

Sesar, Vesna; Martinčević, Ivana; Hunjet, Anica

## Article

# How Influencer Credibility and Advertising Disclosure affects Purchase Intention

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# How Influencer Credibility and Advertising Disclosure affects Purchase Intention

Vesna Sesar

University North, Croatia

Ivana Martinčević

University North, Croatia

Anica Hunjet

University North, Croatia

## Abstract

In recent years there has been a significant increase in digital advertising through influencers being active on many social media platforms. Budgets for influencer marketing rise yearly, and the return on investment from influencer marketing is higher than from other marketing channels. Therefore, influencer marketing is here to stay, and the pandemic has turned many customers online. Nowadays, customers most often collect information regarding products or services from influencers. The factors that may affect customers' purchase decisions are seen in influencers' credibility and advertising disclosure. A systematic literature review was done to provide an overview of the related influencer marketing field and the impact of advertising disclosure and source credibility on purchase intention. The terms ("Purchase intention") and ("influencer credibility" OR "source credibility" and "advertising disclosure") were used to collect data. The papers were reviewed to determine how influencer credibility and advertising disclosure impact customer purchase behavior. Results indicate that influencer credibility traits positively influence purchase intention, and advertisement disclosure may impact customer purchase intention differently.

**Keywords:** influencer marketing; influencer credibility; purchase intention; advertising disclosure

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## Introduction

According to Statista.com (2022), traditional advertising, such as advertising in magazines and newspapers, is experiencing negative growth rates, while digital marketing will grow above 13% in 2022, and worldwide digital marketing revenue is expected to grow to 683 billion dollars by 2026. Digital advertising includes the internet and delivering marketing messages in various formats to internet users (Statista, 2022). Since there is a growing number of social media network users worldwide (4.6 billion users or 58,4% of the total population), social platforms have become a popular way to advertise.

According to Datareportal.com (2022), the average number of social platforms used each month is 7.5. Advertising in social media networks includes; sponsored posts (Social Media Advertising); advertisement banners like, e.g., so-called skyscrapers (Banner Advertising); advertisements within video players (Video Advertising); and paid digital classifieds (Classifieds) (Statista b, 2022).

This massive trend, impacted by digitalization, represents a huge opportunity for brand managers to incorporate influencer marketing into their long-term marketing strategies. Influencer marketing represents cheaper and faster advertising with the potential to reach many buyers quickly (Evans et al., 2017, Weismueller et al., 2020). The increasing use of social media has imposed new dynamics between followers and influencers. People on social networks constantly seek new information and play a dynamic role instead of being "passive recipients of marketing communications" (Vrontis et al., 2021). Therefore, influencer credibility representing influencer traits such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise in their endorsements will significantly influence followers' purchase behaviour.

The scope of the paper is (1) to study and explore the importance of influencer credibility in the last ten years, (2) to analyse and explore how influencer credibility and advertising disclosure affects purchase intention, (3) to ensure a systematic review of the research literature in these fields. To achieve the set goals, up-to-date literature was analysed, which explores the field of influencer credibility, advertising disclosure, and consumer purchase intention. Therefore, to address the research scope, a systematic literature review was conducted to provide an overview of the relevant influencer credibility field. To collect data following phrases were used in the search field ("influencer credibility") or ("source credibility") and ("advertising disclosure,") and ("purchase intention").

## Theoretical approach

### *Influencer credibility and advertising disclosure*

Influencer credibility relates to people's characteristics and how well they are perceived among followers. The construct influencer credibility derives from the source credibility model developed by Ohanian (1990) and consists of trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise and has been put in the context of social media (Vrontis et al., 2021) and researched whether the perceived credibility of an influencer impacts follower's purchase intention (Fink et al., 2020) and which credibility trait is the key to impact consumer behaviour.

For example, Xiao et al. (2018) analysed other characteristics significant for being perceived as credible, such as argument quality, social influence, and issue involvement. This indicates that influencer marketing success depends on the characteristics of an influencer, context, and products (Vrontis et al., 2021). For example, knowledge, attractiveness, and relatability were the key characteristics influencing young millennials to buy cosmetic products (Hassan et al., 2021).

In reaching customers through influencer marketing, researchers have tried to illuminate the effect of advertising disclosure on consumer behaviour. Advertising disclosure relates to revealing the information to the customer that the advertised message is paid and includes "signs like 'ad' or 'advertisement' and statements such as 'Promoted by (brand)' or 'Sponsored by (brand)'" (Weismueller et al., 2020, p.162). To disclose their products, influencers usually use hashtags in posts and place statements that this is a paid advertisement. The consumers (followers) to whom those messages are directed may react differently according to the persuasion knowledge model developed by Friestad and Wright (1994). The question is whether influencers are perceived as more credible if they display the sponsorship status due to unclear sponsorship status. Muller et al. (2018) found that influencer credibility, advertising disclosure, attitudes toward ads, and product utility were significant variables influencing purchase intention. Weismueller et al. 2020 found that a clear disclosure statement regarding hashtag disclosure increases source attractiveness, leading to higher purchase intention.

Overall, brand managers have to find influencers that are authentic to the brand to reach customers and impact them. Their credibility traits play a significant role in this process and how influencers disclose an advertised post.

### *Purchase intention*

In today's digital environment, many marketing strategies have been oriented toward researching the effect of electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) on customer purchase behaviours. Purchase intention represents a buyer's intention to purchase a certain product or service shortly (Herrando and Martín-De Hoyos, 2022, Weismueller et al. (2020). For the consumer to make a purchase decision, he has to recognize the need for a certain product or service, gather information and research the product or service, evaluate alternatives, and finally make a purchase (Mainardes and Cardoso, 2019).

There is a growing interest in the literature on whether sponsorship disclosure and the type of ad disclosure that influencer use in their posts encourages or discourages followers directly or indirectly from making a purchase intention.

According to Lee and Koo (2012), when customers think the influencer's message is biased or not authentic to their experiences, their source credibility may decrease. This, in turn, may decrease the purchase intention of the buyer (Weismueller et al., 2020) since little is known about how advertising disclosure in the online environment affects purchase behaviour and which is the best way to advertise products through influencers; this paper will address this issue.

## **Methodology**

The systematic literature review was used to summarize earlier findings in a research field. Through the first part of the search, we checked WoS and Scopus using the keywords: "Influencer credibility" and "Source credibility" to give an overall view of the influencer credibility topic in the last ten-year period and answer our first aim. This search resulted in 466 total papers (281 in WOS and 185 in Scopus), which are presented in detail in the results part.

Then in the second part, we narrowed our research to "advertising disclosure" and "purchase intention" to address our second research question and to ensure a systematic review of the research literature in these fields. We used peer-review journals cited in Scopus and WoS (SSCI and ESCI papers) to give a more detailed field analysis. Tables 1 and 2 present our search strategies in WoS (SSCI and ESCI) and Scopus from 2017 till March 2022.

Through the first part of the search, we checked WoS and Scopus using the keywords: "Influencer credibility" or "source credibility" and "advertising disclosure" and "purchase intention". This approach resulted in 86 (78 in Scopus and 8 in WoS). In the next step, the search strategy was refined. Since influencer credibility is applied in different areas of scientific research, we decided to limit our research to papers published in English in the fields of business and social sciences and economy in Scopus and business or communication in WOS (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1

WOS search strategy (2017 – 2022)

Search strategy	Hits	Period	Indexes
Influencer credibility or source credibility and advertising disclosure and purchase intention	8	All years	SSCI & ESCI
Refined by: document types: (article) and publication years: (2021 or 2020 or 2019 or 2018 or 2017) and web of science categories: (business or communication) and language: (English)	6	2017-March 2022 (last six years)	SSCI & ESCI

Source: Authors' work

Table 2

Scopus search strategy (2018 – 2022)

Search strategy	Hits	Period	Indexes
title-abs-key (influencer and credibility or source and credibility) and (advertising and disclosure and purchase and intention)	78	All years	Scopus
( limit-to ( oa , "all" ) ) and ( limit-to ( pub year, 2022 ) or limit-to ( pub year, 2021 ) or limit-to ( pub year, 2020 ) or limit-to ( pub year, 2019 ) or limit-to ( pub year, 2018 ) or limit-to ( pub year, 2017 ) ) and ( limit-to ( doctype, "ar" ) ) and ( limit-to ( subjarea, "busi" ) or limit-to ( subjarea, "soci" ) or limit-to ( subjarea, "econ" ) ) and ( limit-to ( language, "English" ) )	22	2017-March, 2022 (last six years)	Scopus

Source: Authors' work

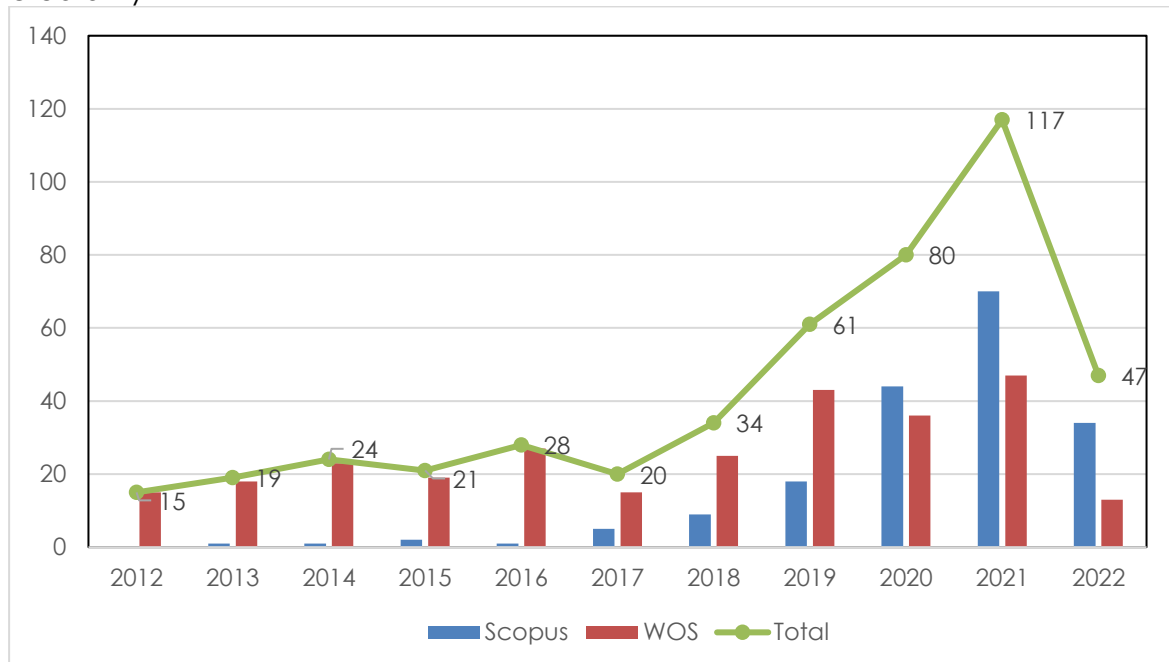
## Results

The results of the first part of the research are the results using the search term "influencer credibility" or "source credibility" in databases Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus in the last ten years (from 2012- March 2022) to determine the trend in this area of research. This search resulted in 466 papers (281 in WOS and 185 in Scopus).

The results indicate that this field of interest, according to the number of published papers (Figure 1), started to increase drastically in 2019, where 2021 represents the year where the largest number of publications to date (117 papers) has been published, resulting in 32% increase over the year before.

Figure 1

Number of papers published per year analysing influencer credibility or source credibility

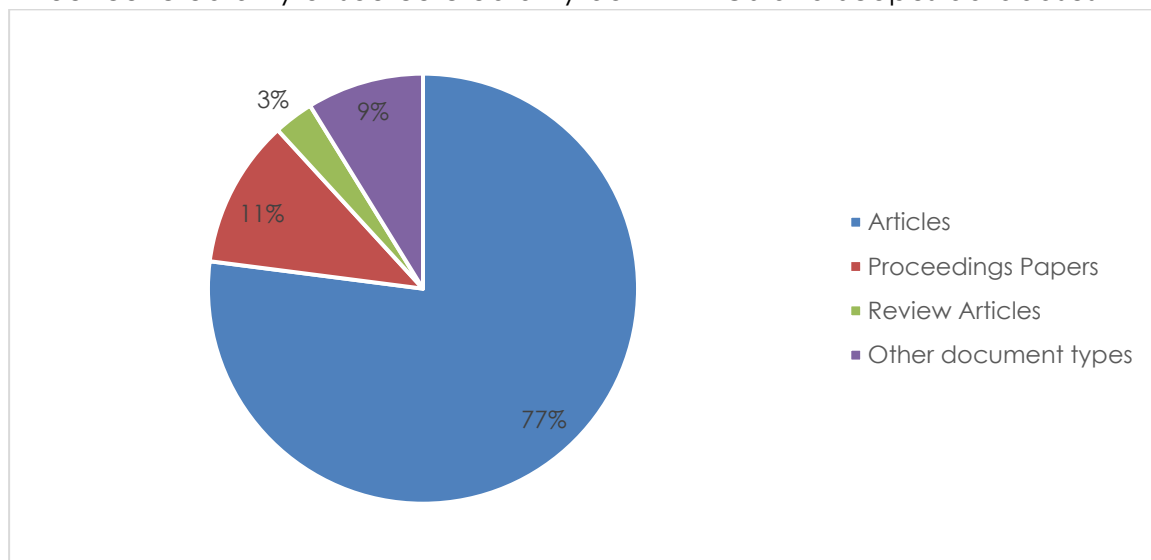


Source: Authors' work

The complete analysis of published papers analysed by document type published in WOS and Scopus can be seen in Figure 2. The most published papers were articles (77%), then conference proceedings (11%), review papers (9%), and other document types like book chapters, letters, etc. (3%).

Figure 2

Number of papers by document type published in the last ten years regarding influencer credibility or source credibility both in WOS and Scopus databases

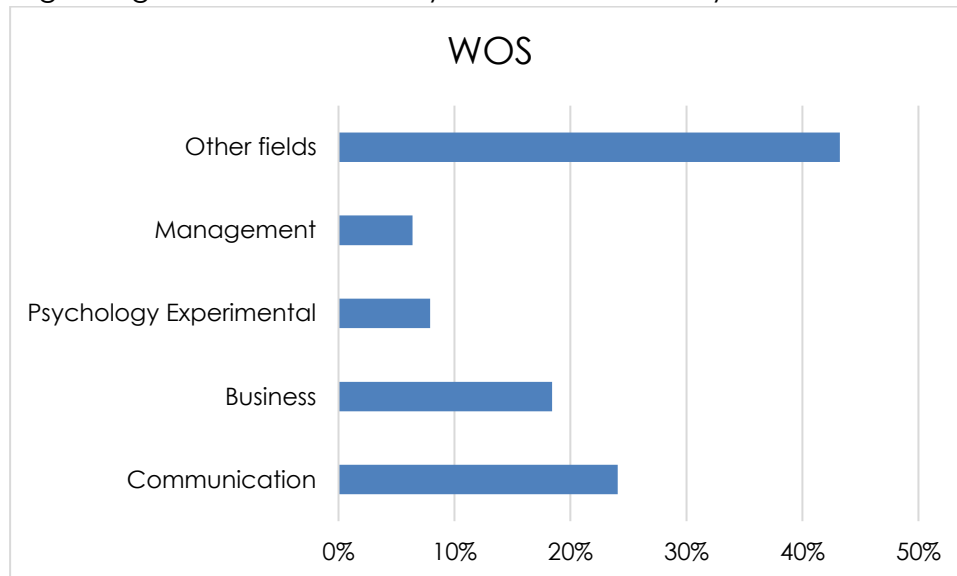


Source: Authors' work

Further analysis was done to determine which subject area is dominant in certain databases among many different areas. Figures 3 and 4 show that in WOS, the dominant research investigating influencer credibility is Communication (24%) and Business (18%). Other fields represent 6% or fewer record counts that address influencer credibility within their area of research (for example, Social Sciences Interdisciplinary, Environmental sciences, etc.), so they have been summed up.

Figure 3

Percentage of papers by subject area that was published in the last ten years regarding influencer credibility or source credibility in the WOS database

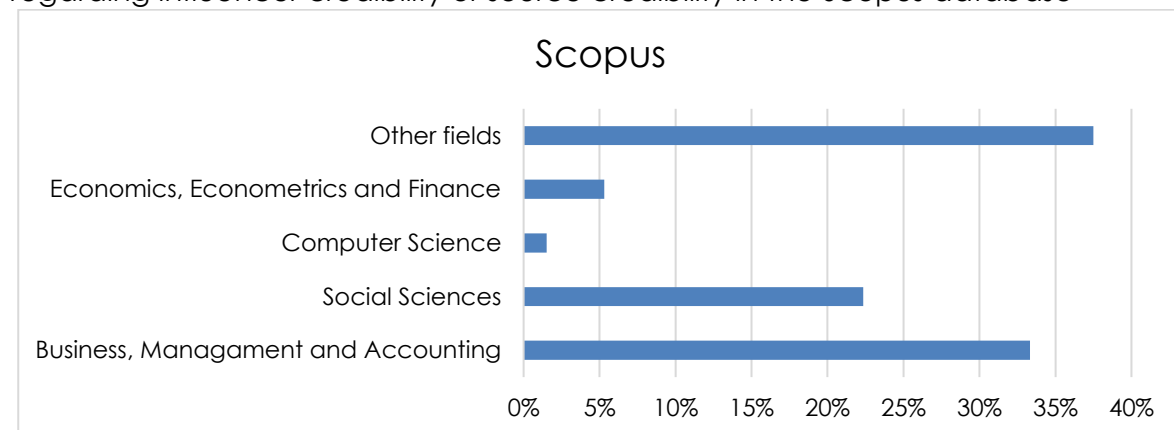


Source: Authors' work

In the Scopus database, the most represented area of research exploring influencer credibility was found in Business, Management, and Accounting (33%) and Social Sciences (22%). In comparison, other fields (43%) represent the total sum of many fields like Engineering, Decision Sciences, Psychology, etc., whose representation range is from 0,3% to 5% depending on the area.

Figure 4

Percentage of papers by subject area that was published in the last ten years regarding influencer credibility or source credibility in the Scopus database



Source: Authors' work



When analysing the country of origin, in the WOS database, the leading country is the USA, with 121 papers published in ten years, followed by China (26 papers) and other countries. The top country of origin in the Scopus database is also the USA, with 36 papers, followed by Spain (15), India (13), Australia (10), and other countries with less than ten papers published in ten years.

After presenting the overall analysis of the influencer credibility field where an increasing trend of published papers has been recognized, in the second step, we narrowed our research to focus on advertising disclosure of influencers on social media networks and how this advertising, together with influencer's credibility impact purchase behaviour of consumers.

In the second step of the analysis, we have included 28 papers (6 from WOS and 22 from Scopus). However, after analysing all papers, we excluded six papers that did not report on influencer credibility, advertising disclosure, or purchase intention.

The paper of Balaban and Szambolics (2022) explores users' perceptions of the authenticity of influencers and advertising outcomes and does not include credibility or purchase intention; therefore, it is excluded. Further, Dalla-Pria and Rodríguez-de-Dios (2022) explored source type and message framing on social media influence message credibility, corporate reputation, and word-of-mouth. Gerrath and Usrey (2021) explore the influence of incentivization and self-disclosure on influencers' credibility, so this paper is also excluded from further analysis. Djafarova and Matson (2021), since their paper do not include advertising disclosure or purchase intention. Berne-Manero and Marzo-Navarro focused on the potentially different roles played by macro and micro-influencers impacting social network users' engagement with promoted products when it comes to preserving corporate sustainability. Also, the paper of Su et al. (2021) examines parasocial relationships (PSRs) between influencers and audiences on social media. After eliminating six papers, we represent in Table 3. the analysis of 22 papers based on the research description, the theory applied, and the key results of the research.

Table 3

Analysis of the paper based on the research description, theory applied, and key findings

Author name, year	Research description	Theory applied	Key finding
<b>Pozharliev et al. (2022)</b>	Examines a two-way interaction between social influencers' number of followers (micro vs. macro) and argument quality (weak vs. strong) on consumers' self-reported and brain responses to advertising posts on Instagram.	Source credibility theory and contemporary theories of persuasion.	Meso-influencers are perceived as a credible source of information only when their product-related post provides strong argument quality.
<b>Bi and Zhang(2022)</b>	Examines the mediation role of influencer credibility (IC) and the moderation role of self-esteem in the effects of individuals' parasocial relationships (PSR) with YouTube influencers on their product attitudes (PATs) and purchase intentions (PIs).	Parasocial theory	Revealed a sequential mediation model that influencer credibility and product attitudes mediate the association between parasocial relationships and purchase intention.



<b>Herrando and Martín-De Hoyos (2022)</b>	Examines the effects of influencer posts on Instagram users.	Uses and gratifications theory (U&G).	Users who attribute infotainment and credibility to an influencer ad post perceive it to have greater ad value, which improves their attitude toward the ad and, consequently, positively affects their purchase intentions.
<b>Janssen et al. (2022)</b>	To what extent do product-influencer fit and number of followers contribute to positive advertising outcomes and influencer evaluations? Moreover, to what extent do the perceived credibility of the influencer and identification with the influencer mediate these relationships?	Congruity theory	Findings imply that macro influencers are more influential endorsers because consumers relate to them more and are more likely to trust their content.
<b>Kwiatek et al. (2021)</b>	Aims to establish the correlation between the credibility of influencer recommendations in the digital environment, primarily on social networks, and the changes that these recommendations may have on consumers' perception of brands and the consequences of these influences on their purchasing decisions.	Attribution theory and Kalman's theory of identification	The paper indicates that consumers trust EWOM communication more than traditional WOM when looking for brand recommendations online. Also, they tend to trust macro influencers more than micro-influencers. Finally, suppose they read the negative information (in the form of a review). In that case, such information will hurt, creating a negative attitude towards the brand and may reduce the purchasing potential in the future.
<b>Belanche et al., 2021</b>	Explores how influencers' promotional actions affect their credibility, and followers' attitudes and behavioral responses toward the influencer (i.e., to continue following, imitate, and recommend them to other users)	Stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory	Findings indicate that perceived influencer-product congruence positively affects followers' perceptions of the credibility of and attitude toward influencers and negatively affects perceptions of paid communication (it harms their credibility).
<b>Silva and da Costa (2021)</b>	Explores how the source credibility (SC), the parasocial relationship (PR), and the use of social media (USM) are related to the intention to buy hotel services endorsed by Instagram digital influencers	The internet endorsing strategy and source credibility theory	Findings indicate that influencers are more persuasive when assessed as reliable and physically attractive sources. The same occurs when there is a unilateral affection relationship between the endorser and the spectator. However, the more frequent use of social media mitigates and negates these inferences
<b>Lee (2021)</b>	The paper explores the mediation effect of ad content value moderated by sports influencer credibility in the relationship between team identification and purchase intention.	Social identity theory. Transfer theory and associative learning theory.	Findings show that team identification and ad content value positively impacted purchase intention. Further, team identification had a positive influence on ad content value. Ports influencer credibility moderated the relationship between ad content value and purchase intention, as well

<b>Fink et al. (2020)</b>	Explores the long-term effect on purchase intentions of social-media-based entrepreneurial marketing drawing on celebrity endorsers. Researched the mediating effect on brand image and the moderation effect of brand differentiation.	Information integration theory	as the relationship between team identification and purchase intention. Findings show that celebrity endorser credibility enhances purchase intention among the sponsored Facebook fan community members by enhancing the image of the sponsor's brand. Brand differentiation plays a dual role: It reinforces the effect of celebrity endorser credibility on the brand image while buffering the effect of brand image on purchase intention.
<b>Schouten et al. (2020)</b>	Explores the impact of celebrity vs. influencer endorsements on advertising effectiveness (attitudes toward the advertisement and product and purchase intention), moderated by product-endorser fit.	Endorsement marketing	Findings show that influencers are deemed more trustworthy than celebrities and that people feel more similar to influencers and identify more with them than celebrities. These processes, in turn, affect advertising effectiveness. Similarity, wishful identification, and trust mediate the relationship between the endorser type and advertising effectiveness. Further, the product- endorser did not explain the relationship between the type of endorser and any of the mediating and dependent variables.
<b>Reinikainen et al. (2020)</b>	This study illuminates the moderating role of audience comments in influencer marketing on YouTube by showing that comments affect the endorsement an influencer provides through the constructs of parasocial relationships and influencer credibility.	Parasocial relationship theory and source credibility theory	The results indicate that a parasocial relationship with the influencer builds the perceived credibility of the influencer, while comments by other audience members moderate the effect. Influencer credibility positively affects brand trust and purchase intention.
<b>Balaban et al. (2020)</b>	Explores the mechanism that determines users' online behavior related to influencers, such as following them on social media. Moreover, the study examined the role of the perceived information quality and of the perceived trust of the influencers in shaping audiences' attitudes toward influencers.	Source credibility theory	Findings showed that the perceived quality of information has a significant direct effect on the trustworthiness of the influencers. The trustworthiness of the influencers has a significant direct effect on the attitude toward following the influencers. All components of the perceived quality of information have a significant positive impact on the trustworthiness of influencers.
<b>Vogel et al. (2020)</b>	Explores the effects of sponsorship disclosures on perceptions of e-cigarette Instagram influencer posts.	Not mentioned	Findings show that with greater recognition of clear (but not ambiguous) disclosure hashtags, ad recognition increased, the perceptions of influencer credibility

			<p>decreased, and intentions to engage with posts decreased.</p> <p>Further, ad trust was lower with greater hashtag recognition regardless of disclosures.</p> <p>Sponsorship disclosures did not significantly affect brand attitudes, brand use, or vaping intentions.</p>
<b>Martínez-López et al. (2020)</b>	<p>The paper proposes a theoretical model to explain how perceived brand control over an influencer's post and the perceived commercial orientation of such a post affects consumer trust in influencers.</p>	Endorsement theory	<p>Findings show that the trust of the influencer is reduced more by the post's perceived commercial orientation than the perceived brand control of the influencer's post. Although perceived brand control also reduces the willingness to search for more information.</p> <p>The results also show that trust of the influencer is salient in predicting post credibility, which in turn predicts interest and willingness to search for more information.</p>
<b>Iacobucci and De Ciccio (2020)</b>	<p>Explores the effects of advertising disclosure on ad recognition and the resulting attitude toward the advertised brand, attitude toward the advertising publisher, publisher credibility, and intention to spread electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)</p>	The theoretical framework of the persuasion knowledge and the reactance theory	<p>Findings show that exposure to a post with advertising disclosure through the Instagram disclosure tool leads to higher ad recognition than a post without disclosure. However, ad recognition negatively affects the attitude toward the brand, publisher credibility, and intention to spread eWOM.</p>
<b>Balaban and Mustătea (2019)</b>	<p>The paper explores the differences and similarities regarding the users' perception of social media influencers' perceived credibility in two countries (Germany and Romania).</p>	Source Credibility Theory	<p>Findings confirm previous research results that attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and similarity are perceived as important elements of the perceived credibility of social media influencers.</p>
<b>Weismueller et al. (2020)</b>	<p>Authors argue that advertising disclosure significantly impacts source credibility subdimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, which positively influence consumer purchase intention.</p>	The halo effect and consistency theory, and persuasion knowledge theory	<p>Findings reveal that source attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise significantly increase consumer purchase intention. Also, advertising disclosure indirectly influences consumer purchase intention by influencing source attractiveness.</p> <p>Also, the number of followers positively influences source attractiveness, trustworthiness, and purchase intention.</p>
<b>Lee and Johnson (2022)</b>	<p>Explores two important elements, influencers' self-disclosures (present vs. not present) and message-sidedness (one-sided vs. two-sided), to explain the</p>	Social penetration theory and attribution theory.	<p>Findings show that Instagram product reviews with two-sided messages yielded higher influencer authenticity, influencer credibility, ad attitudes, and eWOM intentions than Instagram product reviews with wrong messages. Further, influencers' perceived</p>

	effectiveness of influencer marketing.		authenticity and credibility with two-sided messages mediated effects on ad attitude, brand attitudes, purchase intention, and eWOM intention. Self-disclosure was not impactful, nor did product involvement moderate the effects of influencer posts.
<b>Han et al. (2021)</b>	Examines the effects of explicit advertising disclosure on consumers' inference regarding influencers' sincere recommendation intent, and its consequences for consumers' purchase intentions	The persuasion knowledge model (PKM) and reactance theory	Study 1- Consumers are less inclined to purchase products when influencers express explicit advertising disclosures than subtle disclosures. Study 2- These negative effects of advertising disclosure can be caused by consumers' inferences regarding influencers' sincere recommendation intent in posting content (Studies 1 and 2). The negative effect is particularly prominent when an influencer has a large (vs. moderate) number of followers.
<b>Lee and Kim (2021)</b>	Examines the effects of disclosure types (explicit/implicit/no disclosure), influencer credibility (high/low), and brand credibility (high/low) on the effectiveness of Instagram influencer promotional posts. Findings	Brand signaling theory	Findings reveal that highly credible brands featured in Instagram posts positively impact message credibility, attitude toward the ad, purchase intention, and eWOM intention.
<b>Breves et al. (2021)</b>	Analyzes the impact of social media influencers on their respective followers and reports the results of two experiments. First	Parasocial relationship theory	Findings show that follower status (non-followers/followers) affected the strength of the parasocial relationship (PSR), source credibility, and evaluation of a sponsored Instagram post. The second experiment showed that followers, who had established a strong PSR with the influencer, reported lower evaluative persuasion knowledge. Also, followers reported enhanced purchase intentions and brand evaluations, especially when the posts contained advertising disclosures.
<b>Chung and Cho (2017)</b>	To explore the underlying mechanisms through which the use of social media affects endorser effectiveness.	Theories related to parasocial relationships, self-disclosure, and celebrity endorsement.	Results showed that consumers' parasocial interactions with celebrities through social media positively impact celebrity endorsement.

Source: Authors' work

Lee and Kim (2021) found that type of disclosure (explicit vs. implicit vs. no disclosure) did not affect consumers' ad recognition. Also, visible advertising disclosure did not affect consumers' negative attitudes toward the advertising. They don't perceive the message as less credible when lowly credible celebrity posts promotional posts. The

advertising effectiveness posted by a highly credible influencer and by a lowly credible remained the same, representing no difference in the perception of consumers regarding the influencer's credibility. On the other hand, Shouten et al. (2020) found that advertising effectiveness depends on the type of influencer where he distinguishes between celebrity influencers (actors, famous sports players, etc.) and social media influencer who are most often anonymous but became popular on social media networks by representing themselves as experts in branding. In this study, consumers perceive social media influencers as more trustworthy than celebrities and have a more perceived similarity and wishful identification with the influencer. Only attractiveness positively affected purchase intention; however, influencer credibility traits (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness) did not mediate the relation between influencer type and purchase intention. Vogel et al. (2020) analysed how clear sponsorship, ambiguous or no sponsorship disclosure affected perceptions of e-cigarette Instagram influencer posts among young people. Findings indicate that ad recognition increased when the ad was disclosed contrary to ambiguous or not disclosed. Still, the influencer credibility perceptions decreased and their intentions to involve in the posts also decreased. However, this may not affect perceptions or use of e-cigarette products because disclosures did not significantly influence brand attitudes, brand use intentions, or vaping intentions.

In the case of Fink et al. (2020), celebrity credibility enhances purchase intention among consumers by placing sponsorship disclosure of the brand. Also, brand differentiation increases the effect of celebrity credibility on the brand image but, at the same time, diminishes the effect of brand image on purchase intention. Breves et al. (2021) did not find differences in evaluations of the post between followers and non-followers when an ad was not disclosed. However, followers showed higher brand evaluations and purchase intentions when influencers disclosed an advertisement, contrary to the non-followers group. This relates to the fact that follower status (non-followers/followers) affects the parasocial relationship, source credibility, and evaluation of a sponsored post. Weismueller et al. (2020) found that when followers perceive influencers as more credible, a product endorsement will have a greater effect on them, leading to purchase intention.

Further, this study analyses how different disclosure conditions (disclosure statement or disclosure hashtag) affected the credibility of the influencers. However, they found that disclosure statements and disclosure hashtags affect influencers' attractiveness differently. Disclosure statement positively affects influencers' attractiveness, indirectly increasing purchase intention, while hashtag disclosure decreases purchase intention. Authors explain this through transparent communication where followers in statements know that this is paid to advertise perceived as positive. In contrast, hashtag disclosure is perceived as unclear relation between influencers and brands. Contrary to the research of Weissmuller et al. (2020), Han et al. (2021) found when influencers display advertisements, compared to when the advertising disclosures are subtle, then the purchase intention declines.

## Conclusion

Our study aimed to present the significance of influencer credibility in influencer marketing, which has increased significantly in the last decade. Further, we have

focused our search on the effect of advertising disclosure and perceived influencer credibility on purchase intention.

The results indicate that effective product endorsement may depend on the influencer type (celebrities vs. influencers), their credibility traits: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, and that purchase intention may decrease or increase depending on the advertising disclosure in posts. For example, different effects occurred in the two groups (followers and non-followers) when the ad in the post was disclosed. The first group showed higher advertising effectiveness while the latter showed decreased ad effectiveness. Also, when there was a clear disclosure statement, the purchase intention increased, mediated by influencers' credibility traits perceiving the clear statement as transparent rather than unclear. Therefore, followers don't feel manipulated, and influencers' credibility increases.

The trend of cutting costs for traditional advertising and investing in digital marketing (in this case, influencer marketing) increased during the pandemic, and this trend will continue to grow. Overall, incorporating influencers into a marketing strategy will become a regular part of the marketing mix. To make the best of influencer marketing, brand managers must choose which type of influencer would represent their brand in the best light. In this area authenticity of influencers will create added value to product advertisement since there have been studies that followers increasingly look for authenticity in content creation (Kreling et al., 2022) and transparency of posts (Weissmuller et al., 2020) where ad disclosure strategy (depending on the type of disclosure) represents a significant factor in influencers effectiveness which may increase or decrease followers purchase intention.

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## About the authors

Vesna Sesar works as a Lecturer at University North, Croatia. She gained her Ph.D. at the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland in quality management. Her research interests are management and control. The author can be contacted at email: [vesna.sesar@unin.hr](mailto:vesna.sesar@unin.hr)

Ivana Martinčević (Ph.D. in economics) works as an Assistant professor at the University North, Department of Logistics and sustainable mobility. She gained her Ph.D. at the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland. She is the author and co-author of numerous domestic and international professional and scientific articles and has participated in several international conferences. The author can be contacted at [ivana.martincevic@unin.hr](mailto:ivana.martincevic@unin.hr).

Anica Hunjet, Ph.D., is a Full Professor and Vice-Rector for Scientific and Artistic Work and International Collaboration at University North and head of the Department of the International Postgraduate Joint University Doctoral Study "International Economic Relations and Management". She is a member of the Consortium of the International Joint Postgraduate University Doctoral Study "International Economic Relations and Management" and the Joint Doctoral Study of „Educational and Communication Sciences “. Furthermore, she is a member of numerous professional organizations, scientific and international committees, international conferences, and an editorial board of journals. The author can be contacted via email: [anica.hunjet@unin.hr](mailto:anica.hunjet@unin.hr)