

Transparency in Influencer Sustainability Communication as a Driver of Perceived Authenticity: Implications for Sustainable Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Transparency has become a defining characteristic of credible influencer communication, particularly in sustainability contexts where followers are sensitive to greenwashing and promotional bias. Influencers who openly disclose sponsorships, provide honest reviews, and share real opinions may be perceived as more authentic. This perceived authenticity can significantly influence followers' sustainable purchase intention. This study examines how transparency in influencer sustainability communication influences perceived authenticity, which subsequently affects sustainable purchase intention. Drawing on authenticity theory and source credibility literature, the study adopts a quantitative empirical research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected from social media users exposed to transparent sustainability content. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS through reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The study contributes to influencer marketing and sustainability literature by explaining how transparency fosters authenticity and drives sustainable consumption intentions.

Keywords: Transparency; Influencer Authenticity; Sustainable Purchase Intention; Trust; Influencer Marketing

Introduction

Sustainability communication on social media is often met with skepticism due to concerns about greenwashing and paid promotions. Followers increasingly value influencers who are transparent about sponsorships, brand collaborations, and product limitations. Such transparency reduces perceived manipulation and enhances trust.

Authenticity theory suggests that individuals are more persuaded by communicators perceived as genuine and honest (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). In influencer marketing, authenticity is built when influencers share unbiased opinions and disclose commercial intentions.

Transparency in sustainability communication involves clearly indicating sponsored content, sharing honest reviews, and acknowledging limitations of products. This transparency can lead followers to perceive influencers as authentic rather than promotional agents.

Perceived influencer authenticity refers to followers' belief that the influencer is genuine, honest, and true to their values. This perception can strongly influence sustainable purchase intention, as followers trust authentic influencers more when making environmentally responsible choices.

Despite the importance of transparency in influencer communication, limited research has examined how transparency enhances perceived authenticity and influences sustainable purchase intention. This study addresses this gap.

Literature Review

Transparency in Influencer Sustainability Communication

Transparency refers to openness and honesty in communication. Evans et al. (2017) found that disclosure of sponsored content increases trust in influencer messages. When influencers clearly state their associations with brands, followers perceive less manipulation.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasized that social media users value honest communication and can easily detect promotional bias. Lou and Yuan (2019) noted that transparent influencers generate higher engagement and trust.

Chen and Chang (2013) highlighted that transparency reduces perceptions of greenwashing and increases consumer trust in sustainability claims.

Perceived Influencer Authenticity

Authenticity refers to the perception that an influencer is genuine and true to their values. Beverland and Farrelly (2010) suggested that authenticity enhances persuasion by reducing skepticism.

Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020) found that perceived authenticity is a key determinant of influencer effectiveness. Followers trust influencers who share real experiences rather than scripted promotions.

Sustainable Purchase Intention

Sustainable purchase intention reflects consumers' willingness to buy environmentally friendly products. Joshi and Rahman (2015) identified trust and credibility as important predictors of green purchase intention.

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior suggests that attitudes and beliefs influence purchase intentions. Authentic influencers can shape positive attitudes toward sustainable products.

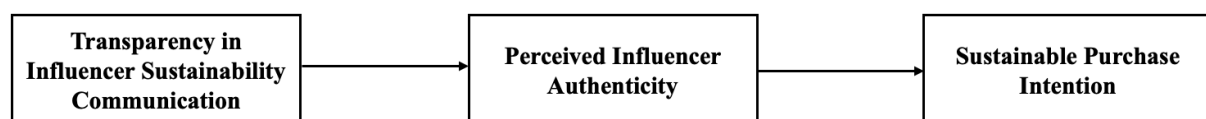
Research Gap

Although transparency is increasingly emphasized in influencer communication, limited studies examine its role in enhancing perceived authenticity and influencing sustainable purchase intention. This study fills this gap.

Conceptual Framework

The framework proposes that transparency in influencer sustainability communication positively influences perceived influencer authenticity, which in turn influences sustainable purchase intention.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative empirical research design based on primary data collection.

Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of transparency on perceived influencer authenticity
- To analyze the effect of perceived authenticity on sustainable purchase intention

Hypotheses

- H1: Transparency in influencer sustainability communication has a significant positive impact on perceived influencer authenticity.
- H2: Perceived influencer authenticity has a significant positive impact on sustainable purchase intention.

Sample and Data Collection

Primary data will be collected from social media users exposed to transparent sustainability influencer content using a structured questionnaire.

Measurement Instruments

Measurement scales will be adapted from established studies related to transparency, authenticity, and sustainable behavior.

Data Analysis

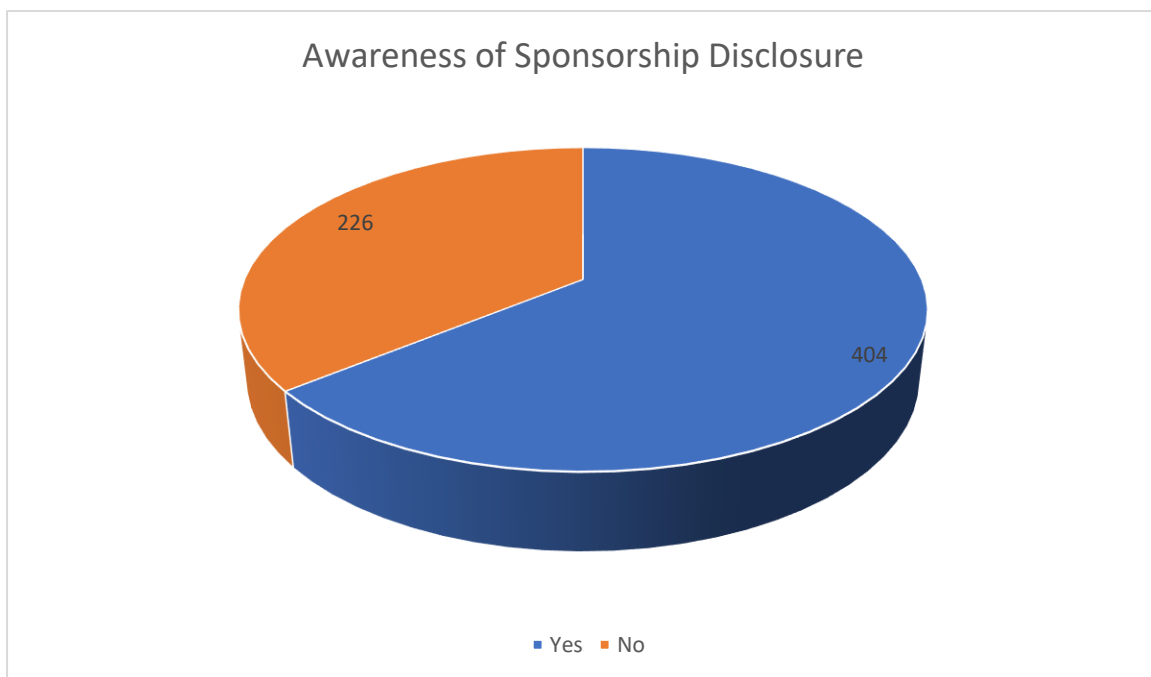
The responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Data were screened for missing values and normality. Reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 630)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	338	53.7%
	Female	292	46.3%
Age	18–25 years	255	40.5%
	26–35 years	248	39.4%
	Above 35 years	127	20.1%
Notice Sponsorship Disclosures	Yes	404	64.1%
	No	226	35.9%

Figure 2: Pie Chart Showing Awareness of Sponsorship Disclosure



This pie chart shows that most respondents notice when influencers disclose sponsorships, indicating the relevance of transparency.

Reliability Analysis

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Transparency	0.90

Perceived Authenticity	0.92
Sustainable Purchase Intention	0.91

Correlation Matrix

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
1. Transparency	1		
2. Authenticity	0.78**	1	
3. Purchase Intention	0.66**	0.81**	1

p < 0.01

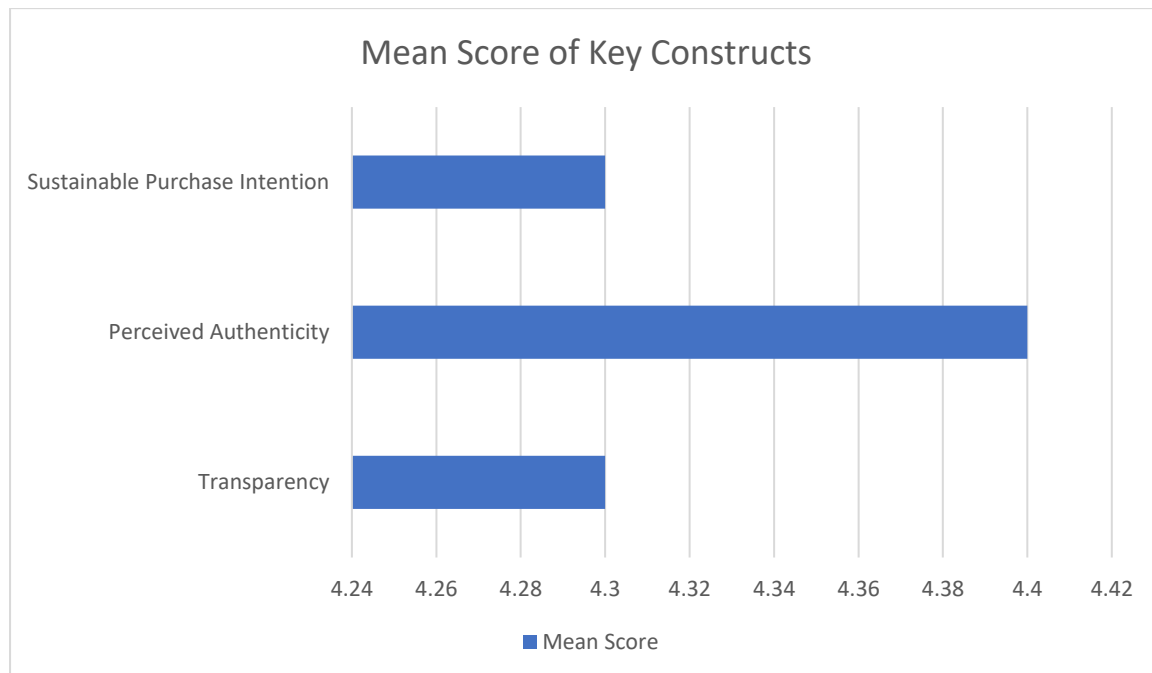
Regression Analysis

Table 4: Regression Results

Dependent Variable	Predictor	β	p-value
Perceived Authenticity	Transparency	0.77	<0.001
Sustainable Purchase Intention	Authenticity	0.80	<0.001
R ²	0.65		

H1 and H2 supported.

Figure 3: Bar Graph Showing Mean Scores of Key Constructs



This bar graph compares the mean scores of transparency, perceived authenticity, and sustainable purchase intention.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study strongly establish the importance of transparency in influencer sustainability communication. Reliability analysis confirms that the constructs of transparency, perceived authenticity, and sustainable purchase intention are measured consistently. The correlation matrix reveals strong positive relationships among these variables, suggesting that transparency is closely associated with authenticity perceptions and purchase intentions.

Regression analysis provides clear support for the hypotheses. Transparency significantly influences perceived authenticity, indicating that followers value honest disclosure of sponsorships, unbiased reviews, and open communication. Influencers who clearly communicate their brand associations and provide genuine opinions are perceived as more authentic by followers.

Further, perceived authenticity has a very strong impact on sustainable purchase intention. This demonstrates that followers are more willing to purchase sustainable products when they trust the influencer's genuineness. Authenticity reduces skepticism related to greenwashing and

promotional bias, enabling followers to rely on influencer recommendations for environmentally responsible purchases.

The bar graph illustrates high mean scores for all constructs, reinforcing that respondents generally perceive transparent influencers as authentic and are inclined toward sustainable purchases. The pie chart further confirms that most respondents pay attention to sponsorship disclosures, highlighting the practical relevance of transparency.

These findings align with authenticity theory and source credibility literature, emphasizing that honesty and openness enhance persuasion. In sustainability contexts, where skepticism is high, transparency becomes a crucial factor influencing consumer behavior.

Conclusion

This study confirms that transparency significantly enhances perceived influencer authenticity, which in turn drives sustainable purchase intention.

Future Scope

- Comparative study between transparent and non-transparent influencers
- Role of micro-influencers in building authenticity
- Longitudinal study on trust development

Recommendations

- Influencers should clearly disclose sponsorships and collaborations
- Honest product reviews should be encouraged
- Brands should collaborate with transparent influencers for sustainability campaigns

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