The effect of ad disclosure and photo aesthetics on the effectiveness of sponsored social media posts

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Abstract

Consumers may not recognize the advertising nature of the sponsored social media posts published by an influencer. Building on the persuasion knowledge model and the CARE model, this paper examines the effect of advertising disclosure and photo aesthetics on the effectiveness of the sponsored post. We hypothesized that advertising disclosures would have a greater impact if the sponsored post contained a snapshot photo that was more in line with Instagram's aesthetics, as opposed to a professional photo. We tested our hypotheses with a 2 2 (control vs. ad disclosure, snapshot vs. professional photo) online experimental study. Our results confirmed our hypotheses: for the sponsored post containing a snapshot photo, the advertising disclosure had a more negative effect on both perceived credibility and attitudes towards the post. We conclude the paper with a summary of our theoretical and practical conclusions.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Branding, Cognition, Consumer Behaviour, Electronic Commerce and Internet Marketing*

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