Influencer Behavior in Social Media Marketing: Developing and Validating a New Model

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Abstract	This research was aimed at develop and validate an influencer behavior model in social media marketing. The statistical population in the qualitative section consisted of Academic and organizational experts including social media marketing experts. A sample of qualitative sample was used for purposeful sampling and in a small part of the compilation sampling. The data collection tool was interviewed in the qualitative section and in the quantitative section the questionnaire was used. Data were analyzed using confirmatory statistical analysis. The results identified 17 components and 90 indicators that 4 components of influencing the behavior of influencers in social media marketing. Finally, the research model consisting of influential and influential factors was presented and its degree of appropriateness was appropriate.
Keywords	*Influencer, Instagram, social Media Marketing*

Introduction

Today, social media has a significant effect on all aspects of life in human societies, including political, economic, communication and interaction. Social media was first introduced by Chris Shipley (2006); Shipley believes that social media guides future events for conversation (Aftadeh, 2010). Shipley believes that social media guides future events for conversation (Aftadeh, 2010). Social media is a description of online tools that people use to share content, profiles, comments, views, experiences, and thoughts. The main difference between social media and

social networks is that social media is a way to convey or share information with a wide audience; While social networks are the agent of interaction. Social media is the socialization of an organization and the involvement of human factors in the process of an organization's procedures and philosophies (Sajid, 2016). With the advent of diverse social media, consumers are increasingly using these media to gather information about their decisions. On the other hand, marketing by celebrities on social media is very important today. Today, social media is one of the most powerful marketing tools that many world famous brands are not unaware of. A number of experts and prominent figures at various social, economic, cultural and even political levels have emerged as influential members of online communities and have been shown to be a source of advice for other consumers (Casaló, Cisneros,Flavián, & Guinalíu, 2017). Influential marketing is a way to promote a business, service or product using people who are popular on social media. One of the most obvious ways to find an influencer is to use social media. The power of social media and its effect on increasing sales and audience is not hidden from anyone (Delisle &Parmentier, 2016). Using the influence of marketing can be very effective when the goal of developing the brand as quickly and efficiently as possible is the presence and visibility of the brand in the mass media. The unique thing about influencers is that their audience is specific and interested in the content produced by the influencer and trusts what it says. By choosing to work with an influential person, brands can benefit from the help of a suitable and appropriate person and their appropriate and appropriate audience (Social Baker, 2016). Collaborating with influencers not only increases the brand reputation of the desired product, but also exposes its content to a wider audience that are interested in product brand related topics. It is because of this efficiency and power in effective marketing which this type of marketing has quickly become one of the most effective ways to grow, promote and market brands (Belanche, Flavián, & Pérez-Rueda 2017).

Background

Social media marketing does not have a single definition like other concepts, but various experts and specialists have provided several definitions for it. Let's review some of these definitions. Social media marketing is a form of internet marketing that uses social media to achieve marketing communications and branding. Social media marketing primarily involves the social sharing of content, videos and photos for marketing purposes. Social media marketing is the process of marketing a product, brand service through consumers or corporate dialogues using social media. Social media marketing is the process of gaining considerable site traffic through social media. Social media marketing programs often try to create content that attracts attention or encourages readers to share it across their social networks. Using social media to promote your company and products is called social media marketing. Social media marketing, the promotion of websites, products or services through online social channels, and connecting with a very large community of people is not possible through traditional advertising channels. Social media marketing is marketing that focuses on people, not products (Datta et al., 2020). Social media marketing is a new marketing strategy that almost every business has adopted to reach its customers in virtual networks (Dima, 2015). Social media marketing is a type of virtual internet marketing. The term social media marketing means the use of social networks, online forums, wikis, and any online public media for marketing, sales, public relations, and customer service (Barber & Wallace, 2013). Weinberg (2009) defines social media marketing as a process that enables people to promote their product or service websites through social channels and through larger communities that may not be available through traditional channels. Defines social media marketing as a process that enables people to promote their product or service websites through social channels and through larger communities that may not be available through traditional channels. Thus, social media marketing is a process that organizations use to

accelerate their company's official websites (Dima, 2015). Social media marketing is about gaining website traffic or gaining attention to a topic through social media. Social media marketing programs usually focus on creating content, through which they can attract the attention of the audience on that platform and encourage readers to share it among social networks. Social media marketing is a wide range of advertising costs, including social media advertising, the virtual world, user-generated product reviews, blog support, RSS feeds and social media news, podcasts, games, and customer-generated ads. Also, social media marketing as a form of online advertising program that covers cultural contexts in this social context, including social networking sites (YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, Virtual World (SecondLife), Social news sites (Dig) and social opinion sharing sites are defined to be used to achieve branding and communication goals (Van Looy, 2016). Social media marketing allows companies to build and connect with new customers. Instead of sending one-way messages to people, social media is based on a natural, credible conversation between people about a cross-cutting issue. ‹2017). In recent years, the rapid expansion of social media and its marketing programs has had a significant effect on the business structure. Which has led to a profound change in organizational models and dynamic marketing of companies (Galati et al., 2017). In the past, companies could send their advertising messages through traditional channels such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines and direct mail. However, it was impossible to target a specific group with individual messages through these channels. The development of the Internet and social media has led to significant changes in marketing. Companies are currently making serious efforts to integrate social media into their marketing strategies (Choi, Y. Thoeni, 2016). In particular, Trinor (2012) has shown that social media is a key tool for creating and maintaining customer communication, and that's why social media has become such an important tool for customer relationship management. Social media provides marketers with significant opportunities to reach

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consumers in social communities and build more personal relationships with them (Bernof, J., & Li, 2018). Social media has changed the way brand content is created, distributed, and consumed, transferring the power to shape the brand image from marketers to online communications and content. Social media complicates customers and helps them develop new tactics in searching, evaluating, selecting and purchasing goods and services. Social media is an exceptional tool for the company to communicate with the consumer. These media, compared to traditional methods, have lower costs and higher speed of dissemination (Keegan, &Rowley, 2017). Social media marketing is different from traditional marketing methods, therefore, paying special attention and creating a strategy to achieve the desired loyalty and mental image of the brand is a must, In fact, companies need to move from trying to sell to building relationships with customers (Shahriari Fard and Khosravi, 2016). A common misconception is that some people think that social media marketing means using online media for traditional marketing. In traditional marketing, there is a one-way relationship from the company to potential consumers, social media marketing establishes two-way communication with audiences (viewers and listeners) who are interested in the brand (Barber, 2013). Table 1 summarizes the differences between traditional marketing and social media marketing.

Table 1

The Difference Between Traditional Marketing and Social Media Marketing (Jan, 2014)

Social media marketing	Traditional marketing
Saving time	Time-consuming
Affordable	Expensive
Exciting and motivating	boring
A wide range of social media for marketing	Limited marketing facilities
creative	Static
Ability to directly access communities	Restrictions on access to communities
Brings closer interaction to users and vice versa	Allow little or no interaction with user communities

Social media marketing	Traditional marketing
Participatory	One way
No time limit	limited time

Method

Given that the present study deals with the development and validation of the model of influencers' behavior in social media marketing, the research method is retrospective in terms of the time of occurrence of the phenomenon; According to the result, decision-oriented; Purposeful, functional; In terms of performance logic, deductive and inductive; According to the time of research, cross-sectional; Depending on the data type, mixed (qualitative-quantitative); Depending on the research environment, library; In terms of data collection method or the nature and method of research, it was descriptive-correlational and in terms of focus on the phenomenon was expansive. The statistical population of the present study in the qualitative section includes social media and marketing experts. To test the community model, the study included 20 experts who participated in the interview process. Valuable opinions of experts and specialists in this field were used to ensure the validity of the qualitative part of the research. In the present study, thematic analysis method was used to analyze qualitative data. To assess the validity of the present study, in addition to the comprehensive, organizing and main themes were selected by studying the theoretical foundations, research background, research objectives and source. As mentioned, the themes are obvious and descriptive and the researcher has not interfered in the content of the themes and therefore has a high accuracy (validity). In addition, the themes were extracted from the articles in the first stage by the researcher himself and in the second stage, by referring to the experts, the themes related to the research questions were re-identified and extracted under their supervision. By comparing these two steps and based on the agreement between the two coding steps, the reliability coefficient has

been calculated. For this purpose, the Holstey method has been used, the formula of which is as follows:

PAO= 2M/ (n1+n2)

PAO= 2*2158/ (2661+2132) =0/90

If the Fi coefficient is above 80%, it can be said that the obtained dimensions and components have the necessary reliability (Kvale, 1996). In this study, two independent transition codes were used and the reliability coefficient obtained according to the above formula was 93%.

The statistical population of the study was a small part of all Instagram users. Their number is unlimited. Using stratified random sampling method using Cochran's formula and Morgan table, 384 people were selected as the sample size. In this study, a researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions with a five-point Likert scale to identify the dimensions of influencers' behavior in social media marketing, which was completed with a survey of Instagram users. Lisrel and smatPLS software were used to analyze the research data. It is worth mentioning that both questionnaires are of the closed answer type and are measured with a range of 5 Likert options. In this study, content and construct validity were used to calculate validity. The results showed that all the questions of the questionnaire were in good condition in terms of simplicity, clarity and relevance. Also, since the CVR value for all questions was above 0.62, no questions needed to be deleted and 90 questions related to the questionnaire were distributed among the statistical sample. To evaluate the construct validity, after data collection, structural equation modeling software with lisrl approach was used in two parts: convergent and divergent validity. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient and combined reliability were used to calculate reliability. Validity and reliability results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Calculation of Instrument Psychometric Properties

Component	Combined reliability	Mean variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha	k-s	skewness	Elongation
Charm	0.801	0.61	0.736	0.201	-1.75	0.24
Content	0.889	0.57	0.838	0.254	-1.78	0.76
Reliability	0.816	0.66	0.779	0.390	-1.64	0.75
the fame	0.836	0.56	0.794	0.379	-1.14	1.60
Expertise	0.847	0.59	0.836	0.190	-1.33	0.95
Credit	0.862	0.65	0.825	0.432	-0.99	1.58
Influencer nationality	0.901	0.60	0.879	0.479	0.05	-0.17
Personal branding	0.755	0.55	0.759	0.169	0.05	-0.08
Influencer identity	0.800	0.70	0.811	0.432	0.88	-1.05
Community social events	0.711	0.58	0.780	0.256	1.20	0.86
Influencer Attitude	0.903	0.61	0.915	0.584	0.02	0.23
Loyalty to the influencer	0.780	0.67	0.763	0.641	0.01	0.26
Encourage followers	0920	0.54	0.836	0.342	-0.14	0.40
Advertising effectiveness	0.796	0.71	0.816	0.569	-0.15	0.31
Entrepreneurship	0.833	0.73	0.750	0.432	0.03	0.29
life style	0.803	0.77	0.792	0.447	0.18	0.10
Awareness of followers	0.788	0.69	0.800	0.473	-0.07	0.25

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software and smartpls in both descriptive and inferential domains (structural equation modeling).

Findings

Valid Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the data. The results showed that the significance level of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for all research variables is greater than 0.5, therefore, we will use parametric statistical tests. Research findings in the descriptive

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statistics section (characteristics of participants) which can be seen in the table above, Showed that the highest percentage of subjects was male (57.8%); most age group 40-31 years (59.40%); the highest degree was related to bachelor's degree (37.85%). Mean and standard deviation of all components were given; the results also showed that according to the elongation statistics, all components are normal. The theme analysis process begins when the analyst considers semantic patterns and topics that have potential appeal. This analysis involves a continuous flow between the data set and the coding set, and the analysis of the data that is generated. Writing the analysis starts from the first step. In general, there is no single way to start studying theme analysis (Clark and Brun, 2006). Theme analysis is a recursive process in which there is reciprocating motion between the steps mentioned. In addition, theme analysis is a process that must be done over time, this means that the researcher will collect and analyze data over time. The six steps of theme analysis with the approach proposed by Clark and Brun (2006) are described below.

Step 1. Familiarity with the data: In order for the researcher to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content of the data, it is necessary to immerse himself in them to some extent. Immersion in data usually involves "re-reading the data" and actively reading the data (i.e., searching for meanings and patterns).

Step 2. Creating the initial code: The second step begins when the researcher has read the data and is familiar with it. This step involves creating the initial code of the data. Codes introduce a data attribute that the analyst finds interesting. The encrypted data are different from the analysis units (themes). Encoding can be done manually or through software programs. In this study, coding was done manually. At this stage, 100 initial codes of interviews were counted.

Step 3. Search for Selective Codes: This step involves categorizing the various codes into selective codes and sorting all the coded data summaries. In fact, the researcher begins to analyze his or her own code

and considers how different codes can be combined to create a general theme. At this stage, 90 selection codes were obtained by the researcher. At this stage, the researchers set aside incomplete or irrelevant codes as well as duplicate codes to achieve this number of selective codes.

Step 4. Formation of sub-themes: The fourth step begins when the researcher creates a set of themes and reviews them. This stage includes two stages of reviewing, refining and shaping the sub-themes. In the second stage, the validity of the sub-themes in relation to the data set is considered. At this stage, the researchers achieved 17 sub-themes.

Step 5. Defining and naming the main themes: The fifth step begins when there is a satisfactory image of the themes. At this stage, the researcher defines the main themes for analysis and reviews them, then analyzes the data within them. By defining and reviewing, the nature of what a theme is discussing is determined and it is determined which aspect of the data each main theme contains. At this stage, the researcher finally achieved 3 main themes after going back and forth among the sub-themes, which can be explained in the field of research. Below are some of the sub-themes from which the main themes were extracted.

Step 6. Report Preparation: The sixth step begins when the researcher has a set of main themes that are completely abstract and consistent with the contextual structures of the research. This step includes the final analysis and writing of the report. Which will be presented at the end. After reviewing and analyzing the interviews using the theme analysis method and going through six steps, the sub-main and main themes are obtained according to Table 3.

Table 3

Theme Analysis

Main themes		Sub-themes
	Influencing factors	Personal branding
		Influencer identity
		Community social events
		Influencer Attitude
	Influencing factors	Loyalty to the influencer
		Encourage followers
		Advertising effectiveness
		Entrepreneurship
		life style
		Awareness of followers
	Influencer behavior	Charm
		Content
		Reliability
		the fame
		Expertise
		Credit
		Influencer nationality

Main themes left column reads vertically: Influencer Marketing Behavior in Social Media

As mentioned, using exploratory factor analysis, all components of influencers' behavior in Instagram social media marketing were identified. Using thematic analysis, these components include attractiveness, content, reliability, reputation, expertise, credibility and nationality of the influencer. Also, using content analysis of the factors influencing the prediction of influencers' behavior in Instagram social media marketing were personal branding, influencer identity, community social events and influencer attitude that named the factors influencing the behavior of influencers in Instagram social media marketing. Also, using content analysis of influential factors (consequences) of predicting the behavior of influencers in Instagram social media marketing, influencer loyalty, follower persuasion, advertising effectiveness, entrepreneurship, lifestyle, and follower awareness were named as influential factors in predicting influencers' behavior in Instagram social media marketing. Using the components obtained from this research, structural equation modeling using pls software is tested to confirm the relationships. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the research in the case of estimating the standard coefficients of structures.
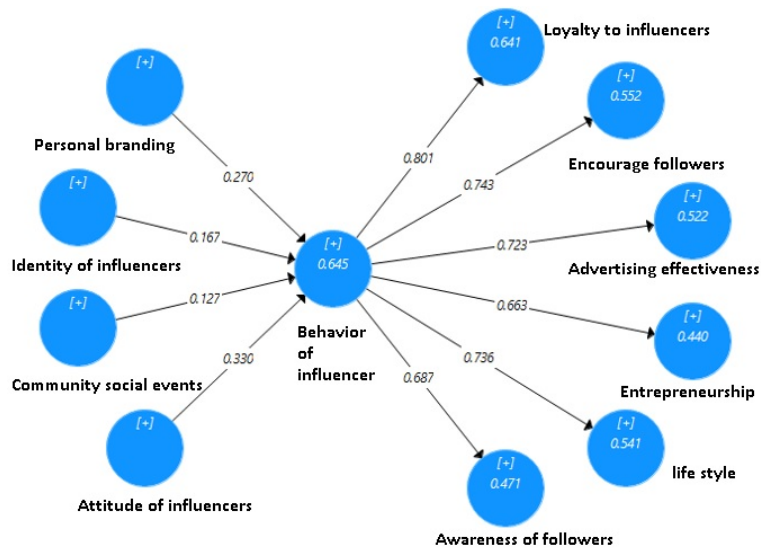
Figure 1

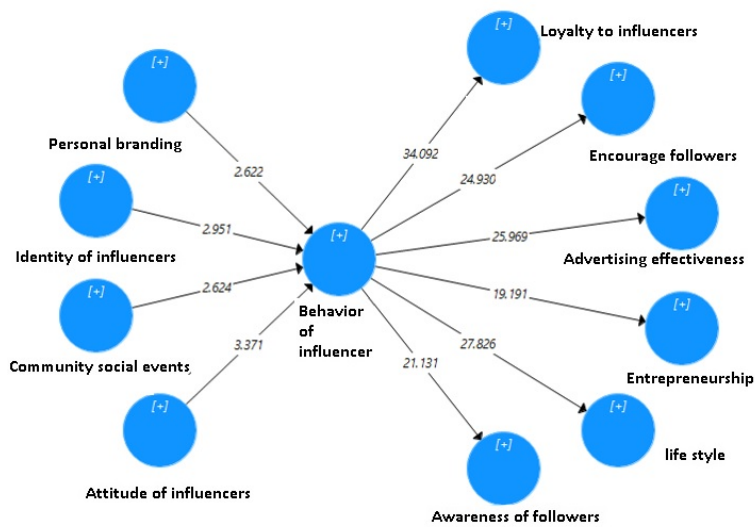*Conceptual Model of Research in the Case of Estimating Standard Coefficients*

Figure 2

Conceptual Model of Research in the Significant State of Coefficients

Table 4 summarizes the results of the concept model.

Table 4

Summary of Test Results of the Conceptual Research Model

Variables and components	Standard coefficients	Significance factor	Result
	0.270	2.622	Reception
Personal branding	0.167	2.951	Reception
Influencer identity	0.127	2.624	Reception
Community social events	0.330	3.371	Reception
Influencer Attitude	0.801	34.092	Reception
Loyalty to the influencer	0.743	24.930	Reception
Encourage followers	0.723	25.969	Reception
Advertising effectiveness	0.663	19.191	Reception
Entrepreneurship	0.736	27.826	Reception
life style	0.687	21.131	Reception

Table 5

Reliability

Dimensions and components	AVE	R^2	Shared reliability	Cronbach's alpha
Personal branding	0.731		0.891	0.816
Influencer identity	0.732		0.891	0.817
Community social events	0.699		0.873	0.781
Influencer Attitude	0.692		0.871	0.778
Loyalty to the influencer	0.681	0.641	0.895	0.843
Encourage followers	0.708	0.552	0.905	0.857
Advertising effectiveness	0.725	0.522	0.887	0.810
Entrepreneurship	0.831	0.440	0.936	0.898
life style	0.688	0.541	0.896	0.841
Awareness of followers	0.740	0.471	0.919	0.883
Influencer Behavior in Social Media Marketing	0.733	0.645	0.916	0.878
Average	-	0.544	0.898	

$$Gof = \sqrt{communalities \times \overline{R^2}} = 0.698$$

Since the calculated GOF values obtained in both models are greater than 0.36, it indicates a good fit of the research models, also, all path coefficients are significant and the explained variance is acceptable and

the internal consistency of the structures is above 0.05. Therefore, the conceptual model of the research has a good fit and is approved.

Conclusion

With the spread of social media and their popularity among the people, a new phenomenon called influencers has been added to the virtual world. In fact, social media provides an opportunity for users to share their current life moments and different experiences with other users. This makes the public increasingly sensitive to the purchase of a product or service offered by companies and spend more time gathering information and experiences of others to experience better shopping. In the present study, according to previous research and the need to study the behavior of influencers in social media marketing to provide a model in this area and analyzed the preconditions affecting the behavior of influencers as well as its economic and non-economic consequences. Based on the conceptual model of the research, the research hypotheses were formulated and tested using various statistical techniques. Influencer personal branding with a path coefficient of 0.27 had a relatively greater effect than other factors. The results showed that the influence of influencers has a positive and significant effect on the behavior of influencers in social media marketing. This means that unlike businesses, organizations, celebrities and influencers, brands do not have to be famous. In fact, whether you like it or not, you are a brand that even if you are not famous! For this reason, you need to take responsibility for your personal branding. If you do not brand yourself, you will allow others to take over your branding.

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