The Impact of Self-disclosure by Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behavior

Sara AlRabiah
University of Edinburgh
Ben Marder
University of Edinburgh
David Marshall
University of Edinburgh

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Abstract

Today social media influencers (SMI) are key marketing agents, core to brands digital strategy. Current knowledge on personal self-disclosure by marketing agents assert that such disclosure is detrimental to brands and should be avoided. SMI challenge this status quo, as self-disclosure is known to be central to their success. The aim of the present research is to provide the first understanding of the role of self-disclosure by SMI on consumer behavior. A between-subject experiment (n=454, 2x2x2) examined disclosure depth, breadth, and gender of Instagram travel influencers on purchase intention and EWOM. Findings, contrast existing knowledge, revealed that promoting greater self-disclosure leads to favorable consumer behavior, a relationship mediated by appropriateness, trust (cognitive and affective), and product attitude. Primarily this study extends knowledge of self-disclosure of marketing agents as well as highlights the importance of appropriateness. Implications for marketers are also provided.

Keywords: *self-disclosure; consumer behavior; social media influencers*

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