

IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS ON PURCHASING DECISION

Margarita Išoraitė, Irena Alperytė, Giedrė Svirbutaitė - Krutkienė

Vilniaus kolegija/University of Applied Sciences

Didlaukio str. 49, Vilnius

Annotation

Influencers have huge impact on public opinion about certain products, brands, events, etc. as well as on consumer's buying decision. It is an extremely important issue since March 2020, when the lockdown is being announced in most of the globe. Being a part of social platforms and having large audiences and making an impact on them, influencers have a significant effect on purchasing decisions while building brand awareness just because the inhabitants have now been densely populated online. The goods and services directly and indirectly are promoted on social networks, via pictures online, and thus the views of the influencers on one or the other brand are reflected virtually. Often, a product advertised by influencers better matches the reality than a TV, radio or printed advertisement. Therefore, the goal of this article is to analyze the role of influencers on consumer purchasing decisions and to explore their perceptions of influencers in purchasing decisions. The paper uses the method of scientific literature analysis and quantitative and qualitative analysis. The theoretical background provided by marketing researchers on decision-making mechanism and its relation to the word-of-mouth of the influencers is examined. The results of the quantitative research conducted in order to analyze the role of influencers on purchasing decisions of the audience and people's perceptions of the impact of the influencers are discussed. The empirical research based on the cases of the ways of conduct on how influencers should organize their opinion on social networks, as on how for them to be more influential are described. Also, some recommendations on how to win more influencers are provided in the article.

Key words: influencer, opinion maker, purchasing decision, consumer, social network marketing.

Introduction

Influencer (opinion maker) is a person who influences public opinion about certain products, brands or events and seeks personal benefit on the account of this. Opinion makers in the 21st century are becoming a part of our lives. They act in various areas. They influence our decisions on whether to buy goods or not, to go to a concert or not, to buy clothes, groceries, to travel to the other part of the world or not. The main concern of an influencer is to attract the consumer's attention and to encourage him/her to buy products. A wide variety of information and topics compete for customers' attention and time every day, together with popular and famous people. The sources embrace the press, TV screen, or social networks attracting audience's attention instantly, by building images and associations, and occasionally helping to collect valuable information.

According to Černikovaitė (Černikovaitė, M., 2018), studies have shown that the means of social network marketing tend to be around 20-30 % more effective than other forms of online advertising. The social network marketing, which leverages social networks and opinion leaders, their ability to form a large network of people about themselves, and to directly form opinions about events, brands or people, has also been gaining its popularity this way. Studies have shown that as many as 83 % of consumers trust the recommendations of the *real* people.

A model, photographer, dancer, athlete, or actor: all these people are ranked among the top 10 most influential opinion communicators in Lithuania on Instagram, according to the results of January - June 2019. Karolina Meschino, a *star* of social networks, has been recognized as the most influential opinion-maker in the ranking of Lithuanian influencers by digital content agency

SuperYou. On the second place there has been the photographer and dancer Naglis Bierancas, and the third place has been taken by the athlete Žydrūnas Savickas.

Market research shows that influencers are most important among those who are the most active in the social sphere, from adolescents to the people in their 25-30s. After that age, people's engagement tends to decline. Thus, marketing strategy for influencers should be planned according to the needs of target audience. In addition, we can get different results with different influencers. It is important to include influencers who do not have too many followers, but who communicate with a business-friendly audience, in order to make a targeted marketing plan.

Selling techniques have changed in recent years: the platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and others have made it much easier for users to express their thoughts on a particular product or service, share their (positive and negative) experience, and provide word-of-mouth recommendations, while all the messages on these platforms can be spread instantly. Having this in mind, marketers face a new challenge of creating positive and minimizing negative messages that particularly affect potential consumers. There is no secret that promoting products through these platforms is an efficient way to reach the target consumer with lower costs. Therefore, social media has a huge effect on buying behavior.

Relevance and novelty of the topic. The topic of influencers has been studied by such foreign researchers as Freberga, K., Grahamb, K., McGaugheyc, K., Freber, L., A. (2010), Lim, X., Y., Rozaini, A., Radzol, M., Cheah (Jacky), JH, Wong, M., W. (2017), Glucksman, M. (2017), Ranga, M., Sharma, D. (2014), Eroğlu, F., Köse, E., B. (2019), Sudha, M., Sheena, K. (2017), but there is a lack of literature about influencer impact on the decision to buy.

Being part of social platforms and having large audiences and impacts on them, influencers have a significant effect on purchasing decisions while building brand awareness. They directly and indirectly promote goods and services on social networks, post pictures online, and thus express their views on one or the other brand. Often, a product advertised by influencers is better matched with reality than a TV or radio or printed advertisement. Therefore, the goal of this article is to analyze the role of influencers on the purchasing decisions and to explore customer's perceptions of influencers in purchasing decisions. The paper uses the method of scientific literature analysis and quantitative (questionnaire survey) methods.

To achieve these goals, we will consider completing the following tasks:

-Examine the theoretical background, provided by marketing researchers on decision-making mechanism and its relation to the word-of-mouth of the influencers;

-Discuss the results of the quantitative research conducted in order to analyze the role of influencers on purchasing decisions of the audience and people's perceptions of the impact of the influencers;

-Analyse the ways of conduct on how influencers should organize their opinion social networks.

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF OPINION MAKERS' INFLUENCE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

Definition of opinion makers'

Influencers are opinion makers who influence the public and shape their opinion on particular brands, products or services. These are people who have large audiences on followers' social networks. There are many people who spend hours each day browsing on social networks, whilst some of them do not switch of their phones all day long. That is why influencer marketing, by which popular public figures promote brands on social networks, has become one of the fastest-growing forms of advertising. Influencers are prone to co-operate with brands provided that co-operation corresponds to the content being broadcast and provides a degree of authenticity. Brand

communication is the most important factor via which influencers decide who they want to partner with.

When considering the definition of those who make influence of public opinion, it is important to look at the definitions of the opinion makers and the opinion maker marketing. The definitions are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Opinion makers' and opinion maker marketing definition

Author	Definition	Highlights
Freberga, K., Grahamb, K., McGaugheyc, K., Freber, L., A. (2010)	Social Media Influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third-party providers that shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other social media.	-a new type of independent third-party providers that shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other social media.
Lim, X., Y., Rozaini, A., Radzol, M., Cheah (Jacky), J. H., Wong, M., W. (2017)	First of all, the influencers of social media explored in advertising, especially create joy in younger markets and further expand the presence of social media businesses.	-create joy in younger markets and further expand the presence of social media businesses.
Glucksman, M. (2017)	The number of opinion makers' has been growing, becoming one of the biggest marketing and public relations trends, especially for lifestyle brands. Lifestyle opinion makers focus on companies whose products are used by non-celebrities in their daily lives. Working alongside social media influencers, public relations agencies can take the attention and take part in promotion of brands among consumers with a relevant content for customers	-focus on work companies whose products are used by non-celebrities in their daily lives
Ranga, M., Sharma, D. (2014)	Influencer marketing is an improvement process for relationships with influential people that can effect many potential buyers which for the common person may not be possible.	-an improvement process for relationships with influential people that can influence many potential buyers
Eroğlu, F., Köse, E., B. (2019)	Influencer marketing, as an alternative type of marketing, is an influencing marketing practice; a theory that supports a view that a limited number of key people can convince solutions of many others (Braatz, 2017, 6)	-supports a view that a limited number of key people can convince solutions of many others.
Sudha, M., Sheena, K. (2017)	Influencer marketing can be defined as a process meant to identify and activate influencers through a certain target audience or medium to be a part of a branding campaign to increase sales.	-can be defined as a process meant to identify and activate influencers through a certain target audience or medium to be a part of a branding campaign to increase sales

Advantages and disadvantages of opinion maker marketing

Opinion maker marketing has its advantages and disadvantages. The pros and cons of applicability of opinion formers as catalysts of sales are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Advantages and disadvantages of opinion maker marketing

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>1) No big budgets needed</p> <p>You heard it right! When working with micro-influencers, many will collaborate on incentives, such as samples or experiences, such as bed and breakfast, if your business is a home hotel. If they choose a payment, it will be much lower than what A-lister would charge for the same transaction.</p> <p>2) Influencer marketing forms your customers opinion</p> <p>This is a major advantage of influencer marketing and has been proven to work. It is a more personal and human element that makes consumers feel differently about different brands and is the same emotion you trust when buying a product.</p> <p>3) When you want to gain consumer confidence, consumer is your supporter</p> <p>Influencers consult loyal followers who watch their videos and read their product posts. They trust their opinions over time. When an influencer promotes a brand with a discount code or gift, their followers will be intrigued. And for a relatively new business, this type of endorsement is effective in strengthening the brand's authority in the market.</p> <p>4) Target the right audience, and your audience increases</p> <p>Partnering with influencers related to your business will increase your audience. You will want to promote your messages to people in your niche. Many clothing brands will opt to partner with fashion influencers who track style. Teams of fashion lovers will be drawn to the lines advertised on social pages.</p> <p>5. Expands your reach, if disseminated by the 'right' influencers</p> <p>Helps your brand and / or product be disseminated to a broad audience by working with influencers relevant to your offer. Thousands of people can contact you. Influencers usually follow with passion, insight, ideas along with the fun messages they post. Their followers expect new posts they love, share and re-post.</p>	<p>1) Choosing the wrong influencer</p> <p>According to the survey, 61 % of marketers find it difficult to identify the right actors for their campaigns. The truth is, getting it right, takes some time and effort, whereas doing the wrong thing can do a lot of damage to your brand reputation.</p> <p>2) Uncertainty of results</p> <p>You can sign a contract with an influencer who has previously posted successful content but is unable to create effective content for your business. The audience will not engage, and any money invested might be at a loss.</p> <p>3) Measuring your progress can be automatic</p> <p>Online programs will automate this task so you can easily measure the revenue generated from your marketing efforts. However, the analysis is extremely important and can be improved in the future or even if you decided to move to another market.</p> <p>4) Maintaining integrity is a challenge</p> <p>Remember, it is important to maintain your integrity when it comes to influencer marketing. There may be times when you may come across something that is not really good for your audience. The reasons for this can be the extra money offered by brands, free goods, and so on.</p> <p>5) Discover consistent work is demanding</p> <p>Another challenge to be an influencer is to find consistent work. There are thousands of influencers and micro-divers out there, and getting lost in this huge sea of influencers can be easy. It also reduces your chances of getting in touch with brands because of partnership.</p> <p>6) Building a community is a must</p> <p>You can only become an influencer when you have a</p>

Advantages	Disadvantages
	community. But to have a community, you first need to create one. Creating a highly engaged community from the start is no easy task. You have to come up with a unique and high quality content so your audience can connect with it.

Consumer trust in influencers

Consumers have been relying on influencer’s recommendations to make choices about products, brands and purchasing decisions for a long time. Based on the 2019 Edelman “Trust Barometer” report data, 63 % of consumers trust in what influencers say about brands more than they trust the brand’s advertisements (Grieb, Newland, Po, 2019). Consumers see influencers not only as a trustworthy source of information but also perceive them as inspiration, entertainment, or just as an ability to establish relationship. Six reasons of trusting influencers can be distinguished:

1. The study “Psychology of Following”, conducted by CITE Research confirms that authenticity is the key element of influencers. Each influencer applies their own expertise, style and creativity when creating their social media contents. Brands understand that social influencers with their uniqueness (authenticity) are very important in helping to create a brand as well as drive sales.
2. Various studies (e.g. Nielsen Consumer Trust Index, MuseFind and other) have proven that consumers tend to trust influencers more than advertisement and celebrity endorsements. People tend to think that ads are lying, and the advertisers are paid to claim and promote something they do not necessarily believe in themselves. As a result, influencers who talk on what they are passionate about are considered much more honest, responsible, and, therefore, trusted by the audience. So there is more confidence in influencers because of their personal connection and experience with the products, because of their impartiality.

However, it should be noted at this point that there are two types of influencer marketing: (Sudha, Sheena, 2017) **earned influencer marketing** (this is unpaid marketing campaigns when influencers aim to promote their personal social growth as well as establish the relationship with the followers) and **paid influencer marketing** (marketing campaigns can take the form of sponsorship, pre-roll advertising or testimonial messaging and can appear at any point in the content, budgets vary based on the audience reach). Thus, in the case of second type of influencer marketing (paid marketing), confidence and trust in influencers, as impartial persons who express personal opinion and experience, diminishes.

1. The digital marketing platform has changed – more and more consumers use one or more advertising avoidance tactics, such as carious ad blockers. According to market-leading research and consulting business Ovum, 35 billion of USD in ad revenue will be lost to ad blocking by 2020. Therefore, influencers are becoming one of the main sources of advertising because they are immune to this type of avoidance behavior. Moreover, in 2016, TapInfluence and Nielsen Catalina Solutions conducted a study showing that influencer marketing generates the ROI (return on investment) 11 times higher of traditional digital marketing (Smith, 2016).
2. Influencers are generally experts in their respective fields. Users are turning to them for advice, tips or recommendations based on their personal experience as experts in the field.
3. Making personal connections – influencers provide insight into their personal lives, creating a sense of closeness and commonality – as if “we are the same”. Also, influencers interact with their followers, e.g. replying to messages, and this builds relationships as well as generates trust.
4. Finally, not only consumers, but also brands themselves trust influencer marketing and use them as part of their marketing strategy. In 2017, 93 % of marketers spent more than 10,000 USD on their influencer campaigns. In 2018, on Instagram alone, marketers spent 5 billion

USD on influencer marketing globally. It's projected that businesses will spend at least 10 billion USD on influencer marketing in 2020.

Analysis of quantitative research results

A pilot study (quantitative research) was carried out in order to analyze the role of influencers on purchasing decisions and to explore customer's perceptions of influencers in purchasing decisions. 118 respondents were interviewed. The key findings are presented below.

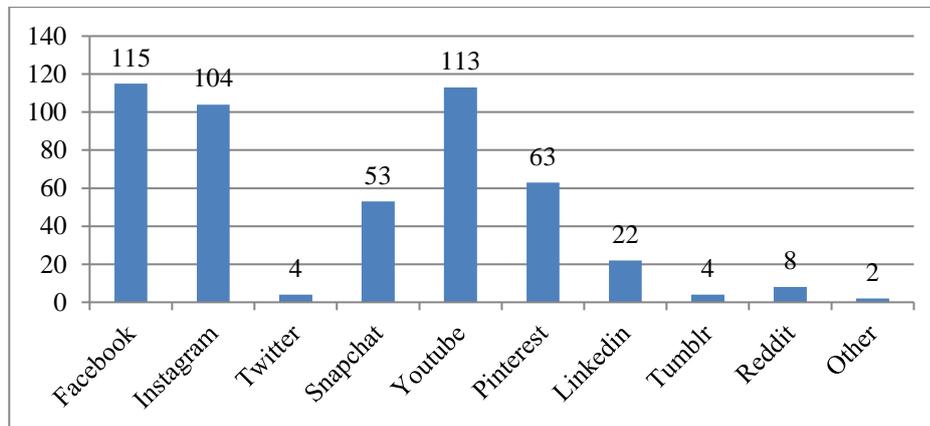


Figure 1. Social networks used by respondents

Out of 118 respondents everyone is using social media networks, out of which Facebook, Youtube and Instagram were used the most (accordingly 97.5 %, 96 % and 88 %). Other social media networks used by respondents were Snapchat, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Reddit, TikTok.

34.7 % of respondents said they were following 1 – 3 influencers, 28 % were following 4 – 9 influencers and 33.9 % were following 10 and more influencers. Most of the respondents were following influencers from Lithuania (57.6 %).

However, when asked about what particular influencers respondents trust (dividing the influencers to 3 subcategories (micro- with 500 – 1000 followers), macro- (with 1000 – 10 000 followers) and mega- (with more than 10 000) even 36.4 % noted that they don't trust influencers at all.

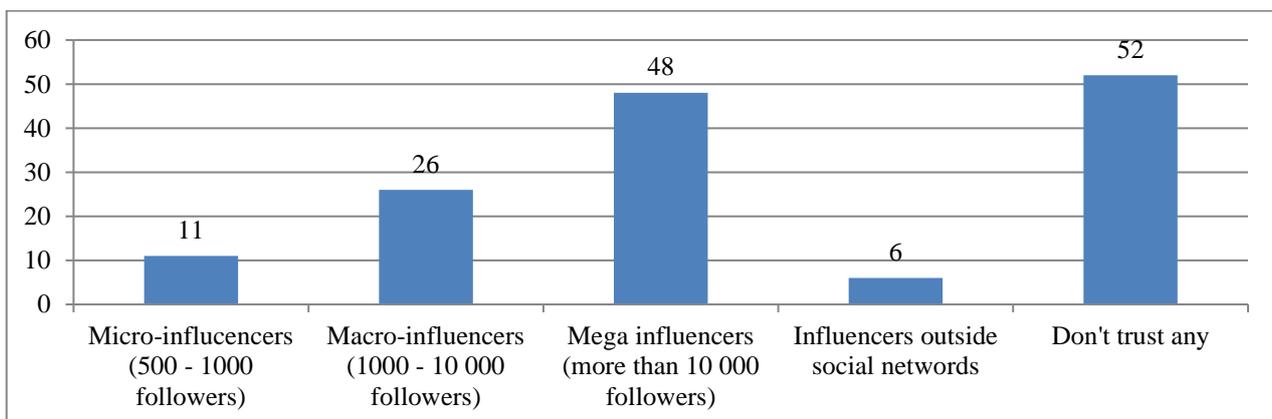


Figure 2. influencers that respondents trust the most

Here emerges an interesting situation, a kind of paradox that while 36.4 % of respondents do not express any confidence and trust in influencers, they still follow them in the social space. Another trend has emerged that people tend to trust influencers with more followers: only 7.7 % expressed their trust in micro-influencers, 18.2 % in macro-influencers and 33.6 % in mega

influencers. The remaining 4.2 % noted, that they do trust influencers but not the ones on social media.

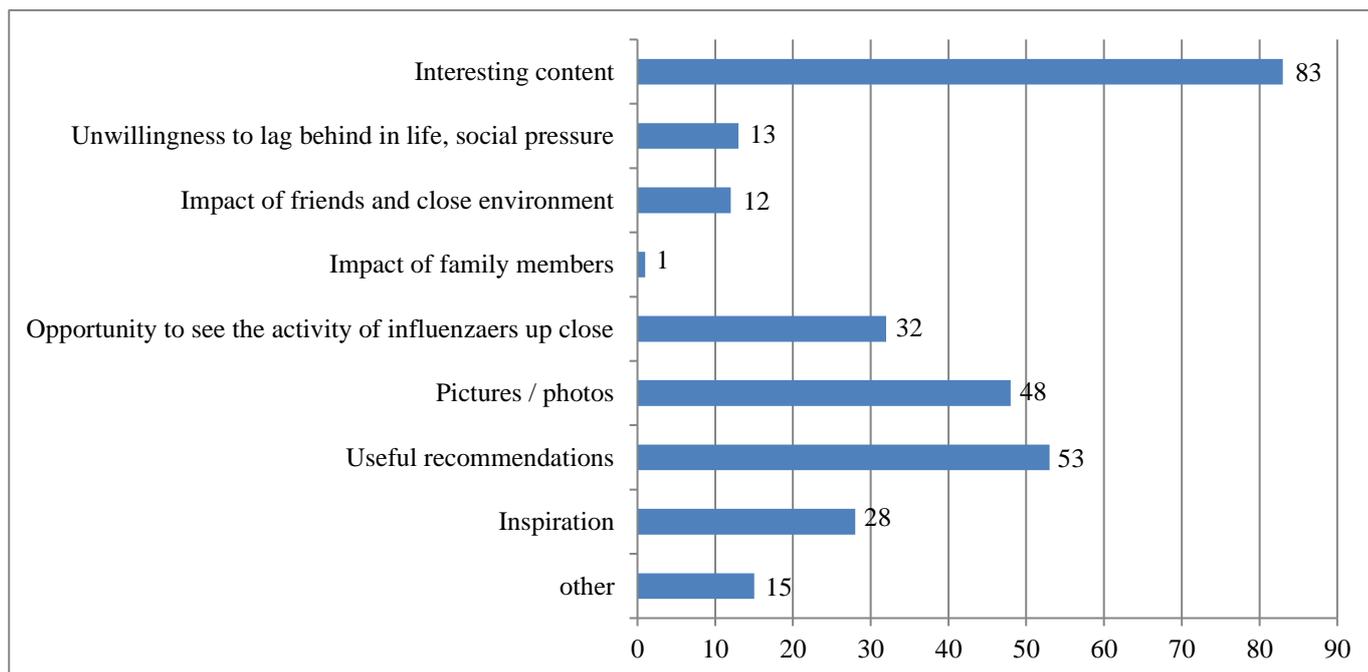


Figure 3. Reasons that motivates to follow influencers on social media

When asked what encourages the respondents to follow the influencers they answered that it was interesting content (29.1 %), useful recommendations (18.6 %), posted pictures (16.8 %), the ability to see the activities of influencers up close (11.2 %) and other. Respondents also mentioned that photos (31 %) and videos (24.8 %) draw the most attention to look at influencer’s posts.

The second part of the questionnaire was focused mainly on purchasing influence. The questions were provided related to buying behavior, recommendations of influencers, their impact on choosing products and services. The majority of the respondents (52.5 %) said that they notice the advertising on social media done by influencers at least two times a day. However only 7.1 % agreed that they actually purchase the item that was advertised by the influencer. Moreover, only 15 % of respondents said that they would (or might) consider the recommendations and reviews of influencers before buying the particular product or service. On the other hand, 59.3 % of respondents would look for recommendations and reviews before making the buying decisions, but not from influencers.

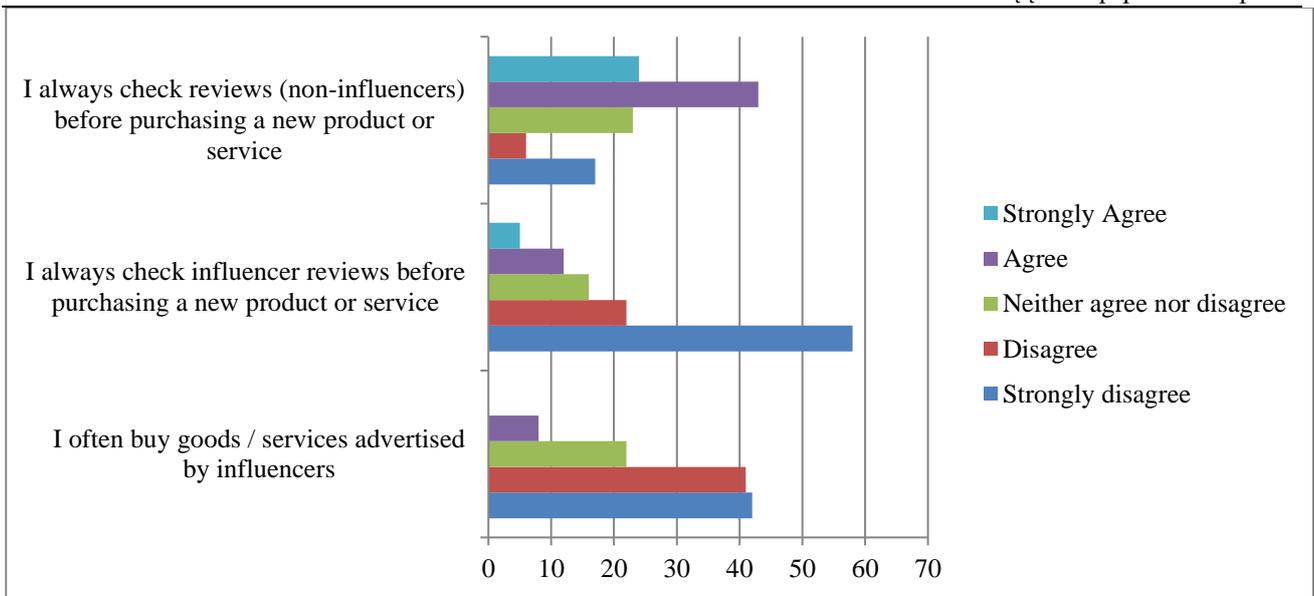


Figure 4. Influencers impact on purchasing

Many respondents were skeptical towards influencers marketing and stated that such type of marketing has its flaws, are not trustworthy and consumers are often experience ‘herd’ mentality.

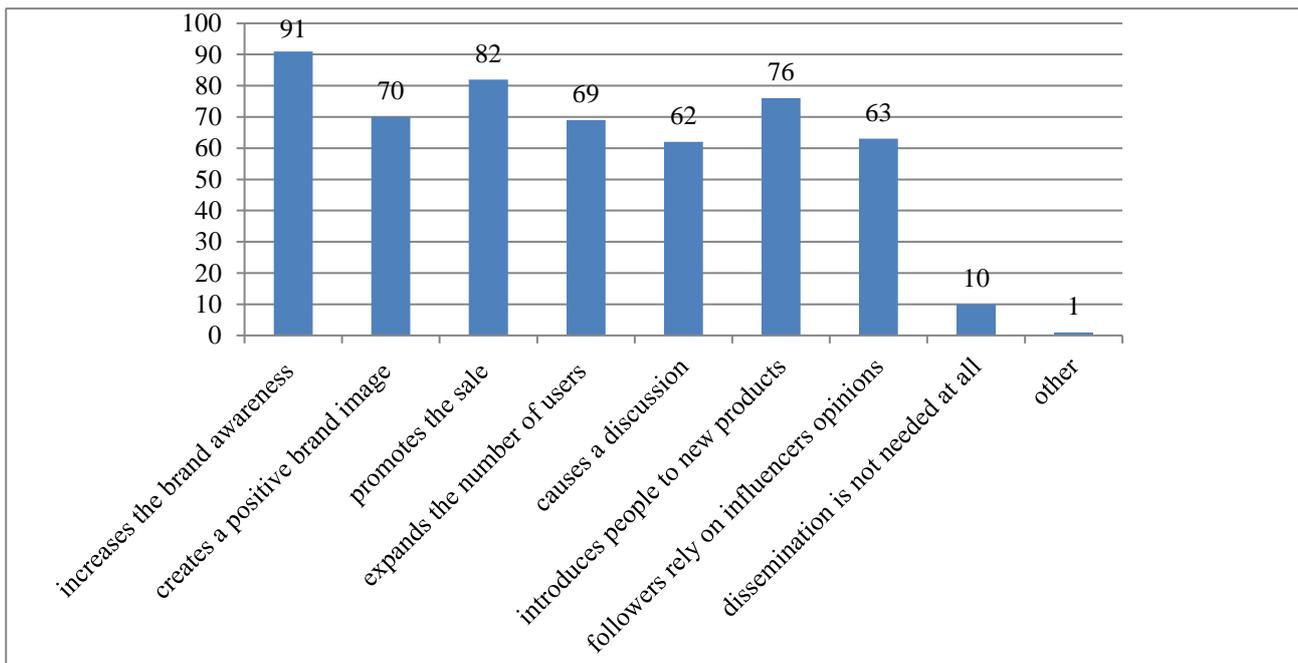


Figure 5. Reasons how influencer-generated content does impact on purchasing decisions

However, respondents agree that influencers marketing can increase brand awareness, promote sales and can introduce new products and services to the consumers. 58.5 % of respondents stated that they have partial trust in content provided by influencers and 5.1 % of respondents have complete trust in the content provided by the influencers.

Finally, 39.8 % of respondents admitted they had stopped following influencer due to excessive advertising and only 9.7 % admitted that they actually bought something just because it was advertised by the influencer.

When talking about the brand and sales promotion, respondents notice that best elements for such promotion are visual appearance of product (design, package) (20 %), recommendations from

other consumers (19.5 %), personal experience (16 %), benefits for consumer (15.4 %) and other rather than opinion of influencers (6.6 %).

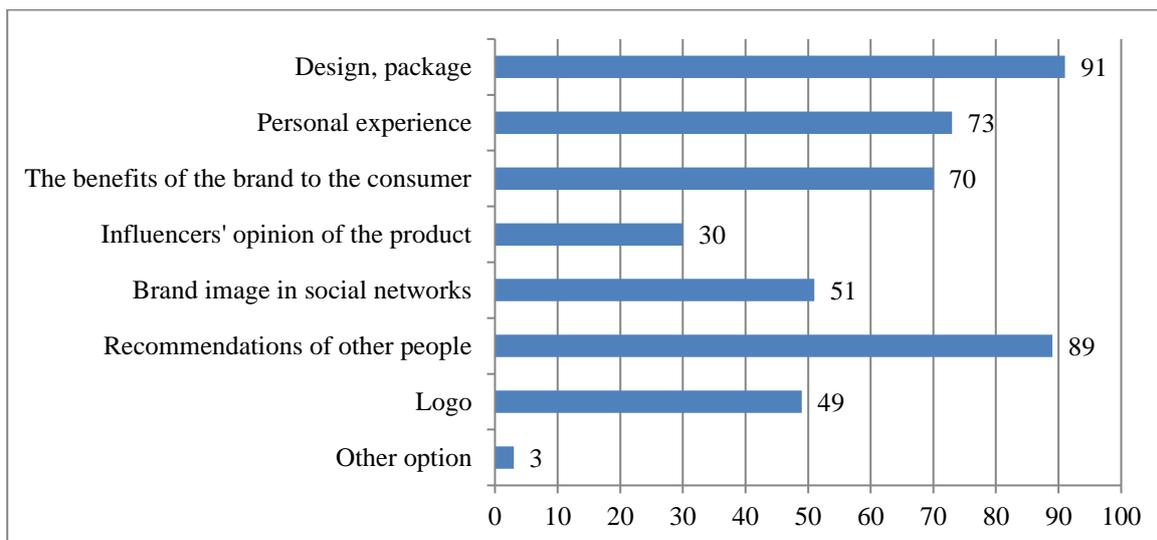


Figure 6. Elements that best form an opinion about the attractiveness of a particular brand

PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF OPINION MAKERS' INFLUENCE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

Empirical research: legal aspects (based on local media digest)

The influencer marketing has some legal aspects to consider, too. In some European countries, there are rules specifically for influencers. UK, Italy, and Austria have issued guidelines for influencers on the requirements for advertising, and in Germany, courts have begun to develop practices on how influencers should signpost messages on social networks.

The UK Advertising Self-Regulatory Authority says influencer messages should be considered advertising when they are paid for and the content is controlled by the sponsor. However, the Recommendation notes that consumer protection requires that all paid content be labeled as advertising or sponsored content. How can influencer should provide product advertising without breaking the law?

The advertising must be clearly marked by the signpost, thus the sign should be present at the beginning of the message, rather than at the end or part of the message that is seen when you click "see more", thus the hashtag must clearly indicate that it is an advertising or sponsored content. (For example, #Advertisement, #SupportedContent).

If the target consumers are in Lithuania, it is recommended to use the Lithuanian language when informing them, so that the popular #ad tag always bears the correct signposting. On Instagram, a particular tool can be used to indicate that it is a "Paid partnership with". The requirements for tagging advertisements also apply to image content, so it should include the symbols of #Advertising or #R aside or indicating at the beginning of the message that the content is supported by a particular trademark.

Before agreeing to advertise foods, dietary supplements, or merchandise for children, the society should be aware of the requirements for advertising these products, and remember that alcohol, tobacco, and gun advertising is prohibited in Lithuania.

Major changes to the Public Procurement Act. Influencer Advertising Markup

From now on, it is necessary to follow the legal acts while sharing your opinion on some goods or services. An agreement on content control can be an essential condition for a fine to be imposed on the advertiser or advertising service provider.

The Advertising Act states that the advertiser is responsible for the use of advertising that does not comply with the requirements of the Act, unless he or she proves that the requirements set out in this Act were not subordinated due to somebody else's fault. If the company had control over the content prior to ordering the notice, it should be penalized for the violation of hidden advertising or other non-compliant advertising.

Incidentally, influencers, as private persons and service providers, may be subject to administrative penalties for non-compliant in advertising if they are found to be in violation of the Act of producing or publishing the advertisement or the influencer is unable to provide information about the advertiser.

The Consumer Protection Authority is monitoring the influencers' opinions further on, but there is no urgency to impose fines, even though there are violations. In December 2019, the Authority issued a paper on how influencers should label advertising on social networks. Valdas Lopeta, head of corporate affairs and communications at 'Lidl Lietuva', points out that about a couple of years ago, when Lidl's collaboration with opinion formers began to gain in-kind support, it set itself the goal of being an example of transparency in this market:

"Unmarked advertising was a normal practice in this market at the time, but it was obvious that with the growing popularity of opinion formers, it would inevitably change, and we wanted to be at the forefront of that change. We created clear rules for marking our partnerships, included them in our contracts with influencers, and began to monitor compliance on a regular basis and, if necessary, to be reminded and consulted," says Lopeta to "Verslo Žinios".

On the question of how this would affect both influencers and followers, Laura Aleksandravičė, Head of a specialized advertising agency Influenceriai.lt, says she has emphasized and contractually obligated clients and opinion formers to disclose on-demand advertising on social networks since the very beginning. *"We do not see any negative impact on the results. Consumers are not stupid, they see when a post is an advertisement and the result is not about tagging, but whether the ad is sincere, creative, valuable, emotive and so on. We note that consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the "advertising police" and themselves praise opinion-makers for flagged advertising and are not afraid to reproach those who do not disclose the advertising relationship with the brand,"* says L. Aleksandravičė (Verslo Žinios).

In addition, Raitis Gocentas, digital marketing project manager at "Caption", comments (Verslo žinios):

"An influencer can look like a great candidate for your marketing campaign – having a lot of followers, great engagement, and already partnering with other brands. However, the campaign may fail completely."

Companies that often work with influencers know at least a few possible causes of failure and how to avoid them. The first is choosing an influencer who has absolutely no interest in working with the advertised product or service. He or she is neither part of the product's target audience nor he or she knows the people to whom the product is relevant. Meanwhile, companies and agencies often choose the easiest way – looking for influencer lists on the Internet, turning to those they are best followed and offering partnerships as soon as they feel that the contents they will publish matches their desired aesthetic. These criteria may bear a resemblance to great choices, but following this pattern, we lose. Choosing influencers that everyone else picks will inevitably cost more for the same service. The elementary economy is that these influencers will have more demand for advertising with them than revenues, because of the place where they can publish that advertising.

Problem solving: act in our own circle

The best way to find the influencers who are the most relevant to your product is by far from demanding weekly searches and surveys. The first and the best source for the person is to look for influencers among your Instagram followers. The second way is the people who put ‘likes’ and comments below your photos, and if the first two are not enough, address the existing followers of the influencers.

By looking for the influencers we can eventually solve at least three problems in one go:

- To find out where we can find influencers for whom our product is relevant?
- To decide on how to get the most effect out of my influencing campaign?
- To learn how to implement influencing (especially micro-) campaigns systematically and quickly?

The only drawback to this approach is the potentially long duration of the primary follower analysis. If you have to look through several or several thousand of your followers by hand, you may have your fingers crossed, while finding proper people. What is still important, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages while applying influencer marketing.

The most memorable in this respect was the case when influencers with 66.5 and 56.6 thousand followers agreed to share a post on their Instagram profile for a Eur 20 coupon. Customers remained extremely satisfied with these results, and work with influencers was running much more smoothly – no more discussion about the product and what problem it solves was an issue. The influencer became familiar with the brand by following it himself. The potential here is great and finding influencers among your followers is not as difficult as it may seem at first. To act according to your campaign goals is advised to be the best strategy in your marketing campaign.

Many people think that choosing an influencer from the list is just a formality. Having a budget, knowing the amount of people you want to reach, getting in touch, and figuring out how much your budget can buy is not the exact plan which you have to follow.

Influencers of different “sizes” serve different purposes. Big, and well-known names work great when you want to increase awareness or remind people about your brand. Micro influencers, meanwhile, are much better suited to campaigns aimed at boosting sales.

The reason for this is quite simple. Influencers are like rising music stars, listened to from the outset by only the most genuine fans and friends. Many of these listeners will be in a hurry to hear the latest record from the artist, and it is recommended not to hesitate to buy anything this person has created. There are not many persons of this kind, but there may be some 500 among the first 5,000.

Later, as awareness and the audience numbers increase, the proportion of these loyal fans increases at a lower rate. We have to acknowledge that although a person becomes more recognizable in the public, especially in social media, however, among the 100,000 listeners there will be only 1,000 who are determined to buy anything.

The similar situation applies to the influencers. With an influencer of 100,000 followers, you will pay more than 20 times more for an influencer than with 5,000 followers. However, if you were looking for something to sell, the results are likely to upset you. Followers of such an influencer are already accustomed to regularly shared promotional posts with products they usually don't even use themselves.

Therefore, choose those who already love and follow you. Weigh whether you want to sell or increase your awareness. And be a human, because the influencer is a human too, not an artificial ad panel.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the ideas of what is said earlier, it should be confirmed that the goal of this article – to analyze the role of influencers on the purchasing decisions and to explore customer’s perceptions of influencers in purchasing decisions – proved that the social media does have a huge effect on

buying behavior, and cause many other issues related to influencer and consumer behavior online. The authors of the paper have used the method of scientific literature analysis and questionnaire survey, statistical analysis, and via these channels have achieved the goals concerning the role of the influencers in nowadays' virtual marketing.

To achieve these goals, the authors aimed at completing the following tasks:

1. The theoretical background provided by marketing researchers on decision-making mechanism and its relation to the word-of-mouth of the influencers is examined. It is argued that social media influencers outline audience's attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other social media. However, influencer marketing has both advantages and disadvantages.
2. The results of the quantitative research conducted in order to analyze the role of influencers on purchasing decisions of the audience and people's perceptions of the impact of the influencers are discussed. The key finding is that the majority of the respondents note that they do not trust influencers at all. Another trend is that people tend to trust influencers with more followers. Although many respondents were skeptical towards influencer marketing, a few respondents stated that they have partial trust in content provided by influencers. To sum up, it can be stated that the advantages and disadvantages explained in the article, determine the role of influencer marketing on purchasing behaviour.
3. The cases of the ways of conduct on how influencers should organize their opinion on social networks, as on how for them to be more influential are described. Certain legal aspects become of the key importance when advertising some products or services. Also, some recommendations on how to win more influencers are provided in the article.

References

1. Černikovaitė, M. (2018). *Nuomonių lyderiai – auganti niša socialinių tinklų rinkodaroje*. <https://naujienos.vu.lt/nuomonių-lyderiai-auganti-nisa-socialiniu-tinklu-rinkodaroje/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
2. Eroğlu, F., Köse, E., B. (2019). *Utilization of online influencers as an experiential marketing tool: a case of instagram micro-celebrities*. Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi / The Journal of International Social Research Cilt: Volume: 12 Issue. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
3. Freberga, K., Grahamb, K., McGaughey, K., Freber, L., A. (2010). *Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality*. Public Relations Review (2010), doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.11.001. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
4. Glucksman, M. (2017). *The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A Case Study of Lucie Fink*. Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications, Vol. 8, No. 2 • Fall 2017. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
5. Grieb S., Newland A., Po M., 2019, 2019 Edelman trust barometer special report: In brands we trust? https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2019-06/2019_edelman_trust_barometer_special_report_in_brands_we_trust.pdf Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
6. Lim, X., Y., Rozaini, A., Radzol, M., Cheah (Jacky), J. H., Wong, M., W. (2017). *The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention and the Mediation Effect of Customer Attitude*. Asian Journal of Business Research Volume 7, Issue 2, DOI: 10.14707/ajbr.170035. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
7. Ranga, M., Sharma, D. (2014). *Influencer marketing- a marketing tool in the age of social media*. Abhinav International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Technology. Volume 3, Issue 8, 16-21. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.
8. Smith E. (2016). *Tap Influence and Nielsen Catalina Solutions Launch Collaboration for CPG Brands to Measure Sales Impact of Influencer Marketing Campaigns*. <https://www.tapinfluence.com/blog->

[tapinfluence-and-nielsen-catalina-solutions-launch-collaboration-for-cpg-brands-to-measure-sales-impact-of-influencer-marketing-campaigns/](#) Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.

9. Sudha, M., Sheena, K. (2017). *Impact of Influencers in Consumer Decision Process: the Fashion Industry*. SCMS Journal of Indian Management, July - September 2017. 14-30. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on April 4, 2020.

Electronic resources:

1. <https://www.zmones.lt/naujiena/sudarytas-itaigiausiu-instagram-nuomones-formuotoju-desimtukas.7e5f37a6-e4db-11e9-a421-aa000054c883#> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
2. <https://marketingovaldymas.lt/marketingas/influenceriai-mada-ar-butinybe/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
3. <https://shanebarker.com/blog/pros-and-cons-of-influencer-marketing/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
4. <https://homebusinessmag.com/marketing/internet-marketing/influencer-marketing-advantages-disadvantages/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
5. <https://www.mondovo.com/blog/4-advantages-3-disadvantages-of-being-an-influencer/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
6. <https://www.taurusmedia.lt/influenceriu-era-socialinese-platformose/> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
7. <https://www.vz.lt/rinkodara/2019/05/06/kada-influencerio-nuomone-tampa-reklama-ir-kaip-ja-zymeti> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
8. <https://www.vz.lt/rinkodara/2020/02/15/influenceriu-reklamos-zymejimas-pliusu-daugiau-nei-minusu> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
9. <https://www.vz.lt/rinkodara/2020/02/11/l-aleksandravice-patys-vartotojai-tampa-influenceriu-reklamos-policija> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
10. <https://www.vz.lt/rinkodara/komunikacija/2019/12/27/influenceris-turi-megti-jus-o-ne-jus---ji-arba-kodel-kampanijos-patiria-fiasko#ixzz6EgRFDmCD> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
11. <https://www.fashtechspain.com/media/olapic-consumer-research-psychology-of-following.pdf> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
12. <https://www.business2community.com/marketing/influencer-marketing-statistics-that-prove-why-its-so-popular-02199795> Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020
13. <https://www.traackr.com/blog/early-days-what-does-covid-19-mean-for-influencer-marketing>. Available on the Internet. Retrieved on February 23, 2020

INFLUENCERIŲ ĮTAKA APSPRENDIMUI PIRKTI

Margarita Išoraitė, Irena Alperytė, Giedrė Svirbutaitė - Krutkienė
Vilniaus kolegija
Didlaukio g. 49, Vilnius

Santrauka

Influenceris (nuomonės formuotojas) yra asmuo, kuris daro įtaką visuomenės nuomonei apie tam tikrus produktus, prekės ženklus ar renginius ir siekia asmeninės naudos dėl to. XXI amžiaus influenceriai tampa mūsų gyvenimo dalimi. Jie veikia įvairiose srityse. Jie daro įtaką sprendimams pirkti prekes ar ne, eiti į koncertą ar ne, pirkti drabužius, maisto produktus, keliauti į kitą pasaulio kraštą ar ne. Pagrindinis influencerio interesas yra pritraukti vartotojo dėmesį ir paskatinti jį pirkti produktus.

Įvairūs tyrimai parodė, kad socialinio tinklo rinkodaros priemonės yra maždaug 20–30 procentų efektyvesnės nei kitos internetinės reklamos formos. Socialinio tinklo rinkodara pasitelkia socialinius tinklus

ir influencerius, jų galimybes formuoti didelį žmonių tinklą apie save ir tiesiogiai formuoti nuomones apie įvykius, prekės ženklus ar žmones. Tyrimai parodė, kad net 83 procentai vartotojų pasitiki realių žmonių rekomendacijomis. Rinkos tyrimai rodo, kad influenceriai daro didžiausią įtaką tiems, kurie yra aktyviausi socialinėje srityje, pradedant paaugliais ir baigiant 25–30 metų žmonėmis. Po šio amžiaus žmonių įsitraukimas linkęs mažėti. Taigi influencerių rinkodaros strategija turėtų būti suplanuota atsižvelgiant į tikslinės auditorijos poreikius.

Būdami socialinių platformų dalimi, turėdami didelę auditoriją ir darydami joms įtaką, influenceriai daro didelę įtaką pirkimo sprendimams, tuo pačiu stiprindami prekės ženklo žinomumą. Jie tiesiogiai ir netiesiogiai reklamuoja prekes ir paslaugas socialiniuose tinkluose, skelbia nuotraukas internete ir taip išreiškia savo požiūrį į vieną ar kitą prekės ženklą. Dažnai influencerių reklamuojamas produktas geriau atitinka tikrovę nei televizija, radijas ar spausdinta reklama. Todėl šio straipsnio tikslas yra išanalizuoti influencerių vaidmenį priimant sprendimus dėl pirkėjų ir ištirti jų suvokimą apie influencerius priimant pirkimo sprendimus.

Straipsnyje pateikiama rinkodaros tyrėjų pateiktų teorinių pagrindų analizė, susijusi su sprendimų priėmimo mechanizmu ir jo ryšiu su influencerių veikla, taip pat išanalizuojami kiekybinio tyrimo (žvalgomojo tyrimo) rezultatai, siekiant išanalizuoti influencerių įtaką vartotojams (ir jų pirkimo elgsenai) bei ištirti vartotojų nuomonę ir požiūrį į influencerius, jų veiklą. Pateikiama influencerių pranašumai ir trūkumai bei jų įtaka pirkimo sprendimams, vartotojų elgsenai. Galiausiai aptariami kai kurie teisiniai aspektai, kurie tampa labai svarbūs reklamuojant kai kuriuos produktus ar paslaugas. Straipsnyje derinami skirtingi metodai – naudojami mokslinės literatūros analizės ir kiekybinės (anketinės apklausos) analizės metodai, taip pat statistinė analizė.

Raktiniai žodžiai: influenceris, nuomonės formuotojas, sprendimas pirkti, vartotojas, socialinių tinklų rinkodara