent inferences.

Moreover, the study primarily focused on self-enhancing ingratiation but introduced elements of other-enhancing ingratiation by highlighting the altruistic motives of the brand and influencer. Future research could explicitly examine this dichotomy and its impact on consumer perceptions to determine if other-enhancing ingratiation leads to more positive outcomes compared to self-enhancing ingratiation.

Methodologically, the study conducted scenario-based experiments in the beauty industry, which might limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could replicate the study in different industries or crisis contexts to test the robustness of the results. Additionally, longitudinal research could provide insights into temporal changes in consumer perceptions of corporate reputation following crisis responses. Additionally, considering SMIs and industries more relevant to male participants could enhance the generalizability of the findings. Overall, addressing these limitations could further enrich our understanding of crisis communications and influencer marketing dynamics.

Firstly, there's the need to expand beyond the cosmetic industry and explore how crisis communications and influencer dynamics operate across various sectors. Different industries may face distinct challenges and consumer responses during crises, necessitating a broader scope of investigation.

Moreover, while scenario-based experiments offer controlled settings, they may not fully capture the complexities of real-world crisis scenarios. Future research could incorporate

alternative methodologies, such as longitudinal studies or case analyses, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of crisis communication dynamics.

Furthermore, there's a significant gap in understanding the nuanced role of influencers in crisis communications. While our discussions have touched upon how influencers can impact consumer perceptions, further exploration is needed to uncover strategies for effectively managing influencer partnerships during crises.

Another crucial area for exploration is the communication of altruistic and values-driven motives behind brand-influencer collaborations. Understanding how to credibly convey these motives to consumers could help mitigate suspicions of manipulative intent and bolster trust in brands.

Lastly, there's a need for longitudinal research to examine the long-term effects of crisis management strategies on consumer relationships and brand reputation. By tracking consumer perceptions over time, researchers can gain insights into the sustainability of crisis communication efforts and their impact on brand-consumer dynamics.

In summary, addressing these gaps could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of crisis communications, influencer dynamics, and their implications for brand reputation management in today's business landscape. (Singh, Crisafulli, Quamina, & Xue., 2020)

## **2.5 Identification of the gap**

Despite extensive studies on influencer marketing and its impact on consumer perceptions, significant gaps remain, particularly in the context of altruistic values communications in partnerships. Previous research has explored the potential of influencers to shape consumer perceptions, but there is a notable lack of understanding regarding how influencers can effectively communicate altruistic and values-driven brand motives without appearing manipulative. This gap is critical, as it underscores the necessity for brands to develop credible and reliable communication strategies in their partnerships with influencers.

Furthermore, existing literature often overlooks the long-term effects of these communication strategies on consumer trust and brand loyalty. While some studies have examined short-term consumer reactions, there is insufficient research on how consistent and transparent communication influences consumer perceptions over time, especially during crises. Additionally, the role of perceived authenticity of influencers and the moderating effect of transparency in these partnerships are areas that have not been thoroughly investigated.

Our research aims to address these gaps by focusing on how secure and trustworthy communication can ensure a successful and ethical brand-influencer partnership, thereby enhancing consumer trust without exploiting or misleading them. This study will delve into the mechanisms that make such communication effective, including the role of authenticity and transparency, and how these elements contribute to consumer perceptions of credibility.

Moreover, this thesis will emphasize the crucial importance of selecting the right influencer and brand for establishing a partnership. The reputation of both parties is a fundamental pillar of consumer trust. The alignment between a brand's values and an influencer's image can significantly impact the perceived authenticity and effectiveness of the partnership. By investigating these factors, our research will contribute to the broader discourse on transparency and authenticity in influencer marketing, offering practical insights for brands to navigate the complex landscape of influencer partnerships effectively.

### **2.5.1 Research question and conceptual model**

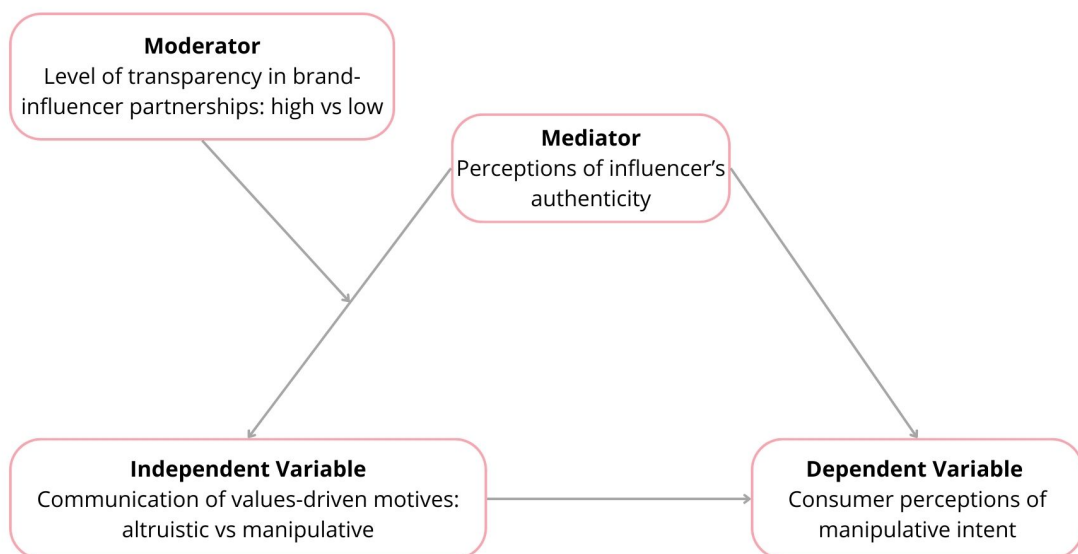
The main objective of this experimental study is to explore how different types of communication (altruistic vs. manipulative) affect consumers' perception of manipulation within the fashion and beauty sector, particularly in the context of brand collaborations.

To test this relationship, the conceptual framework was expanded to include the indirect effect of the mediating factor of perceived message authenticity, as well as the moderating

effect introduced by the level of transparency in brand collaborations (high vs. low). Based on this premise, the research model was developed by incorporating a mediation factor, represented by perceived authenticity, a moderation factor concerning transparency levels (high vs. low), an independent variable related to the type of message communicated (altruistic vs. manipulative), and a dependent variable regarding the perception of manipulation.

Consequently, Andrew F. Hayes' Model 7 was employed for the development of the conceptual framework. This model is characterized by the presence of an independent variable (X), a dependent variable (Y), a moderator (W), and a mediator (M).

*“How can brands credibly communicate the altruistic and values-driven motives behind partnerships with influencers to mitigate suspicions of manipulative intent?”*



The conceptual model shown in the image focuses on the perceived influence of an influencer's authenticity and level of transparency in brand partnerships on consumers' judgments about the manipulative intentions of such partnerships. This framework includes an independent variable, a mediating variable, a dependent variable, and a moderating variable.

**Independent variable:** Communication of value-oriented motivations (altruistic vs manipulative)

The independent variable concerns the type of motivation an influencer communicates to his or her followers about working with a brand. It is a distinction between:

- Altruistic motivations: where the message highlights the authentic value, social mission or ethics behind the product promotion.
- Manipulative motivations: where commercial intentions are more evident, suggesting that the influencer may be promoting the product for personal benefit rather than for the benefit of followers, making little or no reference to the beneficial aspect of the collaboration.

**Mediator variable:** Perception of the influencer's authenticity

The mediator variable represents the key role of perceived authenticity. Perception of influencer authenticity mediates the relationship between the type of motivation communicated (independent) and consumers' perception of manipulative intention (dependent). Specifically, if consumers perceive the influencer as authentic, they may be less inclined to interpret collaboration with the brand as manipulative, even though the communicated motivation may appear commercial.

**Dependent variable:** Consumers' perception of manipulative intention.

This is the dependent variable that measures how consumers perceive the intentions of the influencer and the brand. If consumers perceive that the influencer is trying to manipulate them for personal gain, rather than authentically promoting a product, the perception of negative influence could increase, negatively affecting the effectiveness of the partnership.

**Moderator variable:** Level of transparency in partnerships between brands and influencers (high vs. low)

The moderator represents the level of transparency that exists in the relationship between the brand and the influencer. In a high-transparency context, consumers are aware of the commercial nature of the partnership, and this could influence how they perceive the

influencer's motivations. In contrast, in a low-transparency context, consumers may not be fully aware of the sponsorship, which could alter their perceptions about manipulative intentions.

The model proposes that an influencer's communication of altruistic or manipulative motives influences consumers' perceptions of the influencer's authenticity. This perception, in turn, impacts how consumers judge the partnership's manipulative intentions. The level of transparency of the partnership moderates this relationship, influencing the strength with which motivations and authenticity impact consumer perceptions.

### **2.5.2 Hypotheses**

Building upon the research question and the conceptual model outlined in the previous section, and grounded in the extensive literature review presented, this thesis proposes the following hypotheses to investigate the dynamics between brand communication strategies, influencer authenticity, and consumer perceptions during partnerships:

*H1: The communication of altruistic motives by the influencer is positively correlated with the perceived authenticity of the influencer and the brand.*

The literature review highlights the importance of transparent and credible communication in reducing consumer suspicions of manipulative intent. When brands effectively communicate their altruistic and ethical motives, consumers are more likely to perceive these actions as genuine, thus diminishing the likelihood of viewing the brand's efforts as manipulative. This aligns with the notion that consumer trust is enhanced when the motives behind brand communications are clear and sincere.

*H2: Influencers' perception of authenticity will mediate the relationship between the type of communication of value driven brand motives (altruistic vs. manipulative) and consumers' perception of manipulative intent.*

Specifically, the communication of altruistic value driven motives has a more positive effect toward authenticity. The more authentic an influencer is perceived to be, the less consumers believe the collaboration with the brand has manipulative intent.

*H3: Influencers' perceptions of authenticity will mediate the relationship between the type of values-driven brand motives communication (altruistic vs manipulative) and consumers' perceptions of manipulative intent.*

In particular, a high level of authenticity leads to an improvement in consumers' perception of brand manipulation, reducing it. In a high-transparency context, consumers may be more likely to evaluate the influencer's altruistic motivation positively and perceive it as authentic, whereas in a low-transparency context they may be more skeptical, attenuating this relationship.

The review underscores the critical role of perceived authenticity in influencer marketing. When influencers are viewed as authentic, their endorsements are more likely to be trusted by consumers. This mediation hypothesis suggests that the effectiveness of altruistic and values-driven communications in reducing perceived manipulative intent is contingent upon the authenticity of the influencer. Authentic influencers act as credible conveyors of the brand's motives, thereby positively influencing consumer perceptions.

*H4: The level of transparency in brand-influencer partnerships moderates the relationship between the type of values-driven brand motives communication (altruistic vs manipulative) and influencers' perceptions of authenticity.*

Transparency is identified as a crucial factor influencing the perceived authenticity of influencers. Higher levels of transparency in brand-influencer partnerships enhance the perceived authenticity of influencers. This moderation hypothesis posits that the positive impact of communicating altruistic and values-driven motives on the perceived authenticity of influencers is strengthened when the partnership is conducted transparently. Transparent practices ensure that the true nature of the partnership is visible to consumers, thereby fostering greater authenticity.

These hypotheses aim to explore the complex relationships between brand communication strategies, influencer authenticity, and consumer perceptions in the context of crisis communication. By empirically testing these hypotheses, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into how brands can effectively manage consumer perceptions and build trust through credible, authentic, and transparent communication strategies during crises. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on influencer marketing and crisis communication, offering practical recommendations for brands to navigate the complex landscape of influencer partnerships and enhance consumer trust.



## Chapter 3

### Analysis

#### 3.1 Case Study presentation: The Ferragni-Balocco Controversy

In December 2023, the Italian Antitrust Authority initiated an investigation into Balocco S.P.A., Fenice S.r.l., and TBS Crew S.r.l., the latter two representing the image rights of the renowned influencer Chiara Ferragni, on grounds of misleading advertising associated with the promotional campaign for Balocco's "Pink Christmas" pandoro. This incident has drawn considerable media attention and has become a focal point for discussions on influencer marketing and corporate transparency. The core of the issue lies in the promotional claims made during the campaign, which stated that "Chiara Ferragni and Balocco support the Regina Margherita Hospital in Turin by financing the purchase of a new machine for treating children with Osteosarcoma and Ewing's Sarcoma." According to the Antitrust Authority, these claims misled consumers into believing that the purchase of the pandoro would directly contribute to the donation for the hospital. However, it was revealed that the €50,000 donation had been made prior to the commencement of sales, as part of a brand licensing agreement signed in November 2021, and the donation itself was confirmed in May 2022, several months before the product was available on the market.

The regulatory response was swift and stringent, with AGCOM, the Italian Communications Authority, announcing the introduction of new "Guidelines on Influencer Marketing," aimed at enhancing transparency and ensuring that influencers' roles in promotional activities are clearly identifiable and accountable. Although these guidelines are yet to be officially published, they are expected to regulate influencers with substantial followings, specifically those with over one million followers and an engagement rate of at least 2% on any social media platform. The guidelines aim to enforce stringent measures to safeguard consumer interests and promote ethical practices within the influencer marketing ecosystem.

The fallout from the investigation included a hefty €1.4 million fine imposed by the Antitrust Authority on Balocco and the companies associated with Chiara Ferragni. This financial penalty was just the beginning of the repercussions, as the incident severely tarnished the reputations of both the influencer and the involved brands. The promotional campaign's misleading nature was perceived as a breach of consumer trust, leading to widespread public criticism and media scrutiny. The so-called "Pandoro Gate" became a prominent topic of discussion, with extensive debates about the ethical, professional, and personal integrity of Chiara Ferragni.

The regulatory developments following the incident highlight a significant shift towards stricter oversight of influencer marketing practices. AGCOM's proposed code of conduct for social media influencers underscores the necessity for greater transparency in brand-influencer collaborations. This regulatory framework aims to ensure that influencers with significant social media presence adhere to high standards of ethical communication, thereby protecting consumers from misleading and manipulative marketing practices.

The reputational damage to Chiara Ferragni was profound, with immediate and tangible consequences. Within a short span, the influencer lost over 100,000 followers on Instagram, a significant blow given the typically steady growth of her online community. Moreover, several brands, including Safilo and Monnalisa, severed their ties with Ferragni, and Coca-Cola suspended a planned advertising campaign featuring her. These actions reflect a broader industry response to the negative publicity surrounding the incident, indicating a shift in how brands perceive the risks associated with influencer partnerships.

In response to the crisis, Chiara Ferragni issued a public apology and announced an additional donation of €1 million to the Regina Margherita Hospital, conditional upon the Antitrust Authority reconsidering its decision. Despite this effort to mitigate the damage, the apology video was criticized for lacking genuine remorse and transparency, further complicating the influencer's public image and credibility.

The "Pink Christmas" incident underscores the critical importance of transparency and authenticity in influencer marketing. The misleading promotional claims not only led to legal and financial repercussions but also eroded consumer trust and loyalty. This case

study highlights the necessity for brands and influencers to develop and maintain ethical communication practices, ensuring that their promotional activities are perceived as credible and trustworthy. The lessons learned from this incident are invaluable for the broader discourse on influencer marketing, offering insights into the effective management of consumer perceptions and the enhancement of brand trust through transparent and authentic communication strategies. By understanding the mechanisms that contribute to successful brand-influencer partnerships, this research aims to provide practical recommendations for navigating the complex landscape of influencer marketing and fostering long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

The presentation of the Balocco-Ferragni "Pink Christmas" case is fundamental for analyzing and demonstrating the hypotheses of this thesis and for answering the research question. By examining this real-world example, we can gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of communication strategies, the role of influencer authenticity, and the impact of transparency in brand-influencer partnerships during crises. This case study provides a concrete basis for understanding the theoretical concepts explored in this research and offers empirical evidence to support the proposed hypotheses. Through this detailed analysis, we aim to illustrate how secure and trustworthy communication can enhance the success of brand-influencer partnerships, mitigate perceptions of manipulative intent, and ultimately build and maintain consumer trust. (Dara, 2024)

*Figure 1: presentation caption of the partnership between Chiara Ferragni and Balocco.*



## **3.2 Methodological Approach**

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to investigate the hypotheses presented in the previous sections. The primary objective of this research is to explore how credible communication of altruistic and values-driven brand motives, the authenticity of influencers, and transparency in brand-influencer partnerships impact consumer perceptions. To achieve this objective, a survey was utilized as the main data collection method. This approach allows for the efficient gathering of quantitative data from a large sample, providing a robust basis for statistical analysis.

### **3.2.1 Methodology and study**

The research design adopted for this study is quantitative, leveraging a structured survey to collect data from consumers. The survey method is particularly suitable for this research as it facilitates the measurement of specific variables related to the hypotheses, such as consumer perceptions of manipulative intent, influencer authenticity, and the perceived transparency of brand-influencer partnerships.

The present experimental study employs a conclusive, causal, between-subjects 2x2 research design. The results of the experiment were gathered through responses to a self-administered questionnaire, conducted in Italy during September 2024 via the online platform Qualtrics XM. A non-probability sampling method was employed to select survey participants. Specifically, a convenience sampling technique was chosen to leverage both the ease and speed of access to the sample population. This approach incurs no financial cost and is advantageous in terms of both rapid data collection and a high response rate.

Given the target sample, it was decided to include respondents of all age groups, collecting data from both male and female participants. This decision was made based on the assumption that demographic variables would not have a statistically significant impact on the results of the experimental research.

### **3.2.2 Participants and sampling procedure**

The survey was distributed to 210 individuals, of whom 198 fully participated in the experimental study by providing complete and comprehensive responses to all questions within the questionnaire. The remaining 12 incomplete responses were initially selected and subsequently excluded from the dataset during the data cleaning process. Participants were contacted via an anonymous link generated by the Qualtrics XM online platform, which was then distributed through instant messaging applications and social media networks, using channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and LinkedIn as the primary distribution methods.

The target population sample reached by the survey primarily included university students nearing graduation and recent hires, located in various cities across Italy. Consequently, the average age of respondents was 23.25 years, with the age range spanning from a minimum of 19 years to a maximum of 28 years. Regarding the gender of the respondents, most of the sample was female, representing 55.6% (110/198), while male respondents comprised 43.4% (86/198). The remaining 1% (2/198) of respondents preferred not to identify with a specific gender, and none selected the third gender or non-binary options.

### **3.2.3 Data collection and questionnaire composition**

To conduct the experimental study, a questionnaire comprising 10 questions was developed, of which 8 were specific and 2 demographic.

To manipulate the independent variable (type of message communicated: altruistic vs. manipulative) and the moderating variable (level of transparency: high vs. low), it was essential to create four distinct visual stimuli. Each was characterized by the combination of the scenarios for variables X and W.

The first scenario featured an image of a sponsored post on Instagram from the account of a cosmetics influencer, characterized by an altruistic message with a high level of transparency due to the disclosure of the partnership between the brand and the influencer.

The second scenario depicted a sponsored post on Instagram from the account of a cosmetics influencer, characterized by an altruistic message with a low level of transparency, as the partnership between the brand and the influencer was not disclosed.

The third scenario presented a sponsored post on Instagram from the account of a cosmetics influencer, characterized by a manipulative message with a high level of transparency, due to the disclosure of the partnership between the brand and the influencer.

The fourth scenario displayed a sponsored post on Instagram from the account of a cosmetics influencer, characterized by a manipulative message with a low level of transparency, as the partnership between the brand and the influencer was not disclosed.

As mentioned previously, the data were collected through a questionnaire, which was divided into four main sections.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, a brief introduction was provided, explaining the academic purpose of the experimental research. Additionally, after including the credentials of the university, the complete adherence to privacy regulations regarding anonymity in data collection and management was ensured.

The second part of the survey consisted of a randomized block of four distinct scenarios. The randomization process was essential within the structure of the questionnaire to ensure an equal number of exposures to each visual stimulus. To avoid potential cognitive biases and any influence related to brand sentiment, all scenarios featured mock-ups of Instagram posts displaying the same brand, Pantene, and the same influencer, Chiara Ferragni. All visual conditions were created independently using Word.

The third section of the survey was presented to respondents after they had viewed one of the four scenarios. This section consisted of 8 questions: the first 2 concerned manipulation checks for the independent variable (X) and the moderating variable (W), the next 3 were related to the mediator (perceived authenticity), and the final 3 pertained

to the dependent variable (perception of manipulation). All questions were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale.

The first scale, related to the manipulation check of X, was adapted from the pre-validated scale by White, Katherine, and John Peloza (2009), "Self-Benefit Versus Other-Benefit Marketing Appeals: Their Effectiveness in Generating Charitable Support," *Journal of Marketing*, 73 (4), 109-24.

The second scale, related to the manipulation check of W, was developed independently to meet the needs of the experimental research.

The third scale, related to the mediator, was adapted from the pre-validated scale by Soh, Hyeonjin, Leonard N. Reid, and Karen Whitehill King (2009), "Measuring Trust in Advertising: Development and Validation of the ADTRUST Scale," *Journal of Advertising*, 38 (2), 83-103.

The fourth scale, related to the dependent variable, was adapted from the pre-validated scale by Chang, Chingching (2007), "The Relative Effectiveness of Comparative and Noncomparative Advertising: Evidence for Gender Differences in Information-Processing Strategies," *Journal of Advertising*, 36 (1), 21-35.

All scales obtained from these papers were modified to suit the specific needs of the experimental research.

Finally, the fourth and last part of the questionnaire consisted of the block dedicated to the two demographic questions, in which respondents were asked to provide their gender and age.

### **3.3 Results**

#### **3.3.1 Data analysis**

The data collected through the questionnaire generated on Qualtrics XM was exported to the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) for analysis.

Initially, two exploratory factor analyses were conducted to examine and validate all the scale items used in the conceptual model of the experimental research. Specifically, the principal components analysis was employed as the extraction method, applying the Varimax rotation technique. To determine the number of factors to extract, the total variance explained table was consulted, ensuring that, according to Kaiser's rule, the Eigenvalues were greater than 1 and that the cumulative variance percentage exceeded 60%. Additionally, both the communalities table and the components matrix were reviewed. Specifically, all items showed an extraction value greater than 0.5 and a loading score higher than 0.3. Therefore, it was decided to retain all the items composing the scales, thus validating them.

After validating both scales, two reliability tests were performed to assess the reliability level of the scales under consideration. In particular, the Cronbach's Alpha value of all theoretical constructs was examined to ensure it was above 60%. For the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.999 was found, while for the second scale, concerning the dependent variable, a value of 0.999 was recorded. Therefore, all scales were found to be reliable.

Furthermore, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test for sampling adequacy was conducted. For the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.797 was observed, while for the second scale, concerning the dependent variable, a value of 0.789 was recorded. In all cases, the adequacy levels were deemed more than sufficient ( $> 0.6$ ). Subsequently, Bartlett's test of sphericity was performed, which was statistically significant in all instances, with a p-value of 0.001 ( $p\text{-value} < \alpha = 0.05$ ).

### **3.3.2 Hypotheses results**

After conducting both the factor analyses and the reliability tests, the main hypotheses of the conceptual model of the experimental research were examined to confirm or reject their statistical significance and, consequently, determine their overall success.

#### **H1**



To verify the statistical significance of the direct hypothesis (H1), a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare means, testing the effect of the independent variable (Communication of value-oriented motivations: altruistic vs. manipulative) on the dependent variable (consumer perception of manipulative intent). Specifically, the independent variable (X) is a categorical nominal variable, divided into two different conditions coded as 0 (manipulative motivation) and 1 (altruistic motivation), while the dependent variable (Y) is a continuous metric variable. After performing the ANOVA, the descriptive statistics table revealed that the group of respondents exposed to the scenario coded as 0 (98 participants) showed a mean of 5.8367, while those exposed to the condition coded as 1 (100 participants) had a mean value of 1.9833. Furthermore, from the ANOVA table, a p-value of 0.001 was observed for the F-test, which was statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} < \alpha = 0.05$ ). Therefore, a statistically significant difference between the group means was found, confirming the effect of X on Y. Thus, the direct hypothesis H1 (main effect) was demonstrated.

## **H2-H3**

To test the statistical significance of the indirect hypothesis (H2-H3), a regression analysis was conducted using Model 4 of the SPSS Process Macro version 4.2, developed by Andrew F. Hayes, to test the mediating effect of perceived authenticity on the relationship between the independent variable (Communication of value-oriented motivations: altruistic vs. manipulative) and the dependent variable (consumer perception of manipulative intent). To verify the success of the mediation effect, it was necessary to distinguish it into two separate relationships: a first effect between the independent variable and the mediator (H2) and a second effect between the mediator and the dependent variable (H3). Specifically, a 95% confidence interval with a reference value  $\alpha$  of 5% was adopted to demonstrate the statistical significance of both hypotheses. Additionally, it was essential to ensure that the confidence interval range (LLCI = Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Level of Confidence Interval) for each hypothesis maintained a consistent sign (both positive or both negative), ensuring that 0 did not fall within the range. Finally, to evaluate the sign and magnitude of each effect, the  $\beta$  coefficients of the regression analysis for both relationships between the variables were examined.

## H2

For the first part of the indirect effect (X-M), the SPSS output showed a p-value of 0.0000, a favorable confidence interval (LLCI = 3.7269; ULCI = 4.3656), and a positive regression coefficient  $\beta$  of 4.0463. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was statistically significant, confirming hypothesis H2.

## H3

For the second part of the indirect effect (M-Y), the SPSS output revealed a p-value of 0.0000, a favorable confidence interval (LLCI = -0.9940; ULCI = -0.8998), and a negative regression coefficient  $\beta$  of -0.9469. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was statistically significant, confirming hypothesis H3.

Considering the results obtained, since both sections of the indirect effect were statistically significant, the overall mediation effect (indirect effect) was successful. Additionally, considering the non-significance of the direct effect within the regression analysis, a full mediation was observed.

## H4

To verify the statistical significance of the moderation hypothesis (H4), a Two-Way ANOVA was conducted to compare means and test the interaction effect between the independent variable (Communication of value-oriented motivations: altruistic vs. manipulative) and the moderating variable (Transparency Level: High vs. Low) on the mediating variable (perceived authenticity). Specifically, both the independent variable (X) and the moderating variable (W) are categorical nominal variables, divided into two different conditions coded as 0 (manipulative motivation; low transparency level) and 1 (altruistic motivation; high transparency level), while the mediating variable (M) is a continuous metric variable. After performing the ANOVA, the descriptive statistics table revealed that the group of respondents exposed to the scenario coded as 0,0 (49 participants) had a mean of 2.8844, those exposed to the condition coded as 0,1 (49 participants) had a mean value of 1.1565, respondents exposed to the visual stimulus labeled 1,0 (50 participants) showed a mean of 5.2667, and those exposed to the scenario labeled 1,1 (50 participants) had a mean value of 6.8667. Furthermore, from the table of

test of between-subjects effects, a p-value of 0.001 was found for the corrected model, which was statistically significant ( $p\text{-value} < \alpha = 0.05$ ). Subsequently, all the effects of the independent variables (IV, MOD, IV\*MOD) on the mediating variable (MED) were examined to determine their statistical significance and, therefore, their overall success.

For the first direct effect between X and M, a p-value of 0.001 was observed.

For the second direct effect between W and M, a p-value of 0.563 was found.

For the interaction effect between X and W on M, a p-value of 0.001 was observed.

Therefore, a statistically significant difference between the group means was found, confirming the interaction effect between X and W on M. Thus, the moderation hypothesis H4 (interaction effect) was demonstrated.

### **3.4 General discussion and conclusions**

#### **3.4.1 Theoretical contributions**

This study offers several key theoretical contributions, particularly in the areas of consumer behavior, brand communication, and the impact of altruistic versus manipulative messaging in the fashion and beauty industry. By examining the mediating role of perceived authenticity and the moderating effect of transparency in brand partnerships, this research enhances the understanding of how these variables influence consumer perceptions of manipulation.

One of the primary contributions lies in the empirical confirmation of perceived authenticity as a crucial mediator between altruistic messaging and the consumer's perception of manipulative intent. The findings indicate that altruistic messages, when combined with high levels of transparency, significantly enhance the perception of authenticity. This result is in line with existing literature on authenticity and trust in advertising, but it extends these concepts by demonstrating the specific impact of altruistic communication in the context of social media and brand-influencer partnerships.

This reinforces the idea that altruistic messaging, when perceived as genuine, reduces the feeling of manipulation in advertising.

The research further contributes to the understanding of transparency as a moderating factor in consumer perception. The study reveals that a higher level of transparency in brand partnerships not only fosters trust but also amplifies the perceived authenticity of both altruistic and manipulative messages. This finding strengthens the theoretical understanding of transparency's role in communication strategies, suggesting that transparency is not only beneficial for regulatory compliance but also a strategic tool that brands can use to enhance consumer trust. The results align with existing theoretical frameworks, yet they add nuance by showing that transparency interacts with message framing to influence consumer outcomes.

Moreover, the study provides evidence for the complete mediation effect of authenticity between the type of message and perceived manipulation. The lack of a direct effect emphasizes the importance of authenticity as a central mechanism through which altruistic messages impact consumer perceptions. This finding challenges the idea that brands can influence consumer trust merely through the message content itself; instead, the message must first be perceived as authentic. This theoretical insight offers an important contribution by emphasizing the role of perceived authenticity as the key pathway to reducing consumer skepticism.

Additionally, this study contributes to the literature on consumer psychology by demonstrating how consumers react to varying levels of transparency and altruism in marketing communications. The results show that transparency not only enhances trust but also plays a crucial role in how consumers interpret the intent behind the message. This expands the understanding of the cognitive and emotional processes that underlie consumer reactions to brand communications, suggesting that transparency and authenticity are essential factors in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors.

In summary, this research advances theoretical knowledge in the field of brand communication by highlighting the critical role of message authenticity and transparency. By applying a rigorous empirical approach, the study provides valuable insights into how these factors interact to shape consumer perceptions of manipulation, trust, and brand

loyalty. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that drive consumer responses to altruistic versus manipulative messaging, offering a robust framework for future theoretical development in the study of advertising and consumer trust.

### **3.4.2 Managerial Implications**

Creating greater authenticity in the consumer's mind allows for an improvement in the brand's reputation. In turn, an enhanced brand reputation leads to stronger brand equity. By leveraging an altruistic message and maintaining a high level of transparency in brand partnerships, consumers perceive the collaboration as more authentic. This perception extends to the advertising itself, fostering greater trust. As trust increases, so does brand loyalty, which, over the long term, can evolve into brand advocacy. This leads to a reduced sense of manipulation in the advertising message as perceived by users, enhancing the visibility of the brand and increasing brand awareness.

By improving the upper stages of the marketing funnel, such as awareness, subsequent steps in the funnel also benefit. As a result, the entire customer journey is optimized. Following an improvement in brand awareness, stages like consideration, interest, and conversion are also enhanced, ultimately leading to increased sales. This rise in sales translates into higher revenues, which in turn generate greater profits. These increased profits provide the company with an opportunity to expand its market share relative to direct competitors. In an ideal scenario, this could lead to a situation of oligopoly or even monopoly within the market. This approach is aligned with the POE model (Paid, Owned, and Earned media).

If consumers start to believe in the brand and trust it, they begin to talk about it with others, creating a critical mass of word-of-mouth, which is fundamental to brand reputation and earned media. By focusing on the Earned aspect of the POE model (earned media), the brand can reduce its reliance on Paid media and Owned media. This leads to a reduction in advertising costs associated with paid media, as well as in the efforts

required for owned media. Such a reduction represents an additional competitive advantage for the company.

A strategy centered on earned media and authenticity not only strengthens the company's image but also creates a virtuous cycle. As word-of-mouth and consumer trust increase, the need for costly advertising campaigns diminishes, resulting in more sustainable marketing efforts. This reduction in paid and owned media costs allows resources to be reallocated to other areas, such as innovation and customer service, which can further enhance the customer experience and reinforce the brand's competitive position.

In the long run, the interplay between altruistic communication, transparent partnerships, and a focus on earned media fosters a more resilient brand. It builds long-lasting relationships with consumers, strengthens customer loyalty, and increases the likelihood of customers becoming brand advocates. This can lead to sustained market growth, better financial performance, and a more dominant position within the industry. Therefore, area managers should prioritize these strategies to create a compelling, trustworthy brand narrative that not only drives immediate sales but also builds long-term brand value.

### **3.4.3 Limitations and future research**

The limitations identified in this study offer valuable insights for future research aimed at enhancing and deepening the results obtained.

A first issue concerns the sample used, as the experimental scenarios were presented on Instagram, a platform predominantly attracting a younger audience. Consequently, it would be advisable to replicate the experiment, focusing exclusively on a sample consisting of Generation Y and Generation Z, to explore the communicative dynamics for this demographic group more effectively. An alternative would be to divide the sample into two distinct groups: a younger cohort and a more mature one (belonging to Generation X and Baby Boomers). This division would allow for a comparison between the groups and an analysis of potential differences in how different generations perceive transparency and the type of communicative message.

A second limitation of the study involves the representation of a product that is more appealing to a predominantly female audience, which may have influenced the results and limited the generalizability of the conclusions. Thus, it would be beneficial to repeat the experiment, focusing solely on a female audience for a more in-depth analysis, or by creating new visual stimuli using a product with more universal appeal, targeting both men and women. Expanding the sample to include male participants would allow for the exploration of potential gender differences in the perception of altruistic versus manipulative messages and levels of transparency.

Another limitation lies in the language of the survey, which was conducted in Italian, thus restricting the sample to an Italian-speaking audience. This has limited the applicability of the results to a solely national context. Repeating the experiment by translating the survey into English would allow the research to be extended to a more diverse and international sample, offering the opportunity to analyze the validity of the results in a global context and to understand how the investigated variables behave across different cultures.

From a methodological standpoint, the study adopted a quantitative approach, chosen for its time efficiency. However, while this method provides measurable data, it does not capture the depth of responses and participants' subjective motivations. To delve deeper into the dynamics underlying consumer perceptions, a qualitative approach, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could be more suitable. Although these methods are more time-consuming, they would allow for a more thorough exploration of the emotions and reasons driving consumer responses, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Lastly, the traditional research methods used in this study could be enriched by adopting innovative techniques, such as those from neuromarketing. Tools like EEG (electroencephalography), eye-tracking to measure attention, or GSR (Galvanic Skin Response) to detect emotional arousal, could provide objective data on how consumers react to advertising messages. The use of these techniques would allow for the measurement of consumers' unconscious reactions, offering a more precise and detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of communication strategies.

In conclusion, these limitations highlight the need for further research to explore more deeply the dynamics identified in this study. By using more targeted samples, expanding research to international contexts, and integrating innovative methodologies, it will be possible to obtain results that are even more relevant and applicable to a wide range of market situations and consumer behaviors.



## Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of the intricate dynamics between influencer marketing, altruistic messaging, transparency, and consumer perceptions within the fashion and beauty industry. By investigating the roles of perceived authenticity and transparency in brand-influencer collaborations, the research has offered valuable insights into how these factors shape consumer attitudes, particularly in relation to the perception of manipulative intent.

A key element of this thesis is the integration of Chiara Ferragni's collaboration with Balocco as a case study, which provided a real-world application of the theoretical frameworks explored. The analysis of the "Pink Christmas" campaign vividly demonstrated the challenges and potential risks associated with perceived inauthenticity and a lack of transparency in influencer marketing. This case study highlighted the critical need for brands to prioritize ethical communication and transparency in their marketing efforts to safeguard consumer trust and long-term brand equity. By examining this collaboration, the research reinforced the importance of authenticity and the potential consequences of neglecting transparency in influencer campaigns.

The empirical findings confirm the pivotal role of authenticity as a mediator in influencer marketing. The results clearly demonstrate that altruistic communication, when combined with high levels of transparency, significantly enhances the perception of authenticity, which, in turn, mitigates the consumer's perception of manipulative intent. These findings suggest that brands can effectively counteract consumer skepticism by prioritizing transparency in their partnerships with influencers and ensuring that their messaging is aligned with values that consumers perceive as genuine. Additionally, the moderating effect of transparency underscores its crucial role in cultivating consumer trust. The results indicate that transparency not only amplifies the perceived authenticity of influencer collaborations but also enhances the positive effects of altruistic messaging. This underscores the imperative for brands to maintain open and honest communication with consumers, as transparency serves as a key mechanism for fostering trust and loyalty, especially in today's highly competitive and digitally driven marketplace.

This research highlights the strategic importance of building authentic, transparent influencer partnerships. As digital platforms continue to evolve, brands must adopt practices that not only comply with regulatory requirements but also align with consumer expectations for ethical and transparent communication. By doing so, brands can foster long-lasting relationships with their audiences, ultimately driving increased brand loyalty and advocacy in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

This thesis contributes to the broader discourse on influencer marketing by demonstrating the significant impact that transparency and altruistic messaging have on consumer perceptions. It offers both theoretical insights and practical implications for brands navigating the complexities of digital marketing, particularly in the fashion and beauty sectors. By prioritizing authenticity and transparency, brands can strengthen their position in the market, not only improving short-term outcomes but also cultivating long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

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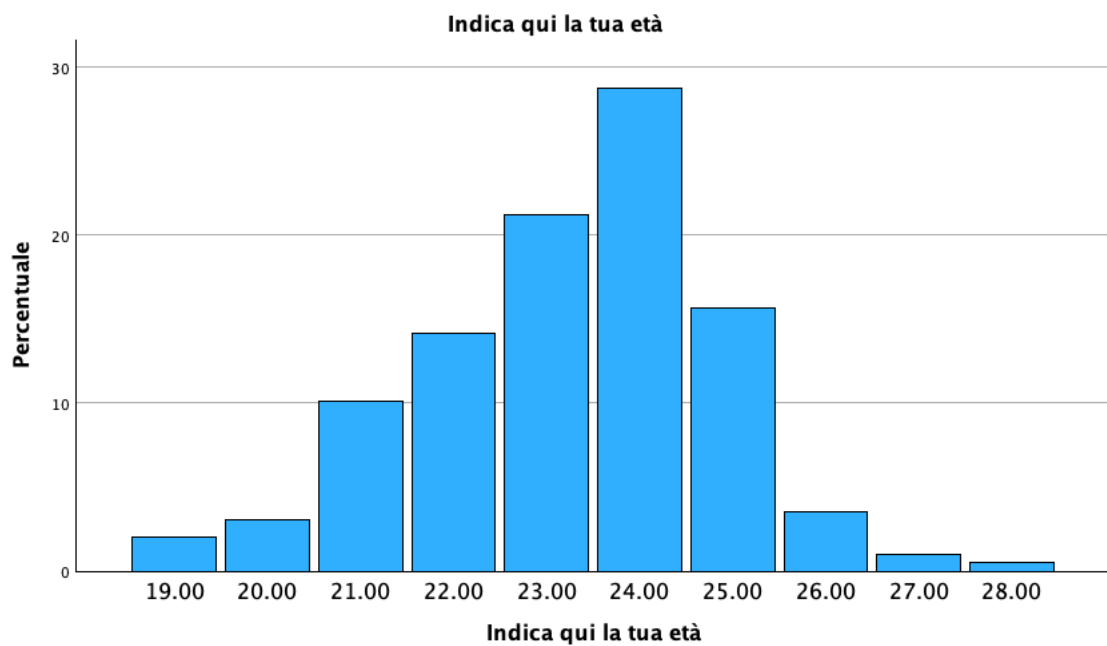
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## Appendix

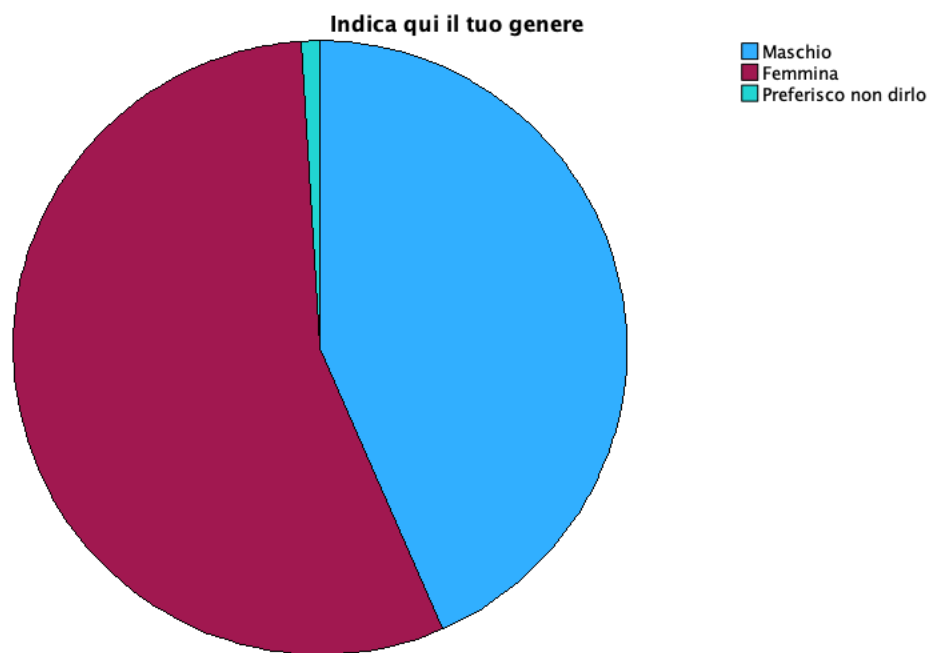
Statistics descriptive: age

Statistiche		
Indica qui la tua età		
N	Valido	198
	Mancante	0
Media		23.2576
Mediana		23.0000
Modalità		24.00
Deviazione std.		1.61507
Varianza		2.608
Intervallo		9.00
Minimo		19.00
Massimo		28.00



Statistics descriptive: gender

Indica qui il tuo genere					
		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	Maschio	86	43.4	43.4	43.4
	Femmina	110	55.6	55.6	99.0
	Preferisco non dirlo	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Totale	198	100.0	100.0	



Factor analysis: mediator

Varianza totale spiegata						
Componente	Totale	Autovalori iniziali		Caricamenti somme dei quadrati di estrazione		
		% di varianza	% cumulativa	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa
1	2.991	99.709	99.709	2.991	99.709	99.709
2	.005	.166	99.875			
3	.004	.125	100.000			

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

### Comunalità

	Iniziale	Estrazione
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato credibile	1.000	.997
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato affidabile	1.000	.997
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato onesto	1.000	.997

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

### Matrice dei componenti<sup>a</sup>

	Componente 1
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato credibile	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato affidabile	.999
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato onesto	.999

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

a. 1 componenti estratti.

### Test di KMO e Bartlett

Misura di Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin di adeguatezza del campionamento.		.797
Test della sfericità di Bartlett	Appross. Chi-quadrato	1911.345
	gl	3
	Sign.	<.001

### Reliability analysis: mediator

#### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	Alpha di Cronbach basata su elementi standardizzati	N. di elementi
.999	.999	3

#### Statistiche elemento-totale

	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento-totale corretta	Correlazione multipla quadratica	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato credibile	8.12	21.630	.996	.993	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato affidabile	8.13	21.637	.997	.994	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Ho percepito il contenuto del post appena visualizzato onesto	8.13	21.637	.997	.994	.998

### Factor analysis: dependent variable

#### Varianza totale spiegata

Componente	Totale	Autovalori iniziali		Caricamenti somme dei quadrati di estrazione		
		% di varianza	% cumulativa	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa
1	2.992	99.733	99.733	2.992	99.733	99.733
2	.005	.172	99.905			
3	.003	.095	100.000			

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

**Comunalità**

	Iniziale	Estrazione
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 1. Il modo in cui il post appena visualizzato cerca di persuadere le persone mi sembra inaccettabile.	1.000	.997
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 2. Il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di manipolare il pubblico in modi che non mi piacciono.	1.000	.997
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 3. il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di essere persuasivo dimostrando un fine manipolativo.	1.000	.998

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.



### Matrice dei componenti<sup>a</sup>

	Componente 1
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 1. Il modo in cui il post appena visualizzato cerca di persuadere le persone mi sembra inaccettabile.	.999
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 2. Il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di manipolare il pubblico in modi che non mi piacciono.	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. – 3. il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di essere persuasivo dimostrando un fine manipolativo.	.999

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

a. 1 componenti estratti.

### Test di KMO e Bartlett

Misura di Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin di adeguatezza del campionamento.		.789
Test della sfericità di Bartlett	Appross. Chi-quadrato	1958.304
	gl	3
	Sign.	<.001

Reliability analysis: dependent variable

### Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	Alpha di Cronbach basata su elementi standardizzati	N. di elementi
.999	.999	3

Statistiche elemento-totale					
	Media scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Varianza scala se viene eliminato l'elemento	Correlazione elemento- totale corretta	Correlazione multipla quadratica	Alpha di Cronbach se viene eliminato l'elemento
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - 1. Il modo in cui il post appena visualizzato cerca di persuadere le persone mi sembra inaccettabile.	7.78	20.052	.997	.995	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - 2. Il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di manipolare il pubblico in modi che non mi piacciono.	7.78	20.224	.996	.993	.998
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - 3. il post appena visualizzato ha cercato di essere persuasivo dimostrando un fine manipolativo.	7.79	20.148	.998	.996	.997

## One-Way ANOVA

Descrittive							
DV							
	N	Medio	Deviazione std.	Errore std.	95% di intervallo di confidenza per la media		
					Limite inferiore	Limite superiore	
.00	98	5.8367	1.13291	.11444	5.6096	6.0639	2.00
1.00	100	1.9833	1.15409	.11541	1.7543	2.2123	1.00
Totale	198	3.8906	2.24320	.15942	3.5762	4.2050	1.00

ANOVA					
DV					
	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Tra gruppi	734.936	1	734.936	561.895	<.001
Entro i gruppi	256.360	196	1.308		
Totale	991.296	197			

## Regression analysis: Model 4

```

*****
Model : 4
Y : DV
X : IV
M : MED

Sample
Size: 198

*****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
MED

Model Summary
      R      R-sq      MSE      F      df1      df2      p
      .8724      .7611      1.2980      624.3109      1.0000      196.0000      .0000

Model
      coeff      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
constant      2.0204      .1151      17.5557      .0000      1.7934      2.2474
IV      4.0463      .1619      24.9862      .0000      3.7269      4.3656

*****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
DV

Model Summary
      R      R-sq      MSE      F      df1      df2      p
      .9856      .9715      .1449      3323.1809      2.0000      195.0000      .0000

Model
      coeff      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
constant      7.7499      .0617      125.6615      .0000      7.6282      7.8715
IV      -.0220      .1107      -.1986      .8428      -.2403      .1963
MED      -.9469      .0239      -39.6768      .0000      -.9940      -.8998

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Direct effect of X on Y
      Effect      se      t      p      LLCI      ULCI
      -.0220      .1107      -.1986      .8428      -.2403      .1963

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
      Effect      BootSE      BootLLCI      BootULCI
MED      -3.8314      .1929      -4.2227      -3.4682

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
5000

```

## Two-Way ANOVA

Statistiche descrittive				
Variabile dipendente: MED				
IV	MOD	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
.00	.00	2.8844	.92183	49
	1.00	1.1565	.61276	49
	Totale	2.0204	1.16636	98
1.00	.00	5.2667	.68346	50
	1.00	6.8667	.85184	50
	Totale	6.0667	1.11212	100
Totale	.00	4.0875	1.44325	99
	1.00	4.0404	2.96322	99
	Totale	4.0640	2.32482	198

### Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: MED

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	947.489 <sup>a</sup>	3	315.830	522.539	<.001
Intercetta	3237.008	1	3237.008	5355.618	<.001
IV	810.342	1	810.342	1340.707	<.001
MOD	.202	1	.202	.335	.563
IV * MOD	137.037	1	137.037	226.728	<.001
Errore	117.256	194	.604		
Totale	4334.889	198			
Totale corretto	1064.745	197			

a. R-quadrato = .890 (R-quadrato adattato = .888)

