Too good to be true! The effects of number of followers and language intensity on consumer responses to influencers' sponsored content

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Abstract

Marketers increasingly enlist influencers to spread information about brands, products and services. However, it remains unclear what, how, and when the influencer perceived credibility is affected. Drawing on language expectancy theory, this study offers a granular assessment of the language intensity effects on consumer responses to sponsored content. Three online experiments demonstrate the joint impact of number of followers (micro vs. macro influencer) and language intensity (moderate vs. high) on influencer credibility. Specifically, results suggest that the use of high intensity appeals enhances micro influencer credibility but reduces macro influencer credibility. The findings shed more light on how verbal elements affect consumer responses to influencer marketing and thus offer guidance to influencers for developing more effective communication strategies in social media marketing campaigns.

Keywords: *influencer marketing; source credibility; language intensity*

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