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Shuer Zhuo

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**The Efficacy of Social Media Influencers in E-commerce
in the Context of Sensory Richness**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Matthew S. Eastin, Supervisor

Laura F. Bright

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Shuer Zhuo

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Abstract

The Efficacy of Social Media Influencers in E-commerce in the Context of Sensory Richness

Shuer Zhuo, M. A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2021

Supervisor: Matthew S. Eastin

Emerging affordances of social media platforms and e-commerce interfaces have enticed brands, marketers, and social media influencers to employ rich media in hopes of engaging consumers with multisensory stimuli. Using Media Richness Theory, this study explores how media richness regarding sensory modalities in influencers' product reviews affects decision confidence and behavioral intentions during online shopping. Further, the study investigates the interaction effects between media richness and motivation on consumers' sensation of presence in e-commerce and the relationships among presence, attention, curiosity, search, decision confidence, and purchase intention. Results show that presence and search significantly predict decision confidence, which was found to have a positive association with purchase intention. Data also reveal that attention and curiosity are positively associated with presence and significantly predict search.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Lack of tangibility and social interaction in e-commerce poses challenges for brands to connect with consumers due to the sensory and experiential gap online. Consumers with increasingly short attention spans are inundated with alternatives during their information search and product evaluation. These challenges can potentially be overcome in the virtual worlds by using interactive spokes-avatars and multimodal communication (Jin, 2009). A number of studies have shown that rich media enhance the vividness of product presentation as well as reduce uncertainty and perceived risk in e-commerce (Brunelle, 2009; Maity et al., 2018; Tseng & Wei, 2020). Sensory-rich media such as audiovisual content tend to stimulate the sensation of presence that enhances persuasion (Kim & Biocca, 1997).

That said, little research has examined how media richness regarding sensory modalities in social media influencers' (SMI) content affects consumers' decision-making. SMIs' abilities to connect with consumers on a personal level and serve as expert sources online render it possible to turn indirect experience into direct experience (Lin et al., 2018; Klein, 1998). Through the sensation of presence induced by a desirable level of media richness, consumers may imagine themselves in the shoes of SMIs and bridge the experiential gap between e-commerce and shopping at brick-and-mortar stores.

Building upon Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), the current study investigates the effects of media richness manifested by different senses involved in consuming SMIs' content on the consumers' decision confidence and behavioral intentions during online shopping. Emerging affordances of social media platforms and e-commerce interfaces have prompted brands, marketers, and influencers to jump on the bandwagon to

implement rich media content in hopes of engaging consumers in full-sensory capacity (Klein 2001). Understanding the interaction between consumer characteristics and media characteristics in the context of product presentation will shed light on the comparative merits of different content types and engagement methods in the digital space. Marketers can optimize e-commerce strategies in collaboration with SMIs according to consumers' intrinsic needs during their information search online. Enhanced decision confidence and satisfaction at various touchpoints may foster positive brand and product attitudes as well as purchase intention during the consumer journey (Kim & Biocca, 1997).

Chapter II: Literature Review

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER (SMI)

The immense growth of social media has made new information sources widely available, cultivating a rising demand for information from fellow consumers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). SMIs emerge as a unique and compelling source of information, and consumers tend to value their opinions more than traditional celebrities' due to SMIs' higher perceived authenticity, relatability, and accessibility (Djafarova & Chloe, 2017; Lee & Eastin, 2020; Lee, Bright & Eastin, in press).

Informativeness and entertainment are the two main components of influencer content value (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The major obstacles of online shopping are the lack of entertainment, social interaction, and personal consultation (Barlow et al. 2004, as cited in Jin, 2009, p. 235). These issues can potentially be solved by incorporating online recommendation agents (Punj & Moore, 2007). SMIs serve similar functions as “interactive spokes-avatars” identified in Jin’s (2009) study on 3-D virtual stores, which extends beyond conventional recommendation formats such as visual thumbnails and textual lists to deploy sensory-rich media and offer extensive product information. Additionally, Lou and Yuan (2019) argue that SMIs distribute information about product alternatives and other persuasive content based on expertise, thus conveying informativeness; their “personal aesthetic touches and personality twists” in their content convey entertainment value for followers.

MEDIA RICHNESS THEORY

Media richness in this study is defined as modality richness and “the intensity with which a mediated environment is able to present information to the senses”; this conceptualization was adapted by Klein (2001) from the vividness construct labeled by Steuer (1992) to avoid confusion in the marketing literature (Li et al., 2002; Steuer, 1992; Klein, 2001). Technological advances in e-commerce have driven the adoption of multisensory experiences with high-quality visuals, stereo sound, and rich imagery (Daugherty et al., 2008). Sensory breadth and sensory depth are two aspects of media richness; sensory breadth pertains to the number of sensory dimensions simultaneously presented while sensory depth refers to the resolution of each perceptual channel and the quality of information (Li et al., 2002, as cited in Jin, 2009, p. 236). Messages that appeal to multiple perceptual systems and denote higher quality are posited to be better perceived and more effective than lower-quality messages that appeal to fewer perceptual systems.

However, rich media are not always better than lean media in engaging consumers online. Multisensory stimuli can potentially cause cognitive overload and negative redundancy effects when the media format is not aligned with consumers’ internal and external needs in a given e-commerce task (Li et al., 2002). Individual traits such as motivations, need for cognition, and information processing styles connote preferences for certain stimuli, different amounts of cognitive efforts that consumers are willing to expend, and consequently different mental encoding levels (Büttner et al., 2013; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Kim, 2019; Martin et al., 2005; Li et al., 2015).

With consideration of information load and types, the Levels-of-Processing (LOP) theory explicates advantages of semantic encoding over sensory encoding, which accounts for lean media’s benefits for processing marketing stimuli online (Olson, 1980).

Sensory encoding is often triggered by visuals and generates broad and elaborate memory of product attributes (Li et al., 2015). However, this encoding remains at a shallow level that hinders consumers from understanding product features. Instead, it distracts them with executional characteristics of the media content, such as sensory saturation with dynamic audiovisuals and interactivity of the interface (Martin et al., 2005). A study by Li et al. (2015) found that textual stimuli induce higher decision confidence than visual stimuli in a low information load condition for online product presentation, but as the information load increases, visual stimuli enhance decision confidence more than textual stimuli. Therefore, it is crucial to determine the conditions under which optimal media richness encourages effective processing of product information to reduce friction in online customer experience that supports decision making.

The growth of influencer marketing has invigorated e-commerce with unique touchpoints along the consumer journey. Brands and social media influencers (SMIs) have employed content across various modalities for product promotion and customer relationship management. Videos (audiovisual), images (static visual), podcasts (auditory), and blogs (primarily textual) are among the most prevalently used media formats for digital product presentation and engagement with consumers via SMIs. According to Media Richness Theory, face-to-face communication is the richest medium, followed in order by video, voice, and text (Chang et al., 2017).

Videos' superior richness over photos' can be explained by the merits of the multiplicity of cues and added heuristic attributes. Multiple cues make a message more salient, attention-grabbing, and vivid (Xu, et al., 2015, p. 88). SMIs' videos appeal to both visual and auditory channels whereas static images on social media feeds only appeal to the visual channel. Hence, videos are posited to carry higher sensory richness than images. Based on the concept of visual capture, the dominance of vision over other

senses elucidates images' advantage over audios and texts (Biocca et al., 2001).

Therefore, the scale of media richness in SMIs' content in this study is operationalized from the highest to the lowest as follows: videos, images, audio, and text. Based on the above discussion, the overarching goal of this research seeks to understand the role of media richness in terms of sensory modalities in SMIs' content on consumers' decision confidence in e-commerce.

MOTIVATION

Research has shown that motivational orientation during shopping significantly influences how consumers perceive and process marketing stimuli (Büttner et al., 2013) and function across a range of consumption phenomena (Childers et al., 2001).

Consumers are generally classified into searchers and browsers according to their motivations and process goals (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Büttner et al., 2013). Searchers are extrinsically motivated by utilitarian benefits that afford them situational self-relevance. These consumers are goal-directed and focus on efficiently completing the shopping task. To achieve a valued outcome, they engage in task-specific activities such as prepurchase deliberation and facts curation (Schlosser, 2003). In contrast, consumers intrinsically motivated by hedonic benefits are classified as browsers who seek enjoyment and entertainment while shopping. They focus on the experiential aspect of activities and what happens during the process instead of the end outcome (Hong et al., 2004). For example, browsers derive value from exploring new products and being sensorily stimulated in a store environment, whether it being physical or virtual (Chung et al., 2013; Büttner et al., 2013).

Researchers have probed the link between motivations and consumer behaviors in e-commerce in the context of webmospherics, which represent strategic design choices of

the digital interface that will “either enhance or detract from the consumer’s interactive shopping experience” (Pine & Gilmore 1999, as cited in Childers et al., 2001, p. 529). These interface attributes make unique contributions to the web performance and attitudes of both information seekers (i.e., searchers) and entertainment surfers (i.e., browsers) (Huang, 2003, p. 434). In the present study, different sensory modalities incorporated in SMI’s product reviews, manifested as varied sensory richness, serve as the counterpart to the “structural design attributes” and product presentation formats that arouse consumers to varying degrees in the online retailing literature (Childers et al., 2001). According to Kaltcheva and Weitz (2003), searchers perceive high-arousal content as energy-consuming and hindering their goal achievement in an e-commerce task; therefore, rich sensory stimuli with high arousal capabilities negatively impact searchers’ shopping pleasantness. In contrast, browsers tend to avail themselves of the high-arousal environment to mobilize more energy for the sake of sensation seeking, thus perceiving rich stimuli as pleasant. In this regard, pleasantness suggests the degree to which the marketing stimuli can help consumers achieve their respective goals (Clore, et al., 1994).

Media’s usefulness embodies interactive shopping’s instrumental dimension while enjoyment of media usage denotes shopping’s hedonic dimension. As social media have become the new front for marketing and sales, consumers turn to SMI content to filter and form consideration sets when engulfed in a plethora of product information prior to purchase (Childers et al., 2001). They adopt social media as a new decision aid system for efficient acquisition of product knowledge or as exploratory platforms for motives such as pastime, habit, and relaxation (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the dynamics between media design characteristics inherent in SMI’s content and consumers’ motivations as searchers and browsers to construct a seamless customer experience that corresponds with their needs. The ease of use and fun

aspect of shopping on social media contribute to an overall enjoyable experience that drives positive attitudes towards brands and products and induce approach behaviors (Childers et al., 2001).

COGNITIVE FIT THEORY

The reasoning and findings of media richness's efficacy in evoking presence have been inconsistent hitherto (Biocca, 2003; Jones, 2007; Schubert, 2009; Mennecke et al., 2011). Studies reveal textual and verbal stimuli's benefits in online engagement regarding expectation and memories, even though they are generally perceived to be leaner media and less conducive to the formation of mental imagery and presence (Walther, 1996; Nowak et al., 2005; Klimmt & Vorderer, 2003). Verbal stimuli help media users construct rich and individualized experiences via the absence of disconfirming information and retrieval of related memories. According to Gysbers et al. (2004), lean media with less immersive capability induce presence via higher-order processes such as imagination and cognitive involvement. In the e-commerce context of this study, without direct sensory simulation as in physical interaction with products, consumers may still vicariously experience and assess product attributes in the presence state through an indirect source such as SMIs' content, whether it being multimedia or a text-based blog post.

Although presence researchers have long acknowledged the illusion layer of presence, attempts to establish the link between presence and the illusion mechanisms for its formation have been scarce (Rodríguez-Ardura & Martínez-López, 2013). Context-specific elements have been well documented in prior research as crucial factors related to how presentation formats differentially affect information processing, subsequent mental states, and behavioral outcomes (Benbasat & Dexter, 1986; Kumar & Benbasat,

2004; Astleitner & Wiesner, 2004; Meyvis et al., 2012). The mechanisms that elicit presence as an illusory state might depend on situational factors such as motivations. The present study employs the cognitive fit theory to elucidate the interplay of media richness and motivations in evoking presence through respective mental processes underlying consumers' perception and cognition.

Cognitive fit theory explicates the effects of the representation congruence between how information is presented and organized and the nature of the decision-making task on users' performance in information systems (Hong et al., 2004). It has been validated across various domains such as multimedia and decision aiding displays (Tuttle et al., 1998; Li et al., 2009; Kelton et al., 2010; Van Der Land et al., 2013). The cognitive fit occurs when the information format supports users' task at hand or when there is a consistent mental representation of external cues and internal portrayal of users (Hong et al., 2004).

Specifically, searchers prefer straightforward formats such as textual description over rich media to acquire product knowledge because text is better suited for scanning specific information (Schlosser, 2003). The lean media format matches searchers' goal of maximizing the efficiency of a targeted task; they focus on gleaning relevant product information to quickly complete the decision process (Büttner et al., 2013). Lean media contain little contextual information, which was found to facilitate the persuasive influence of retrospective self-referencing related to memory retrieval (Krishnamurthy et al., 1999). In this regard, SMIs' content that engages fewer senses but offer "to-the-point" benefits is likely to prompt searchers to engage in cognitive elaboration of product claims (Schlosser, 2003). The aforementioned mechanism denotes intensive processing that gives rise to higher cognitive involvement associated with stronger sensation of presence (Weibel et al., 2015).

In comparison, browsers (i.e., hedonic motivation) attach more experiential value to the task and are more likely to attend to irrelevant information and design characteristics of media content. They are more prone to heuristics and sensory stimuli such as graphics and sound effects (Martin et al., 2005). Therefore, their product evaluation depends more on sensory encoding of symbolic cues instead of actual product information. The redundancy benefits of rich media offer more contextual detail with the ability to present information to multiple senses, enhancing the vividness of the imagined consumption scenario via the transportation-imagery model (Schlosser, 2003). This mechanism encourages anticipatory self-referencing and mental simulation that elicit presence (Krishnamurthy et al., 1999).

The thought-imagination continuum that situates forms of presence provides a plausible account for the mechanisms whereby media richness and consumer motivations jointly influence presence (Rodríguez-Ardura & Martínez-López, 2013). When the media content involves more realistic thinking and prompts consumers to construct mental models by activating their memories, beliefs, and current knowledge and anticipating similar events, cognitive elaboration would come into play to trigger thought-imagery presence. When consumers don't need to compare the incoming stimuli with information stored in their own mental schemes and knowledge structures, they rely on sensory encoding and mental imagery for episodic processing of novel and fantastical stimuli to settle themselves in the virtual environment. In this case, narrative transportation is activated to induce imagination-imagery presence. In conjunction with consumers' differing motivations, searchers are likely to analytically process lean media and experience thought-imagery presence via cognitive elaboration, whereas browsers are likely to immerse themselves in the fictitious world with a less critical view of the

content and experience imagination-imagery presence via narrative transportation. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is established:

H1: There is an interaction effect between media richness and consumers' motivations on their sensation of presence when they consume SMI's product review.

H1a: Consumers with utilitarian motivation are more likely to sense presence in the lean media environment.

H1b: Consumers with hedonic motivation are more likely to sense presence in the rich media environment.

PRESENCE

Presence refers to “the illusion of being there” (Steuer 1992) or “an experience of being in an environment while one is physically situated in another location” (Witmer & Singer 1998). The subjective feeling of immersion implies “the perceptual illusion of non-mediation”, wherein users fail to recognize technology's role in constructing an alternate reality to link their own sensorimotor perceptions with external cues transmitted by media products (Lombard & Ditton, 1997; Klimmt & Vorderer, 2003; Weibel et al., 2015). However, another stream of research argues that beyond the perceptual phenomena and technological standpoints, the formation of presence is contingent on internal processes such as cognition and mental imagery, which encompass attention allocation, the construction of spatial situation model, and higher cognitive involvement (Rodríguez-Ardura & Martínez-López, 2013; Wirth et al., 2007).

The merits of presence in e-commerce have been widely explored regarding 3-D product presentation that enables direct manipulation of products via digital interfaces.

According to a study of 3-D advertising's effects on online product experience (Li et al., 2002), presence allows for simulated firsthand evaluation as in physical stores. By combining attributes of direct and indirect experience, presence renders the digital product presentation more effective via the integration of "information cues and the simulation of sensory experience" (Daugherty et al., 2008; Keng et al., 2012). Presence was detected to enhance confidence in attitudes toward product information and brand preference (Kim & Biocca, 1997).

The "as if" responding during the simulation echoes the concept of object interactivity, which is characterized as virtual interaction with a product to resemble physical actions; both object interactivity and presence carry benefits such as evoking vivid mental imagery and allowing for simulated product experience (Schollosser, 2003). Schollosser's research also uncovered an interaction effect between consumers' goals (i.e. utilitarian versus hedonic motivations) and object interactivity on their response to product presentation.

In the current study, although consumers are unable to make real-time changes to the product via object interactivity while consuming SMI's content, they may still actively inspect and form judgment of products in their mental simulation via a media character, which is the SMI in the product review. This relatively passive form of consumption lends itself to presence in the context of TV advertising. By means of role-taking, which is defined as placing "the self into the ad or product experience", consumers identify with the TV character, find self-relevancy of brand and product information, and anticipate the outcomes of product usage (Debbabi et al., 2013). Past research demonstrates that consumers feel "present" in the portrayed story when they assume a character role wherein, creating the illusion that they are "part of the action" (Kim et al., 2017). In this regard, consumers are able to enter the presence state without

interactivity offered by the medium. Through the affective involvement during role-taking that contributes to presence, consumers are likely to be persuaded by the media message and form strong product beliefs and attitudes.

According to Higgins (1996), salient influences activate accessible knowledge and prime an individual during a stimulus event. Consumers tend to employ prior experiences in their knowledge inventory as decision-making heuristics (Hsu et al., 2012). Vivid mental imagery formed during presence generates simulation heuristic, which enhances consumer learning and consequently decision confidence when information is made more contextually accessible (Daugherty et al., 2008). This mental imagery pertains to vicarious consumption in an “imagined scenario” that offers consumers access to virtual product usage. During the simulation that resembles direct experience, consumers generate information about and develop attitudes toward the presented products and brands by themselves; this self-generated information becomes highly accessible and is likely to be carried over to subsequent product evaluation (Cauberghé et al., 2011). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is established:

H2: Presence predicts decision confidence in product evaluation via SMI’s content.

Focused Attention

Well-designed e-commerce interfaces may facilitate an “optimal state of focused attention”, wherein consumers sense the distortion of time and space and vicariously experience the products that are situated in a remote location (Ilsever et al., 2007; Skadberga & Kimmel, 2004). This argument echoes the aforementioned efficacy of

presence in constructing illusory direct experience to enrich product evaluation and augment decision confidence.

Attention is a pivotal construct that underlies the formation of presence. As noted by Hoffman and Novak (1996), vividness and motivations are both deciding factors of attention but function on the stimulus dimension and personal dimension respectively. Klimmt and Vorderer (2003) also argue that media users' attentional behaviors are influenced by perceptual and motivational mechanisms, which in turn, affect the extent of non-mediation experiences. Presence is essential in enabling media users to remain focused when they perform the task (Faiola et al., 2013). The efficacy of presence in maintaining attention during social media usage was also validated in a study by Pelet et al. (2015). Consistent with their process goals, both searchers and browsers may have focused attention in their shopping activities: searchers concentrate on decoding "what information should be retained" while browsers allocate their attentional resources to the experience itself (Schlosser 2003). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a: Presence will positively influence focused attention in consumers' product evaluation via SMI's content.

Curiosity

Curiosity bespeaks how much "an experience arouses an individual's sensory and cognitive interest" (Pelet et al., 2015). Novel visual and auditory stimuli are posited to elicit perceptual curiosity, which was found to moderate the effects of atmospheric cues on consumers' emotional responses (Koo & Ju, 2010). Intellectual uncertainty arouses

epistemic curiosity, which is more associated with curiosity's cognitive dimension (Litman et al., 2005).

Research by Roth et al. (2009) explores the experiential qualities of curiosity, suggesting that in the context of interactive storytelling systems, a desirable amount of uncertainty enacts loops of “increased curiosity and resolved curiosity”, giving rise to “pleasant affective dynamics”; media users’ physiological activation is increased during this process. Roth et al. (2009) also indicate that curiosity shares physiological roots with aesthetic pleasantness, and sensory immersion is a promising contributor to such positive evaluations. More specifically, Pelet et al. (2015) argue that when social media users sense stronger presence, they display more curiosity. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3b: Presence will positively influence curiosity in consumers’ product evaluation via SMI’s content.

SEARCH

Focused Attention and Search

With limited capacity to attend to stimuli presented to all sensory channels, individuals selectively direct attentional resources and prioritize certain inputs than others. The selection process determines the performance of perceiving, remembering, and acting on the information transmitted via attended stimuli (Zhang, 2000). Higher uncertainty is frequently aroused by ambiguous, novel, and dynamic stimuli and associated with greater need for information (Gottlieb et al., 2014). Attention allocation reduces uncertainty by prompting individuals to accumulate evidence relevant to the attended source (Gottlieb, 2012). Attention is herein regarded as a learning mechanism

(Gottlieb, 2012). Applied in the context of advertising, the study by Tseng and Wei (2020) argues that mobile ads that embody high media richness and attract consumers' attention drive consumers to search relevant product information (Tseng & Wei, 2020). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Focused attention will predict search in e-commerce.

Curiosity and Search

The information gap hypothesis proposed by Loewenstein (1994) addresses curiosity as a discrepancy between what individuals know and would like to know, which corresponds to the epistemic curiosity that motivates learning-oriented behaviors to close the knowledge gap (Gottlieb et al., 2013). Increased learning in the hypermedia environment enables users to acquire new knowledge that piques their interests in obtaining more information to reduce uncertainty in their knowledge structure (Skadberga & Kimmel, 2004; Litman et al., 2005). In the context of e-commerce, consumers' curiosity is aroused when the product knowledge gap is moderate and manageable; curious consumers seek information to elaborate on the presented product attributes and inspect product claims more closely (Menon & Soman, 2002; Koo & Ju, 2009). On the other hand, "complex or ambiguous patterns of sensory stimulation" evoke perceptual curiosity and encourages exploratory behaviors and sensation seeking. Search behaviors and exploration in this regard focus more on the learning process per se. Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Curiosity will predict search in e-commerce.

DECISION CONFIDENCE

Decision confidence has been operationalized in both objective and subjective dimensions (Kamis & Davern, 2004). Objectively, decision confidence speaks to acquiring information to reduce uncertainty and reach a correct answer in the decision-making process. Subjectively, it entails a halo effect whereby consumers feel good about their product or brand choice, attach a “desirable quality” to the decisions made (Kamis & Davern, 2004; Hostler et al., 2005). It is employed as a user performance indicator in a study of internet agent by Hostler et al. (2005). Decision confidence pertains to perceived risk during product evaluation and subsequent decision-making, such as product performance risks and psychological risks (Laroche et al., 1996). According to the risk literature, consumers tend to engage in more information seeking when they perceive high risks during shopping activities (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). In view of search’s benefits for knowledge acquisition and uncertainty reduction, search behaviors can inform consumers of brand and product attributes, which enhances decision confidence in brand judgement and product evaluation.

Howard and Sheth (1969) suggest that confidence is one of the determinants of purchase intention. Likewise, decision confidence was established as a strong predictor for purchase intention in Bennett and Harrell’s study (1975). The research by Kamis and Davern (2004) also identified decision confidence as “a key predictor of purchase likelihood” (p. 1). The more confident consumers are in their brand and product evaluation, the more likely that they will project themselves into their “prepurchase daydreaming” and consumption visions that drive actual consumption (Rodríguez-Ardura & Martínez-López, 2013). Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Search will positively influence decision confidence in e-commerce.

H7: Decision confidence will positively influence purchase intentions.

Although each of the hypothesized relationships will be examined individually, to better portray the direct and indirect hypothesized relationships, the following conceptual model is presented:

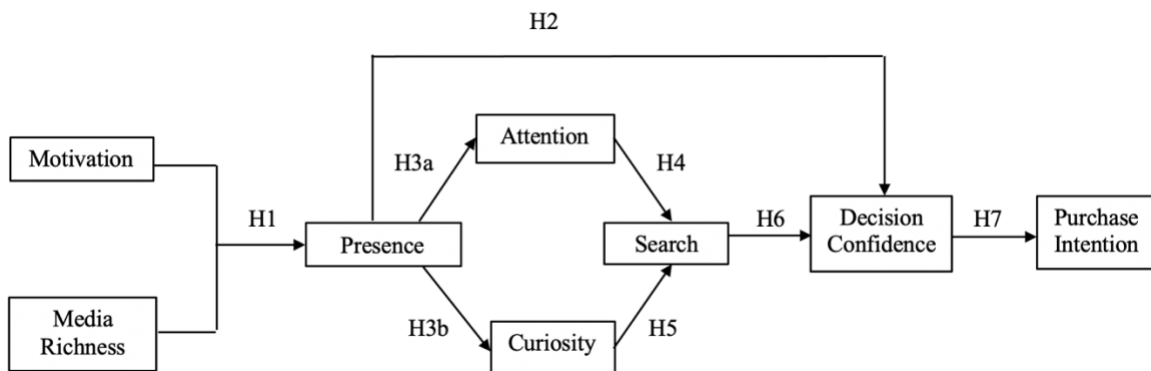


Figure 1: Research model

Chapter III: Methodology

SAMPLE

A total sample of 148 responses were obtained after excluding those with erroneous data (i.e., participants who did not complete the survey or indicated that they did not follow social media influencers, $N = 60$). Of those who participated, 80% females, 18% males, and 2% identified as others with a mean age of 19 ($SD = 1.044$). Participants were mainly Caucasian (47%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (29%), Asian/Pacific Islander (15%), and others (3%). They are mostly freshmen in college (59%), followed by sophomores (30%), juniors (8%), and seniors (3%). Of the participants, 42% indicated that they used social media platforms several times a day, and 37% indicated that they used these platforms several times an hour.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

This study used a 2 (motivation: utilitarian vs. hedonic) X 4 (richness: text, audio, image, video) between-subjects design, which was administrated through a Qualtrics survey. A random assignment of motivation and richness resulted in eight unique conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions after answering questions on their general social media usage.

STIMULI

A digital camera was selected as the subject for the product review. Digital cameras have been widely used in research (Jiang & Benbasat, 2004; Flavián et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2019) on product presentation and virtual product experience since they contain both experiential and instrumental attributes that require complex information

processing in consumers' decision process. Further, consumers may benefit from both lean and rich media in presentation formats to inform their product evaluation and purchase decisions. Digital cameras also represent a high-involvement purchase (Wong et al., 2008) that entails higher perceived risk, which prompts consumers to seek advice from expert sources online to aid their decision-making (Mun et al., 2013; Jiang et al., 2015), which is the SMI in the context of this study.

To simulate the realistic influencer marketing environment, the current study adapted an actual digital camera review posted on YouTube by Henbu, a filmmaking influencer with 233,000 subscribers on YouTube and 31,200 followers on Instagram, two of the most used social media platforms for product information search (Morning Consult, 2019). The original video review was transcribed and edited to create the other three sets of conditions varied in richness. The text condition only included the transcript; the audio condition was the auditory version of the original video without visuals; the image condition included both the snapshots of the video review and the transcript that corresponded with the snapshots as the caption component to mimic the product review scenario on social media. The information content was controlled across four conditions to ensure the only difference was in terms of the sensory modalities (i.e., richness levels) in product presentation.

Shopping motivations were manipulated by enacting two scenarios that respectively correspond with utilitarian and hedonic orientations. The following prompts were provided to facilitate these orientations:

Utilitarian: Imagine that you are shopping online for a birthday gift for your closest friend, whose birthday is in two days. While searching for product information, you come across the following influencer's product review and

decide to closely examine the product in his content.

Hedonic: Imagine that it is a relaxing weekend, and you have some time left until an appointment with a friend. While waiting, you start scrolling on your social media and encounter an influencer's profile. You decide to browse his content until your friend comes.

PROCEDURE

Participants were recruited from a large university class with extra credit offered as compensation to complete the survey. After providing their consent to participate, participants were shown a definition of SMIs since their perceptions of the boundaries between SMIs and traditional celebrities active on social media might differ. The following definition of SMIs was provided: social media influencers are people who have built a reputation for being knowledgeable on a particular topic. They can range from industry experts, bloggers, to ordinary users. They became famous through their social media accounts—which makes them different from traditional celebrities such as Hollywood singers, actors and/or entertainers. Influencers usually have a very high number of followers and frequently update their social media accounts (Carrillat & Ilicic 2019, as cited in Lee & Eastin, 2020, p. 82). Then, participants answered questions regarding their general social media usage and current SMI following statuses; those who indicated they did not follow SMIs were skipped to the end of the survey.

Participants who advanced to the next part of the survey were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. Those in the utilitarian condition were provided with a prompt that hypothesized an urgent information search (i.e., time restriction) scenario to examine the following SMI's product review with the aim of purchasing a birthday gift

for their friends. Those in the hedonic condition were instructed to imagine they were casually browsing the SMI's content while they wait for their friends on a relaxing weekend. The prompts also informed the participants that they would be given one minute to experience the influencers' content before they could advance to the next section. The submit button was configured on Qualtrics to only display after one minute to ensure participants have enough time for product evaluation.

Following the stimuli exposure, participants answered questions related to their experiential states while consuming the SMI's content (i.e., presence, focused attention, and curiosity) as well as postexposure attitudes and behavioral intentions (i.e., search, decision confidence, and purchase intention). Manipulation check questions were also included to assess participants' perceived media richness of the SMI's content and assigned motivations while consuming the content. The final part of the survey consisted of demographic questions.

MEASURES

Presence – Presence is defined as the subjective feeling of immersion and the “illusion of being there” (Steuer 1992; Lombard & Ditton, 1997). Presence was assessed using a ten-item Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1) ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .76$, $\alpha = .90$), which was adapted from a study by Biocca et al. (2001). Sample items include participants indicating the extent to which they felt a sense of being there, as if they were inside, immersed in, and surrounded by the environment portrayed in the SMI's content, as if they visited another place, had a concrete mental image of the portrayed spatial environment, the intensity and enjoyment of the experience, and the extent to which the experience of reviewing a product through the influencer was involving.

Focused attention – Focused attention is defined as how much an individual attends to “a limited stimulus field” (Webster et al., 1993). Focused attention was assessed using five Likert-type items ranging from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1) ($M = 2.71$, $SD = .90$, $\alpha = .83$) (Huang, 2003). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on the following statements about their experience while consuming the SMI’s content: “I thought only about the influencer's content”, “I was aware of distractions”, “I was totally absorbed in what I was doing”, “I devoted my whole attention to the influencer's content”, and “My attention did not get diverted very easily while I was experiencing the influencer's content”.

Curiosity – Curiosity is defined as the degree to which “an experience arouses an individual’s sensory and cognitive interest” (Pelet et al., 2015). Curiosity was assessed using four Likert-type items ranging from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.00$, $\alpha = .87$) (Huang, 2003). Sample items include “Experiencing the influencer's content excited my curiosity”, “Experiencing the influencer's content aroused my imagination”, “The influencer's content made me curious about the product”, and “I would be interested in learning more about this product”.

Search – Search is defined as the behavioral intention to seek out product-related information (Tseng & Wei, 2020). Search was assessed using four Likert-type items ranging from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.06$, $\alpha = .92$) (Tseng & Wei, 2020). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on the following statements about their intentions after experiencing the SMI’s content: “I think I would search for information about the product on the Internet”, “I think I would search for online word-of-mouth about the product on the Internet”, “I think I would compare prices of the product on the Internet”, and “I think I would compare alternatives to this product on the Internet before making a purchase decision”.

Decision confidence – Decision confidence is defined as the degree to which consumers feel confident in their product evaluation, product choice, and the desirable quality of their decision (Kamis & Davern, 2004). Decision confidence was assessed using a five-item Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (score = 7) to strongly disagree (score = 1) ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.20$, $\alpha = .88$), which was adapted from the studies by Kamis and Davern (2004) and Jiang and Benbasat (2007). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on the following statements about their attitudes after experiencing the SMI's content: "I feel confident in my ability to judge the quality of the product", "I feel confident in my ability to understand the performance of the product", "I feel confident in my ability to make a good product choice", "I feel confident in my ability to make a wise purchase decision", and "It's likely that I would recommend this product to others for purchase".

Purchase intention – Purchase intention is defined as the willingness and intention to make transactions (Pavlou, 2003). Purchase intention was assessed using four Likert-type items ranging from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). ($M = 4.75$, $SD = .98$, $\alpha = .903$) (Xu et al., 2015). Participants were asked to indicate their agreement on the following statements about their intentions based on the product review: "I would recommend my friend to buy this product", "I will purchase this product the next time I need a product like this", "it is likely that I will buy this product", and "I will definitely try this product".

DATA ANALYSIS

All data were examined using SPSS v24. The proposed interaction in H2 was tested within a univariate analysis. Hypothesis 1, 6, as well as H4 and H5 were tested within multiple regression analyses. Finally, H3a and 3b, and H7 were testing using correlational analysis. Relationship among all variables is denoted in the correlation matrix presented in Table 1.

	Richness	Motivation	Presence	Attention	Curiosity	Search	Decision Confidence	Purchase Intention
Richness	--							
Motivation	-0.001	--						
Presence	.178*	0.089	--					
Attention	0.133	0.012	.435**	--				
Curiosity	0.094	0.134	.643**	.451**	--			
Search	0.097	0.103	.291**	0.160	.367**	--		
Decision Confidence	-0.034	0.037	.463**	.404**	.442**	.191*	--	
Purchase Intention	0.079	.173*	.504**	.327**	.535**	.202*	.448**	--
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Chapter IV: Results

HYPOTHESIS 1

When examining H1, data indicate that there is not a significant interaction between Media Richness by Motivation for Presence, $F = 1.190 (3, 147), p > .05$. Thus, H1 is not supported by the data. However, within this analysis, Media Richness did display a main effect for Presence, $F = 5.07 (3, 147), p < .05$. Here, video displayed the great presence ($M = 3.35, SD = .66$), followed by Text ($M = 2.91, SD = .82$), Audio ($M = 2.78, SD = .67$) and Image ($M = 2.73, SD = .76$). There was not main effect for Motivation, $F = 1.034 (1, 147), p > .05$.

HYPOTHESIS 2 AND HYPOTHESIS 6

Turning to H2 and H6, regression analysis indicates Decision Confidence is significantly predicted by Presence and Search ($R = .47, R^2 = .22, F = 20.16 (2, 145), p < .05$). When looking at individual variable contribution to the regression model, Presence $\beta = .45, t = 5.80, p < .05$ significantly contributed to the model, while Search did not ($\beta = .061, t = .80, p > .05$). Thus, while H2 is supported by the data, H6 is not.

HYPOTHESIS 3A AND HYPOTHESIS 3B

Supporting H3a and H3b, data indicate Presence was significantly related to Attention ($r = .44, p < .05$) and Curiosity ($r = .64, p < .05$).

HYPOTHESIS 4 AND HYPOTHESIS 5

Testing H4 and H5, regression analysis indicates that Search is significantly predicted by Attention and Curiosity ($R = .37, R^2 = .13, F = 11.26 (2, 145), p < .05$).

Failing to support H4, data indicate that Attention did not uniquely contribute to Search ($\beta = -.01, t = -.08, p > .05$). However, supporting H5, Curiosity did significantly predict Search ($\beta = .37, t = 4.27, p < .05$).

HYPOTHESIS 7

Finally, supporting H7, data indicate that Decision Confidence is significantly related to purchase intention ($r = .45, p < .05$).

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusions

DISCUSSION

The current study examined the effects of media richness on decision-making in e-commerce by proposing the formation of presence as the central mechanism to process information on social media. Specifically, this study showed strong support for presence's role in predicting decision confidence in product evaluation. Although the interaction effects of media richness and motivation on presence was not significant, richness alone did significantly influence presence. Here, the data demonstrated that videos-based content is superior in evoking presence, followed by text, audio, and image stimuli.

Data also indicated that presence is positively associated with focused attention and curiosity, and curiosity strongly predicted search. However, focused attention only jointly predicted search with curiosity and did not make unique contribution to explaining search. This conflict might be ascribed to the relatively high correlation between attention and curiosity. In other words, shifts in either attention or curiosity might change the value of the other, resulting in the overlap of search's variance explained by either construct. In this regard, the current study partially supports prior research that validated attention's merit in learning and the instrumental usage of the Internet, considering how curiosity encourages exploration and promotes learning (Huang, 2003; Litman et al., 2005). These exploratory behaviors include attentive listening and visual inspection, which connotes media users' focused attention (Litman et al., 2005).

That said, attention might be a condition accompanying presence, curiosity, and search, albeit not a strong predictor for search by itself. In the context of this study, even when consumers absorbed into a shopping task, they might not proactively seek out

information related to brands and products if the marketing stimuli are unable to arouse their curiosity to identify and close the gaps in sensation and knowledge. The experience of getting lost in a concentrated state might be rewarding enough in and of itself without taking efforts to search for extra stimuli. Potential variations in interests and situational relevance during the media exposure could also affect consumers' willingness to remain in or further the attentive state to search more information.

Data also demonstrated that presence and search predicted decision confidence, but search did not significantly contribute to the regression model. However, a positive association was detected between decision confidence and purchase intention. In sum, although it is unclear how media richness differentially affects presence when factoring in motivations, the current study corroborated the efficacy of presence in boosting decision confidence when consumers evaluate products through SMIs and revealed the associations among several indicators of online shopping performance.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Research has established the efficacy of multimedia to enhance learning and communication efficiency via the multiplicity of cues and mental representations (Mayer et al., 2003; Moreno & Mayer, 2002). The extant research suggests that richer media tend to induce a stronger sense of presence and contribute to greater advertising effects (Schmitz & Fulk, 1991; Lim & Benbasat, 2000). The present study adds to the media richness literature by investigating modality-specific richness of digital product presentation in influencer marketing. The results demonstrate that the video format strongly discriminated from the other formats in affecting presence, an experiential state confirmed to be a strong predictor of decision confidence in this study. The finding echoes Xu et al. (2015) findings, which demonstrated the advantage of online video

reviews in influencing consumer perceptions and attitudes towards user-generated content. Rich media such as videos evoke vivid and sensory mental representations of product attributes, mitigating uncertainties during product evaluation; the dynamic nature of videos facilitates the portrayal of “spatial relationships and movements integral to the product” (Lee, 2012; Xu et al., 2015, p. 88).

Data from the current study lends support to the line of research that advocates for lean media’s capability of arousing presence (Biocca, 2003; Gybster et al., 2004; Mennecke et al., 2011). Specifically, researchers argue that media content without high-fidelity cues and sensorimotor feedback such as music and books prompt users to enter the presence state via mechanisms other than perceptual immersion. To elaborate on this perspective, Kim’s study (2019) provided empirical evidence that verbal stimuli varied in concreteness (i.e., product description) can activate both imagery processing and discursive processing that facilitate visualization and mental tangibility of product attributes, which is essential in crafting simulated consumption scenarios with an inherent sense of presence. An explanation for the image stimuli inducing the least presence could be that individuals have been accustomed to the static image formats of product presentation and experienced social media fatigue of scrolling through their feeds to browse images. In this regard, the image format lacks novelty heuristics and sensory arousal known to induce presence; it also entails lower processing cost compared to textual and auditory stimuli, which renders consumers less likely to encode product information conveyed by the image into their memory.

On one hand, lower cost implies shallow encoding of stimuli without elaboration of product claims; on the other hand, rich media reduce processing cost and efforts by virtue of their redundancy benefits. Building on perceived cost, the current study contributes to the decision-making literature by linking presence and search with decision

confidence. Data demonstrated an indirect effect of presence on search through attention and curiosity, two important constructs to decode consumers' internal states of perception and cognition in their online decision process (Menon & Soman, 2002; Jiang & Benbasat, 2004; Koo & Ju, 2010; Huang, 2003; Debbabi et al., 2013). Perceptions of cost and risks are related to uncertainty reduction (Huang et al., 2009; Maity et al., 2018; Tseng & Wei, 2020). This study demonstrated that greater presence enhances focused attention and curiosity, which predicted intentions to search product information to mitigate perceived risks associated with a potential purchase decision. Maity et al. (2018) revealed that perceived cost mediates the relationship between media richness and search. Consistent with prior research on presence's role in learning and persuasion (Kim & Biocca, 1997; Grigorovici, 2003; Suh & Lee, 2005; S. Van Der Land et al., 2013), the results of this study indirectly support that presence evoked by varied media richness integrates indirect and direct product experiences, significantly lowering the perceived cost and risks of evaluating products with lack of sensory input online. Consequently, consumers feel more informed of product attributes and satisfied in their choice task, which denotes enhanced decision confidence (Bharati & Chaudhury, 2004; Wang & Shukla, 2013).

PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

Researchers have focused on interactive experiences such as 3-D presentation that allows for direct manipulation of products or chatting with recommendation agents in real time to facilitate presence and positive consumer responses (Punj & Moore, 2007; Jin, 2009; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Presence induced by highly interactive media with various avenues for sensory stimulation entails greater production costs and timeline constraints for marketers (Tseng & Wei, 2020). Limited studies have probed modality richness's effects in evoking presence in non-interactive product experiences on social

media platforms. Consumers could evaluate products through a secondary source such as SMIs, which implies affordances for interaction with products and with these online personalities that serve as the “extended-self” even though the consumption experience per se is passive (Belk, 2013). SMIs’ personal branding that aligns with the nature of promoted products and services as well as brand personalities offers opportunities to leverage lean media such as blog posts (i.e., primarily text) and podcasts (i.e., audio stimuli) to trigger presence and create simulated yet persuasive product experiences.

Consumers also might not be able to process multimodal stimuli thoroughly due to their limited capacity to allocate mental resources, as manifested in the attention split from the increasingly prevalent media multitasking as consumers adopt more platforms and devices (Fisher et al., 2019). Hence, consumers might not absorb and process product information that marketers intend to convey and use as a catalyst for approach behaviors. The present study suggests that brands and marketers could collaborate with SMIs to strategically plan product-related content by implementing varied richness to foster role-taking and presence as cost-effective solutions (Debbabi et al., 2013). In this fashion, marketers can attract consumers as they navigate through a multitude of promotional messages and provide both an enjoyable and informative experience in their social media consumption without sensory overload.

Additionally, the current study suggests that aside from attracting and sustaining initial attention, marketers and SMIs could consider content elements that tap into consumers’ perceptual and epistemic curiosity respectively to encourage inquiry (Litman et al., 2005). Selecting the proper media format that speaks to consumers’ different needs for sensation seeking and information acquisition to satisfy their curious states could enhance the efficiency of consumers’ decision-making, fostering positive attitudes and behavioral intentions towards brands and products (Martin et al., 2005).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Like most research, the current study has several limitations. First, the small sample size affected the internal and external validity of the study. The sample was also significantly skewed in terms of gender, with 80% females, 18% males, and 2% identified as others. Future research could consider recruiting a more balanced sample or isolate gender effects while introducing product types to investigate whether the congruency between these two elements affects media richness's efficacy in product presentation.

Another limitation lies in the study design as an experiment embedded in an online survey. In a less controlled virtual environment compared to an experiment conducted in the same physical space, participants might have been affected by different times and locations and distracted by surrounding stimuli while consuming the SMI's product reviews. Even though participants were not allowed to skip the stimuli exposure, it was impossible to ensure they were experiencing the content within the assigned timeframe. This could be one of the factors that resulted in the insignificant interaction between motivations and media richness. A suggestion for future studies would be to design a realistic social media interface that contains the content stimuli while controlling for platform heuristics that might confound the richness effects on presence.

This study utilized self-reported measures on experiential states (i.e., presence, attention, and curiosity). Even though they were assessed immediately after exposure, experiential states not objectively measured in real time could lead to inaccuracy and response bias. It would be interesting for researchers to employ physiological measures of presence and attention in a controlled environment, such as fMRI, or integrate psychophysical tests using signal detection theory to investigate the subjective experience of presence and its implication on decision-making (Schloerb, 1995).

Lastly, the current study only measured participants' intentions to search for product information after stimuli exposure instead of their actual search behaviors. Although the experience of presence was measured, the enhanced learning effects resulted from search behaviors were not assessed. This might explain why presence predicted decision confidence while search did not.

Delving into the SMI context, it would be fruitful for future studies to identify influencer attributes such as perceived credibility, similarity, and familiarity as well as individual differences in product involvement and product knowledge when examining SMIs' product reviews. These constructs could be potential moderators that affect the mechanisms underlying the formation of presence and the pathways from presence to consumers' attitudinal and behavioral responses in the virtual space (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Xiao et al., 2018).

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



Office of Research Support & Compliance
Institutional Review Board
P.O. Box 7426, Campus Code A3200
Austin, Texas 78713
T: 512-232-1543 F: 512-471-8873
Email: irb@austin.utexas.edu
www.research.utexas.edu/ors

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

February 3, 2021

FWA # 00002030

Matthew Eastin
300 W DEAN KEETON ST
AUSTIN, TX 78712

me5362@eid.utexas.edu

Dear Matthew Eastin:

On 2/3/2021, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Special Determinations:	Students / Employees
Title:	The Efficacy of Social Media Influencers in E-commerce Within the Context of Sensory and Media Richness
Investigator:	Matthew Eastin
IRB ID:	STUDY00000585
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Approval Date:	2/3/2021
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consent Form.pdf, Category: Consent Form;• Exempt Proposal Form_Social Media Influencers.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;• Survey Questions, Category: Other;

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104 (2)(ii) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation (low risk).

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in HRP-103 - INVESTIGATOR MANUAL.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. Modifications that involve a change in PI, increase risk, or otherwise affect the exempt category or the criteria for exempt determination must be submitted as a modification. Investigators are strongly encouraged to contact the IRB staff to describe any changes prior to submitting an amendment.

If you have any questions, contact the RSC by phone at 512 -232-1543 or via e-mail at irb@austin.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board

University of Texas at Austin

cc:

Matthew Eastin (PI), Shuer Zhuo (Primary Contact), Shuer Zhuo (Proxy)

Appendix B: Online Survey Questionnaires

Definition of Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers are people who have built a reputation for being knowledgeable on a particular topic. They can range from industry experts, bloggers, to ordinary users. They became famous through their social media accounts—which makes them different from traditional celebrities such as Hollywood singers, actors and/or entertainers. Influencers usually have a very high number of followers and frequently update their social media accounts.

Influencer Following Status

Do you follow social media influencers?

- Yes
- No

General Social Media Usage

What platforms do you follow social media influencers on? (Check all that apply)

- Instagram
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Twitch
- Other (Please specify)

How often do you use these platforms?

- Several times an hour
- Twice an hour
- Once an hour
- Several times a day
- Twice a day
- Once a day
- Several times a week
- Twice a week
- Once a week
- Several times a month
- Twice a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

What do you follow social media influencers for?

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Inspiration and aspiration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning about new trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interesting and fun content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information about products and services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input style="width: 100px; height: 15px;" type="text"/>					

How much do you rely on social media for information in general?

- Never rely
- Rarely rely
- Sometimes rely
- Rely
- Heavily rely

How much do you rely on social media for information about products?

- Never rely
- Rarely rely
- Sometimes rely
- Rely
- Heavily rely

Indicate your reliance on the following platforms for product information.

	Never rely	Rarely rely	Sometimes rely	Rely	Heavily rely
Instagram	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
YouTube	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TikTok	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Snapchat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="text"/>					

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I tend to use social media for shopping needs frequently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time on social media with regard to my shopping needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I exerted myself to social media and getting information for my shopping needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Life Satisfaction

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In most ways, my life at school is close to my ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am completely satisfied with my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am completely satisfied with my academic life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So far I have gotten the most important things I want in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could relive my life, I would change nothing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Presence

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I felt I was inside the environment portrayed in the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt as if I visited another place.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt immersed in the environment portrayed in the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt surrounded by the environment portrayed in the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt a sense of being really THERE inside the environment portrayed in the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience of reviewing a product through the influencer was involving.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt as if I was inside the environment observing the events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even now, I still have a concrete mental image of the spatial environment portrayed in the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoyed myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience was intense.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Focused Attention

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
While experiencing the influencer's content, I thought only about the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While experiencing this influencer's content, I was aware of distractions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While experiencing the influencer's content, I was totally absorbed in what I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I devoted my whole attention to the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My attention did not get diverted very easily while I was experiencing the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Curiosity

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Experiencing the influencer's content excited my curiosity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing the influencer's content aroused my imagination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The influencer's content made me curious about the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be interested in learning more about this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Manipulation Check: Motivation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was purposeful when I was experiencing the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While experiencing the content, I want to get things done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was focused on the task when experiencing the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was trying to be efficient when experiencing the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was just leisurely experiencing the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was trying to amuse myself when experiencing the content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My evaluation of the content was carefree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was trying to be entertained by the influencer's content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Manipulation Check: Media Richness

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The product demonstration in this influencer's content is lively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can acquire product information in this influencer's content from different sensory channels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This influencer's content contains product information that is exciting to senses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to fairly easily visualize the product and all its features.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All necessary features/specifications of the product were vividly represented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to obtain/understand all necessary information about the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was easy to understand/process all product information that was presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The overall experience was as if I was reviewing the product in a real store.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Decision Confidence

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly agree , 7 = strongly disagree) regarding the following items:

After consuming this influencer's content...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel confident in my ability to judge the quality of the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in my ability to understand the performance of the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in my ability to make a good product choice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in my ability to make a wise purchase decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's likely that I would recommend this product to others for purchase.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Search

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly agree , 5 = strongly disagree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
After experiencing this influencer's content, I think I would search for information about the product on the Internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After experiencing this influencer's content, I think I would search for online word-of-mouth about the product on the Internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After experiencing this influencer's content, I think I would compare prices of the product on the Internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After experiencing this influencer's content, I think I would compare alternatives to this product on the Internet before making a purchase decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Purchase Intention

Indicate your agreement (1 = strongly agree , 5 = strongly disagree) regarding the following items:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Based on this product review, I would recommend my friend to buy this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Based on this product review, I will purchase this product the next time I need a product like this.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Based on this product review, it is likely that I will buy this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Based on this product review, I will definitely try this product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

Which gender do you identify as?

- Male
 - Female
 - Other (Please specify)
 - Prefer not to say
-

What is your age?

Please specify your year in school.

- Freshman
 - Sophomore
 - Junior
 - Senior
 - Graduate student
-

Please specify your major.

Please specify your ethnicity.

- Caucasian
 - African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native American
 - Asian / Pacific Islander
 - Other (Please specify)
-

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