

The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Brand Image in Sponsored Content: A Case Study of Algerian Influencer Followers

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of influencer marketing on brand image. For this purpose, a quantitative research design was adopted, Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 1,504 social media users who follow influencers, and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings supported all proposed hypotheses, demonstrating that both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of influencers have significant and positive impact on brand image. These results highlight the importance role of influencer marketing in creating strong brand image and provide critical insights for future studies and marketers seeking to better understand factors influencing brand image.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the global market -including Algeria- has experienced a notable transformation in marketing strategies through the adoption of new methods based on digital channels, primarily the influencer marketing. This type of marketing has emerged thanks to the widespread use of social media, which has become an effective tool that allows brands to approach their customers in a direct and more interactive manner. This trend has changed many traditional concepts of marketing by relying on individuals with credibility and wide influence over their digital networks (Barbara, 2024, p. 312). Today's brands exploit the relationship between influencers and their social media audiences to influence customer behavior, by promoting their products and services in a more honest and realistic way. The power of influencer marketing lies in its ability to shape a positive branding image, thereby contributing to its entrenchment in customers' minds and motivating them to make purchasing decisions (Jasmin, 2022, p. 191). This shift has not only changed the nature of marketing communication, but it has also led to the emergence of new practices and trends within influencer marketing itself. As this type of marketing evolved, new concepts emerged: the rise of Nano-influencers, focusing on authenticity and credibility, developing visual content, building long-term partnerships, and leveraging user-produced content. These trends present new challenges and opportunities for marketers, making keeping up with them necessary to enhance digital marketing performance, but the success of influencer marketing is not only based on the number of followers, but also more depends on the compatibility of the influencer's personality with the values of the brand, its ability to create content that reflects the honesty of the experience and expresses the needs and aspirations of customers. An influencer who can relate his personal experience to a particular product in a convincing way contributes to building a long-term relationship between the customer and the brand (levin, 2020, p. 150).

Problematic statement and research hypotheses:

In light of the above, the study raises the following central research question:

What is the impact of social media influencers on the brand image within the sponsored content?

To address this main question, the following research hypotheses have been proposed:

- **H1:** Intrinsic Influencer Attributes positively impact brand image.
- **H2:** Extrinsic Influencer Attributes positively impact brand image.

The importance of the study:

This study sheds light on the performance of one of the most popular tools of contemporary digital marketing “social influencers” on the Algerian context, which as yet lacks sufficient scholarly work on this subject. Moreover, the study provides empirical findings that can help marketers make more informed decisions while selecting influencers and developing sponsored promotion campaigns.

The Objectives of the study:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Determine the extent to which influencer characteristics affect brand image from the perspective of social media followers
- Distingue between the two types of characteristics of influencer and determine which ones are more influential on brand image.
- Develop a framework that helps Algerian brands improve strategies for collaboration with influencers.
- Contribute to the academic literature on influencer marketing of within Algeria's digital environment.

Methodology of study:

To address the research problem and test the formulated hypotheses, a quantitative approach was adopted. The study relied on secondary sources including academic articles, books, and previous studies to support the theoretical framework and develop relevant hypotheses concerning influencer marketing and brand image. To contextualize the study with Algerian, a field survey was conducted using an electronic questionnaire targeting followers of social media influencers active on Instagram, which is currently one of the most engaging platforms in Algeria. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v.21), employing multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between the study variables.

Previous Studies:

In a study entitled "The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Brand Awareness, Image and Trust in their Sponsored Content" conducted by Arian Matin (2022), the researcher targeted a sample of university students in the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. A descriptive quantitative approach was adopted, using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 316 participants. The study aimed to measure the impact of influencers' characteristics in sponsored content on consumers' awareness and trust in brand image. The findings revealed a positive influence of influencer traits on both brand image and trust dimensions.

In a study entitled "The Impact of Social Media Influencer's Credibility Attributes on Gen Z Purchase Intention with Brand Image as Mediation" conducted by researchers Nugroho et al (2022), the study targeted millennials (Gen Z) in Indonesia who consume Korean beauty products to analyze the influence of influencers' credibility attributes (attractiveness, experience, and reliability) on purchase intention, while examining the mediating role of brand image. The interpretive approach was used by relying on the questionnaire instrument distributed to a sample of 210 individuals, and the data were analyzed using partial structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The results showed a direct positive effect of influencer attributes on purchase

intention, and an indirect effect through the brand's mental image, which acted as a full mediator in the relationship between credibility attributes and purchase intention.

In a study entitled "The Effect of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention: Examining the Mediating Roll of Brand Attitude" by Lu 'ay Al-Mu' ani et al. (2023), the impact of influencer traits on the intention to buy in customers was analyzed, focusing on the role of non-brand. The study relied on the quantitative approach, where data was collected via an electronic questionnaire from 309 participants, and the results were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. The results showed that influencer traits, such as credibility, experience and information quality, positively influence the trend towards the brand, which in turn partly affects the intention to buy.

A study entitled "The Influencers' Attributes and Customer Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Customer Attitude Toward Brand" was conducted by Zhao Xu et al (2023). The study was carried out in the context of e-commerce platforms in China, where the researchers targeted users of online shopping platforms. A quantitative methodology was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 233 participants. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The objective of the study was to examine the impact of influencer traits—such as attractiveness, credibility, and interactivity on consumers' purchase intentions, while testing the mediating role of customers' attitudes toward the brand. The results showed that influencer attributes positively influenced purchase intention through enhancing followers' attitudes toward the brand.

Although previous studies have provided valuable contribution to understanding the relationship between influencer attributes and consumer behavior, significant gaps remain, particularly within the context of emerging markets such as Algeria. This study focuses on the Algerian context, which remains underexplored in the existing literature. Moreover, unlike many previous studies that treated brand image as a mediating variable, this research considers it as the main dependent variable, allowing for a more direct analysis of its relationship with influencer attributes. Finally, the study distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of influencers, offering a more nuanced conceptual framework.

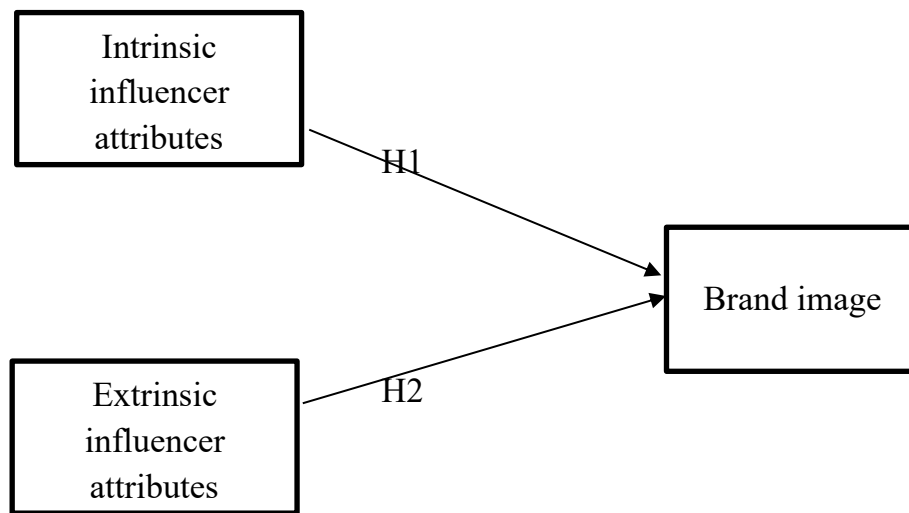
Study Plan:

To address the main objective of this research, the study is divided into five main sections, The first section presents the general introduction, which includes the study problem, its significance, objectives, methodology overview, and a review of previous studies. The second section combines the theoretical framework and the development of research hypotheses, focusing on the concepts of brand image and influencer attributes. The third section outlines the research methodology used in the study. The fourth section presents and analyzes the study's results based on the collected data. The fifth and final section concludes the study by discussing the findings, highlighting the main conclusions.

2. Framework and Hypotheses

To investigate the impact of social media influencers on brand image, a theoretical framework was developed based on previous studies to illustrate the relationship between these variables. As shown in Figure 1, the framework proposes that the authenticity of influencer content and their intrinsic and extrinsic attributes directly influence brand image. Based on this framework, a set of hypotheses were formulated to test these relationships.

Fig.1. Theoretical Framework



Source: authors own work based on previous studies

2.1 Influencer marketing

A social media influencer is an individual who was not famous among the public before posting content. These people become famous overnight through their viral content (Lou, 2019, p. 56). Marketing through this type of personality is known as influencer marketing. Influencers are also considered individuals capable of creating an impact and are recruited to endorse or even supervise marketing initiatives in partnership with companies or groups. These influencers are social media users who have gained significant fame and recognition and have fostered large networks of followers. Their followers show high levels of engagement with the content they share on social media (Ozuem, 2021, p. 58).

An influencer is considered an opinion leader and is essential in the strategy. However, influencer marketing should be chosen according to very selective criteria to achieve the goals targeted by this new form of marketing, Influencers can create an emotional connection with the brand, which encourages customers to get to know the brand, The most commonly used categorization of

influencers is based primarily on the number of subscribers they have an unreliable criterion due to the latter's fraudulent inflation, The selection should be done by taking into account more objective criteria, such as the level of education of the influencers, their field of interest, their rhetoric, and their subscriber profiles which can be discovered through their questions, interventions, published information, and the content they create (Ge, 2022, p. 165).

Influencer marketing is not a fad, but a growing trend in the modern marketing world, even in Algeria. It goes beyond simply showcasing products and services to focusing on creating a strong emotional connection between the brand and the audience. The Algerian society is rich with values and emotions, as family and community relationships play an important role in decision-making. Here, the impact of "the power of words" is evident. A recommendation from a close person carries more value than a mere commercial advertisement. In this context, the marketers are aware of this and take advantage of the campaigns that target the important emotions for the Algerians, such as the love of the family, homeland, and authentic traditions (Summak, 2024, p. 70).

2.2 Brand image

Brand image, refers to the cognitive representation of a brand. It encompasses the way the target audience perceives the brand's attributes, benefits, usage scenarios, customers, and product features. Brand image marketing is a set of marketing tools and activities that organizations use to shape and communicate the image of their values to the competitive market, and, thus, improve the public awareness and recognition of the brand. In this context, the brand image expresses the thoughts and feelings that are evoked in the customer's mind when he encounters the brand name (Trianasari, 2021, p. 6).

2.3 Influencer Attributes

Influencer attributes refer to the set of characteristics that define how an influencer is perceived by their audience and determine their effectiveness in delivering persuasive messages. These attributes shape the degree of trust, credibility, and engagement that followers develop toward the influencer, thus influencing their attitudes and behaviors toward promoted brands. Influencer attributes are generally divided into two main categories. The first includes intrinsic attributes, such as credibility, attractiveness, authenticity, and expertise. These traits are often linked to the influencer's personality, behavior, and the content they produce. The second encompasses extrinsic attributes, which are observable features such as physical appearance, fashion style, or the professional aesthetics of the influencer's digital presence (Djafarova et al, 2017). This two-part classification allows researchers to analyze both the psychological and visual factors that shape followers' perceptions and responses to influencer marketing.

2.3.1 *Intrinsic Influencer Attributes*

Influencer attributes play a crucial role in building trust and credibility with the audience. Beyond the content itself, attributes such as likability, expertise, and familiarity contribute to a positive perception among followers. However, studies have shown that the impact of certain attributes, such as familiarity, may diminish over time. Additionally, an influencer's gender significantly influences the audience's acceptance of sponsored content. These factors can be explained within the framework of various persuasion models, where influencer attributes serve as social cues that shape audience perceptions and decisions. Furthermore, successful influencers possess a unique blend of qualities and skills that enhance their credibility and appeal. These include expertise in their niche, transparency in their commercial relationships, and a compelling personality. Effective communication skills are essential for delivering marketing messages persuasively. Moreover, an influencer's image should align with the brand's values, and they should target an audience that aligns with their interests (Su., 2022, p. 195). Consequently, influencer success hinges on a combination of personal attributes, communication skills, brand alignment, and social factors. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Intrinsic Influencer Attributes positively impact brand image.

2.2 *Extrinsic Influencer Attributes*

Extrinsic influencer attributes refer to the external and visible features of influencers that shape how followers perceive them. These include physical appearance, style of clothing, tone of voice, and the overall aesthetic of their social media content. Such traits often affect the perceived professionalism, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the influencer, especially on visual platforms like Instagram. Studies have shown that these Extrinsic Influencer attributes contribute to building a favorable brand image when they align with the brand's identity and appeal to the target audience. Therefore, well-managed visual presentation and personal grooming can enhance the effectiveness of influencer marketing efforts (Casaló et al, p 512, 2018). Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H2: Extrinsic Influencer Attributes positively impact brand image.

3. *Methodology*

This study aimed to explore the behavior of the Algerian influencers' followers on social media platforms. Therefore, a survey was administered to a sample of followers on Instagram to examine the proposed hypotheses outlined in the conceptual framework. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and reliability tests, and multiple regression analysis using SPSS v.21 was employed to test the research hypotheses. A detailed description of the research methodology,

including measurement instruments, sampling procedures, and data analysis techniques, is provided in the subsequent section.

3.1 Variable measurement

This study used a quantitative research methodology, using an electronic questionnaire tool to collect data from a sample of Algerian influencers' followers. This questionnaire was based on measures derived from previous studies, where approved items were used in scientific literature to measure different variables. The source of each metric used was explained in the next table.

The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS v.21 software, starting with descriptive statistics to characterize the sample and explore the distribution of variables. The correlation analysis was also carried out to examine the interrelationships between the main variables. To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the Alpha Cronbach coefficient has been calculated for all measures. Thereafter, multiple linear regression analysis was used to test hypotheses, enabling the examination of the impact of multiple independent variables, the intrinsic and external characteristics of influencers, on the dependent variable the brand image.

Table 1. Measurement scales

Construct	Number of items
Intrinsic Influencer Attributes	13
Extrinsic Influencer Attributes	3
Brand image	5

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

The research instrument was constructed in the form of a questionnaire consisting of four main sections, whose items were formulated to reflect the dimensions and basic variables of the study. The first section included general and demographic questions such as age, marital status, social media usage habits, and participants' general opinions regarding influencer marketing. The second section deals with the intrinsic influencer attributes, and includes 13 items covering aspects such as credibility, attractiveness, and experience. The third section relates to the Extrinsic influencer attributes, and includes 3 items that focus on formal elements and general appearance. While the fourth section was devoted to brand image, and contained 5 items aimed at measuring customers' perceptions of the brand. These items have been prepared to ensure comprehensive coverage of research areas, contribute to accurately achieving the study objectives, and enable the linking of conceptual dimensions and subsequent quantitative analysis in a systematic and organized manner.

3.2 Sample Characteristics

The study population consists of followers of Algerian influencers on social media, particularly on the Instagram platform, which is one of the most interactive platforms for digital advertising content. This makes it an appropriate environment to study the impact of influencer attributes on brand image. Given the size and diversity of this population, a random sampling method was used by distributing an electronic questionnaire via social media platforms. Several Algerian influencers from various fields such as fashion, beauty, sports, and lifestyle, were invited to share the survey with their followers. This helped reach a broad and diverse audience without targeting a specific group, thus ensuring randomness in participant selection. A total of 1,504 valid responses were collected and used in the final analysis. The demographic analysis revealed that 50.1% of participants were aged between 26 and 35, and 42.8% were between 19 and 25. In addition, 61.4% of respondents believed that companies should collaborate with influencers for marketing purposes, while 55.1% admitted to making a purchase based on Algerian influencer recommendations.

Table 2. Demographic analysis

Variable	Response's choice	Frequency	Percentage
Age	under 18 years old	25	1.7%
	18-25 years old	643	42.8%
	26-35 years old	755	50.1%
	36-45 years old	77	5.1%
	Over 45 years old	4	0.3%
Influencer-driven purchase decision	Yes	829	55.1%
	No	675	44.9%
Customer support for Algerian companies collaborating with influencers	Yes	236	15.7%
	No	345	22.9%
	Sometimes	923	61.4%

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

3.3 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Items Measuring

The descriptive analysis in table 03 shows that Intrinsic Influencer attributes (IIA) recorded the highest overall mean (2.19), indicating that respondents perceive these attributes as highly important. Among IIA items, IIA7 had the highest mean (1.92), while IIA4 had the lowest (1.48). Extrinsic Influencer attributes (EIA) showed lower mean scores (from 1.32 to 1.61), suggesting they are perceived as less influential. Brand Image (BI) items had moderate mean values (from 1.52 to 1.66) with relatively low standard deviations, reflecting consistent perceptions across respondents. The relatively high standard deviation values for IIA (from 0.969 to 1.101) indicate moderate variability in responses, meaning that while the overall perception was positive,

individual opinions varied. In contrast, the lower standard deviations for EIA and BI suggest greater consensus among respondents in evaluating these dimensions. Overall, intrinsic attributes are more positively perceived and play a greater role in shaping brand image than extrinsic attributes, highlighting the importance of authenticity and credibility in influencer marketing.

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Items Measuring

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
IIA1	1.74	0.985
IIA2	1.89	1.029
IIA3	1.81	1.013
IIA4	1.48	0.969
IIA5	1.52	0.972
IIA6	1.57	0.014
IIA7	1.92	0.101
IIA8	1.69	1.009
IIA9	1.68	1.042
IIA10	1.63	1.013
IIA11	1.67	0.977
IIA12	1.90	1.057
IIA13	1.69	1.093
EIA1	1.32	1.107
EIA2	1.59	0.038
EIA3	1.61	0.991
BI1	1.52	0.955
BI2	1.52	0.922
BI3	1.58	0.949
BI4	1.66	0.975
BI5	2.19	1.149

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

4. Results

4.1 Mean and Standard Deviation of the Items Measuring

To assess the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for each scale. As presented in Table 3, Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.773 to 0.937, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7, This indicates that the measurement scales exhibit high internal consistency and reliability.

Table 4. Reliability analysis results

Symbol	Variable	Number of items	(a) Chronbach
IIA	Intrinsic Influencer Attributes	13	0.937
	Extrinsic Influencer Attributes		
EIA	Extrinsic Influencer Attributes	3	0.773
BI	Brand image	5	0.856

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

To examine the correlation between brand image (the dependent variable) and the independent variables (intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes), Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. As presented in Table 4, both intrinsic ($r = 0.792$, $p < 0.001$) and extrinsic ($r = 0.737$, $p < 0.001$) influencer attributes demonstrated a significant and positive correlation with brand image. These findings indicate a strong positive relationship between both types of influencer attributes and customer perceptions of the brand.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix results

	Intrinsic Influencer Attributes	Extrinsic Influencer Attributes	Brand image
Intrinsic Influencer Attributes	1		
Extrinsic Influencer Attributes	0.671*	1	
Brand image	0.792*	0.737*	1
N = 1504		*P < 0.001	

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

4.3 ANOVA Analysis

To assess the explanatory power of the model, ANOVA was conducted. The results, presented in Table 5, revealed a significant F-statistic ($F = 1784.392$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that at least one of the independent variables significantly influences brand image. Furthermore, the R-squared value was found to be 0.70, suggesting that 70% of the variance in brand image can be explained by the included independent variables (intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes). The remaining 30% of the variance may be attributed to other factors not considered in the current model.

Table 5. ANOVA Analysis results

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Regression	662.730	2	331.365	1784.392	0.000
Residual	278.739	1501	0.186		
Total	941.469	1503			
R = 0.839 R ² = 0.704 Adjusted R ² = 0.703					

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

4.4 Hypotheses Test

To examine the primary causal relationships, Multiple linear regression analysis was employed. As presented in Table 6, the results demonstrate a significant positive impact of both intrinsic ($\beta = 0.540$, $p < 0.001$) and extrinsic ($\beta = 0.375$, $p < 0.001$) influencer attributes on brand image. These findings support the proposed hypotheses (H1, H2). These results are consistent with the findings of Matin et al. (2022), who also confirmed the significant influence of both intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes on brand image.

Table 6. Hypotheses Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.234	0.027		8.596	0.000
Intrinsic Influencer Attributes	0.544	0.19	0.540	28.515	0.000
Extrinsic Influencer Attributes	0.342	0.17	0.375	19.795	0.000

Source: By authors based on SPSS output.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical support for the proposed hypotheses, demonstrating a significant positive impact of influencer marketing on brand image. The findings reveal that both intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes showed a significant positive influence on brand image. This results are consistent with the findings of Matin (2022), who emphasized the significant influence of both intrinsic ittributes such as expertise, credibility, and authenticity), and extrinsic attributes (such as follower count and engagement rate) of influencers on customer brand perceptions.

This study provides a valuable contribution to the existing marketing literature by examining the impact of two key determinants intrinsic influencer attributes and extrinsic influencer attributes on the brand image in the specific context of Algerian customers and their engagement with local social media influencers. By utilizing data from this specific cultural and social context, the study adds valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on customer motivations and perceptions of products and brands. The identification of both intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes as significant determinants of brand image provides valuable implications for marketers seeking to leverage influencer marketing effectively within the Algerian market.

6. Limitations and Future Studies

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on influencer marketing by investigating the factors influencing consumer engagement and brand image within the specific context of Algerian consumers and their interactions with Algerian influencers. While the findings highlight the significant impact of both intrinsic and extrinsic influencer attributes on brand image, the research is subject to certain limitations. First, although the conceptual framework provides a valuable basis for this study, it can be further enriched by integrating additional variables. For example, the impact of influencer detection practices (such as clearly marking supported content), the role of social media algorithms in shaping influencer access and visibility, as well as the impact of consumers' personality traits on their responsiveness to influencer marketing can be studied. Secondly, although the sample size used in this study was large, it is important to recognize that it represents a certain segment of Algerian society. Increasing the sample's size and ensuring greater diversity of demographic factors, socio-economic situation and patterns of social media use would enhance the dissemination of outcomes to Algerian society more broadly. Finally, this study relied mainly on a quantitative methodology. However, integrating qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, may provide deeper insights into the motivations, trends and experiences that consumers experience when interacting with Algerian influencers. A mixed research approach will enable us to more accurately understand the complex overlap between influencer characteristics, consumer trends, and brand outcomes. Despite these limitations, this study opens up exciting prospects for future research into influencer marketing, particularly within North Africa and other developing countries. Future research can explore cultural differences in influencer marketing in different contexts, examine the long-term impact of influencers' endorsement of consumer behavior, and study the ethical dimensions of influencer marketing practices in emerging economies.

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