

Influencer marketing: The role of Z followers' emotions

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Abstract: In today's dynamic marketing landscape, brands are increasingly leveraging Social Media Influencer (SMIs) as a potent marketing strategy. However, despite escalating interest, there remains a significant knowledge gap regarding the drivers of the relationship SMI-follower. This study is one of the earliest attempts to investigate this relationship dynamics from the lens of followers' emotions. On the basis of 14 qualitative interviews with Z followers, we provide evidence that positive (joy and fun), negative (envy and guilt) and neutral emotions have a role on followers' social media engagement and purchase intentions. With the emphasize of neutral emotions, we introduce the novel construct of *follower indifference*. The negative emotions influence extends the influencer's dark side literature. These insights should therefore pave the way for more research on emotions and influencer marketing. Professionals should take these findings into consideration in order to be successful.

Keywords: *Emotions; Gen Z; Social Media Influencers*

Track: *Digital Marketing & Social Media*