

The Study of Para-Social Interaction With E-Word-of-Mouth for Influencer Marketing by Complex Computing

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was focused on exploring the relationship among the fans' preferences, fans' para-social interaction, and fans' word-of-mouth. A survey consisted of 21 items based on the literature review and developed by this study. An online survey was distributed to the users of YouTube in Taiwan. A total of 606 valid samples was collected by the survey. The instrument passed the reliability and validity test. Further, the data process applied the PLS (partial least squares) regression analysis methodology. The result shows that the 'attractive' impacted 'para-social interaction', 'e-word-of-mouth', and 'preferences of fans' positively. In addition, the para-social interaction plays an important role as a mediator between influencer's attractiveness, e-word-of-mouth, and preferences of fans. Some suggestions were provided for social media influence-related studies as references.

KEYWORDS

Attractive, Entertainment, Fans' E-Word-of-Mouth, Influencer, Fans' Para-Social Interaction, Marketing, Partial Least Squares Regression, Social Media Influence Preferences

INTRODUCTION

In the era of influencers' marketing as a mainstream of economic, the influencers' effect will enhance the impact on marketing dramatically. The influencers can play the spokesperson role of business, politician, commodity, or charitable activities to raise those peoples' influence and reputation, meanwhile, the influencers could gain the benefit or promote them-self from those activities (Guerreiro, Viegas, & Guerreiro, 2019). Thus, the internet platform and social media become important channels for influencers to self-promotion and raise online personal branding (Altenburger, De, Frazier, Avteniev, & Hamilton, 2017; Khedher, 2013). Further, those channels presenting an innovative implementation of influencers' marketing and extending the type or style of social media functions. Many social media were developing and generating from the internet such as YouTube, Facebook,

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LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, or Weibo, etc. Those social media provide a useful platform for influencers to show their talents of artistic or capacity that can promote them widely and get famous faster (Glucksman, 2017). Therefore, the influencers' marketing was pushing economic growth in a new way and become more competitive.

The YouTuber launched in February 2005 and some of the influence stars from related social media's early days helped to make the platform as an essential part of internet economic (Stone & Webb, 2019). The original influencers were communicated with audiences mainly by text without a business model at the beginning (Ignatidou, 2019; Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Meanwhile, the affective force of influencers was generated via e-word-of-mouth (Anastasiei & Dospinescu, 2019). Relay on the development tendency of social media and the influencers, the influencer economy has driven e-commerce growth start from (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019).

In recent years, influencers become more professional and skilled people due to the advantage of information and communication technology (ICT) and portable devices (Larios-Hernández & Reyes-Mercado, 2018). The new generation influencers can catch more attention depends on those performances, hence, enterprises will promote their commodities by influencers' reputation, attraction, and popularity (Magno & Cassia, 2018). Therefore, the internet economy was driven by influencers' marketing and a new business model was emerged.

The business profit earning model of influencers' economy was distinguished as e-commerce, live broadcast (Ma, Zhang, Harris, Chen, & Xu, 2016; Tsai, 2016), advertising (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017), gaming endorsement (Alim, 2017), entertainment circles (ITA, 2016), and brand image (Verhoef, 2020). The global Instagram influencer market size growing significantly from 0.8 to 2.3 billion since 2017 to 2020 (Statista, 2019). It demonstrated that the influencer market has dramatic development and driven the growth of internet economy.

Askitas and Zimmermann (2009) agreed that the data retrieved from internet with real-time and rich information was better than the government statistic report. Matsumoto, Matsumura and Shiraki (2013) point out that the prediction of economy issue relay on past data. However, the accuracy and validity of prediction will be affected by delayed information. Thus, Internet search data become a powerful potential index of prediction. Further, Vosen and Schmidt (2012) applied big-data from Google Search Engine to predict citizens' consuming trend and they found those data were more reliable than the traditional prediction index. Therefore, apply the big-data from internet was advantage method to do prediction and survey.

The marketing managers and social medial platform operators were trying to find a critical factor that will impact the business performance in the e-commerce environment. Some studies argued that the consumers' purchase intention will be affected by some factors such as physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and para-social interaction (Lin, Crowe, Pierre, & Lee, 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This argument indicates a new direction for marketing research and points out the importance of Internet celebrities in this field (Geng, Wang, & Chen, 2019). Furthermore, the growth force of influencer economy to be driven by the influencers' fans obviously. In addition, fans were stimulated to loyal to the influence depends on their psychological identification and virtualize the relationships with influencer, this symptom was called 'para-social' (Shtern, Hill, & Chan, 2019). Therefore, enterprises were cooperating with influencers closely to create vary marketing styles and still keeping extending the scope of the influencer economy. For example, the 'click-through rate' (CTR) were using instead of product endorsement and reward of money (Yang, Lin, Carlson, & Jr. Ross, 2016). In general, the goal of this study was aimed to explore the cause-effect relationships between para-social interaction with preferences and e-word-of-mouth, and attempt to distinguish the model of influencer marketing as well.

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