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# The Effects of Influencer Marketing on Brand Attitude

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## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of mega-influencers and micro-influencers on consumer trust, brand attitude, and purchase intention within the beauty industry. Methods: A survey of 160 adults was conducted in March 2024, analyzing responses to the influence of a beauty mega-influencer ("Isa Bae") and a micro-influencer ("Day Beauty"). Participants were surveyed online over two weeks, and the data were analyzed using statistical tools to compare the influence of both types of influencers. Results: The results indicated that mega-influencers had a more substantial effect on reliability and brand attitude compared to micro-influencers, although both types of influencers significantly influenced purchase intentions. Influencer attractiveness and expertise emerged as critical factors in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. Conclusion: This study provides insights into optimizing influencer marketing strategies by leveraging the distinct characteristics and scales of influencers to enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty. The findings underscore the importance of choosing the appropriate influencer type to maximize marketing effectiveness and consumer trust in the digital marketing landscape.

**Keywords :** SNS, Product purchase, Brand attitude, Marketing, Influencer

**JEL Classification Code :** M10, M14, M15, M30, M31

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Backgrounds

Recently, social networking services (SNS) are being developed as the spread of the Internet and smart phones is activated. Users form and strengthen online social relations by expanding free communication, information sharing, and various connections within SNS. Recently, millennials with high purchasing power are moving in favor of Instagram

rather than Facebook. As Instagram content has increased significantly, SNS users are affected by the content they are exposed to, and they are actually making purchases, and 34% of those who have experienced brand content have purchased it. According to Kim (2019), companies are actively using Instagram as a promotional channel, with 71% of companies in the U.S. using Instagram and nearly 70% of hashtags related to brands. According to E-marketer's forecast for 2018 Instagram advertising revenue, it expects to earn about \$ 7 billion in revenue, up about 5 billion \$ from

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two years ago. Among them, Instagram's influencer marketing market is expected to grow even larger and is expected to reach 200 million \$ by 2019.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Influencers

With the advent of digital media and the Web 2.0 era, Internet users are able to communicate interactively while participating and sharing open content. With the development of content-focused services such as SNS, consumers are more interested in influencers as they are able to learn before purchasing reviews and reviews of products more easily than in the past. Influencer means a consumer who has more influence on SNS than others, and the content they produce has a great impact on the consumption behavior of followers beyond the promotion of the brand (Cho, 2014). Recently, as MCN (Multi-Channel Network) systematically manages one-person creators, creators play various roles such as production, directing, and information source, and influencer marketing is gaining popularity (Khan et al., 2024). They function to supplement the business that caused the avoidance of advertising with creative ideas. In other words, one-person creators bypass information to provide consumers with necessary information while avoiding fatigue, indirectly providing necessary information to consumers, and voluntarily sharing information in the SNS space (Khan et al., 2024). As a result, fandom for beauty creators who provide beauty content in social media such as YouTube has a significant impact on the purchase of real products (George & Michael, 1993). According to the survey, 84% of high-purchasing millennials hate advertising (McCracken, 1989) and trust user-generated content or word of mouth more than advertising (Jeon, 2010). In addition, according to Atkin and Block's (1983) study, professional information sources have a positive effect on advertising effectiveness in the media because experts in a particular field are perceived to be rich in knowledge and experience and are considered persuasive information. Eight out of 10 consumers get information about products and services from Influencer, according to the Harmoon and Coney (1982). The prospects for the influencer marketing market are expected to grow 2.4 times over the next two years from 2017 to 2019, and companies are aggressively investing in influencer marketing. Therefore, the characteristics of influencers and their credibility can affect the brand attitude and purchase intention of the buyers they advertise, and it is necessary to clarify them in detail as they are receiving attention from the industry recently.

### 2.2. Types of Influencers

Influencer marketing can be classified into mega influencers, macro influencers, micro-influencers, and "nano-influencers" by type of influencer, taking into account cost aspects to achieve efficiency. In this study, we compared the mega-influencers and micro-influencers, and defined the people who have already made their name known to the public, such as entertainers, athletes, and writers, as mega-influencers in the industry. It is easy to say that those who correspond to have millions of fans. Micro influencers have less than 10,000 followers and are relatively easy to communicate with compared to celebrities, so their followers are easily intimidated and loyal. The characteristics of micro-influencers are that they have their own business and marketing is a side job (Jeon, 2010; Kim et al., 2012). In general, when distinguishing influencers, if you have more than 1 million followers, such as celebrities and YouTube stars, you are defined as a mega influencer, and if you have 500 to 10,000 followers, you are defined as a micro influencer (Kailati, 1987). Micro-influencers have the advantage of communicating closely with their high expertise in their field, although their followers are smaller than mega-influencers. Mega Influencers have between 500,000 and 1 million followers, and they are commonly referred to as 'celebrities.' Micro Influencers also have between 1,000 and 100,000 followers and feel more friendly than Mega Influencers (Berscheid & Walster, 1984).

### 2.3. Characteristics of Influencers

Caballero and Solomon (1993) categorized attractiveness and reliability as attributes of the model, attractiveness as psychological attractiveness and physical attractiveness, and reliability as the degree of the possibility that the words of the model are true. Ohanian (1991), Dholakia and Sternthal (1977) categorized attractiveness and credibility as the main attributes of the model, attractiveness as favorability, intimacy and similarity, and credibility as expertise and reliability as important factors. MacKenzie et al. (1986) categorized attractiveness, public confidence, and public power as important attributes of the model, and included attractiveness, familiarity, and similarity of information sources. Dion (1972) categorized it into attractiveness and reliability, and then classified it into similarity, likability, friendliness in attractiveness, and truthfulness and professionalism in reliability. Janis and Kelly (1953) saw professionalism and integrity as important elements of the model, and based on this, they showed higher reliability (Kim, 2010). Attractive consumers are influenced not only by the trust and expertise of the advertising model but also by how attractive the model is, and the higher the attractiveness of the advertising model, the higher the acceptance of the message (Bower & Landreth, 2013). In the end, intimacy, similarity, and likability affect the advertising

effect of attractive models in advertising. Attractiveness is generally influenced by how familiar consumers are with the advertising model, how much they like it, and how similar they feel to themselves (Ahn & Yu, 1999). Here, intimacy can be seen as the degree to which the advertising model is known through exposure, liking is the emotion caused by the physical appearance or behavior of the advertising model, and similarity can be defined as the degree of resemblance between the advertising model and the consumer (Lee, 2015; McCracken, 1989). In traditional social psychology research, people who are rated as attractive have a better life than those who do not, and those who have socially desirable characteristics are rated as attractive (Berschied & Walster, 1978). It also argues that those perceived as attractive to others are judged to be fair and trustworthy and that social benefits accumulate over time (Tedeschi, 1974). Expertise In SNS, consumers judge the influencer's expertise by the quality of the content of the photos and images visible to the influencer, the level of information contained in the content, the number of comments and comments, and finally the number of followers. Consumers are easily persuaded by the message when it is judged that the informativeness of the information source is high (Sohn & Kim, 2017), but when it is judged that the informativeness is low, they show a negative attitude toward the message of the information source (Cho & Jo, 2014). This is because consumers tend to trust and accept the message that the source conveys when they think the source has a wealth of knowledge on a particular topic (Loebnitz & Grunert, 2021). Jarvenpaa et al. (2000) stated that the credibility of an informant influencing communication effectiveness is related not only to authenticity but also to expertise (Kim, 2018). In other words, the higher the reliability of the expertise and experience of the advertising model, the more positive the advertising effect. Expertise has been dealt with in the context of persuasion communication as a characteristic of information sources that affect advertising effectiveness (George & Michael, 1997; Morrow et al., 1990). Expertise refers to the degree to which the recipient perceives that the informant delivering the message can present the correct solution or correct judgment on the subject of the specific message (McCracken, 1989). Or the extent to which a prisoner perceives that an informant has the ability to make a convincing argument (Janis & Kelly, 1953). In other words, the knowledge that seems to be possessed to support the claim of the information source is called expertise, which can be said to be the attribute of the information source recognized by the consumer. In this study, the characteristics of the influencer were defined as attractiveness and expertise among the characteristics of the model. Influencers create content based on their charm and expertise and communicate with consumers to create intimacy and trust. In this regard, the influencer's content on

brands, products, and services will have a greater impact and will affect brand attitude, reliability, and purchase intention. As the marketing market of trustworthy companies has become fierce, they have focused on corporate marketing such as advertising promotion and quality management in order to survive in the market (Jung et al., 2007). This means that the reliability of the product is the most influential factor for consumers to purchase the product, and the need for an advertising model is increasing (Im, 2011). Reliability is defined as a belief in the intention of an entity at a particular time, and consists of reliability and expertise. In other words, the reliability of the product is defined as the belief in the product information that the brand believes that the consumer has the ability to keep the promise (professionalism) and the willingness to keep the promise (reliability) (Erden & Joffre, 2004). In addition, Jarvenpaa et al. (2000) claimed that trust plays a role in promoting purchase intention on the Internet, and cited trust as a success factor in Internet shopping (Kim, 2017). The current mass media is losing confidence in consumers and investment in influencer marketing is actively taking place (Sohn, 2018). In order for the influencer's content to be directly connected to the purchase, the consumer's trust formed by the influencer's attractiveness and expertise must be formed. In this study, we will verify whether the reliability actually affects the purchase intention.

#### **2.4. Brand Attitudes**

Brand image is recognized as the most important factor in product marketing by companies. It is no exaggeration to say that brands are controlled by consumers' loyalty to products, and brands and companies are spurring efforts to improve their brand image (Ahn & Yu, 1999). Various studies have been conducted based on the fact that advertising attitude can affect brand attitude and brand attitude affects purchase intention (MacKenzie et al., 1986; Friedman & Friedman, 1979). In the study of Sung (2002), it was found that the better the brand attitude, the greater the purchase intention, and when the brand attitude is positive, it tends to choose the brand continuously and also acts as a positive factor in the evaluation of the product (Go et al., 2013). According to Harmon and Coney's (1982) study, the higher the credibility of the source, the more positive the brand attitude of the recommended message. Based on these results, depending on the mega-influencer and micro-influencer, it will affect the brand attitude and verify it. 2.4 Purchase intentions Purchase intention is the probability that beliefs and attitudes will be transferred to purchase, and it means the future behavior of planned consumers (Taylor & Baker, 1994). Therefore, the higher the purchase intention, the higher the probability of actual purchase. In other words, the purchase intention of consumers, which means the future

behavior of consumers, can be said to be the possibility that the attitude of belief is made up to purchase. Purchase intention is an important variable in measuring corporate performance by expressing the will to predict future behavior when consumers purchase products (Taylor & Baker, 1994). The intention to purchase is a subjective possibility including the relationship between consumers' behavior and knowledge by acting between consumers' purchasing behavior and purchasing attitude (Oh & Seong, 2018). According to Lee (2010)'s research on the effect of information sources on purchase intention, the types of information sources provided on the Internet were classified into corporate websites, personal blogs, communities, and news sites. Among them, personal blogs were the most positive information sources. In particular, the respondents who had access to blogs and communities showed the most positive responses to the items that they were willing to recommend to others, and news sites had the lowest impact on product purchase intention. These results indicate that there is a difference in purchase intention depending on the type of information source, and it is expected that there will be meaningful differences between Instagram Mega Influencers and Micro Influencers.

### 3. Research Methods

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of characteristics of mega influencers and micro influencers on reliability, brand attitude, and purchase intention. 'Isa Bae' is a beauty creator working in Korea and has about 1 million followers. 'Isa Bae' shows her makeup in real time and gives makeup tips to followers as a makeup expert. In addition, we selected 'Day Beauty' as a micro influencer. 'Day Beauty' is a beauty product influencer with about 11,000 followers and communicates with followers by raising beauty product reviews. Prior to this study, the contents of stimuli (Isabae, Day Beauty) were selected through a preliminary survey, and experimental stimuli were selected and manipulated. In order to minimize the difference of stimuli, the stimuli were selected from the same photos uploaded to the Instagram by Isabae and Day Beauty, and the group survey was conducted by applying the same layout of the Instagram. In order to carry out this study, a survey was conducted through the Internet for two weeks in March 2024, and 160 samples were used for analysis. The survey was conducted on adult men and women to see if there is a difference in reliability, brand attitude, and purchase intention according to the characteristics of influencers.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Results of Study

Cross-tabulation analysis was used to determine whether there is a difference in demographic characteristics according to the demographic characteristics group of the subjects. As a result of analyzing a total of 160 samples, in terms of gender, group A was 7.6% (6) and group B was 13.6% (11); female was 92.4% (73) and group B was 86.4% (70). In terms of age, 91.1% (72 persons) of group A and 69.1% (56 persons) of group B were in the age group of 20-30. In the age group of 30-40, 8.9% (7 persons) of group A and 29.6% (24 persons) of group B were in the age group of 30-40. For ages 50 to 60, group A was 0.0% (0 persons) and group B was 1.2% (one person). For university students, group A was 12.7% (10 students) and group B was 4.9% (four students); group A was 75.9% (60 students) and group B was 79.0% (64 students). In terms of income, the A group (43.0%) and the B group (39.5%) were found to be between 100 and 2 million. In the case of 200~300,000, 41.8%(33) of group A and 27.2%(22) of group B appeared. In the case of 300~400, 11.4%(9) of group A and 23.5%(19) of group B appeared. In 4 million cases, A was 3.8% (3 persons) and B was 9.9% (8 persons).

4.2 Reliability and Feasibility Analysis  
4.2.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Verification

**Table 1:** Characteristics of the Survey Participants

Classification	Type	Unit	Group		Total	χ <sup>2</sup> (p)
			A	B		
Gender	Male	No. of people	6	11	17	1.509 (0.306)
		%	7.6	13.6	10.6	
	Female	No. of people	73	70	143	
		%	92.4	86.4	89.4	
Age (years old)	20~30	No. of people	72	56	128	13.224** (0.001)
		%	91.1	69.1	80.0	
	30~40	No. of people	7	24	31	
		%	8.9	29.6	19.4	

	50-60	No. of people	0	1	1			
		%	0.0	1.2	0.6			
Education	High school graduate	No. of people	5	3	8	5.923 (0.115)		
		%	6.3	3.7	5.0			
	University student	No. of people	10	4	14			
		%	12.7	4.9	8.8			
	University graduate	No. of people	60	64	124			
		%	75.9	79.0	77.5			
	Graduate school or higher	No. of people	4	10	14			
		%	5.1	12.3	8.8			
	Income (Korean Won)	Less than 2 million	No. of people	34	32		66	8.081** (0.044)
			%	43.0	39.5		41.3	
2 million to less than 3 million		No. of people	33	22	66			
		%	41.8	27.2	34.4			
3 million to less than 4 million		No. of people	9	19	28			
		%	11.4	23.5	17.5			
4 million or more		No. of people	3	8	11			
		%	3.8	9.9	6.9			

Note: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents  
 \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01

Factor analysis was conducted excluding questions with low validity and commonality, and the five factors were grouped to simplify the variables. Generally, N minimum value maximum value average standard deviation skewness kurtosis attractiveness 160 1 5 3.18.872 -.331 1.170 specialty 160 1 5 3.23 .902 -.209 .041 reliability 160 1 5 3.01 .788 -.440 .451 brand attitude 160 1 5 3.15 .794 -.587 .395 purchase intention 160 1 5 2.32 .791 .331 -.062 KMO value is judged to be good if it is over 0.7.

**Table 2:** Factor Analysis of Survey Participants by Group

Items	Factors					Cronbach's Alpha	
	Expertise	Attractiveness	Purchase intention	Brand attitude	Trustworthiness		
Expertise 2	.893	.213	.083	.073	.126	.935	
Expertise 1	.840	.278	.041	.151	.143		
Expertise 3	.826	.281	.175	.153	.138		
Expertise 5	.729	.401	.133	.199	.190		
Expertise 4	.686	.380	.127	.106	.312		
Attractiveness 1	.297	.816	.224	.202	.165		.926
Attractiveness 3	.353	.783	.088	.165	.193		
Attractiveness 2	.243	.735	.270	.246	.187		
Attractiveness 4	.418	.692	.132	.296	.131		
Attractiveness 5	.417	.675	.176	.105	.223		
Purchase intention 2	.079	.113	.905	.028	-.052	.874	
Purchase intention 3	.167	.159	.787	.198	.173		
Purchase intention 1	.151	.182	.782	.327	.021		
Purchase intention 4	.014	.154	.720	.236	.354		

Brand attitude 2	.149	.207	.210	.901	.068	.936
Brand attitude 3	.147	.228	.229	.875	.156	
Brand attitude 1	.184	.207	.244	.791	.268	
Trustworthiness 2	.354	.368	.144	.228	.718	.898
Trustworthiness 1	.383	.300	.194	.260	.707	
Trustworthiness 4	.471	.498	.162	.257	.500	
Eigenvalue	4.437	3.967	3.061	2.921	1.879	
Variance	22.185	19.834	15.303	14.604	9.397	
Cumulative variance	22.185	42.019	57.322	71.926	81.323	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .924						
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Chi-Square $\chi^2 = 2919.273$ (df=190, p<0.01)**						

Note: Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Testing

First, in KMO, it is generally judged that 0.7 or more is good. KMO value is 0.924, so it is judged to be good. The Bartlett sphericity test, which determines whether the use of factor analysis is appropriate, is less than 0.05, so the use of factor analysis can be judged to be appropriate. As a result of factor analysis, five factors were found: professionalism, attractiveness, purchase intention, brand attitude, and reliability. It is called Cronbach Alpha Test to find out the possibility of obtaining the same measurement value when repeatedly measuring the same concept. Generally, it can be judged to be reliable if it is 0.6 or more in the paper. First, in terms of professionalism, the reliability value is 0.935, which is very high, and in terms of attractiveness, the reliability value is 0.926, which is very high. In terms of purchase intention, the reliability value is 0.874, showing high reliability, and in terms of brand attitude, the reliability value is 0.936, showing very high reliability. Lastly, when the reliability was examined, the value of reliability was 0.898, showing high reliability.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistics Analysis by Factor

Factors	No. of People	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attractiveness	160	1	5	3.18	.872	-.331	.170
Expertise	160	1	5	3.23	.902	-.209	.041
Trustworthiness	160	1	5	3.01	.788	-.440	.451
Brand attitude	160	1	5	3.15	.794	-.587	.395
Purchase intention	160	1	5	2.32	.791	.331	-.062

**Table 4:** Pearson Correlation Analysis by Factor

Factors	Attractiveness	Expertise	Trustworthiness	Brand attitude	Purchase intention
Attractiveness	1				
Expertise	.744**	1			
Trustworthiness	.769**	.741**	1		
Brand attitude	.552**	.435**	.582**	1	
Purchase intention	.469**	.350**	.462**	.518**	1

Note: \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the correlation of variables. In terms of attractiveness, correlation coefficient was 0.744, showing a statistically significant positive correlation; in terms of attractiveness and reliability, correlation coefficient was 0.769, showing a statistically significant positive correlation. Attractiveness and brand attitude showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.552, and attractiveness and purchase intention showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.469. Professionalism and

reliability showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.741, and professionalism and brand attitude showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.435. Professionalism and purchase intention showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.350, and reliability and brand attitude showed a statistically significant positive correlation coefficient of 0.582. In terms of reliability and purchase intention, the correlation coefficient was 0.462, showing a statistically significant positive correlation.

**Table 5:** Multiple Regression Model Analysis Results of Group B, Part 3

Purchase intention									
Independent variables	B	SE	Beta	t	p	VIF	DW	R <sup>2</sup>	F
(constant)	.370	.317		1.169	.246				17.131**
Attractiveness	.428	.141	.385	3.031	.003**	1.811	1.790	.305	*
Expertise	.237	.140	.215	1.692	.095	1.811			(.002)

Note: \* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01 and R<sup>2</sup>=.287

The model F value is 17.131, which is a statistically significant regression model, and R<sup>2</sup> is high at 30.5%, so it can be said that the explanatory power is good. The variation inflation factor can be determined that there is no multicollinearity problem of more than 1 and less than 10. Since the value of VIF is less than 10, there is no problem in multicollinearity. Since the Durbin-Watson result is close to 2 and the independence condition of the residual is established, there is no abnormality in the variable.

**Table 6:** CHOW test results of Groups A and B, Part 3

Group	Independent variables	Beta	Sum of squares (SS)	DF	Mean square	F	p-value
A	Attractiveness	.429	2.885	3	.962	1.980	.119
	Expertise	-.093	74.792	154	.486		
B	Attractiveness	.385					
	Expertise	.215					

In group A, the influence of attractiveness was 0.429, which was larger than that of group B (0.385). In group A,

the expertise was -0.093, and in group B, the influence of attractiveness was 0.215, which was larger in group B. In the test statistic, the F value is 1.980 and the significance probability is 0.119, so it is not statistically significant difference.

## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1. Conclusions and Discussions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of characteristics of mega-influencers and micro-influencers on reliability, brand attitude and purchase intention. For this purpose, the theoretical backgrounds of the types and characteristics of influencers, reliability, brand attitude, and purchase intention were examined. For the analysis of the study, 'Isabae', a beauty mega influencer, and 'Danal Beauty', a beauty micro influencer, were set as stimuli and a survey was conducted for each group. Groups A and B were surveyed mainly for adult women, and the survey period was about 3 weeks in April 2018. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 23.0 program, and a total of 160 questionnaires were analyzed. The results of the survey are as follows: First, the differences in the effects of characteristics of mega-influencers and micro-influencers on reliability were examined. As a result of the Chow Test analysis, the group A showed a statistically significant difference because the F value was 5.928, although the attractiveness was more influential and the influence of professionalism was less than the group B. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 that mega-influencers will have a more positive effect on reliability than micro-influencers was supported. Second, the difference in the effect of the characteristics of mega-influencers and micro-influencers on brand attitude was examined. As a result of the Chow Test analysis, the group A showed a statistically significant difference because the F value was 12.016, although the attractiveness was more influential and the influence of professionalism was less than the group B.

### 5.2. Discussions and Implications

#### 5.2.1. Academic Implications

The academic implications of this study, which can be obtained through the above research results, are as follows: First, the differences in the influencers' types on reliability and brand attitude were statistically verified. Second, there is a steady progress of research on the influencer's contents, characteristics, and purchase intention among the previous studies related to influencers, but there is no research on the type of influencer, so it is a new approach.

### 5.2.2. Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study are as follows: According to Kim (2008), while conducting interviews with industry experts, it was confirmed that systematic research results were absent compared to the high interest in influencer marketing. With the rapid rise of the influencer marketing market, industry experts believe that the reason for influencer marketing is that intimacy created through the network has a greater impact on the process of purchasing more specific products. (Lee, 2013) Indicators that show the performance and expected performance of influencers include empathy, participation, preference, and interest (Chow, 1960), but there is a lack of research on whether there is a significant difference by dividing the types of influencers. This study will be helpful for marketing considering cost and efficiency by sharing with mega influencer and micro influencer.

### 5.3. Conclusions and Discussions

First, it is difficult for the subjects of this study to generalize the study to women in their 20s and 30s, and it is necessary to conduct research considering various ages. Second, the involvement of products was not considered. In this study, a survey was conducted on women-oriented beauty products, but depending on the involvement of the target product, reliability, brand attitude, and purchase intention may appear differently. Considering these limitations, it is necessary to conduct broader and more specific research in future studies.

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