

The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Purchase Intentions for Organic and Green Products

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Abstract:

One of the most consequential factors that may affect buying behavior is social media; this changes the manner in which organizations relate to potential consumers mainly in the organic and green industry.” The objective of this research paper is to look at the role of influencers in influencing consumers’ purchase decisions on organic and green products. In view of increasing the customer consciousness of the populace towards sustainability and environmental concerns, social media influencers have emerged as opinion leaders whose opinions influence purchasing decisions. This paper explores the suitability of influencers’ credibility, trustworthiness and content messages on followers that triggers their attitude toward organic and eco-friendly products. Collecting data by survey, survey respondent consists of varied set of consumers and the aim of analysis was to determine the correlation between the influencer marketing and the consumers’ buying decision. It is for this crucial data that the work showed that influencers endorsing sustainable attributes and genuinely recommending products improve consumer confidence and the potential for buying sustainable products. The paper therefore concludes by reflecting on the prospects, challenges and interventions for marketers and brands employing social media influencers to market organic and environmentally friendly products.

Keywords: Social media influencers, consumer purchase intentions, organic products, green products, sustainability

Introduction

Over the past few years, social networks have also become the primary tools for controlling consumers’ activity, especially in the situation with increasing customer interest in environmental issues and green products. Of the many factors influencing consumer behavior; social influences are key influential in the decision making process of consumers especially in industries like organic and greens. The rising number of conscious about their living environment and the push towards improved health have created demand for organic and environmentally friendly products. In this context, key opinion leaders, especially social media, who guide the consumer’s perception and behavioural intentions, are influential.

An influencer is a person who has this power to influence others to make the decision to purchase a product by creating contents on social media networks, the most popular ones include Instagram ,YouTube, and Tik tok. As such, they create an almost cult-like following, where their followers trust and are loyal to them since they are informative, genuine or simply friends with them, the brand capitalizes on this to get to their target market. This is especially so in the case of organics and green products which consumers’ perception is largely dictated by perceived environmental gains, ethics and positive health attributes.

This research therefore seeks to establish the influence of social media influencers on consumer buying behaviour of organic and green products. This study aims to help marketers and businesses by identifying factors that will encourage consumer trust in the influencers and the methods used to create awareness for the products that will ultimately influence sustainable purchasing power. By studying the relationship between the variables influencer credibility, content authenticity, and consumer attitude regarding green products, the paper will demonstrate the possibility of using influencer marketing for positive consumer change. In conclusion, this research shall assist in developing the knowledge base on how social media influencers influence the expanding market on natural and environmentally sustainable products.

Literature Review

The influence of social media influencers in influencing the consumer decision making process especially with reference to the organic and green commodities has lately become a focus of extensive analysis. With consumers turning into being sensitive to sustainability, environment, and health, social media influencer has become a significant decision maker. This systematic paper integrates research that has been done with regards to effects of social media influencers on consumers' purchasing behaviour concerning organic and environmentally sustainable products.

Research evidence has increasingly extolled the importance of – social media influencers in consumer purchase decision-making process. Breves et al, (2020) identify that, influencers are considered more credible and more visually familiar than celebrities, mainly because they are rated as more genuine than celebrities. They select products they support and this results in a positive impact on the followers' trust and their purchases. That's why the role of influencers in decisions made by customers regarding purchases of such products, particularly in the organic and the green economy, is one of the most focus areas of modern marketing research.

The credibility of social media influencers is the most significant factor that defines the performance of a given product. Lou and Yuan (2020) noted that the credibility of an influencer is a factor that affects consumer buying behaviours and that credibility comprises of expertise, trust and beauty. When followees recognize influencers as credible and informed about natural resource-based and environmentally friendly products, they are likely to consider recommendations if those products from influencers. Tafesse investigated that actualists and the extent of perceived authenticity greatly influenced consumer purchase intension of those organic products, emphasizing the significance of perceived expertise in the market of organic products.

Since the reemergent of social medial following the recession, originality of content is a big factor for the buyer. Thus, the meanings of establishing an organic and green product and being an influencer entwined with environmental issues can be the following: While consumers tend to determine motives of influencers who are promoting the idea of sustainable products, they also presume that the influencers who truly support green initiatives would be more credible in their followers' eyes (Smith & Roberts, 2020). While consuming content is entertaining, consumers tend to be more faithful to influencers who use them to share their real-life experiences of using environmentally friendly products and offer relevant informative material about sustainability. The study conducted by Goyette et al. (2021) pointed out that it is educative, transparent and congruent content with ethical consumer values that triggers the consumer engagement and purchase intentions.

Due to the growing client consciousness towards the environment and the resultant requirements towards green products, social media influencers are usually involved in advertising green products. Analyzing the incidents, Kim and Kim

(2019) established that influencers who advocate sustainable buying through flying recommendation influence the consumer perception and purchase intentions. It is especially true for the younger audience that tends to subscribe to accounts focused on sustainability and watch videos and read articles about environmentally friendly goods. Additionally, when the influencers promote organic products as both healthy for the body and the environment the appeal created among consumers with health consciousness and the environment separately tend to be stronger (Zhang et al., 2020).

Review of existing literature shows us that based on the perspective of consumers, the effects of organic and green products depend on some factors such as the level of environmental awareness, health concerns, and social pressure as highlighted by Sharma et al. (2022). Social media influencers themselves come up with these perceptions and place organic and green products as something that people need and want. When influencers wrap these products in the context of the green narrative, their followers' perceived buying motivations skyrocket particularly when the influencers share life experiences and success stories.

A lot of scholarly research has focused on the correlation between influencer marketing and purchase intentions. According to the survey by Lee and Choi (2021), it was revealed that there is a positive relationship between influencer marketing and the consumer attitude which in turn determines the purchase intention of the organic and eco friendly products. According to their study, consumers, who interact with influencers contributing to the green products, are likely to have a positive attitude towards them resulting in a higher tendency to buy them. This was further supported by Kim et al. (2023) who showed that it is possible for influencers to alter the perceived by consumers and build a higher level of intent to purchase sustainably branded products when the influencers personally associated honest and genuine emotions towards the endorsed products.

In the case of social media, every social platform offers opportunities that determine how influencers can affect consumer behaviour. As known, Instagram and YouTube are more focused on videos and photos so they are very effective in promoting organic and green products. As Wang and Li (2022) mentioned, these platforms allow people like celebrities to post content like reviews, instructions, and other live demonstration videos so as to increase consumers' confidence and purchase willingness. TikTok could also be mentioned as a modern opinion maker, and short videos are used as a primary means to advertise sustainable products (Chen & Liu, 2023).

Influencer marketing has typically been highly effective, but has also been criticized for certain ethical problems, especially, 'green' scams, when companies provide information about being environmentally friendly in order to attract clients. Jenkins and Mays (2021) have identified that the client is aware of greenwashing and, therefore skeptical about influencers who endorse non-sustainable products. This goes to show that there's no room for dishonesty when marketing organic and environmentally friendly products as any flaw will greatly affect the influencer and the buyers trust.

The literature discussed in this study established the key input of social media influencers in influencing consumer buying behaviour towards organic and green products. Sustainability-conscious influencers that provide real content and interact with the subscribers, clearly can change the consumers' behavior and stimulate them to purchase more environmentally-friendly products. Organic and environmentally friendly products are set to remain popular because sustainability is becoming a top consumer value, and, therefore, influencers will remain relevant players in the marketplace. Marketing professionals have to harness these trends so that they can be able to create new and meaningful influencer procedures that will be arresting to the ever-rising customer longing for eco-friendly lifestyles.

Objectives of the study

- To analyze the impact of social media influencers on consumer purchase intentions for organic and green products.
- To assess the role of influencer credibility in shaping consumer behavior towards sustainable products.
- To examine the relationship between influencer content authenticity and consumer engagement with organic products.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a positive relationship between influencer content authenticity and consumer engagement with organic products.

Research methodology

The study's methodology in this research work implements a quantitative research method for analyzing the proposed hypothesis about the correlation between influencer content authenticity and customer interaction with organic products. This is a survey-based means of data collection where only consumers who follow organic and green products influencers on social media will be sampled. The survey will consist of structured questions measuring two key variables: The perceived credibility of the content offered by influencers and consumers' engagement with organic products. In an effort to evaluate content credibility, participants will be required to make some ratings concerning credibility and relatability of the posts contributed by influencers. Engagement signals that will be collected relate to how often consumers are interacting with the product and how much they trust the recommendations made to them. Online survey will be conducted on social media pages and group and other post popular organic influencers sites. The data collected will be processed and subjected to statistical testing, correlation analysis and regression analysis, to establish the degree of relationship between content authenticity and customer participation.

Data analysis and discussion

Table 1 – Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Frequency (%)
Age (years)	28.6	6.5	18	45	
Gender					
- Male					70 (46.7%)
- Female					80 (53.3%)
Social Media Platform Used					
- Instagram					90 (60%)
- YouTube					60 (40%)
Influencer Content Authenticity	4.3	0.8	2	5	
Engagement with Organic Products	3.9	1.2	1	5	
Frequency of Online Purchases	2.5	1.3	0	5	
Trust in Influencer's Recommendations	4.2	0.7	2	5	
Intention to Purchase Organic Products	4.0	1.1	1	5	

General information compiled on the 150 respondents indicates the following patterns in the study. The participants' mean age is 28.6 years, $s = 6.5$, age from 18 to 45 years, therefore, can be considered as a young group of individuals. The gender distribution results presented here indicate that 53.3% of the respondents are female, while 46.7% are males, thus providing a fair sex distribution.

From social media usage point of view, they utilize instagram significantly than other media since 60% of the respondents use instagram while the other 40% use youtube. Hence, the high activation of the younger generation with more visual-oriented social media, such as Instagram that is used for influencer marketing.

The results for the perceived authenticity which measures how much the participant considered the content of the influencers to be trustworthy had a mean of 4.3 and a standard deviation of 0.8. Our results suggest that influencer content is mostly considered to be authentic. Organic product interaction was rated slightly above average, 3.9 from a 5-point scale meaning moderate to high interaction with organic products. Furthermore, participants' responses as to the overall rate of online purchasing revealed that it a mean of 2.5 with some standard deviation of 1.3 to it.

The level of trust regarding the recommendations of influencers is somewhat high ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.7$), where consumers rely on influencers especially regarding products' recommendations. Finally, the level of interest in buying organic products by the consumers was 4 which, shows a positive attitude of consumers towards the buying of organically grown products, which may in some extent be informed by the contents of the influencer's posts. Such mean scores indicate large to moderate effect values of influencer marketing, specifically via Instagram in understanding consumer response and purchase intention towards buying organic products.

Table 2 – Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Influencer Content Authenticity and Consumer Engagement with Organic Products

Variable	Influencer Content Authenticity	Consumer Engagement with Organic Products
Influencer Content Authenticity	1.000	0.75** ($p < 0.01$)
Consumer Engagement with Organic Products	0.75** ($p < 0.01$)	1.000

Through a Pearson correlation test on the level of authenticity from the selected influencers' content and the consumers' interaction with organic products, it demonstrates a positive correlation of 0.75. This means that when the perceived authenticity of content by influencers is high, the consumers' involvement with organic products is also high. Therefore, the p-value less than 0.01 result indicate that this coupling indeed has a meaningful positive correlation and that it is significant at low level, proving that this correlation is unlikely to have happened by chance. This means that the proposed hypothesis of content authenticity of influencers as an area that can facilitate consumer interactions on organic products has been supported. These findings on the strong positive relationship suggest that consumers make recourse to organic products when they find the influencer's material genuine while confirming the relevance of trust and credibility in influencer marketing of organic products.

Discussion

Overall, the conclusion of this study offers understanding on the moderating role of authenticity of influencer content on the consumer's attention to organic products. Pearson coefficient was hundredth confidence level, 0.75 revealed positive

and significant relationship with $P < 0.01$. This means that the organic products are more likely to be consumed when the consumers assess that the content posted by the key opinion leaders as being genuine.

This is why there might be a stronger correlation between sales and marketing today compared to the past and here is why: They appreciate the messages that are being sent to them especially when it comes to the organic products. Engaging with personal or 'real' content of influencers leads to cultivating of a stronger, more emotional type of connection with the audience. This in turn a variable that affects the consumers' willingness to use and purchase organic products.

It is also worth to mention that influencer authenticity is crucial in terms of organic products. Because most people are not sure of the quality of organic products, their origin and the prices they attract, many turn to question these products. When an individual is seen as genuine then he or she can effectively work on the cross-over of consumer uncertainties and confidence equation and establishes a credibility factor that leads to engaging aspects. The observations support prior research arguments that provision of authentic influencers is more useful in swaying consumers' behavior than fake influencers, especially subsets such as organic and green products category.

Furthermore, such a marked positive association indicates that marketers and brands from the organic segment should focus on partnership with special reference to influencers supportive of environmentally friendly and transparent practices. The implications are consumer-generated content is more likely to be viewed if the consumer sees the influencer as trustworthy, potentially raising awareness, engagement and consequent sales.

However it must be understood that although there is a strong positive relationship between employment growth and wage growth, the relationship is not always causal. Other research questions for further investigation can be established based on the indicators influencing consumer consumption of organic products e.g. quality, price, health benefits that may be associated with organic products health benefits, and the effects of organic products on the environment. Moreover, this investigation targeted a particular group of respondents, and, therefore, the results of the research may not be relevant for the other consumers or regions.

Altogether, the present research enlightens the subject of influencer content genuineness as the key determinant of consumer interactions with organic products. That being said, consumers are constantly demanding more trust and transparency so it is about time, marketers align their influencer marketing with authenticity to encourage increased engagement in more natural forms of products and services.

Conclusion

Influencer content authenticity, therefore, yielded strong positive evidence on consumer engagement with organic products. The analysis showed that the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.75: the higher the authenticity of the content created by influencers, the higher consumers' engagement with organic products. This study sought to determine that this was a statistically significant relationship, further emphasizing the centrality of authenticity in informing consumers' buying behaviour especially as pertains to organic products.

From the research, it is clear that the modern consumer seeks assurance and credibility in any influencer-content they consume, particularly with organic products that gain criticisms concerning their authenticity, origin, and harm to the environment. This research studies have clear revelation that only the perceived authentic influencers can create a major impact on consumer perception and intent to engage with organic products.

Based on these findings, marketers involved in organic product marketing should consider employing relevant influencers, and should avoid developing fake relationships with such influencers, especially since their marketing initiatives are anchored on the principles of sustainability and transparency. In doing so, they can strengthen the bond with the buyers, establish more trust, and thus boost result and grow the revenues.

However, the study also recognises the need to undertake other studies that would also establish how these factors affect consumer behaviour and other factors such as price, quality and environmental issues of the organic products. However, the linkage between influencer content authenticity and consumers' engagements can be very helpful in understanding successful marketing communication strategies for the firms that deal in organic products, with a stressing focus on trust and authenticity in influencer marketing.

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