

Influencer Marketing: The Power of Emotions in Branded Influencer Posts

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Abstract

In this paper, we draw on emotional contagion theory and heuristic-systematic processing theory to examine how emotions in branded content from social media influencers affect consumer engagement with such content. To this end, we conducted an analysis of 3,515 influencer marketing campaigns that were undertaken from 1,216 influencers in partnership with 135 well-known brands across 10 different areas of interest including apparel, beauty, and technology on Instagram. In so doing, we provide empirical evidence that emotional facial expressions in images and emotional language in post descriptions (i.e., text that complements an image in a social media post) positively affect consumer engagement with branded content from influencers. Our results also reveal that the positive impact of emotional facial expressions and post descriptions on consumer engagement is stronger when the influencer promotes a product that has greater hedonic than utilitarian value and when emotions are present in the majority of influencers' unbranded social media posts.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Information Systems*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media