

INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER'S SPONSORED POSTS: MEASURING USERS'
ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPONSORED POSTS AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN
THE UNITED STATES

by

FNU ISHANI

(Under the Direction of Yoo-Kyoung Seock)

ABSTRACT

Over the past few years, Instagram has seen rapid growth in the sponsored posts. Instagram's user-generated content has witnessed a massive engagement among youth today, associated with media sharing capabilities. By engaging their followers with shared videos and images, Instagram influencers are becoming increasingly popular. This study aims at giving insights into key the elements that affect the attitude of Instagram users towards the influencer's sponsored posts, and also their purchase intentions. The sample population of this research was Instagram users aged 18 to 38 years in the United States. A structured questionnaire was developed in Qualtrics and distributed using the online tool - Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk). The research findings showed that enjoyable, trustworthy, and non-irritating sponsored posts on Instagram by credible influencers, generate a positive attitude of users towards the influencer, and also towards the sponsored posts, further positively affecting their purchase intentions.

INDEX WORDS: Instagram Influencer's Credibility, Attitude towards Instagram Influencer, Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility, Irritation, Attitude towards Sponsored Post, Purchase Intention

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DEDICATION

“He was a father. That’s what a father does. Eases the burdens of those he loves.
Saves the ones he loves from painful last images that might endure for a lifetime.”

- George Saunders

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings together research that will contribute to an understanding of consumers' purchase intention toward the products promoted by Instagram influencers in their sponsored posts in the United States. This section has been composed by addressing the background and problem, the purpose of the study, justification, research objectives, assumptions and the conceptual definitions used in this study.

Background and Problem

One of the most popular rising mobile photo-video-GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) sharing and editing social media platform at present is Instagram. Over the past few years, Instagram has grown to be a vital source of information to the consumers in numerous divisions such as fashion, beauty, technology, parenting, fitness, entertainment, travel, gaming, home, food, pets, and business. Instagram has enhanced to an accelerating platform for consumer-to-consumer communication in the current information era. Being an essential information source, Instagram has also evolved into one of the significant sources of social interaction, obtaining information and sharing opinions, and has been very useful for marketers for increasing brand visibility. It has become one of the most active contestants even for top platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat, in terms of marketing strategies and has gained extreme popularity among social media users (Choi & Sung, 2018).

According to York (2018), as compared to any social network, Instagram drives the most engagement per post, that is 84 times higher than Twitter, 54 times higher than Pinterest and 10 times more than Facebook. In the United States, 35% of adults use Instagram actively over any other social media platform (Pew-Research-Center, 2018). As stated by Statista (2018), Instagram has more than 1 billion monthly active users worldwide as of June 2018 and over 1 million advertisers (Leibowitz, 2018) that are still thriving. Instagram has made it possible for users to create profiles, generate and upload creative content that can be shared with friends and followers worldwide. Users like to share, follow other people, update stories, and post engaging content on Instagram. Consumers around the world use the Instagram platform to show their originally designed creatives to other people globally and gain public reviews and opinions. They get a chance to connect, share their views, and also get inspired to be innovative. Users from across all age groups are continuing to leap towards the usage of social media for networking. They get many advantages from such web-based platforms.

As compared to other social media platforms, Instagram has matured to an indispensable source of public opinions. Moreover, Instagram enables everyone, including professionals and celebrities, to post creative content on their Instagram feed. Instagram provides its users with many eccentric features such as posting pictures, videos and stories of the best quality, manipulating them using smart iconic filters, following other users, liking and commenting on posts, sending direct messages, tagging other users in pictures using "@tag," and writing in-depth information along with using hashtags "#", and so forth. User-generated content allows other people browsing to look for similar pictures or products and helps in creating engagement online by sharing posts (also known as 'reposting') and following new users. Consumers can present their

innovativeness in different areas using photo-enhancing filters. Users share over 95 million photos and videos on an average day on Instagram (Leibowitz, 2018). The Pew-Research-Center (2018) statistics also showed that 35% of the United States adults use Instagram actively than other social media platforms, and 64% of Americans who are active users of Instagram belong to ages of 18 years to 29 years old.

Consumers today have become profoundly active on Instagram. Their activeness on Instagram is ordinarily generalized from their time spent browsing on Instagram, the number of times they share or post some content, or their intention to interact with others by liking and commenting on posts. Consumers are adopting Instagram more frequently to assemble information to influence their purchase decisions. Instagram has provided consumers globally a platform for advice and recommendations before buying a product. To make the right purchase decision, consumers look for the reviews of a particular product by searching the brand or product name, their hashtags, and also browse to look for the same product's advertisements posted by influencers. Instagram has manifested new mechanisms for advertising to consumers and has further allowed influencers to adequately reach out to consumers with regards to the frequency and influence of advertising through sponsored posts. Instagram has not only quickly grown popular but has also encouraged brands with a more sustainable solution through influencers to reach broader audiences. With Instagram, brands have the chance to post content that is creative and engaging in an aesthetic form (such as posts, stories and IG Videos), converging solely on visuals and demonstrating their merchandises in an attractive way (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018; LYFE-Marketing, 2018). Compared to an average internet user, the possibilities of Instagrammers increases by 60%, to most likely purchase a product utilizing the brand-engaged posts (Buckle, 2015). Consumers perceive

and react to the content exhibited by influencers (by liking, sharing, or commenting) on their sponsored posts in order to promote the products to a broader target audience. Instagram is the most widely accepted platform by fashion industry opinion leaders, and it is assumed that this trend will sustain in the coming future. As stated by Mediakix (2019), Instagram has been ranked by 89% of marketers as the most strategically appropriate social media channel for influencer marketing and a dominant player that can shape cultural trends and is a significant boon to brands seeking to approach young audiences. The channel has been a cost-effective method to improve outcomes for brands and companies. Marketing on Instagram using influencers has evolved at an unbelievable rate and is a market of about \$1.7 billion (Mediakix, 2019) since it involves the union of audience reach and user engagement that brands are looking for. Also, in contrast to other social networking sites, the engagement rate on Instagram has been explicated to be higher, and it is yet prominent in the case of influencers (Casaló et al., 2018; Vorhaus, 2018).

The ‘influencers’ on Instagram are referred to as personalities who have established a large social network of followers and are recognized as a trusted tastemaker in one or more niches (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). They are responsible for their engaged and organic (self-made) followers. Influencers are also regarded as opinion leaders, as they are the first and foremost adopters of trends and disseminate their opinions through social media and influence other consumers (Ramos-Serrano & Martínez-García, 2016). Influencers tend to make creative, convincing and engaging content in the form of stories or posts on their Instagram newsfeed and center the content around the product or service. Such users usually have a high number of followers on Instagram and have the capability to encourage these followers to like or follow that new

brand or product. Consumers respond and act uniquely on Instagram considering they appear to demonstrate or exhibit further activities such as follow the influencer, follow the tagged brand, visit their websites and purchase more frequently after viewing their sponsored posts (Casaló et al., 2018; Buckle, 2015). Influencers on Instagram are extra creative in the articulation of sponsored posts and their choices of promoting mechanisms to achieve their target market's attention. Credible influencers are likable, they enhance the impact of the product's message, hold a great value as an opinion leader (De Veirman et al., 2017) and have the capability to influence a large section of consumers in a comparatively short period. Consumers on Instagram judge the generated content and information provided by influencers on Instagram to be credible, knowledgeable and trustworthy. Influencers make their opinions and behavior more centered towards consumers (De Veirman et al., 2017). According to Mediakix (2019), influencers on Instagram have been classified into tiers based on their follower counts such as Nano-influencers (1K to 10K followers), Micro-influencers (10K to 50K followers), Mid-tier-influencers (50K to 500K followers), Macro-influencers (500K to 1M followers) and Mega-influencers (over 1M followers). They can be celebrities, bloggers, YouTubers or other social media stars who are popular due to the attention gained through their content on Instagram and have the ability to reach wider audiences. Higher engagement rates have strived to be provided by micro-influencers with smaller audiences, as smaller creators tend to deliver brand messages that are authentic and at scale (#Hashoff, 2017).

Influencers have an appealing relationship with their followers or fans. By posting aspirational pictures using hashtags, Instagram influencers engage and gather massive followers. Influencers from different advertising sectors such as travel, entertainment, home and lifestyle, health and fitness, fashion, photography, food, beauty, art and design,

and businesses are winning attention through their sponsored posts on Instagram (Vorhaus, 2018). Influencers have the advantage of featuring ' Sponsored Posts ' on their Instagram news feed, mostly a product advertisement after being paid by the brand or having company partnership. Such posts have high impressions and are likely to be seen by more people. They gain high attention from new people and audiences as they provide unique content and information about the brands. They can help in persuading and building closer relationships with partners (for example, brands, customers, prospective customers). Such posts are mostly sponsored by the brand who collaborate with the influencers on Instagram around the world to target their consumer population. People have begun to gain attention from the popularity of sponsored posts, that are now engaged through product placements by different brands, also featuring entertaining content inside their videos and pictures.

The sponsored posts are either identified by a hashtag written inside the description such as '#sponsored', '#sp' or marked as "Paid Promotion" or "Paid Partnership". The posts are well informed with the information, use of the product and also have notable reviews and comments by other consumers. Influencers post such content describing the brand, and its products in the form of video and pictures, with their creativity, showing both entertainment as well as practical value. In extension to the time invested for building content, influencers consume much more time on the permanent commitment and development of the organic audience, by spending plenty of their time creating their best posts, ranging from idea to creation and publishing it on Instagram. Content creators tend to keep their Instagram account's appearance and feel realistic. Consumers assess the value of the product after checking the number of likes and the type of comments received on the sponsored post (positive or negative). Positive

feedbacks and comments on the in-depth information from the influencer's posts help the consumers to gain trust towards the brand and also lead towards purchase intention (Casaló et al., 2018). Such marketing on the internet from well-known personalities enables consumers to get the product category's targeted exposure. As of 2019, there are over 5 Million brand sponsored influencer posts on Instagram that precisely follow hashtags such as '#Ad' or '#Sponsored' (Mediakix, 2019). Users can always search for the pictures posted along with descriptive in-text information if they use hashtags within their texts.

Along with sponsored posts, influencers on Instagram also like to play around with 'Instagram Stories' to promote and increase the visibility of their sponsored posts. Stories are usually perceived as more trustworthy by Instagram users from the content viewpoint (Mediakix, 2019) and are a crucial driver in the virality of attractive sponsored posts. Instagram Stories are a series of pictures or videos with an extensive variety of playful animated texts and GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format). Instagram stories favor the brands since they help in promoting the sponsored posts because they include clickable links such as "Swipe Up" (that redirects the user to a website or a webpage) and "See Post" (that redirects the user to the sponsored post) (Mediakix, 2019). According to a handful of brands and publishers who have experimented with the feature, 15% to 25% of people who see a link in an Instagram story, swipe on it (Measured, 2017). Side by side, it also makes consumers look out for the specific brand and their products by clicking on the tagged brand '@brand' inside the description of the influencer's sponsored post. Consumers visit the brand's Instagram page and go through their variety of posts about their products with detailed information, additionally influencing their purchase intention. Hence, the influencer's sponsored posts on Instagram not only affect

the users' attitude towards the sponsored posts, but also play an essential role in engaging and leading Instagram users (their followers) or consumers to increase their purchase intentions towards the products.

Instagram users these days tend to follow and visualize much more from the influencer's endorsements rather than the traditional advertisements marketed on television, billboards, radio, newspapers, magazines, and so forth, which shows the influencer how other people actively react to the brand and their products. Consumers heavily prefer Instagram to search for new information about brands and their products and are not dependent now on long-established traditional media. Advertising through sponsored posts is a major factor for modern consumers who are often not exposed by traditional advertising channels, and who have dynamic lifestyles. Instagram helps users grow and maintain their social interactions and connections with celebrities and influential people. It builds strongly affiliated social relationships with other users who share similar interests and needs. Sponsored posts by influencers have created a much higher user engagement rather than the content posted traditionally by the original brands, as they target to get more followers (or fans) and consumers attention by revolving the story around the benefits, features and the worth of the product in a single or multiple posts. The necessity to generate new means for advertising has resulted in the formulation of new-age media such as advertising through sponsored Instagram posts that have helped to drive more traffic, establish a dialogue with users, build brand awareness, and form a powerful brand identity. Sponsored posts also provide additional opportunities for brands to get their content noticed. A company or a brand decides for each sponsored post which product, service or brand messages they are interested in promoting and elects the right influencers for the campaign (Mediakix, 2017). Content created by

Instagrammers afterward incorporates the product and brand's message in a way that feels organic and authentic to the audience. Advertising and publicity of brands through sponsored posts have raised the bar in the overall advertising possibilities, taking into account revenue and profit structures of influencers.

Brands have lately found the wide-ranging influence and viral potential of forming associations with influencers on Instagram to advertise their products (De Veirman et al., 2017). Following the growing ventures to endorse their products by the influencers, conventional advertising techniques are being continually dropped by brands (De Veirman et al., 2017). Because of greater authenticity and credibility, endorsing products through influencers emerges to be more effective for brands than traditional advertising tactics (De Veirman et al., 2017). Influential marketing has helped many new start-ups to grow their businesses. They have helped many entrepreneurs continually by supporting and helping them achieve their most crucial business impact goals by becoming a critical source of brand communication. Brands attempt to identify and elect influencers that have a substantial impact on their target consumers, persuade them to adopt new products and help disperse the brand's products through their posts (De Veirman et al., 2017), which leads to a mutually profitable sponsorships and collaboration between brands and influencers (Mediakix, 2017). Also, in the fashion industry, social influencers play an essential role (Casaló et al., 2018; Wiedman, Hennings, & Langner, 2010). As the number of active users associated to the fashion businesses and brands has firmly increased, there have been significantly larger followers and hence, higher interactions on Instagram, related to the fashion brands than other brands (Casaló et al., 2018). Discussion about new trends, styles, and interchange of

information is performed by consumers to spread trends in fashion (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008).

Past researches confirm that with the evolution of Instagram influencers, how consumers react to the brands and their products has completely changed. Researchers have proven that influencer's posts lead towards higher consumer purchase intentions (Casaló et al., 2018) and also that Instagram users' perceived credibility of an influencer is an antecedent of purchase intention (Rebelo, 2017). Although there have been many investigations conducted on influential marketing, fewer academic studies were seen that explicitly focused on sponsored posts by influencers on Instagram. Also, very few papers have been written in recent times about consumer attitudes towards influencer advertising (sponsored posts) on Instagram. Given both the interests of exploring the growing social media composition of Instagram sponsored posts as a marketing tool and the obligation to assess its effectiveness in measuring the influence on consumer's purchase intentions, there is an imperative need to investigate this research gap. Another intent of the study is that the current research induces and systematically integrates literature from influential marketing disciplines and adopts the theories from the advertising and psychological backgrounds to form a model which could be applied in prospective studies to measure the impact of the Instagram influencer's credibility on consumers' attitude towards Instagram influencers. Hence, there remains a need for a more in-depth academic understanding of both the antecedents and consequences of the users' attitude towards sponsored posts on Instagram.

Thus, this research adds to a better understanding of current formats of consumer's attitude towards the Instagram influencers and their sponsored posts. Primarily, this study attempts to present answers to basic questions for advertisers, such

as how an influencer's sponsored posts should be chosen to increase the consumer's purchase intention towards the products, or whether this effect depends on the characteristics of the sponsored posts and the credibility of the Instagram influencers.

Purpose of Study

Instagram influencers can access larger audiences and are identified by their reputation, which depends mostly on the number of followers they have. Influencers gain popularity and their followers based on their accurate and creative content. Brands pay the influencers to post about the product information on their Instagram profiles, which helps consumers make better decisions. Sponsored posts have become an important marketing tool on Instagram for the brands to reach their targeted markets. Instagram allows its universal users to look for opinions, online recommendations and reviews inside the comments made on the posts (by making users follow the influencer, browse brand pages and follow products hashtags) before they buy the product. Understanding the buying decisions of consumers after they go through the sponsored posts, is one of the most significant problems of the marketers.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to focus on the factors which determine the impact of the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post on their purchase intention. The study also investigates the mediating effects of perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation of sponsored posts on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. It also explores the impacts of Instagram influencer's credibility on the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer that would further affect their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

Justification

Instagram has become a vital tool for consumers to identify their buying decisions in the current era. Influencers use product placements in their Instagram posts to gain benefits by creating much more user engagement with the posted brands and their products. Hashtags have become an omnipresent culture on Instagram and are used by influential users to share and tag content about a specific brand category within their post. Active users on Instagram usually show a considerable response engagement to the sponsored posts by influencers who build original creative content and have a vast number of organic followers as well. Influencers have begun to promote products in a very entertaining way, featuring the brand in a particular form of a story. Together with the comments left on a specific sponsored post and the informative description, sponsored posts would help consumers clear their doubts and opinions on purchasing the product presented by the influencer. Such opinions commented by active users on a daily basis would help other customers analyze and redefine their research on product information. Also, marketers need to know how influencers and brands together can satisfy their online consumer's purchase intentions and strengthen consumer-influencer-brand relationships. To summarize, this study analyzes if the sponsored posts help customers to re-think their product preference and get a second opinion upon their purchase intentions towards the products. The study would also further analyze how both influencer's credibility and attitude towards the influencers help in forming the factors that affect the users' attitude towards sponsored posts and also how it would further influence the users' purchase intentions.

In addition, according to Worthy (2018), with 120 million users, the United States is the world leader in active Instagram users. In 2018, an estimated 71% of the United States businesses were found to be on Instagram (Aslam, 2019). For brand collaborations, 78% of influencers prefer Instagram, which produces an average of 12.6% more engagement when using at least one hashtag in their posts (Aslam, 2019). Also, as of February 2019, the age distribution of highest Instagram users in the United States included 32.7% of Instagram users between the ages of 25 and 34, while the second largest user group was 18 to 24-year-olds with a 22.9% share (Statista, 2019). Instagram has quickly developed into one of the most popular social media platforms in the world since its launch in late 2010, particularly for Millennials and teen audiences with massive global reach (Mediakix, 2017) and highest user interactions.

Millennials (also known as Generation Y) have been defined by Bolton, et al. (2013) as the demographic cohort following Generation X and preceding Generation Z, that includes all people born between the years 1981 and 1999 (20 to 38 years of age). According to the (Kasasa, 2019), Generation Z is the generation born between 1995 and 2015 (or are currently between 4-24 years old); and, Generation Y or Millennials is the generation born between 1980 and 1994 (or are currently between 25-39 years old). Millennials have different behaviors, values and attitudes from other generations due to changes in economic, socio-cultural and technological conditions (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003). Generation Y also tends to utilize modern technologies and engage in numerous social media practices. Instagram's Generation Y is a generation familiar with tremendous level of marketing noise, and they demand exceptional branding on Instagram because of this and their desire to be unique (Johansson & Eklöf Wallsbeck, 2014). They are distinguished by their fashion and acceptance of the new product as

media and internet users. Generation Y is known to be always virtually connected to their phones; 83% of the generation sleeps alongside their phones (Bergh & Behrer, 2013).

When marketing to Generation Y, it is essential to be creative, fun and tell the truth, as Generation Y will assure that the organization has proper values (Gronbach, 2008).

Previous studies have revealed that endorsement is also used as a marketing tool to entice millennials interests in addition to their requirement for uniqueness in purchase intentions (Soh, Rezaei, & Gu, 2017). In the United States, the frequency of Instagram usage among Millennial internet users from the third quarter of the year 2017 was 34% of respondents stating daily use (Statista, 2019a). Moreover, 31% of women and 24% of men use Instagram in the United States (Aslam, 2019). Hence, the age group of 18 to 38 years old from the United States was selected for this study, since they are the highest users of Instagram, including Generation Z users and Millennial (Gen Y) adult users, who were born between 1995 and 2015 (or are currently between 4-24 years old), and between 1980 and 1994 (or are currently between 25-39 years old), respectively (Kasasa, 2019).

Research Objectives

The overall objective of this research is to understand the role of Instagram influencers and their sponsored posts in determining the users' purchase intentions in the United States. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the level of Instagram usage activity for users.
2. To investigate the impacts of Instagram influencer's credibility on the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer.
3. To investigate the impacts of the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on their attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

4. To investigate the mediating effects of perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of a sponsored post on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.
5. To investigate the impacts of the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post on their purchase intention.

Assumptions

As previously stated, as of February 2019, Instagram's highest age distribution for users in the United States was 32.7% for Instagram users aged 25 to 34, and Instagram's second largest user group was 18 to 24-years old with a share of 22.9% (Statista, 2019). Hence, for this study, it's being assumed that the sample participants are of age group of 18 to 38 years old, from the United States, since they are the highest number of users of Instagram, which includes Generation Z (the generation born between 1995 and 2015; or are currently between 4-24 years old) and, Generation Y or Millennials (the generation born between 1980 and 1994; or are currently between 25-39 years old) (Kasasa, 2019). The participants are also assumed to be active users of Instagram, and to be familiar with Instagram influencers and their sponsored posts.

Conceptual Definitions

1. Source Credibility: Source Credibility refers to the degree to which the target audience observes the source in order to attain knowledge and skills in their recognition of the product/service (Ohanian, 1990).

2. Attitude towards the advertiser: Attitude towards the advertiser is defined as a philosophical preference to react in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way towards the sponsoring party (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989).
3. Entertainment: Entertainment is defined as the capability to satisfy the audience's need for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment or emotional enjoyment (Ducoffe, 1996).
4. Informativeness: Informativeness is defined as the capability of advertisement to inform or notify consumers of product choices so that purchases allowing the highest attainable satisfaction can be made by the consumers (Ducoffe, 1996).
5. Credibility: Credibility is defined as how proficient the communicator is looked upon to be in the area of interest, and also as how well it is trusted by the consumers receiving the information (Freedman, Sears, & Carlsmith, 1981).
6. Irritation: Irritation is defined as "when advertising employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult, or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as an unwanted and irritating influence" (Ducoffe, 1996).
7. Attitude towards Ad: Attitude toward the ad (Aad) is defined as a "predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a particular advertising stimulus during a specific occasion of exposure" (Lutz, 1985).
8. Purchase Intention: Purchase intention is defined as the probability for the consumer to purchase products in the future, which demonstrates their intentions to buy the products primarily focused on their attitudes and emotions (Bong, 2017; Danieli, 2016; Kim, Chun, & Ko, 2017).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study analyzes the role of sponsored posts by Instagram influencers in shaping the users' attitude towards sponsored post and their purchase intentions to broaden previous findings. This chapter provides the outlining of a literature review from the preliminary studies, and the primary constructs used in this study are Instagram influencer's credibility, attitude towards Instagram influencer, perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of sponsored posts, attitude towards sponsored posts and purchase intention.

Instagram Influencer's Credibility

Source credibility refers to the degree to which the target audience observes the source in order to attain knowledge and skills in their recognition of the product/service (Ohanian, 1990; Teng, Wei Goh, & Yee Loong Chong, 2014; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). According to Ohanian (1990), the credibility of the source is based on the communicator's trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. This was also supported by Korotina and Jargalsaikhan (2016), who found that the attitude towards the endorser (in this case, the influencer) plays an essential role in trustworthiness, and also emphasized the importance of influencer credibility and expertise. The credibility of the source also depends on the quality and the convincing strength of the endorser's argument (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013), which refers to the 'strength of persuasion of the arguments within an informational message' (Teng et al., 2014). This implies that

when product and service reviews or statements are generally considered credible on Instagram, consumers will establish a positive attitude towards the product that is sponsored with regard to the reviews (Spry, Pappu, & Bettina Cornwell, 2011; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). When the products sponsored (or endorsed) are comprehended as misleading and invalid, consumers develop a negative attitude towards the brand's product and also towards the source (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Belch and Belch (2004) affirmed that consumers consider credibility to be critical in terms of knowledge, skill, experience, and trust at the source. The positive attributes of messages can magnify the significance of the source and therefore increase acceptance amongst viewers. Besides, experts and trusted sources are more convincing and influential through an internalization process in beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and conduct (Belch & Belch, 2004). This mechanism of internalization of opinions takes place when the consumer believes in a credible (expert and trusted) source (Belch & Belch, 2004). In terms of sponsored posts, the source here is 'influencer,' who often promotes brands and their products on Instagram. An influencer's perceived credibility refers to whether an individual perceives the recommendations of the influencer as unbiased, credible, true or factual (Hass, 1981; Rebelo, 2017). Credibility and perceived trustworthiness are the two features that make the active influencers the true promoters of the brands and their products (Chu & Kamal, 2008). As the primary source of information is the influencer, its perceived credibility has been an essential characteristic for the advertisers (Friedman & Friedman, 1979) and is one of the fundamental persuasion factors (Pornpitakpan, 2004). The perceived credibility of an influencer explains that the efficiency of a message depends on an individual's perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness towards an influencer (Ohanian, 1990). If an influencer is considered to be more credible, the

purchasing intentions of the target groups would be higher as it would make the influencers more likable and to have more significant expertise, confidence, and appeal (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

Information from such a credible source can affect beliefs, views, behaviors, and attitudes of the consumers (Erdogan, 1999). Ohanian (1990) pointed out that source credibility is frequently employed to focus on the positive attributes and features of the influencer that affects the consumer's acceptability of the message provided. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) have proven in their research that non-traditional celebrities' such as 'Instafamous' profiles (or influencers) have been recognized as more influential by the users as they are acknowledged to have higher credibility. Gupta, Kishore, and Verma (2015) also emphasized the importance of characteristics of influencer credibility and their expertise in their study, and also their impact on the perception of an ad. Abidin (2016) found out that the credibility of influencers and their perceived trustworthiness makes them more active promoters of brand messages. The profound relations between the brands and the followers are fundamental to the success of influencers; however, their success also depends upon their tastes and credibility (Abidin, 2016). Users on Instagram follow influencers, trust them, and ultimately help them decide what will succeed or fail (Gómez Macías & Rungsaridworakarn, 2018). Korotina and Jargalsaikhan (2016) determined that the credibility of micro-influencers is the most critical element in the consumers (or followers) attitude towards Instagram's promotional posts.

Attitude towards Instagram Influencer

MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) defined attitude toward the 'advertiser' as a philosophical preference to react in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way towards

the sponsoring party. MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) also showed in their research that attitude toward the advertiser is a powerful predictor of attitude toward the ad. Attitude towards someone is produced out of behavioral assumptions and subjective consequence evaluations (Sanne & Wiese, 2018). MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) said that consumers' affective responses to the sponsor of the ad stimulus (in this study, an Instagram influencer) of concern are anticipated to bear some authority in the development of attitude towards the ad.

Unlike attitude towards the ad, attitude toward the advertiser is witnessed as a representative of an aggregation of both information and experience obtained over time (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Rebelo (2017) and Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) recommended that the attitudes of consumers towards Instagram influencers, accompanying their motives to follow them, can be additionally examined in different ways. Korotina and Jargalsaikhan (2016) found out in their study that consumers' attitude towards micro-celebrities is mostly positive and is majorly influenced by the trustworthiness of the micro-celebrity. Moreover, besides this, no other study was conducted on overall attitude towards advertiser or attitude towards Instagram influencer.

Perceived Entertainment of Sponsored Posts

Ducoffe (1996) defined entertainment as the capability to satisfy the audience's need for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment or emotional enjoyment. According to Oh and Xu (2003), entertainment refers to the capability to stimulate aesthetic enjoyment or satisfaction and is a powerful predictor of the advertising value (Ducoffe, 1996). Entertainment can be considered as the attitude of cheerfulness and pleasure in people (Huq, Alam, Nekmahmud, Aktar, & Alam, 2015). The feeling of enjoyment affiliated

with advertising plays a critical role in the overall value of advertising (Shavitt, Lowrey, & Haefner, 1998), and helps in winning the consumers' attention. Ducoffe (1996) explained that the entertainment element in advertising could satisfy the needs of consumers for aesthetic enjoyment and emotional release, and could also increase customer loyalty (Huq et al., 2015).

Saeed et al. (2013) confirmed in their research that consumers like children and young people like the entertainment factor in all ads, rather than adults and old consumers. Okazaki (2005) explained that the information addressed in an advertisement has the capability to communicate sufficient knowledge and also renders utilitarian and practical information. The audience considers entertaining ads to be more valuable (Ducoffe, 1995). According to Chowdhury, Parvin, Weitenberner, and Becker (2006), feelings of enjoying an advertisement represents an essential role in the generation of consumer's attitude towards the advertisement in particular. Tsang, Ho, and Liang (2004) proved in their research that higher the entertainment value of an advertisement to the audience, the more positive is the attitude of the audience towards the advertisement. For this area of perceived entertainment of sponsored posts, there is missing and insufficient information which limits the ability to conclude further. Hence, this study considers consumer's perceived entertainment of sponsored posts as an essential aspect to take into account for the research.

Perceived Informativeness of Sponsored Posts

Ducoffe (1996) defined informativeness as the capability of advertisement to inform or notify consumers of product choices so that the consumers can make purchases allowing the highest attainable satisfaction. According to Oh and Xu (2003),

informativeness pertains to the ability to provide relevant information adequately. Informativeness depends on how much complete and comprehensive information is presented to consumers (Saeed et al., 2013). One of the targets of advertising is to provide the viewers with information about new products or features of existing products, and also to inform the viewers about changes in the price of products (Kotler, 2009). As said by Brahim (2016), advertisements providing needs-related information can be processed actively and be efficiently responded to by consumers. For consumers, advertising is mostly information on the availability and quality of products (Brahim, 2016). As stated by Chowdhury et al. (2006), the information enclosed in an ad is an essential catalyst in the development of a positive attitude towards an advertisement for the consumers. The more important the value of the information, such as: the efficiency of the message, comprehensiveness, and usefulness towards the audience; the more significant will be the attitude of the audience towards the ad which will conclusively affect how the audience behaves (Blanco, Blasco, & Azorín, 2010). The advertising content (informativeness) is vital for the effectiveness of advertising and has a direct influence on the perceptions of the customers towards the products (Blanco et al., 2010). For this area of perceived informativeness of sponsored posts, there is missing and insufficient information which limits the ability to conclude further. Hence, this study recognizes consumer's perceived informativeness of sponsored posts as a critical perspective to take into the record for the research.

Perceived Credibility of Sponsored Posts

Credibility is generally defined as how proficient the communicator is looked upon to be in the area of interest, and also as how well it is trusted by the consumers

receiving the information (Freedman et al., 1981). MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) defined credibility as the degree to which the consumer observes the content of the ad, to be authentic and trustworthy, and recognize the source to have information and skills and to give truthful and impartial information. Advertising credibility refers to the perception of the customers' that advertising, in general, that is truthful and believable (Stewart & Pavlou, 2002; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). The credibility of advertising has proved significantly relevant to web advertising value (Brackett & Carr, 2001). Choi and Rifon (2002) defined perceived credibility as the believability of consumers regarding the advertisement that it will meet their demands & needs and would also have a straightforward positive impact on respondent's attitude towards any ad or the brand. Research carried out by numerous researchers showed that there is a positive correlation linking consumer perceptions of the credibility of an advertisement and consumer attitudes towards the advertisement (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Huq et al., 2015). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) supported that ad credibility is influenced by the credibility of the advertiser and also advertising credibility; moreover, the advertiser credibility has a direct impact on advertising credibility. For this area of perceived credibility of sponsored posts, there is missing and insufficient information which limits the ability to conclude further. Therefore, this research acknowledges consumer's perceived credibility of sponsored posts as a significant aspect to take into the account.

Perceived Irritation of Sponsored Posts

Ducoffe (1996) defined irritation as the “when advertising employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult, or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as an unwanted and irritating influence”. According to Ducoffe (1996), consumers

scrutinize an advertisement associated with annoyance or irritation as it generates an outcome thought to lead to a general decline in advertising effectiveness. In the past, several studies discussed the problem of irritation in advertising (Bauer & Greyser, 1968; Chakrabarty & Yelkur, 2006). One of the primary problems reported in the literature for advertising effectiveness is the notion of irritation (Gaber, Wright, & Kooli, 2019). Irritation of an advertising has been discovered to be one of the primary factors why customers are critical of advertising (Greyser, 1973), and is useful to explain how some advertisements can cause adverse emotions (Li, Edwards, M., & Lee, 2002). Web advertising may trigger consumer annoyance due to the structure of the products advertised, and the perceived loss of control in one's conduct (Gaber et al., 2019). Features such as targeting the incorrect audience, manipulative information, misplacements, extreme advertising placements, and compelled exposure could be irritable to consumers (Gaber et al., 2019). Annoying, offending, and manipulating advertising is observed as irritating and undesirable content by the customers; therefore, all businesses have to think about making their advertising neither irritating nor annoying (Gaber et al., 2019). The logical conclusion is that if anything about the advertising is annoying, it is likely that customers will feel upset and are not persuaded by the advertising. It has been predicted that irritation triggered by advertising also affects the attitude of people towards them (Tsang, et al., 2004). An annoying advertisement can also cause customers to react specifically to the advertised brand. For this area of perceived irritation of sponsored posts, there is missing and insufficient information which limits the ability to conclude further. Therefore, this research acknowledges consumer's perceived irritation of sponsored posts as a significant aspect to take into the account.

Attitude towards Sponsored Posts

Attitudes are a prominent subject of investigation for advertising and marketing areas for two grounds: firstly, they are beneficial to forecast consumer behaviors, and secondly, social psychology researchers have made possible numerous theoretical frameworks for the examination of attitudes (Spears & Singh, 2004), and its popularity is displayed in the American Marketing Association's yearly conference on attitudes, sponsored since 1970. Attitudes incorporate the tendency of determining something if it is favorable or unfavorable (Grafström, Jakobsson, & Wiede, 2018). Advertising is the most effective when individuals give them more attention, make more cognitive attempts to understand the advertising and focus on product-related learnings and information (Gordon, McKeage, & Fox, 1998). The attitude is defined in the advertising field as the effective response of the audience members to advertising generally (Lutz, 1985). According to Lutz (1985), attitude toward the ad (Aad) is defined as a "predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a particular advertising stimulus during a specific occasion of exposure".

MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986) associated attitude towards an advertisement with positive purchase intentions in their study. The sponsored posts by influencers should be acknowledged as a form of online advertisement promoted by marketers rather than merely just a consumer review of online users' personal experiences. The attitudes of consumers towards advertisement, based upon MacKenzie et al. (1986), are a predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to a particular advertising stimulus during a specific occasion of exposure. According to MacKenzie et al. (1986), attitude

toward the ad (Ad) has been hypothesized to be a causative mediating factor in a manner with which advertising influences brand attitudes and consumer's purchase intention.

Obermiller and Spangenberg (1998) also stated that advertisement is a general insight of a funded non-personal marketing means of communication and defines consumer dubiousness towards advertising as a predisposition to disbelieve in a specific advertising claim. Gauzente (2010) implied that a positive impact on click intention is affirmed when Internet users are familiar with sponsored links and have a favorable attitude towards them. In their study, Lu, Chang, and Chang (2014) also explained that consumers have a very positive attitude towards the sponsored recommendation posts, which intensifies purchase intentions when the products recommended in posts are profoundly searched and have high brand awareness. Therefore, for this research consumers' attitude towards the sponsored posts can be related to the purchase intentions towards the product.

Purchase Intention

Consumer behavior has been of notable importance to scholars and has also been associated repeatedly with consumer buying intentions in online settings and environments such as social media platforms. Intention to purchase is one of the key concepts studied in marketing literature. The intention is observed as the conative segment of attitude which is correlated with the effective component of attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). As per Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), purchase intention is the objective intention of a consumer towards a product. Spears and Singh (2004) defined purchase intention as a conscious plan or an intention of the consumer to execute an attempt to acquire a product. Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) published in their theory of reasoned action

model that the purchase intention is the outcome of repercussions of subjective norms and behavioral attitude and recommended that the subjective norms are established by the beliefs of several other significant people and their determination to comply.

Intention to purchase refers to a consumer's behavior to a future decision to purchase a particular good or service (Papadopoulou, Pavlidou, & Hodza, 2012; Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013) and can also be contemplated as a consumer's intention towards a product (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). All industries see purchase intention as an essential marketing concept (Morrison, 1979). As per Pavlou (2003), the intention to buy online is the situation where a customer is willing to take part in an online transaction. The concept of purchase intention describes the pattern of customer loyalty and has perpetually been of substantial interest for the marketers because the businesses desire to expand the sales of their distinct products in order to maximize their revenue (Lisichkova & Othman, 2017). Consumers intend to buy the brand at the evaluation stage of the decision-making process, and at this point, consumers decide to purchase the brand that is most favored and select a brand that satisfies their needs and desires (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

While one of the reasons a consumer might postpone, change or prevent a purchase is also perceived risks (Kotler & Keller, 2012), such as physiological needs, uncertain product availability, price and the lack of ability to sense a product (see it or touch it) (Trocchia & Janda, 2003; Chikweche & Fletcher, 2010). According to Kotler and Keller (2012), however, two determinants may generally influence consumer's intention before they purchase at this stage: attitudes of others and unexpected factors such as lack of money, and if a stronger competitor brand drops their price, and so forth. The central goal of the advertisers is to get consumers to establish an intention to

purchase the product which influencers advertise to recruit and grasp customers (Rebelo, 2017). Besides, purchase intentions are regularly evaluated and used as an input for both established and new products and services by marketing experts because purchase intention statistics can help executives in their business decisions linked to market dynamics and promotion tactics (Goyle, 2014). Hence, in order to predict consumers purchasing behavior, marketers must have an understandably great deal of interest in market projections for both current and new products.

Influencers are frequently perceived as idols in a fascinating urban lifestyle, which also affects the intentions of followers or consumers on Instagram to the purchase products and services supported by the influencer (Gómez Macías & Rungsaridworakarn, 2018). The results of Campbell and Marks (2015) research present a greater acceptance of sponsored ads by consumers, which is a positive indication for businesses that adopt social media to promote their products and services. Mathisen and Stangeby (2017) predicted in their study that the brand, endorser and the ad, all influence ad effectiveness and purchase intention. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) have proven in their research that Instagram celebrities influence the purchasing habits of young female users. Rebelo (2017), and Lisichkova and Othman (2017) also stated that Instagram users' purchase intention is affected by the perceived attractiveness and trustworthiness (credibility) of the influencer.

According to Gunawan and Huarng (2015) attitudes towards information usefulness and subjective norms are influenced by the credibility of the source and social influence, which further lead to consumers' purchase intention. Consumers are highly probable to evaluate the credibility of the source over the quality of the argument since credible sources produce a positive attitude towards the intention of purchasing (Gómez

Macías & Rungsaridworakarn, 2018). Hence, to sum up, this research addresses the role of consumer's attitude towards sponsored posts in influencing their purchase intentions.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The current study is based on the previous models that were generated in related fields, namely- the ‘attitude towards web advertising’ model, the ‘attitude towards the ad’ model and the ‘theory of reasoned action’. The following research models have been slightly adapted and modified for this study in line with Instagram influencers' sponsored posts:

Attitude towards Web Advertising

This model was developed initially by Ducoffe (1995) as a proposition to examine the effectiveness of attitude toward web advertising (as shown in Figure 3.1). Ducoffe (1995) found the predecessors (informativeness, credibility, irritation, and entertainment) of advertising value on the World Wide Web, and understood how advertising could best assist the needs of consumers through advertising value (Ducoffe, 1996). Brackett and Carr (2001) added credibility and relevant demographic variables, in addition to the other three antecedents. Informativeness reflected the strength of advertising to familiarize consumers of product types and product information, and also had a positive influence on attitude towards advertising. Entertainment has recognized itself as engaging or attractive advertising that has had a positive impact on attitude towards advertising. Credibility also had a direct relationship with the attitude towards advertising. Irritation was referred to as “when advertising employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult, or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as an unwanted and irritating influence”.

And, informativeness was regarded as the ability of an advertising to inform consumers of product alternatives so that purchases yielding the greatest possible satisfaction can be made (Ducoffe, 1995). The value of advertising (Ad Value) was referred by Ducoffe (1995) as the ‘subjective evaluation of relative worth or utility of advertising to the consumers’; meaning if the advertising is overall useful, valuable or important to the consumers. Ducoffe (1995) also proposed that the advertising value and advertising attitude were highly associated. He suggested that the four antecedents – entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation, are the key factors that explain how consumers assess the value of advertising in various online environments. These four antecedents were also explained by Gaber et al. (2019) as the primary pillars for consumers’- perceived advertising value for Instagram advertisements. It is therefore anticipated that a customer who evaluates advertising as valuable, is expected to generate favorable attitude. Advertising value is therefore representative of the four antecedents – entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation, respectively.

Thus, this theory provides a satisfactory framework where the four antecedents – informativeness, entertainment, credibility and irritation are used directly to determine the consumers' attitude towards the internet or web advertising (Brackett & Carr, 2001). Hence, for the current research, the following framework can be applied in terms of sponsored posts on Instagram, where the four antecedents – entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation should be regarded as the ‘perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of sponsored posts’ on Instagram (adapted from ‘ad perceptions’) (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989), which would further directly influence the ‘attitude towards sponsored posts’ on Instagram (adapted from ‘attitude towards advertising’). Also, for this study, ‘relevant demographic variables’ are not being

considered or taken into account, as this study focuses on Instagram users, aged 18 to 38 years old. Furthermore, ‘advertising value’ is not being taken into account, as the four antecedents – entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation, respectively, are already representative of the advertising value itself, and hence would directly influence the attitude towards advertising.

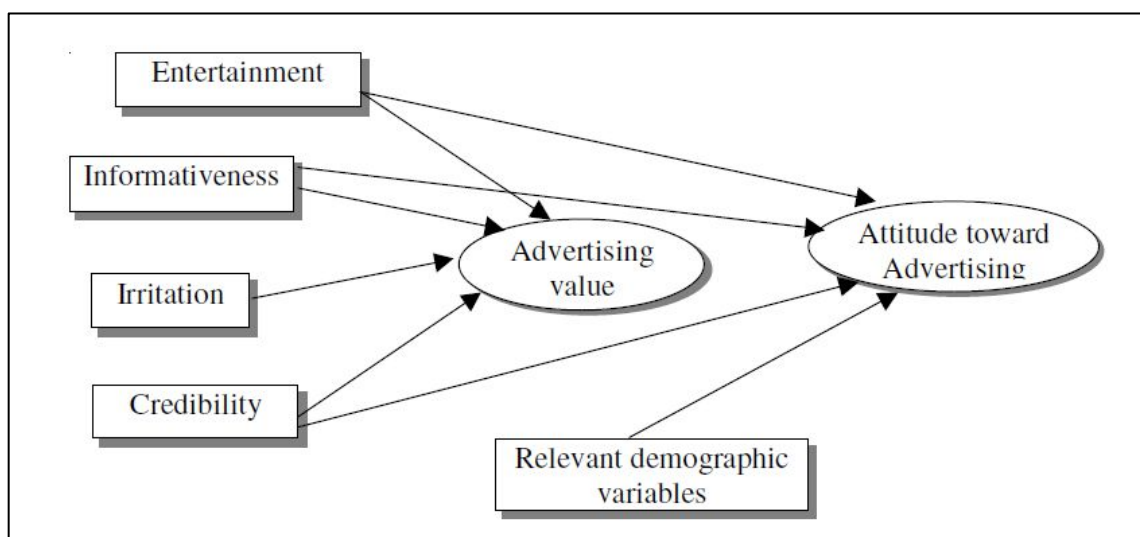


Figure 3.1. Attitude towards Web Advertising Model (Brackett & Carr, 2001).

Attitude towards the Ad

According to MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), attitude towards advertising is of two forms – attitude towards advertising in general and attitude towards specific ads (A_{Ad}) (as shown in Figure 3.2). A_{Ad} is defined by Lutz (1985) as a "pre-disposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion". Thus, for the current study, the ‘attitude towards sponsored posts’ has been adapted from A_{Ad} , since the sponsored posts on Instagram have been considered as a stimulus. This model describes the consumer’s attitude towards any specific advertisements and focuses on the five determinants of A_{Ad} , which

are – ad credibility, ad perceptions, attitude towards the advertiser, attitude towards advertising and mood. Attitude towards the advertiser is described as “a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner toward the sponsoring organization” (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Advertiser's credibility is defined as "the perceived truthfulness or honesty of the sponsor of the ad" (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). For the current research, this theory provides an adequate framework in consideration to the sponsored posts on Instagram, where advertiser's credibility directly influences the attitude towards the advertiser, and which further directly influences the attitude towards advertising (A_{Ad}).

Thus, in terms of the current study regarding sponsored posts on Instagram, it can be said that the ‘Instagram influencer's credibility’ (adapted from ‘advertiser's credibility’), would directly influence the ‘attitude towards the Instagram influencer’ (adapted from ‘attitude towards advertiser’), which would further directly influence the attitude towards the sponsored post on Instagram (adapted from ‘attitude towards advertising’). Moreover, it can also be predicted that the ‘attitude towards the Instagram influencer’ (adapted from ‘attitude towards advertiser’) would directly influence the ‘perception towards sponsored posts’ on Instagram (adapted from ‘ad perceptions’), which also further influences the attitude towards the sponsored post on Instagram (adapted from ‘attitude towards advertising’). Hence, the perception towards sponsored posts (adapted from ‘ad perceptions’), comprises the four antecedents – the perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of sponsored posts.

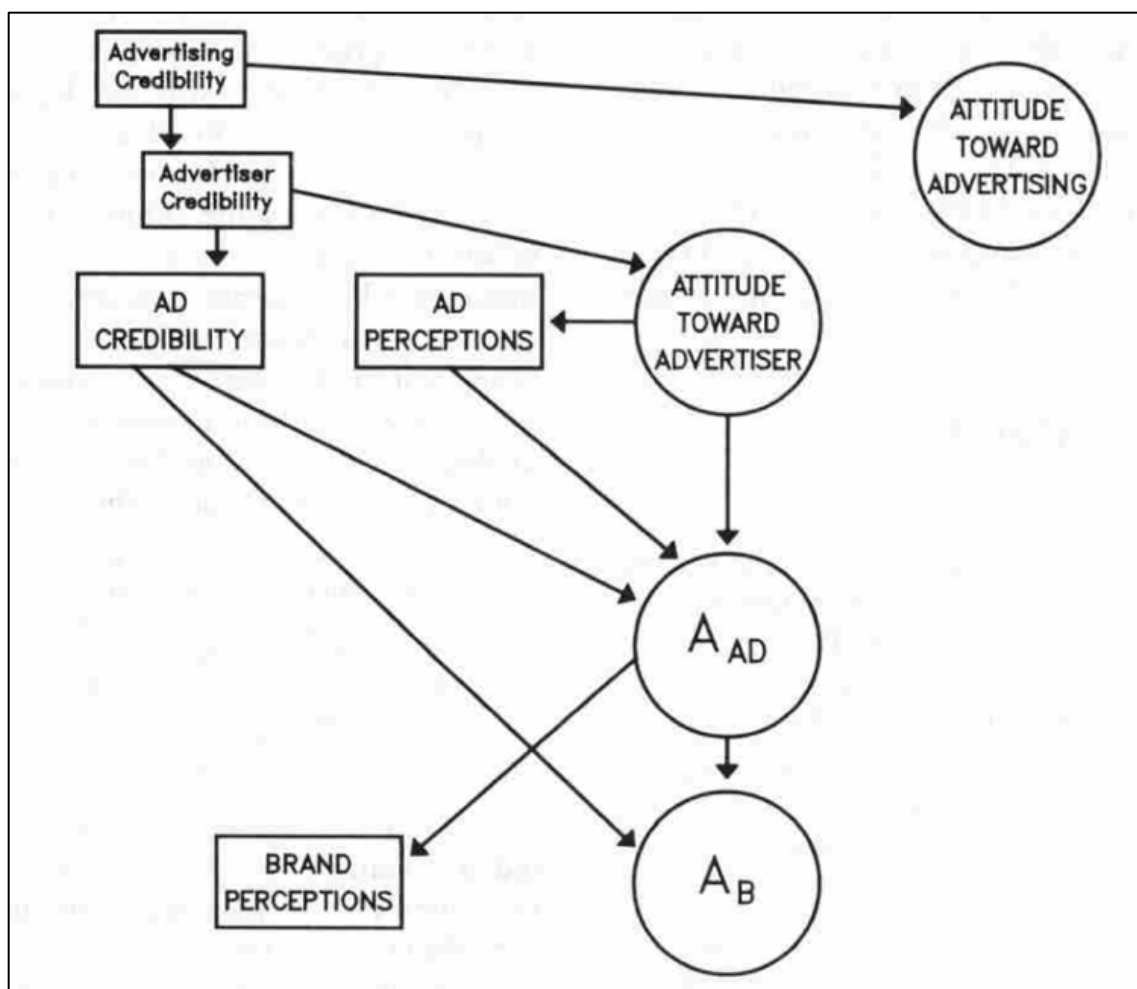


Figure 3.2. Attitude towards the Ad Model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)

Theory of Reasoned Action

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) has had its origins in the context of social psychology. It is intended to explain the relationship between human attitudes and behaviors. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) derived this theory based on previous social psychology researches, models of persuasion, and methods of attitude (as shown in Figure 3.3). The theory is a forerunner to many research models and is a commonly used human behavior theory to justify the adoption of technology (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). According to TRA, the

behavioral intention of an individual is assessed by two constituents: the attitude of the individual towards the behavior, the perception of the person of the social pressures placed on the behavior (referred to as the subjective norm) to perform the behavior. TRA argues that individual behavior is motivated by the individual's behavioral intention, which in turn depends on the person's behavioral attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Although numerous researchers applied this model outside its established conditions, the predictive validity of the model persisted (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988; Dwivedi, Rana, Jeyaraj, Clement, & Williams, 2017).

The TRA was the foundation for the construction of two more broader theoretical inclinations: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) and the widely used Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). According to TPB (Ajzen, 1991), the actions of the user are determined by their intentions, and their attitudes toward behavior influence their intentions. TAM proposes that the more user-friendly technology is and the more useful it is, the more positive one's attitude and intention toward using the technology will establish (Davis, 1989). This association amongst attitude and behavioral intention expressed in TAM suggests that people develop intentions to conduct behaviors toward which they have a positive attitude and has also been explicated in TRA.

The behavior of a person is determined by their intent or enthusiasm to try and the efforts they are prepared to contribute to the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The behavioral attitude concerns the positive or negative feelings of the individual about performing the behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) discovered that attitude was a powerful predictor of intention. The intention is the behavior that drives an individual a sense to perform the behavior (Rezvani et al., 2012). Purchase intention is what the consumer believes he or

she is going to buy and can also be regarded as a physiologic purchasing action of buying a product (Lin & Lu, 2010). It is well explained as the chance that the customer will purchase the products in the future, revealing their intention to buy the products based on their attitudes and emotions (Danieli, 2016). In their study, Ambler and Burne (1999) also explained that the answer to advertising stimuli would eventually incite an attitude towards advertisement and that would ultimately affect buying intentions. TRA also explains 'subjective norms' as the perceived social pressure (or peer pressure) to perform or not to perform the behavior. Hence, in terms of sponsored posts, subjective norms would occur amongst the Instagram users when they open a sponsored post by an influencer and go through the comments on the post, which can further influence their perceived credibility of the sponsored post or their attitude towards the sponsored post or their buying intentions.

Therefore, the purchase intention depends on the positive attitude of the person or consumer in relation to performing that behavior. Hence, concerning the present study on Instagram influencer's sponsored posts, it can be said that the Instagram users' 'attitude towards the sponsored post' (adapted from the 'attitude towards the behavior') would directly influence their 'purchase intention' (adapted from the 'behavioral intention') towards the product displayed in the sponsored post. Furthermore, 'subjective norms' are not being taken into account for this study, as the users are not being allowed to go through the comments on the sponsored posts by Instagram influencers, in case of this research.

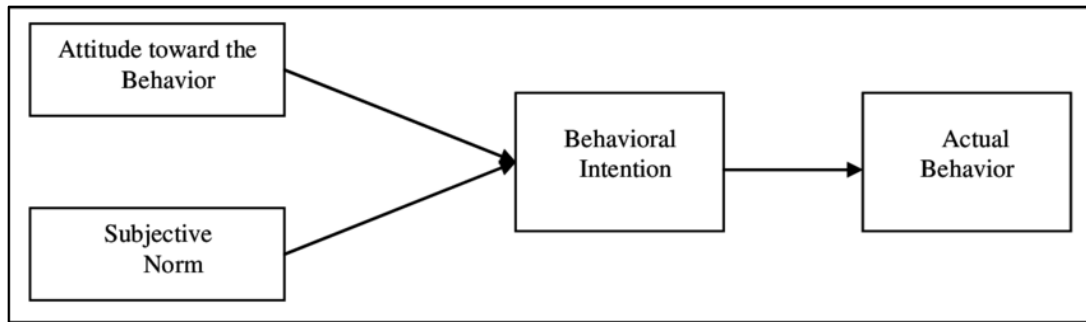


Figure 3.3. Theory of Reasoned Action Model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)

Thus, combining the three research theories, namely - the ‘attitude towards web advertising’ model (Brackett & Carr, 2001), the ‘attitude towards the ad’ model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and the ‘theory of reasoned action’ (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), we get the following research model (as shown in Figure 3.4):

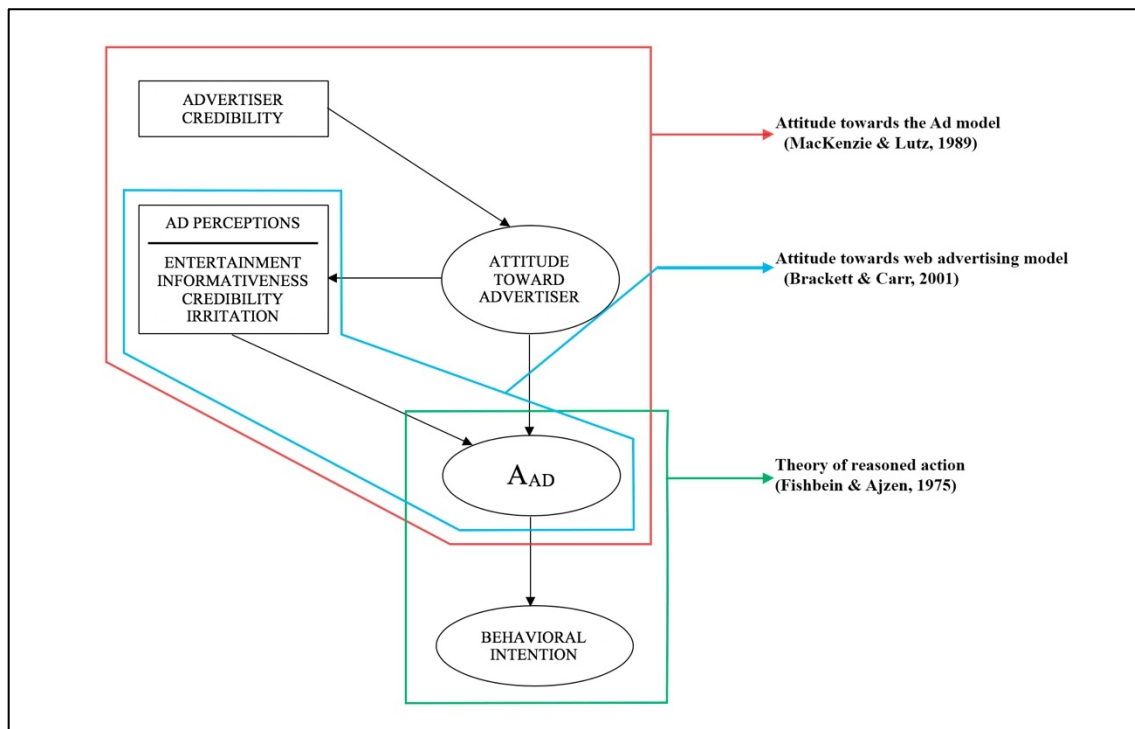


Figure 3.4. Combined research model including the ‘attitude towards web advertising’ model (Brackett & Carr, 2001), the ‘attitude towards the ad’ model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989) and the ‘theory of reasoned action’ (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)

Hence, for the current research in terms of Instagram influencers' sponsored posts, 'advertiser credibility' has been adapted into 'Instagram influencer's credibility'; 'ad perceptions' has been adapted into 'perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility, and irritation of the sponsored post'; 'attitude toward advertiser' has been adapted into 'attitude towards Instagram influencer'; 'attitude toward Ad' has been adapted into 'attitude towards sponsored post'; and, 'behavioral intention' has been adapted into 'purchase intention'.

Research Questions

The following research questions are therefore central to this study:

RQ 1: What is the level of users' Instagram usage activity?

RQ 2: To what extent does Instagram influencer's credibility affect the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer? [Adapted from Attitude towards the Ad Model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)]

RQ 3: To what extent does the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer affects their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post? [Adapted from Attitude towards the Ad Model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)]

RQ 4: To what extent does the perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of the sponsored post have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post? [Adapted from Attitude towards Web Advertising Model (Brackett & Carr, 2001) and Attitude towards the Ad Model (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)]

RQ 5: To what extent does the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post affects their purchase intention? [Adapted from Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)]

Proposed Research Model

The following research model (Figure 3.5) is therefore proposed from the above discussions:

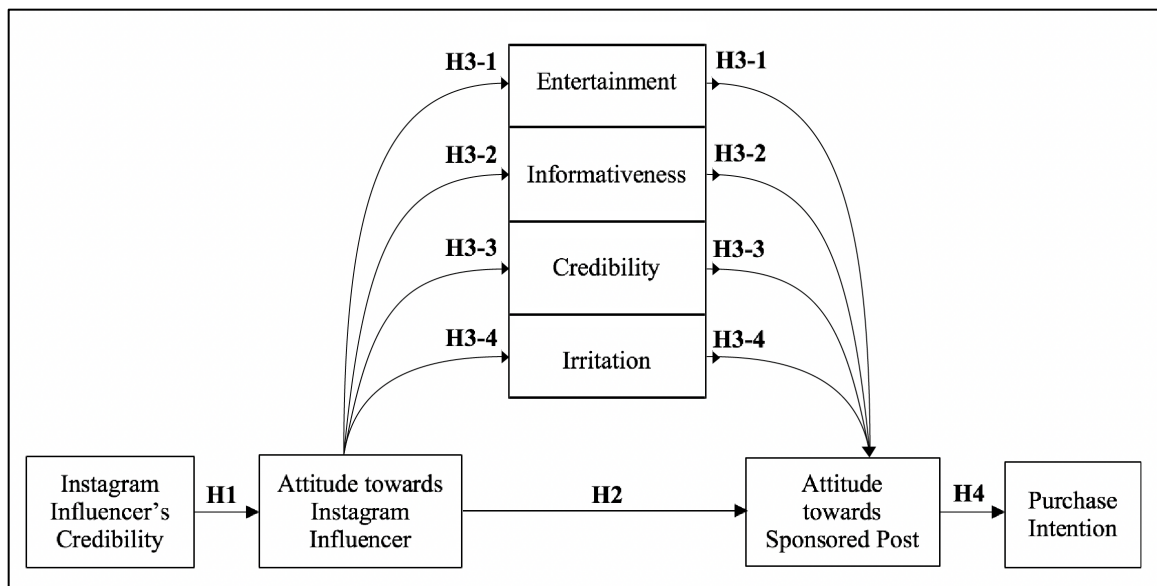


Figure 3.5. Proposed Research Model

Research Hypotheses

From the preliminary discussions, the following hypotheses are justified:

H1: Instagram influencer's credibility significantly affects the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer.

H2: The users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer significantly affects their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H3: The perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of the sponsored post have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H3-1: Entertainment will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H3-2: Informativeness will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H3-3: Credibility has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H3-4: Irritation has a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

H4: The users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post significantly affects their purchase intention.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of the study, the operational definitions of this research are as follows:

1. Instagram influencer's credibility: Instagram influencer's credibility refers to the degree to which the Instagram users observe the influencers in order to claim them truthful and believable, and also to attain knowledge and skills in their recognition of the product sponsored in their posts.
2. Attitude towards Instagram influencer: Attitude towards Instagram influencer refers to the degree to which the Instagram users react in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way after perceiving the influencer.
3. Entertainment: Entertainment refers to the capability of the sponsored post to satisfy the audience's need for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment or emotional enjoyment.
4. Informativeness: Informativeness refers to the capability of the sponsored post on Instagram to inform or notify consumers of product choices so that the consumers can make purchases allowing the highest attainable satisfaction.
5. Credibility: Credibility refers to how proficient the sponsored post on Instagram is looked upon to be in the area of interest, and also as how well the consumers receiving the information trusts it.
6. Irritation: Irritation refers to when the sponsored post causes to annoy, offend, insult or cause an irritating influence on the Instagram users.
7. Attitude towards sponsored posts: Attitude towards sponsored posts refers to the predisposition of Instagram users to respond favorably or unfavorably to the sponsored post as a stimulus on Instagram.

8. Purchase Intention: Purchase intention refers to the intentions of the Instagram user to purchase products in the future, which are demonstrated within the sponsored post by the influencer.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This study has been designed to determine the factors which determine the impacts of the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post on their purchase intention in the United States. This chapter focuses on the sample, measures, instrument development and data analysis to test the variables.

Sample

The sample population of this research was active Instagram users, aged between 18 years to 38 years, in the United States. For this quantitative study, upon approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB), a structured questionnaire was developed on Qualtrics and distributed in the United States. The data was collected from both male, and female participants, using the online paid service tool of Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) provided by Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk), by linking M-Turk to the Qualtrics survey questionnaire. The Qualtrics survey was live for a week in Spring 2019. The data was originally gathered from a sample of 563 respondents, but the actual number of participants for the data analysis was 300, after eliminating the respondents who answered incomplete survey or uploaded unnecessary screenshots or were not 18 years to 38 years old (either below 18 years or above 38 years). The respondents were also notified about the anonymity of the data collection method, and also about that there were neither right nor wrong answers. Screening questions were also asked to identify the study population.

Measures

To test the predictions, the questionnaire was made from the measures taken from existent theories and literature, adapted for this research (see below Table 4.1) to be in line with the sponsored posts by Instagram influencers. The first part of the questionnaire included the screening question about respondent's activeness on Instagram. It was measured on a six-point Likert scale adapted from the 'Frequency' scale by Tan & Teo (2015): 1 = Never (no times), 2 = Very Rarely (once a month or less), 3 = Rarely (2 to 3 times a month), 4 = Occasionally (2 to 3 times a week), 5 = Frequently (1 to 2 times a day), 6 = Very Frequently (more than 2 times a day); where 'Never' represented 0% of the time and 'Very Frequently' represented close to 100% of the time. The respondents who answered 'Never' to activeness on Instagram, were asked to leave the survey. Screening questions regarding their familiarity with sponsored posts by Instagram influencers and their age were also incorporated in the survey. The respondents who answered 'No' to 'Are you familiar with Sponsored posts by an Instagram influencer?', were asked to leave the survey. It also additionally included questions regarding their gender and Instagram usage activity.

The instruments for Instagram usage activity were adapted for the current study from the 'Passive and Active Use Measure' scale by Trifiro (2018), which was first created by Gerson, Plagnol and Corr (2017) for Facebook. It included the following 10 statement items reflecting respondent's Instagram usage activities – 'Posting photos to your profile', 'Commenting on other users' photos', 'Sending direct messages to other users', 'Checking to see what someone else is up to', 'Viewing photos', 'Viewing videos', 'Tagging other users in videos', 'Browsing the newsfeed passively (without

liking or commenting on anything)', 'Browsing the newsfeed actively (liking and commenting on other users' posts)', and 'Looking through my friend's posts'. Responses for Instagram usage activity were measured on a five-point Likert scale that was adapted from the 'Frequency' scale of using an application on a smartphone employed by Tan & Teo (2015): 1 = Very Rarely (once a month or less), 2 = Rarely (2 to 3 times a month), 3 = Occasionally (2 to 3 times a week), 4 = Frequently (1 to 2 times a day), 5 = Very Frequently (more than 2 times a day). The option 'Never' was removed from Instagram usage activity Likert scale since the respondents who answered 'Never active on Instagram' initially in the screening question, were dismissed from the survey. Therefore, it was anticipated beforehand that all the respondents who completed the survey, actively revealed their usage activity on Instagram.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the respondents to 'Go to your Instagram', 'Open an influencer's profile which you follow the most', 'Take a screenshot of their most recent sponsored post' and 'Upload the screenshot'. The respondents were then asked to keep in mind the screenshot they would 'Upload', of a sponsored post by an Instagram influencer, and answer the questions related to Instagram influencer's credibility, attitude towards Instagram influencer, perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of sponsored posts, attitude towards the sponsored post and their purchase intention. This ensured that the variables measured were more accurate to the particular screenshot uploaded by the participant in the survey. A total of 33 questions were used to measure the variables in this study.

Instagram Influencer's Credibility: The variable influencer's credibility was measured the extent to which the respondents make claims about the influencer to be truthful and believable. The responses were measured on a 7-point semantic differential

scale, reflecting upon the question ‘How would you rate the Influencer along with these characteristics?’. The scale consisted of 3 instruments adapted from MacKenzie and Lutz’s (1989) study of antecedents of attitude towards the ad, which are – ‘unconvincing/convincing’, ‘unbelievable/believable’ and ‘biased/unbiased’; amongst which ‘biased/unbiased’ was originally a reversed-scale.

Attitude towards Instagram Influencer: The variable attitude towards influencer measured the respondent’s evaluation of Instagram’s influencer – favorably or unfavorably. The responses were measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale, reflecting upon the question ‘How would you rate the Influencer along with these characteristics?’. The scale consisted of 3 instruments adapted from MacKenzie and Lutz’s (1989) study of antecedents of attitude towards the ad, which are – ‘bad/good’, ‘unpleasant/pleasant’ and ‘unfavorable/favorable’.

Entertainment: The variable entertainment measured the respondent’s perceived level of enjoyment or amusement after watching the sponsored post by an Instagram influencer. The responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) reflecting upon the question ‘How much of the following do you think the Sponsored Post is, in terms of entertainment?’. The scale consisted of 5 instruments adapted from Ducoffe’s (1996) study of advertising on the web, which are – ‘It is entertaining’, ‘It is enjoyable’, ‘It is pleasing’, ‘It is fun to see’ (adapted from ‘fun to use’), and ‘It is exciting’.

Informativeness: The variable informativeness measured the ability of the sponsored post by an Instagram influencer to inform respondents about the product and their relative information. The responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) reflecting upon the question ‘How much of the

following do you think the Sponsored Post is, in terms of informativeness?'. The scale consisted of 7 instruments adapted from Ducoffe's (1996) study of advertising on the web, which are – 'good source of product information', 'supplies relevant product information', 'provides timely information', 'good source of up-to-date product information', 'makes product information immediately accessible', 'convenient source of product information' and 'supplies complete product information'.

Credibility: The variable credibility measured the respondent's beliefs about the sponsored post by an Instagram influencer to be truthful and believable. The responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) reflecting upon the question 'How much of the following do you think the Sponsored Post is, in terms of credibility?'. The scale consisted of 3 instruments adapted from Brackett and Carr's (2001) study of cyberspace and media advertising, which are – 'It is credible', 'It is trustworthy', and 'It is believable'.

Irritation: The variable irritation measured the respondent's beliefs about the sponsored post by an Instagram influencer to be annoying, offending, or causing an irritating influence. The responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) reflecting upon the question 'How much of the following do you think the Sponsored Post is, in terms of irritation?'. The scale consisted of 5 instruments adapted from Ducoffe's (1996) study of advertising on the web, which are – 'It insults people's intelligence', 'It is annoying', 'It is irritating', 'It is deceptive', and 'It is confusing'.

Attitude towards Sponsored Post: The variable attitude towards sponsored post measured the respondent's evaluation of sponsored post – favorably or unfavorably. The responses were measured on a 7-point semantic differential scale, reflecting upon the

question ‘How would you rate the Sponsored Post along with these characteristics?’. The scale consisted of 5 instruments adapted from ‘Attitude towards the Ad (A_{ad})’ scales given by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), and Teng, Laroche, and Zhu (2007). The items – ‘bad/good’, ‘unpleasant/pleasant’ and ‘unfavorable/favorable’ were adapted from MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), and the items – ‘uncreative/creative’ and ‘unattractive/attractive’ were adapted from Teng, Laroche, and Zhu (2007).

Purchase Intention: The variable purchase intention measured the respondent’s intention to buy the product which was promoted by the Instagram influencer in their sponsored post. The responses were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) reflecting upon the question ‘How likely are you to purchase the product which was promoted by the Instagram influencer in their sponsored post?’. The scale adapted from Rebelo’s (2017) study of influencers’ credibility on Instagram originally consisted of 3 items that were initially adapted from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal’s (1991) research on buyers’ product evaluations. For this study, 2 items were used from Rebelo (2017) to measure purchase intention, which are – ‘It is likely that I will buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram’, and ‘I am willing to buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram’.

Instruments Development

The scales and constructs that have been adapted from the previous researches (Table 4.1) for each variable in this study are as follows:

Table 4.1
Survey instrument items and their references

Instruments	References
Instagram Usage Activity (IUA)	
Posting photos to your profile	
Commenting on other users' photos	
Sending direct messages to other users	
Checking to see what someone else is up to	(Trifiro, 2018)
Viewing photos	(Gerson, Plagnol, & Corr, 2017)
Viewing videos	(Tan & Teo, 2015)
Tagging other users in videos	
Browsing the newsfeed passively (without liking or commenting on anything)	
Browsing the newsfeed actively (liking and commenting on other users' posts)	
Looking through my friend's posts	
Instagram Influencer's Credibility (INF_CRE)	
unconvincing/convincing	(MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)
unbelievable/believable	
biased/unbiased	
Attitude towards Instagram Influencer (ATT_INF)	
bad/good	
unpleasant/pleasant	(MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)
unfavorable/favorable	
Entertainment (SP_ENT)	
It is entertaining	
It is enjoyable	
It is pleasing	(Ducoffe, 1996)
It is fun to see (adapted from 'fun to use')	
It is exciting	
Informativeness (SP_INF)	
Good source of product information	
Supplies relevant product information	
Provides timely information	(Ducoffe, 1996)
Good source of up-to-date product information	
Makes product information immediately accessible	
A convenient source of product information	
Supplies complete product information	
Credibility (SP_CRE)	
It is credible	
It is trustworthy	(Brackett & Carr, 2001)
It is believable	
Irritation (SP_IRR)	
It insults people's intelligence	
It is annoying	
It is irritating	(Ducoffe, 1996)
It is deceptive	
It is confusing	
Attitude towards Sponsored Post (ATT_SP)	
bad/good	
unpleasant/pleasant	(MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)
unfavorable/favorable	(Teng, Laroche, & Zhu, 2007)
uncreative/creative	
unattractive/attractive	
Purchase Intention (PI)	
It is likely that I will buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram.	(Rebelo, 2017)
I am willing to buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram.	(Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991)

Data Analysis

For this study, simple linear regression analyses was performed to determine the association between variables proposed in the research hypotheses, and also, mediation analysis was performed using SPSS Process Model given by Andrew F. Hayes (Hayes, 2017) to test the mediating effects of perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of the sponsored post on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Descriptive statistics were also implemented to examine the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The data analysis was administered in three stages using SPSS. The first stage was implementing descriptive statistics including calculating means, standard deviations and reliability measures for the study variables. The second was performing simple linear regression analysis of the data to learn the associations between variables proposed in the research hypotheses. In the third stage, mediation analysis using Hayes' (2017) 'PROCESS macro' was performed using parallel multiple mediators' model to test the research hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample population of this study consisted of 300 participants, out of which 27% were male ($n = 81$), 72.3% were female ($n = 217$) and the rest 0.7% belonged to the 'Others' category ($n = 2$) (as shown in Table 5.1). 42.7% of the participants were from the age group category of 18 to 24 years old ($n = 128$) and the rest 57.3% of the participants fell under the age group category of 25 to 38 years old ($n = 172$). Hence, it was derived from these statistics that in this study, 42.7% of the total sample population belonged to the Generation Z (generation born between 1995 and 2015; or are currently between 4-24 years old) category (Kasasa, 2019). Furthermore, it was also derived that 57.3% of the total sample population in this study belonged to the Generation Y or Millennials (generation born between 1980 and 1994; or are currently between 25-39

years old) category (Kasasa, 2019). Table 5.1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the categories ‘age groups’ and ‘gender’ tested in this study.

Table 5.1
Descriptive Sample Statistics of Age Groups and Gender.

		Frequency	Percent
Age Groups	18-24	128	42.70
	25-38	172	57.30
	Total	300	100.00
Gender	Male	81	27.00
	Female	217	72.30
	Other	2	0.70
	Total	300	100.00

Also, in the Figure 5.1, which represents the bar-chart of age distribution (18 years to 38 years old) amongst all the participants of the study, it can be noticed that the highest percentage of participants in the study was of 24 years old (11%), followed up by 25 years old (8.7%) and then 26 years old (7.3%). Whereas, the lowest percentage of participants in the study was overall estimated from the participants who were 35 years old to 38 years old, with the least one being 37 years old (0.7%).

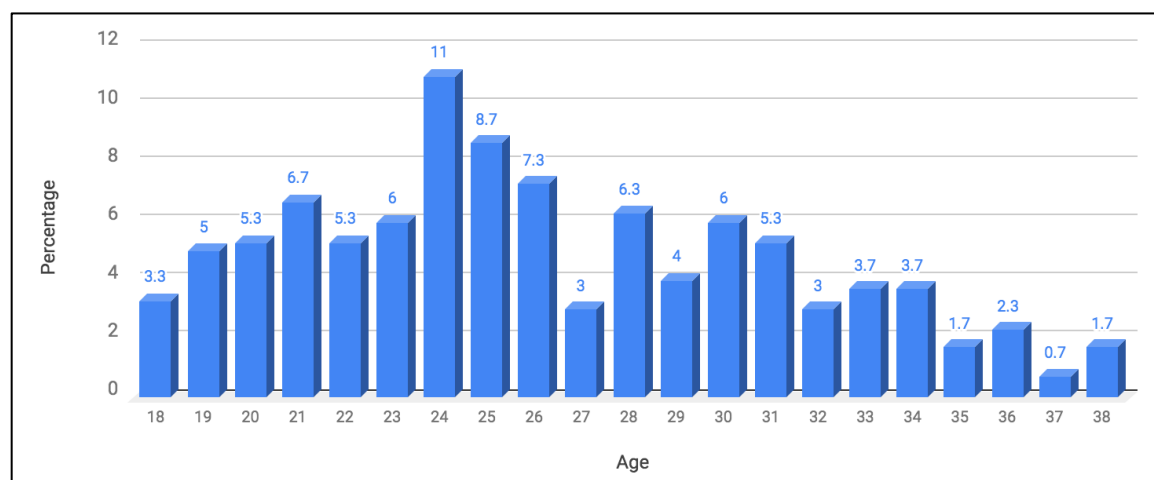


Figure 5.1. Bar chart showing Age distribution (in percentage) amongst participants (n = 300).

Figure 5.2 represents the bar-chart of distribution of users' activeness on Instagram (amongst all the participants of the study, $n = 300$). It was observed that out of all the participants ($n = 300$), 59.3% were active 'very frequently' on Instagram (more than 2 times a day), 26.7% were active 'frequently' on Instagram (1 to 2 times a day), 10.7% were active 'occasionally' on Instagram (2 to 3 times a week), 2% were active 'rarely' on Instagram (2 to 3 times a month), and 1.3% were active 'very rarely' on Instagram (once a month or less).

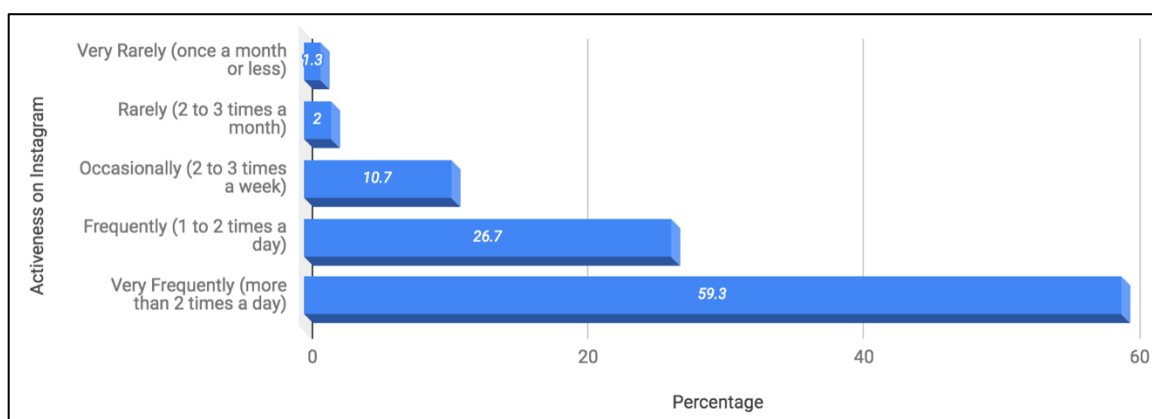


Figure 5.2. Bar chart showing distribution of 'Activeness on Instagram' (in percentage) amongst participants ($n = 300$).

Furthermore, Table 5.2 shows the elaborated descriptive statistics for 'activeness on Instagram' in regard to the categories 'age' and 'gender'. The frequency table output from Table 5.2 showed that out of the highest participants who were active 'very frequently' on Instagram ($n = 178$), 47 participants were male, and 131 participants were female; and also, that 78 participants were from the age group 18 to 24 years old, and 100 participants were from the age group 25 to 38 years old. Similarly, out of the second highest participants who were active 'frequently' on Instagram ($n = 80$), 20 participants were male, 58 participants were female, and 2 participants were from 'Others' category;

and also, that 35 participants were from the age group 18 to 24 years old, and 45 participants were from the age group 25 to 38 years old.

Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics for Activeness on Instagram for the categories Gender and Age Groups.

Activeness on Instagram	Percentage	Frequency	Gender			Age Groups	
			Male	Female	Other	18-24	25-38
Very Rarely (once a month or less)	1.30	4	3	1	1	2	2
Rarely (2 to 3 times a month)	2.00	6	2	4	0	4	2
Occasionally (2 to 3 times a week)	10.70	32	9	23	0	9	23
Frequently (1 to 2 times a day)	26.70	80	20	58	2	35	45
Very Frequently (more than 2 times a day)	59.30	178	47	131	0	78	100
Total	100.00	300	81	217	2	128	172
			300			300	

Figure 5.3 represents the bar-chart showing the frequency distribution of users' 'Instagram Usage Activity' amongst all the participants of the study ($n = 300$), and simultaneously, Table 5.3 shows their descriptive statistics. The frequency table output showed that the highest participants: (i) posted photos to their profile occasionally (2 to 3 times a week) ($n = 95$); (ii) commented on others photo's occasionally (2 to 3 times a week) ($n = 104$); (iii) send direct messages to other users occasionally (2 to 3 times a week) ($n = 81$); (iv) checked to see what someone else is up to very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 112$); (v) viewed photos very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 181$); (vi) viewed videos very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 162$); (vii) tagged other users in videos rarely (2 to 3 times a month) ($n = 88$); (viii) browsed the newsfeed passively (without liking or commenting on anything) very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 130$); (ix) browsed the newsfeed actively (liking and commenting

on others posts) very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 107$); (x) looked through their friend's posts very frequently (more than 2 times a day) ($n = 125$).

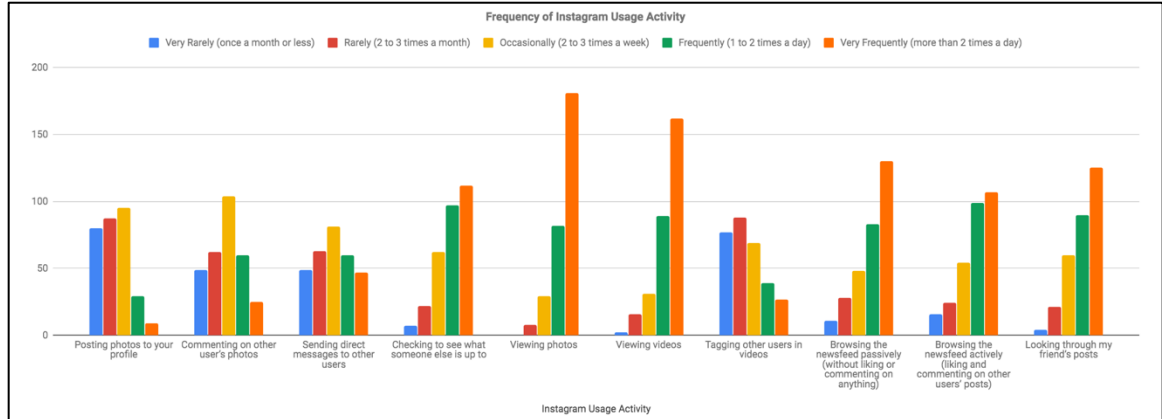


Figure 5.3. Bar chart showing the frequency of 'Instagram Usage Activity' amongst participants ($n = 300$).

Table 5.3

Descriptive Statistics showing the frequency for 'Instagram Usage Activity'.

Instagram Usage Activity	Mean	Std. Dev.	Frequency				
			Very Rarely (once a month or less)	Rarely (2 to 3 times a month)	Occasionally (2 to 3 times a week)	Frequently (1 to 2 times a day)	Very Frequently (more than 2 times a day)
Posting photos to your profile	2.33	1.064	80	87	95	29	9
Commenting on other users' photos	2.83	1.171	49	62	104	60	25
Sending direct messages to other users	2.98	1.302	49	63	81	60	47
Checking to see what someone else is up to	3.95	1.041	7	22	62	97	112
Viewing photos	4.45	0.777	0	8	29	82	181
Viewing videos	4.31	0.907	2	16	31	89	162
Tagging other users in videos	2.50	1.252	77	88	69	39	27
Browsing the newsfeed passively (without liking or commenting on anything)	3.98	1.140	11	28	48	83	130
Browsing the newsfeed actively (liking and commenting on other users' posts)	3.86	1.149	16	24	54	99	107
Looking through my friend's posts	4.04	1.009	4	21	60	90	125

The participants in the study were asked to upload a screenshot of their most followed Instagram influencer's most current sponsored post. After the data was cleaned to a sample of 300 participants, the images uploaded by the participants in the study were examined very carefully. For each of the sponsored post's screenshot, the brand promoted (or tagged inside the sponsored post) by the influencer was noted down in the data file. The promoted products by the influencers inside the sponsored post were then classified into 17 categories (shown in Figure 5.4), namely, Beauty/Cosmetics (26.3%), Clothing/Fashion (16%), Health/Fitness (10%), Food/Beverage (9.7%), Media (8.7%), Accessories (7%), Software/Technology (4%), Sportswear/Activewear (3.3%), Décor (2.3%), Travel (2%), Recreational Drug (2%), Pet Supplies (2%), Education (1.7%), Electronic Gadgets (1.7%), Baby/Kids Goods (1.3%), Games/Toys (1.3%), and Finance (0.7%). Figure 8 represents the bar chart showing the percentage distribution of the sponsored posts' categories amongst all the participants of the study.

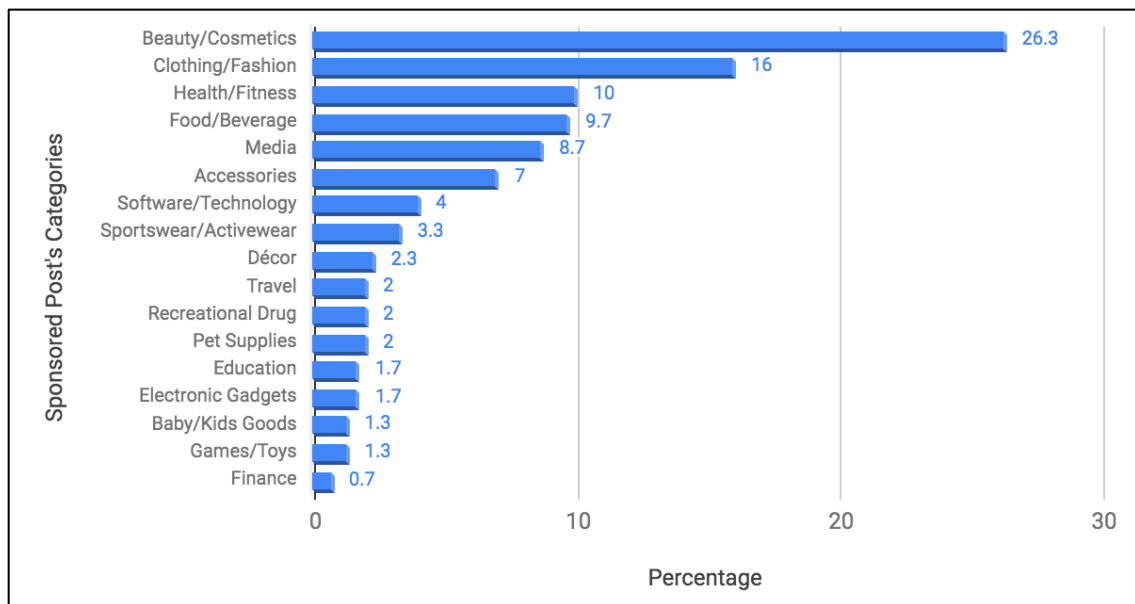


Figure 5.4. Bar chart showing the distribution of Sponsored Posts' categories (in percentage).

Table 5.4 shows the descriptive statistics of the distribution of the sponsored posts' categories with age and gender amongst all the participants of the study (n = 300). The frequency output showed that the highest sponsored posts were from the Beauty/Cosmetics category (n = 79); out of which 66 posts were from female participants and 13 posts were from male participants; and also, out of them 39 participants were from the age group 18 to 24 years old, and 40 participants were from the age group 25 to 38 years old. And the second highest sponsored posts were from the Clothing/Fashion category (n = 16); out of which 35 posts were from female participants and 13 posts were from male participants; and also, out of them 23 participants were from the age group 18 to 24 years old, and 25 participants were from the age group 25 to 38 years old.

Table 5.4
Descriptive Sample Statistics for the distribution of Sponsored Posts' categories.

Sponsored Post's Category	Percentage	Frequency	Gender			Age Groups	
			Male	Female	Other	18-24	25-38
Clothing/Fashion	16	48	13	35	0	23	25
Accessories	7	21	7	13	1	8	13
Beauty/Cosmetics	26.3	79	13	66	0	39	40
Travel	2	6	2	4	0	4	2
Health/Fitness	10	30	11	19	0	11	19
Recreational Drug	2	6	2	4	0	3	3
Food/Beverage	9.7	29	9	20	0	8	21
Software/Technology	4	12	2	10	0	4	8
Sportswear/Activewear	3.3	10	4	6	0	3	7
Pet Supplies	2	6	2	4	0	1	5
Baby/Kids Goods	1.3	4	0	4	0	1	3
Education	1.7	5	1	4	0	2	3
Décor	2.3	7	0	7	0	1	6
Electronic Gadgets	1.7	5	2	3	0	2	3
Media	8.7	26	13	13	0	15	11
Games/Toys	1.3	4	0	3	1	1	3
Finance	0.7	2	0	2	0	2	0
Total	100	300	81	217	2	128	172
			300			300	

The descriptive statistics were run on SPSS for all the variables proposed in the research model of the study (as shown in Table 5.5). The average score of influencer's credibility was 5.5 (SD = 1.34); for attitude towards influencer was 6.15 (SD = 1.28); for perceived entertainment of sponsored post was 4.95 (SD = 1.52); for perceived informativeness of sponsored post was 4.86 (SD = 1.52); for perceived credibility of sponsored post was 5.41 (SD = 1.48); for perceived irritation of sponsored post was 2.1 (SD = 1.42); for attitude towards sponsored post was 5.54 (SD = 1.34); and, for purchase intention was 3.9 (SD = 1.86).

Table 5.5
Descriptive Sample Statistics for the study variables.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
INF_CRE	5.5022	1.33764	1.789	-1.061	0.141	1.103	0.281
ATT_INF	6.1478	1.2819	1.643	-2.017	0.141	4.188	0.281
SP_ENT	4.9527	1.51762	2.303	-0.63	0.141	-0.03	0.281
SP_INF	4.8624	1.51984	2.31	-0.629	0.141	-0.059	0.281
SP_CRE	5.4111	1.47614	2.179	-0.943	0.141	0.48	0.281
SP_IRR	2.096	1.41766	2.01	1.322	0.141	0.87	0.281
ATT_SP	5.5427	1.34086	1.798	-1.069	0.141	1.04	0.281
PI	3.8983	1.86245	3.469	-0.041	0.141	-1.079	0.281

Reliability and Validity

The instrument scales used in this study were all derived from the instruments of previous studies given by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), Ducoffe (1996), Brackett and Carr (2001), Teng, Laroche, and Zhu (2007), and Rebelo (2017) (as shown in Table 4.1). A reliability analysis was carried out for all the variables in the study and was investigated using Cronbach's alpha (which is the measure of internal consistency reliability of a set of measures). The reliability analysis was able to use all the 300 observations in the study. Table 5.6 summarizes the results of the scale reliability for all

the study variables. Reliability above 0.70 is considered to be the acceptable value or the level of measure to indicate that the respective scale provides consistence results and is reliable for further analysis. Hence, the results indicate that all the constructs of the study, which are - influencer's credibility ($\alpha = 0.788$), attitude towards influencer ($\alpha = 0.961$), perceived entertainment of sponsored post ($\alpha = 0.945$), perceived informativeness of sponsored post ($\alpha = 0.953$), perceived credibility of sponsored post ($\alpha = 0.962$), perceived irritation of sponsored post ($\alpha = 0.94$), attitude towards sponsored post ($\alpha = 0.928$) and the purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.899$), all have relatively high internal consistency or are reliable as a measuring tool. Furthermore, all the constructs or item statistics were individually examined, and it was suggested for all the constructs that the elimination of items would not increase the reliability of the scale. Table 5.6 summarizes the number of items and Cronbach's Alpha for each of the variable used in this study.

Table 5.6
Scale reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the study variables.

Constructs	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items
INF_CRE	3	0.788	0.813
ATT_INF	3	0.961	0.961
SP_ENT	5	0.945	0.946
SP_INF	7	0.953	0.954
SP_CRE	3	0.962	0.962
SP_IRR	5	0.94	0.94
ATT_SP	5	0.928	0.931
PI	2	0.899	0.899

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted that Instagram influencer's credibility would significantly affect the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer. The dependent variable for testing Hypothesis 1 was users' attitude towards Instagram influencer. The independent variable

was Instagram influencer's credibility. A simple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the prediction of the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer from the Instagram influencer's credibility. The scatterplot showed that there was a strong positive linear relationship between the two variables, which was confirmed with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.667. The simple linear regression analysis result showed that the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer was significantly predicted by the Instagram influencer's credibility, $F(1, 298) = 238.79, p < .001, R^2 = 0.445$, indicating that approximately 44.5% of the variance in users' attitude towards Instagram influencer was explained by Instagram influencer's credibility. Influencer's credibility significantly predicted the attitude towards Instagram influencer, $B = 0.64, t(298) = 15.45, p < .001$. Therefore, Instagram influencer's credibility is significantly related to the attitude towards Instagram influencer. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Table 5.7 summarizes the results of the simple linear regression model.

Table 5.7
Results for Linear Regression with Influencer's Credibility predicting Attitude towards Influencer.

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>t</i>	Sig.	95% CI
(Intercept)	2.63	0.23		11.23	.000	(2.17, 3.09)
Influencer's Credibility	0.64	0.04	0.67	15.45	.000	(0.56, 0.72)

Note. Results: $F(1,298) = 238.79, ***p < .001, R^2 = 0.445$

Unstandardized Regression Equation: Attitude towards Influencer = $2.63 + 0.64 \times \text{Influencer's Credibility}$

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer would significantly affect their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. The dependent variable for testing Hypothesis 2 was users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. The independent variable was users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer. A simple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the prediction of the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post

from the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer. The scatterplot showed that there was a strong positive linear relationship between the two variables, which was confirmed with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.571. The simple linear regression analysis result showed that the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post was significantly predicted by the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer, $F(1, 298) = 144.09, p < .001, R^2 = 0.326$, indicating that approximately 32.6% of the variance in users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post was explained by the attitude towards the Instagram influencer. Attitude towards the Instagram influencer significantly predicted the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post, $B = 0.59, t(298) = 12, p < .001$. Therefore, attitude towards the Instagram influencer is significantly related to the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported. Table 5.8 summarizes the results of the simple linear regression model.

Table 5.8
Results for Linear Regression with Attitude towards Influencer predicting Attitude towards Sponsored Post.

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>t</i>	Sig.	95% CI
(Intercept)	1.87	0.31		5.99	.000	(1.26, 2.49)
Attitude towards Influencer	0.59	0.05	0.57	12.00	.000	(0.50, 0.69)

Note. Results: $F(1,298) = 144.09, ***p < .001, R^2 = 0.326$

Unstandardized Regression Equation: Attitude towards Sponsored Post = $1.87 + 0.59 \times \text{Attitude towards Influencer}$

A mediation analysis was performed to test Hypothesis 3, using Hayes' PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) with 'Model 4' using the parallel multiple mediator model (Hayes, 2017). In the parallel multiple mediator model, the antecedent variable *X* (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) was modeled as influencing the consequent variable *Y* (Attitude towards Sponsored Post), directly as well as indirectly through four mediators (perceived Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility and Irritation of the

sponsored post), with the condition that no mediator casually influences another (as shown in Figure 5.5). The macro practices a bootstrap technique to test the mediation hypotheses, which is a reliable method for testing the statistical significance of indirect effects (Hayes, 2017). Bootstrapping is a ‘non-parametric’ approach based on resampling with replacement and evaluating the indirect effects in each resampled data set, which is done many times (for example 5000 times). After repeating this process, a thousand times, the estimated sampling distribution of the indirect effects is formulated, which is then used to acquire bootstrap confidence intervals (lower and upper) to test the statistical significance of the total and specific indirect effects. According to Hayes (2017), the effect is recognized as a significant one, if the confidence interval does not include zero. If the confidence interval includes the value zero, the determination is that there is not sufficient proof that the variable X affects the variable Y through the specific mediator. For this study, the analysis comprised the default bootstrapping (5000 bootstrap resamples) procedure drawn with replacement from the original sample of 300 respondents, and a 95% confidence interval was implemented to construct the indirect path. Also, the estimated total effect (c), direct effect (c') and indirect effects of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) were calculated.

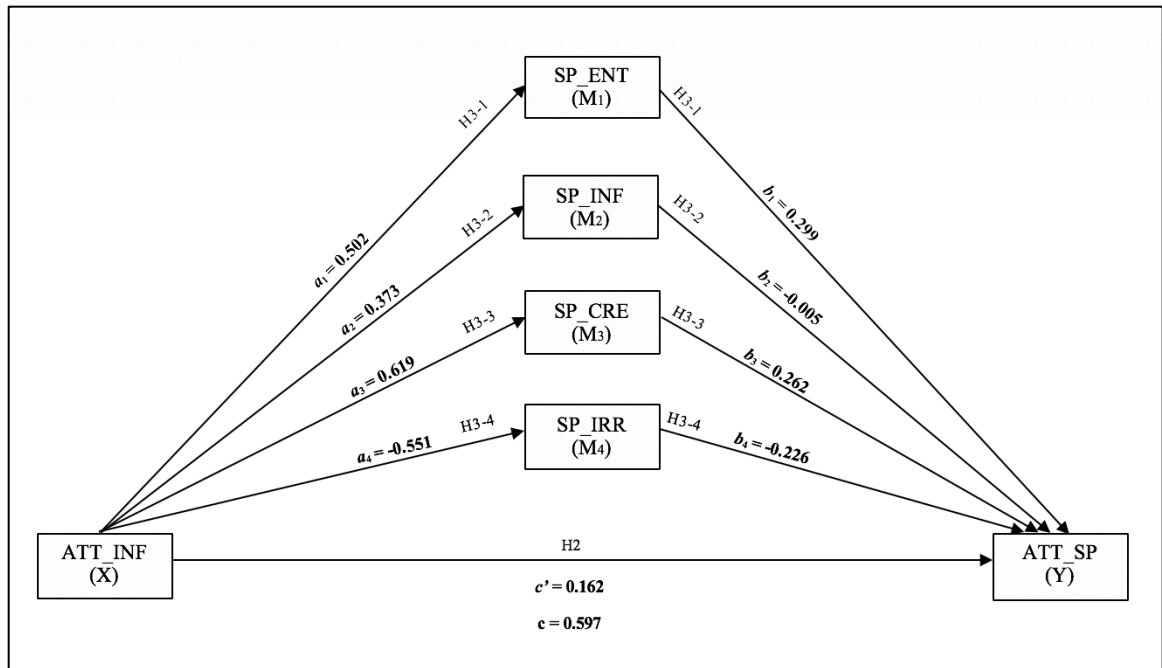


Figure 5.5. Hypothesized Multiple Mediation Model: Path diagrams illustrating the total effect (c), direct effect (c') and indirect effects of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) through four mediators (perceived Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility and Irritation of the sponsored post).

The hypothesized multiple mediation model (as shown in Figure 5.5) was used to determine whether the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) affects the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) through the four proposed mediators: perceived Entertainment (M_1), Informativeness (M_2), Credibility (M_3) and Irritation (M_4) of the sponsored post. The 'a' coefficients (a_1 , a_2 , a_3 and a_4) represent the effect of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the mediators (M_1 , M_2 , M_3 and M_4). The 'b' coefficients (b_1 , b_2 , b_3 and b_4) represent the effects of the mediators (M_1 , M_2 , M_3 and M_4) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post). The c' path is the *direct effect*, which represents the effect of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post), controlled for the effect of the set of mediators. The *specific indirect effects* represent the mediating effect of each of the proposed mediator, which are, a_1b_1 (perceived Entertainment of the sponsored

post), a_2b_2 (perceived Informativeness of the sponsored post), a_3b_3 (perceived Credibility of the sponsored post), and a_4b_4 (perceived Irritation of the sponsored post). The *total indirect effect* refers to the sum of all the specific indirect effects;

$$\text{Total indirect effect of X on Y} = \sum_{i=1}^k a_i b_i$$

where in this case it refers to the sum of all four specific indirect effects ($a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3 + a_4b_4$). The ‘ c ’ path refers to the *total effect* of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post), which is the sum of the direct and indirect effects;

$$\text{Total effect of X on Y} = c = c' + \sum_{i=1}^k a_i b_i$$

where in this case: $c = c' + (a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3 + a_4b_4)$. Hence, in this research study, the (i) direct effect (c'), (ii) the specific indirect effects ($a_1b_1, a_2b_2, a_3b_3, a_4b_4$), (iii) the total indirect effects ($a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3 + a_4b_4$), and the (iv) total effect (c), of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) were calculated to evaluate the results of the mediation analysis.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the perceived Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility and Irritation of the sponsored post would have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer’s sponsored post. As shown in Table 5.9 and Table 5.10, the direct effect (path c') of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) was found to be statistically

significant, $Coeff. = 0.162$, Boot SE = 0.045, 95% Boot LLCI = 0.073, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.251. The 95% confidence interval, 0.073 to 0.251 did not contain the value of zero.

Therefore, it is interpreted that the effect of attitude towards Instagram influencer on the attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post, when controlled for the effect of the mediators, was found to be statistically significant.

Also, the total indirect effects ($a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3 + a_4b_4$) of the set of four mediators {which is also the difference between the total effect (c) and the direct effect (c')} of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post), was found to be statistically significant (shown in Table 5.10), $Coeff. = 0.435$, Boot SE = 0.061, 95% Boot LLCI = 0.321, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.556. The 95% confidence interval, 0.321 to 0.556 did not contain the value of zero. Therefore, it is interpreted that the set of four mediators (perceived Entertainment, Informativeness, Credibility and Irritation of the sponsored post) completely mediated the effect of attitude towards the Instagram influencer on attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the total indirect effects of attitude towards the Instagram influencer predicting the attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post.

Specifically, *Hypothesis 3-1* predicted that the perceived Entertainment of the sponsored post would have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. As shown in Table 5.10, the specific indirect effect of perceived Entertainment of the sponsored post (a_1b_1) was found to be statistically

significant, $Coeff. = 0.15$, Boot SE = 0.031, 95% Boot LLCI = 0.093, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.215. The 95% confidence interval, 0.093 to 0.215 did not contain the value of zero.

Therefore, it is interpreted that the perceived Entertainment of the sponsored post was a significant mediator of the relationship between attitude towards the Instagram influencer and attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 3-1 was supported. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the specific indirect effect of perceived Entertainment of the sponsored post (a_1b_1).

Hypothesis 3-2 predicted that the perceived Informativeness of the sponsored post would have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. As shown in Table 5.10, the specific indirect effect of perceived Informativeness of the sponsored post (a_2b_2) was not found to be statistically significant, $Coeff. = -0.002$, Boot SE = 0.013, 95% Boot LLCI = -0.028, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.025. The 95% confidence interval, -0.028 to 0.025, contained the value of zero. Therefore, it is interpreted that the perceived Informativeness of the sponsored post was *not* a significant mediator of the relationship between attitude towards the Instagram influencer and attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 3-2 was not supported. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the specific indirect effect of perceived Informativeness of the sponsored post (a_2b_2).

Hypothesis 3-3 predicted that the perceived Credibility of the sponsored post would have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored

post. As shown in Table 5.10, the specific indirect effect of perceived Credibility of the sponsored post (a_3b_3) was found to be statistically significant, $Coeff. = 0.162$, Boot SE = 0.04, 95% Boot LLCI = 0.089, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.247. The 95% confidence interval, 0.089 to 0.247 did not contain the value of zero. Therefore, it is interpreted that the perceived Credibility of the sponsored post was a significant mediator of the relationship between attitude towards the Instagram influencer and attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 3-3 was supported. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the specific indirect effect of perceived Credibility of the sponsored post (a_3b_3).

Hypothesis 3-4 predicted that the perceived Irritation of the sponsored post would have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. As shown in Table 5.10, the specific indirect effect of perceived Irritation of the sponsored post (a_4b_4) was found to be statistically significant, $Coeff. = 0.124$, Boot SE = 0.035, 95% Boot LLCI = 0.063, 95% Boot ULCI = 0.199. The 95% confidence interval, 0.063 to 0.199 did not contain the value of zero. Therefore, it is interpreted that the perceived Irritation of the sponsored post was a significant mediator of the relationship between attitude towards the Instagram influencer and attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Thus, Hypothesis 3-4 was supported. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the specific indirect effect of perceived Irritation of the sponsored post (a_4b_4).

Finally, the total effect (c), of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post) was calculated to evaluate the results of the mediation analysis. The total effect (c) is calculated as the sum of the direct effect (c') and the indirect effects. Figure 5.5 shows the path diagram illustrating the total effect (c) of the variable X (Attitude towards Instagram influencer) on the variable Y (Attitude towards Sponsored Post). The results showed that the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer significantly predicted the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post, $Coeff. = 0.59$, $t(298) = 12$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval for the slope, 0.50 to 0.69 did not contain the value of zero, and therefore Attitude towards the Instagram influencer is significantly related to the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Table 5.10 summarizes the results of the total effects of attitude towards the Instagram influencer predicting the attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Furthermore, upon comparison it was also found out that the results of the total effects of mediation analysis were exactly similar to the results of the simple linear regression analysis which was conducted upon Hypothesis 2 (Table 5.8 and Table 5.10). Hence, this shows that Hypothesis 2 (attitude towards the Instagram influencer predicting the attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post) was supported from both simple linear regression analysis and also the total effects of mediation analysis.

Table 5.9
Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model summary information of Direct Effects for Attitude towards Influencer predicting Attitude towards Sponsored Post using Parallel Multiple Mediator Model by Hayes (2017).

Antecedent	Consequent																			
	M ₁ (SP_ENT)			M ₂ (SP_INF)			M ₃ (SP_CRE)			M ₄ (SP_IRR)			Y (ATT_SP)							
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p					
X (ATT_INF)	a ₁	0.502	0.062	0.000	a ₂	0.373	0.065	0.000	a ₃	0.619	0.056	0.000	a ₄	-0.551	0.055	0.000	c'	0.162	0.045	0.0004
M ₁ (SP_ENT)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b ₁	0.299	0.04	0.000
M ₂ (SP_INF)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b ₂	-0.005	0.039	0.907
M ₃ (SP_CRE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b ₃	0.262	0.049	0.000
M ₄ (SP_IRR)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	b ₄	-0.226	0.041	0.000
Constant	i _{M1}	1.865	0.39	0.000	i _{M2}	2.57	0.409	0.000	i _{M3}	1.606	0.353	0.000	i _{M4}	5.486	0.349	0.000	i _Y	2.142	0.341	0.000
			R ² = 0.18			R ² = 0.099			R ² = 0.289			R ² = 0.249			R ² = 0.649					
			F(1, 298) = 65.4, p < .001			F(1, 298) = 32.725, p < .001			F(1, 298) = 121.069, p < .001			F(1, 298) = 98.592, p < .001			F(5, 294) = 108.981, p < .001					

Note: a₁, a₂, a₃, a₄, b₁, b₂, b₃, b₄, c' = path coefficient (unstandardized coefficient)

Table 5.10

Total effects, Direct effects and Indirect effects with 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for Attitude towards Influencer predicting Attitude towards Sponsored Post using Parallel Multiple Mediator Model by Hayes (2017).

Path		Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Total effect of X on Y	Total effect (c)	0.597	0.05	0.499	0.695
Direct effect of X on Y	Direct effect (c')	0.162	0.045	0.073	0.251
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y	Total indirect effect	0.435	0.061	0.321	0.556
	a_1b_1	0.15	0.031	0.093	0.215
	a_2b_2	-0.002	0.013	-0.028	0.025
	a_3b_3	0.162	0.04	0.089	0.247
	a_4b_4	0.124	0.035	0.063	0.199

Note: Boot LLCI = bootstrapping lower limit confidence interval; Boot ULCI = bootstrapping upper limit confidence interval; SE = standard error.

Thus, from the mediation analysis results it can be concluded that the indirect effect of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on the users' attitude towards sponsored posts, through the perceived informativeness of the sponsored posts, was not significant (Hypothesis 3-2 was not supported). But it can be concluded that the indirect effects of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on the users' attitude towards sponsored posts, through the perceived entertainment, credibility and irritation of the sponsored posts, were collectively significant. Hence, the perceived entertainment, credibility and irritation of the sponsored posts, collectively mediate the effect of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on the users' attitude towards sponsored posts.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post would significantly affect their purchase intention. The dependent variable for testing Hypothesis 4 was users' purchase intention. The independent variable was users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post. A simple linear regression was conducted to evaluate the prediction of the users' purchase intention from

the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post. The scatterplot showed that there was a strong positive linear relationship between the two variables, which was confirmed with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.486. The simple linear regression analysis result showed that the users' purchase intention was significantly predicted by the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post, $F(1, 298) = 91.99, p < .001, R^2 = 0.236$, indicating that approximately 23.6% of the variance in users' purchase intention was explained by the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post significantly predicted the users' purchase intention, $B = 0.67, t(298) = 9.59, p < .001$. Therefore, attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post is significantly related to the users' purchase intentions. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported. Table 5.11 summarizes the results of the simple linear regression model.

Table 5.11

Results for Linear Regression with Attitude towards Sponsored Post predicting Purchase Intention.

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>t</i>	Sig.	95% CI
(Intercept)	0.16	0.40		0.40	.692	(-0.63, 0.95)
Attitude towards Sponsored Post	0.67	0.07	0.49	9.59	.000	(0.54, 0.81)

Note. Results: $F(1,298) = 91.99, ***p < .001, R^2 = 0.236$

Unstandardized Regression Equation: Purchase Intention = 0.16 + 0.67*Attitude towards Sponsored Post

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS

The following sections have been discussed in this chapter: (a) summary of the study, (b) conclusions and implications, (c) limitations, and (d) future research.

Summary of the Study

Instagram is an excellent tool for sharing creative customized content, but its sponsored posts are also a highly productive way for corporations to generate revenues out of exciting and personalized content. Instagram is predominantly concentrated on expression through visual components such as pictures and videos, creating a completely fresh way of interaction with customers for the marketers. Instagram influencers have the power over buying decision-making process of their followers and also maintaining their engagement by promoting product's information in their sponsored posts. Through the consistent creation of material and a connection with their supporters, influencers earn the trust of the supporters. An influencer is a person who has constructed and strengthened trust with the viewers to an extent where a paid product placement inside a post appears authentic, even though it is apprehended that they are gaining compensation. Since sponsored posts by influencers on Instagram have proven to be a valuable marketing tool, it is vital to research consumers attitude toward the sponsored posts and also their purchase intentions.

Diverse perspectives were brought into concern for descriptive statistics after collecting the data, and the results of hypotheses testing contributed to establishing

reliable inferences about the potential impact of all constructs used on the dependent variables. The study was focused on the sample population of age 18 years to 38 years old who were active users of Instagram and were familiar with Instagram influencer's sponsored posts, in the United States. The data was collected from 300 respondents using Amazon M-Turk. The sample was a representative of Millennials (Generation Y) and Generation Z population (Kasasa, 2019). Knowledge through sponsored posts on Instagram could lead to more informed buying choices being made by Generation Y and Generation Z population, and thus be more faithful to a brand. Companies will, therefore, need to use Instagram as a channel to provide Generation Y and Generation Z, the understanding of brands and their products. Therefore, one might claim that this study is contributing new knowledge and also providing helpful data which is not yet accessible on the American market for Instagram influencers and their sponsored posts.

Utilizing the early research frameworks given by Brackett and Carr (2001), MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), and upon their application to this research, this study analyzed the effect of Instagram influencer's credibility in predicting the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer. The current study also sought to examine the influence of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer in affecting their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Specifically, it also investigated the mediating effect of perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of the sponsored post, on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. This research was also designed to examine the effect of users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored on their purchase intentions. Table 6.1 shows the four main hypotheses of the study as follows:

Table 6.1
Summary of Hypothesis Testing.

Hypothesis	Result
<i>H1</i> : Instagram influencer's credibility significantly affects the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer.	Supported
<i>H2</i> : The users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer significantly affects their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Supported
<i>H3</i> : The perceived <i>entertainment</i> , <i>credibility</i> and <i>irritation</i> of the sponsored post have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Supported
<i>H3-1</i> : Entertainment will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Supported
<i>H3-2</i> : Informativeness will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Not Supported
<i>H3-3</i> : Credibility will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Supported
<i>H3-4</i> : Irritation will have a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post.	Supported
<i>H4</i> : The users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post significantly affects their purchase intention.	Supported

The first finding in this research study, predicted by Hypothesis 1, was that Instagram influencer's credibility had a positive effect on the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer. This symbolized that the credibility of an Instagram influencer plays an essential component in promoting the users' (or audience's) attitude towards Instagram influencer, which was also supported in the former findings by Lim, Cheah, and Wong (2017). Influencer's credibility or source credibility is based on the trustworthiness, attractiveness and the expertise of the communicator (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016; Ohanian, 1990), and refers to whether an individual perceives the recommendations of the influencer as unbiased, credible, true or factual (Hass, 1981; Rebelo, 2017). This implies that the quality and the convincing strength (strength of persuasion of the arguments within an informational message) of the influencer (Teng et

al., 2014), will establish a positive attitude towards the Instagram influencer. Similarly, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) also stated that when the products promoted (or endorsed) are perceived as misleading and fallacious, consumers acquire a negative attitude towards the brand's product and also towards the source (or the influencer). Hence, considering influencer is the principal source of information, its perceived credibility and also the users' (or audience's) attitude towards Instagram influencer, should be an inherent characteristic for the advertisers.

The second finding in this research study, predicted by Hypothesis 2, was that the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer had a positive effect on their attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. This signified that the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer (or the source) represents an essential element in supporting the users' attitude towards the sponsored post by Instagram influencer. This was also supported by MacKenzie and Lutz (1989) who stated that the affective reactions of users to the sponsor of the ad stimulus of interest (in this case, the Instagram influencer) are expected to exhibit some power in the development of the users' attitude towards the ad (in this case, the sponsored post by influencer). Attitude toward the advertiser (in this situation, the influencer) is noted as a representative of a collection of both learnings and expertise acquired over time (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Hence, it would positively predict the users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post which would be the effective response of the viewers or users to the sponsored post generally.

The third finding in this research study, predicted by Hypothesis 3 (and also Hypothesis 3-1, Hypothesis 3-2, Hypothesis 3-3, and Hypothesis 3-4), was that the perceived entertainment, informativeness, credibility and irritation of the sponsored post

had a significant mediating effect on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. However, the results of mediation analysis concluded that the specific indirect effect of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on the users' attitude towards sponsored posts, through the mediator 'perceived informativeness of the sponsored posts', was not significant (Hypothesis 3-2 was not supported). Thus, it was concluded that the indirect effects of users' attitude towards the Instagram influencer on the users' attitude towards sponsored posts, through the perceived *entertainment*, *credibility* and *irritation* of the sponsored posts, were collectively significant. Hence, the perceived entertainment, credibility and irritation of the sponsored posts, collectively mediate the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. This implied that the users who exhibited more favorable and positive attitude towards the Instagram influencer, showed more favorable and positive attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post, as they perceived that the sponsored post was entertaining (enjoyable, pleasing, exciting and fun to see), credible (trustworthy and believable), and not irritating (not annoying, deceptive or confusing), which in turn was positively related to the attitude towards sponsored post.

The fourth finding in this research study, predicted by Hypothesis, was that the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post had a positive effect on their purchase intention. This signified that the users' attitude towards Instagram influencer's sponsored post was an essential element in supporting their purchase intentions. This prediction was also supported by Lu et al. (2014) in their study, who emphasized that the consumers have a very much positive attitude towards the sponsored recommendation posts, which intensifies purchase intentions when the products

recommended in posts are extremely searched and have high brand awareness. Hence, the concept of purchase intention specifies the pattern of consumer commitment and has permanently been of substantial interest for the marketers since the companies aspire to increase the sales of their products in order to maximize their revenue.

Conclusions and Implications

This study is one of the first to implement a more in-depth academic understanding of both the antecedents and consequences of the users' attitude towards sponsored posts on Instagram. Although there have been many investigations conducted on influential marketing, fewer academic studies were seen that explicitly focused on sponsored posts by influencers on Instagram. Advertising through sponsored posts is a significant factor for up-to-date customers who are often not subjected to traditional advertising channels and whose lifestyles are dynamic. Instagram enables users to develop and retain their social interactions and relations with influential individuals and celebrities. The need to create fresh means of advertising has led in the formulation of new-age media such as advertising through sponsored Instagram posts that have helped drive more traffic, engage with customers, create brand awareness, and create a strong brand identity. Sponsored posts also provide brands with other possibilities to make viewers notice their content. Additionally, consumers visit the Instagram page of the brand and go through their range of posts with comprehensive data about the brand's products, additionally influencing their purchase intention. The findings of this study provide real-world applications and guidelines for influential marketers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs, to follow when advertising through sponsored posts on Instagram, and also when they have a very small budget for Instagram marketing and want to make sure

that they are leveraging the influencers correctly. For example, by offering entertaining, credible, and non-irritating content through Instagram influencer's sponsored posts, they can make their advertising appealing.

Sponsored posts on Instagram include useful information about the brand provided by influencers. They may also include product-related specifications and practical understandings of the product characteristics inside their descriptive texts. Information is an important advantage that the customer expects to benefit from the exchange with any medium of an advertisement. Because of the countless sponsored posts by influencers that customers or users are exposed to on Instagram every day, they might be always looking for informative sponsored posts, that can assist them to choose the best product options to satisfy themselves. In the case of sponsored posts, the importance of informative content to consumers was supposed to be beneficial to form their attitude towards the sponsored posts and also fulfill their buying needs. However, from the results, it was seen that Hypothesis 3-2 was not supported. It was implied that the perceived informativeness of the sponsored posts, did not mediate the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer's sponsored post. Hence, it can be predicted that the information provided inside the descriptive text of the sponsored posts on Instagram, does not help in forming users' attitude towards the sponsored posts and also do not help in fulfilling users' buying needs. Thus, it can be said that the users only give value to entertaining, credible and non-irritating sponsored posts on Instagram, and hence they are helpful in attracting consumers' attention.

Upon watching the images (screenshots uploaded by the participants), it was also observed that the influencers posted pictures on their profile promoting products by

particular brands tagged inside their sponsored posts, that was entertaining in a manner such as the images were bright and colorful, influencer posed by doing a weird or unique act (like drinking coffee while taking a bath), had funny quotes inside the pictures, showed video demonstrating of the product applications, posed in an exotic location, and so forth. The data showed that there was a balance inside the images, featuring both the brand's products and also the influencer using the product in a unique way. Sometimes the image of the product is helpful, while the influencer showing the product's application is useful sometimes; and sometimes only the image of the influencer, which has nothing to do with the product but is fun to look at. Thus, it was implied that the perceived entertainment and irritation of the sponsored post, showed the 'emotional' aspects of the sponsored posts, since those feelings are mental, and they cannot be accurately evaluated. Also, the perceived informativeness of the sponsored post showed the 'cognitive' aspects of the sponsored posts, since cognition refers to the mental procedures engaged in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Our study shows that informativeness is not a significant factor in promoting users' attitudes towards sponsored posts that, in turn, influence their buying intentions on Instagram through influencers' sponsored posts. Therefore, the implication was regarded in terms of sponsored posts that the Instagram users following various influencers, look for emotional factors (or emotional connections) inside the sponsored posts which are brand-promoted, rather than the cognitive factors. As a result, we can say that social media marketers should rather choose to spend their budget on entertaining sponsored posts rather than informative.

The most important metric to measure the success of user engagement on Instagram is the level of users Instagram usage activity. The research found out that the highly active users on Instagram checked to see what someone else is up to, viewed

photos, viewed videos, browsed the newsfeed passively (without liking or commenting on anything), browsed the newsfeed actively (liking and commenting on others posts), and also, looked through their friend's posts, very frequently (more than 2 times a day). Also, according to the findings, the products promoted by the influencers inside the sponsored post on Instagram were found to be representative of the following classifications: Beauty/Cosmetics, Clothing/Fashion, Health/Fitness, Food/Beverage, Media, Accessories, Software/Technology, Sportswear/Activewear, Décor, Travel, Recreational Drug, Pet Supplies, Education, Electronic Gadgets, Baby/Kids Goods, Games/Toys, and Finance. It was also found out that the products shown inside the categories such as finance, baby/kids goods, education, electronic gadgets, and software/technology, were more utilitarian (purchased for practical uses and are based on consumer's needs); while that the products shown inside the categories beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, health/fitness, food/beverage, media, accessories, sportswear/activewear, décor, travel, recreational drug, pet supplies, and games/toys, were more hedonic (purchased or consumed for luxury purposes, or that allow consumers to feel pleasure, fun, and enjoyment).

Table D.1, Table D.2 and Table D.3 (given inside the Appendix D), represent the frequencies of the scores on the 7-point Likert scale for the perceived entertainment, credibility and irritation of the sponsored posts by sponsored post's category. Highest entertainment was seen from the sponsored posts for clothing/fashion category, followed by beauty/cosmetics, media, accessories, software/technology, and sportswear/activewear. Similarly, the highest credible sponsored posts belonged to the category of beauty/cosmetics, followed by clothing/fashion, media, accessories, food/beverage, software/technology, and sportswear/activewear. And the most non-

irritating posts were from the categories of beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, accessories, media, software/technology, and health/fitness, food/beverage. From Table 5.4, it was also observed that the age group of 18 years to 24 years old, or Generation Z, leaned more towards beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, media, and health/fitness related products shown inside sponsored posts. Similarly, it was observed that the age group of 25 years to 38 years old, or Generation Y (or Millennials), leaned more towards beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, food/beverage, and health/fitness related products shown inside sponsored posts. Furthermore, more males leaned towards the products related to clothing/fashion, beauty/cosmetics, media, and health/fitness, shown inside sponsored posts; while more females leaned towards the products related to beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, food/beverage, and health/fitness, shown inside sponsored posts. Hence, amongst the survey participants, female to male ratio was seen higher for categories such as beauty/cosmetics, clothing/fashion, food/beverage, and health/fitness. However, for the category media, female to male ratio is equal, which seems to be relatively less than the usual case. Therefore, it might be easier for the businesses to target relatively more male consumers than females related to media through Instagram influencers, such as for upcoming movies, online shows, concerts, and so forth; and hence can partner with appropriate influencers to target a relatively large proportion of male consumers compared to female consumers, in contrast to other categories.

When a business has effectively adjusted Instagram as part of its social media strategy and mastered how to use it as efficiently as possible, the business can gain a competing advantage over the other brands, and also increase sales and boost brand awareness quickly. The research findings have consequences for advertisers and other

agencies engaged in online advertising, marketing explicitly through influencers on Instagram. Marketers and advertisers need to develop enjoyable, trustworthy, and non-irritating advertisements (or sponsored posts) in collaboration with credible influencers, that would create a favorable approach and generate a positive attitude of customers towards the influencer and also towards the sponsored post, further positively affecting customer's buying intentions. Hence, social media marketers should partner with influencers whose content is more entertaining than others, as compared to the case of the influencers whose content is less entertaining but more informative. Furthermore, depending on the budget, marketers, businesses or entrepreneurs can partner with influencers whose credibility is in proportion to their budget. Finally, the social media managers should also be conscious of the adverse impact of irritation on the attitudes of customers, which can be achieved by avoiding annoying, offensive or insulting sponsored posts.

Limitations

This study, like all studies, has constraints that can lead to future possibilities for studies. The present research is moderately short in terms of generalizability, as the sample size for this study was 300, out of which 27% were male ($n = 81$), 72.3% were female ($n = 217$) and the rest 0.7% belonged to the 'Others' category ($n = 2$). Hence, the results cannot be completely generalized for all male and 'others' category users on Instagram in the United States.

The effect of Instagram influencers on the buying intentions of Instagrammers within the Generation Y and Z in the United States continues to be a very contemporary subject. Various research studies can be discovered about the advertisers or bloggers on

other social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, but since the word Influencer has appeared within the past few years, it exhibits specific gaps in the literature.

Future Research

Marketing through Instagram is still at its initial steps of advancement and is continually expanding. Companies and brands have begun to establish interest in influential marketing increasingly. However, a very minimal study on Instagram marketing has been conducted through influencer's sponsored posts for the marketers. This would, therefore, be both exciting and essential to further explore, and the results would be highly valuable to the marketers. In addition, future research could look at influential marketing from the tagged brand or the influencer's perspective. Researchers can also explore other influencing social media engagement behavioral factors such as sharing intention, intention to like or make positive comments, and also compare the study with the influencer's other social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. They can also look more into the hedonic versus utilitarian, and cognitive versus emotional aspects of the sponsored posts. Researchers can also work upon the content analysis of the screenshots uploaded by the respondents.

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APPENDIX A

Human Subjects Approval



Institutional Review Board
 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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»

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Instagram influencer's sponsored posts: Measuring users' attitude towards sponsored posts and purchase intentions in the United States

ID:
 PROJECT00000647

Principal Investigator:	Seock	Contacts:	Ishani
Reviewer:	Westbrook	Review Level:	Exempt
Determination:	Approved	Approved Date:	15-05-2019
Funding Source:		Expiration Date:	
Committee:		Project Status:	Approved
Review Category:			

Documents

Draft	Category	Date Modified
Consent Form Updated	Consent Form	14-05-2019 11:12
Survey	Materials for Data Collection	14-05-2019 10:30
Preview of MTurk	Recruitment Materials	14-05-2019 10:28

APPENDIX B

Survey Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONSENT FORM

INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER'S SPONSORED POSTS: MEASURING USERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS SPONSORED POSTS AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Research Participant:

By continuing with this survey, you agree to participate in a research study titled “Instagram influencer's sponsored posts: Measuring users' attitude towards sponsored posts and purchase intentions in the United States”. Your involvement in the survey is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

The purpose of this study is to focus on the factors which determine the impacts of the users’ attitude towards the Instagram influencer’s sponsored post on their purchase intention. The study also investigates the mediating effects of perceived entertainment, informativeness and credibility of sponsored posts on the relationship between the attitude towards the Instagram influencer and the attitude towards the Instagram influencer’s sponsored post. It also explores the impacts of Instagram influencer’s credibility on the users’ attitude towards the Instagram influencer that would further affect their attitude towards the Instagram influencer’s sponsored post.

Participants for the survey will be in the United States using the online survey method of Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) provided by Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk). Each survey participant (M-Turk worker) will be asked to complete 1 survey that should take no more than 15 minutes for their total participation. The M-Turk workers will be rewarded with \$ 0.20 fee per HIT (for the completion of survey) along with \$0.08 per HIT per worker charged by Amazon M-Turk. The M-Turk workers who give wrong or incorrect information; or who did not qualify for the survey, will also be awarded a bonus fee of \$0.01, for their participation in the survey. Along with this, workers who provide diverse answers and screenshots in relation to sponsored posts on Instagram from miscellaneous categories, were also given an extra bonus fee of up to \$3.5.

If you participate in the study, your identity will remain anonymous. However, internet communications are insecure, and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. Once the researcher receives materials, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed. The data collected about the participant will be confidential as IP addresses are being stripped upon data submission. The data will remain secure by being sent as an encrypted file. The researcher’s computer will also enable a firewall that will block unauthorized access. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need extra information. At any time during the survey, if you feel any discomfort, you can exit the survey. There are no foreseen risks in this research.

The principal investigator conducting this study is *Dr. Yoo-Kyoung Seock*, Associate Professor, *Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors* at the University of Georgia. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu

Principal Investigator:

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APPENDIX C

Survey: Instagram influencer's sponsored posts: Measuring users' attitude towards
sponsored posts and purchase intentions in the United States

Survey: Instagram influencer's sponsored posts: Measuring users' attitude towards sponsored posts and purchase intentions in the United States

Please answer the following screening questions about yourself:

1 How active are you on Instagram?

Never (no times)	Very Rarely (once a month or less)	Rarely (2 to 3 times a month)	Occasionally (2 to 3 times a week)	Frequently (1 to 2 times a day)	Very Frequently (more than 2 times a day)
1	2	3	4	5	6

If you answered “Never”, please do not proceed with the following survey.

Influencers on Instagram can be famous bloggers, celebrities, or entrepreneurs, who are paid by the brands to create content for them in the form of paid-partnerships; and they influence their followers to make purchases and lifestyle decisions.

Sponsored Post is a promoted post by an influencer on Instagram, in the form of a picture or a video on their Instagram profile, which contain hashtags such as ‘#Ad’, ‘#Sponsored’, or are marked as ‘Paid Promotion’ or ‘Paid Partnership’.

2 Are you familiar with **Sponsored posts by an Instagram influencer**? Yes No

If you said “yes”, please proceed with the following survey.

If you said “no”, please do not proceed with the following survey.

3 What's your age? Below 18 18 - 38 Above 38

If your age is “below 18” or “above 38”, please do not proceed with the following survey.

Please answer your age.

15 Write the name of the **Influencer** that you follow the most on Instagram:

Please answer the following question about the **influencer's credibility**:

How would you rate the **Influencer** along with these characteristics?

16	Unconvincing							Convincing
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
17	Unbelievable							Believable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
18	Biased							Unbiased
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Please answer the following question about your **attitude towards the influencer**:

How would you rate the **Influencer** along with these characteristics?

19	Bad							Good
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
20	Unpleasant							Pleasant
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
21	Unfavorable							Favorable
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

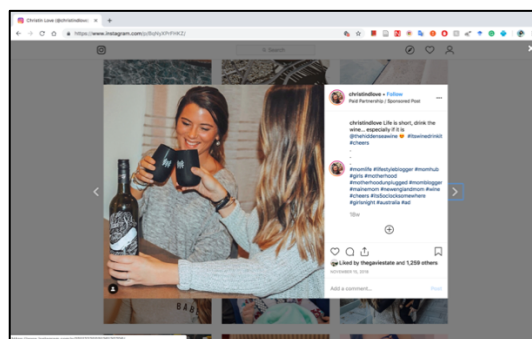
Now please take the following step:

Step 3: Take a Screenshot of the most recent Sponsored Post by the Influencer you named above

Here's an example of a sponsored post by an Instagram influencer, for your reference:



OR



22 Upload the screenshot here (Mobile view or Desktop view):

UPLOAD

Answer the following questions keeping in mind the above ‘Sponsored Post by an Instagram Influencer’ of which you just uploaded the screenshot.

Please answer the following questions about how you perceive the sponsored post:

How much of the following do you think the *Sponsored Post* is, in terms of **entertainment**?

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
23	It is Entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	It is Enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	It is Pleasing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	It is Fun to Use	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	It is Exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How much of the following do you think the *Sponsored Post* is, in terms of **informativeness**?

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
28	Good source of product information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	Supplies relevant product information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	Provides timely information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	Good source of up-to-date product information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	Makes product information immediately accessible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33	Convenient source of product information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	Supplies complete product information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How much of the following do you think the *Sponsored Post* is, in terms of **credibility**?

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
35	It is Credible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36	It is Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

37 It is Believable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How much of the following do you think the *Sponsored Post* is, in terms of **irritation**?

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
38	It insults people's intelligence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39	It is annoying	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40	It is irritating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41	It is deceptive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42	It is confusing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please answer the following question about your **attitude towards the sponsored post**:

How would you rate the *Sponsored Post* along with these characteristics?

43	Bad							Good
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
44	Unpleasant							Pleasant
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
45	Unfavorable							Favorable
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
46	Uncreative							Creative
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7
47	Unattractive							Attractive
	1	2	3	4	5	6		7

Please answer the following questions about your **purchase intention towards the product promoted**:

How likely are you to *purchase the product* which was promoted by the Instagram influencer in their sponsored post?

		Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
48	It is likely that I will buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49	I am willing to buy the products promoted by the influencers on Instagram	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX D

Tables showing descriptive statistics for Sponsored Post's Categories with the perceived
Entertainment, Credibility and Irritation of the Sponsored Posts

Table D.1

Frequencies of the scores for the Perceived Entertainment of the Sponsored Posts by Sponsored Post's Category

	SP-ENT																													
Sponsored Post's Category	1	2	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.8	3	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6	6.2	6.4	6.6	6.8	7	Total		
Clothing/Fashion	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	4	0	4	2	1	0	3	5	2	4	1	1	2	1	0	12	48		
Accessories	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	4	21		
Beauty/Cosmetics	4	3	0	2	1	0	0	3	1	3	3	9	3	2	4	2	8	3	7	2	4	5	0	0	2	0	8	79		
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	6		
Health/Fitness	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	2	1	4	3	3	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	30		
Recreational Drug	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	6		
Food/Beverage	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	3	0	1	0	2	1	0	3	0	1	2	1	4	2	0	1	0	2	29		
Software/Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	12		
Sportswear/Activewear	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	10		
Pet Supplies	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6		
Baby/Kids Goods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4		
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5		
Décor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	7		
Electronic Gadgets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	5		
Media	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	6	1	0	0	2	4	26		
Games/Toys	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4		
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2		
Total	10	9	1	2	4	4	7	6	4	11	6	18	9	13	14	11	21	14	22	6	15	27	9	5	4	3	45	300		

Table D.2

Frequencies of the scores for the Perceived Credibility of the Sponsored Posts by Sponsored Post's Category.

	SP-CRE																			
Sponsored Post's Category	1	1.33	1.67	2	2.33	2.67	3	3.33	3.67	4	4.33	4.67	5	5.33	5.67	6	6.33	6.67	7	Total
Clothing/Fashion	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	1	4	4	2	4	8	3	1	15	48
Accessories	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	5	1	1	9	21
Beauty/Cosmetics	2	1	0	2	1	3	3	1	4	4	6	1	10	8	3	14	0	0	16	79
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	6
Health/Fitness	2	0	0	1	0	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	5	2	4	2	0	0	5	30
Recreational Drug	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	6
Food/Beverage	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	4	1	3	0	5	0	2	5	29
Software/Technology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	5	12
Sportswear/Activewear	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	5	10
Pet Supplies	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	6	6
Baby/Kids Goods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	4
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	5
Décor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	7
Electronic Gadgets	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5
Media	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	2	0	1	5	1	0	9	26
Games/Toys	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	6	1	1	5	1	5	8	6	8	19	12	13	31	20	17	53	8	6	80	300

Table D.3

Frequencies of the scores for the Perceived Irritation of the Sponsored Posts by Sponsored Post's Category.

Sponsored Post's Category	SP-IRR																											
	1	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	2	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.8	3	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.8	4	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	5	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6	7	Total
Clothing/Fashion	22	3	1	1	0	6	3	0	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	48
Accessories	12	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	21
Beauty/Cosmetics	31	7	3	1	2	6	2	5	0	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	79
Travel	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Health/Fitness	7	1	1	0	3	2	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	30
Recreational Drug	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
Food/Beverage	7	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	29
Software/Technology	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	12
Sportswear/Activewear	6	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
Pet Supplies	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Baby/Kids Goods	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Education	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Décor	4	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Electronic Gadgets	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Media	10	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	26
Games/Toys	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Finance	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	126	15	13	9	7	25	14	8	5	7	7	7	4	4	3	8	6	7	3	1	5	3	3	2	2	4	2	300