

Taking Advice from Your Popular Friend – The Influence of Parasocial Interaction and Number of Followers on Brand Attitude and Brand Purchase Intentions on Instagram

Anja Collenberg

ZHAW School of Management and Law

Pia Furchheim

ZHAW School of Management and Law

Bettina Beurer-Züllig

ZHAW School of Management and Law

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Abstract

The growing popularity of social media platforms has boosted the effects of peer recommendations. A major challenge that brands face is how to identify the right influencer. Oftentimes, companies refer to the number of followers as a proxy for ascribed opinion leadership. However, contrary to the general rule of thumb, this paper shows that more important than the number of followers is whether an influencer creates parasocial interaction with his followers. Across two studies this paper demonstrates that parasocial interaction impacts consumers' brand attitudes and subsequently purchase intention. Moreover, it shows that the number of followers only had a marginal significant effect on purchase intention.

Keywords: *influencer marketing; parasocial interaction theory; opinion leader*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media