

Followers' Perceptions of Deinfluencing: Moral Responsibility and Anti-consumption

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Abstract

Deinfluencing is a novel practice whereby social media influencers encourage their followers to buy less. In view of the scarce scholarly research on deinfluencing, we draw on fifteen in-depth interviews with followers of social media influencers to capture their perceptions of deinfluencing, and how it affects their consumption. Our findings show that deinfluencing is a social movement that serves as a moral guide for followers in their consumption; empowering them to make better choices, consume less, and exercise moral responsibility. We also find that deinfluencing has positive effects on followers' wellbeing, promoting changes to the way they feel about themselves. Our study advances theoretical knowledge of deinfluencing and its effects, while positioning it as a crucial concept in the domain of influencer marketing. Our study also contributes to current debates about the effects of influencer marketing on followers' wellbeing.

Keywords: Deinfluencing, influencers, anti-consumption, moral responsibility, authenticity

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