
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perception of Filipino Skincare Product Users on the Effectiveness of Social Media Influencers vs Celebrity Endorsers as Brand Ambassadors

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| ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the perspectives of females aged 18 to 25 years old who use skincare products residing in Quezon City. To determine which is effective as brand ambassadors in terms of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers, the researchers decided to conduct quantitative research, which was accomplished using structured questions on a Likert scale type of questions that focused on a list of themes and categories. According to the findings, social media is frequently used to learn more about the skincare products they want to buy. It demonstrates that social media was an effective channel for marketing products. In addition, based on the qualities provided in the survey, social media influencers are more effective brand ambassadors than celebrity endorsers. Furthermore, skincare products promoted by social media influencers are preferred purchases in comparison to celebrity-endorsed products.

| KEYWORDS

Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencer, Celebrity Endorser, Skin Care, Brand Ambassadors

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1. Introduction

In this generation, social media influencers and celebrity endorsers have become a marketing platform to assist brands in publicizing and promoting their product offerings. There are numerous benefits that the company may obtain from partnering with content creators and celebrities. According to John and Shyamala (2019), social media influencers are partnered to construct or develop a positive relationship and influence their target audience. Furthermore, an influencer can quickly disseminate information to the intended audience. According to Wagner (2019), social media platforms can also help to boost brand awareness, reputation, or recognition. As a result, social media influencers may benefit both businesses and users. Celebrity endorsement is a lucrative, blooming advertising approach sweeping fashion, cosmetics, food, sports, and many other industries; it is widely portrayed in social media advertisements, as it is the most futuristic advertising instrument in this generation of technology.

Influencer Marketing, in terms of the ability and effectiveness of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers, is not extensively studied in the Philippines. Therefore, this study explores the perspective of females aged 18 to 25 years old residing in Quezon City. Furthermore, skincare brand users in the Philippines are the appropriate ambassador for brands between social media influencers and celebrity endorsers. According to Masory (2019), millennials are leading the trend towards skincare products both by the number of consumers in this age group and their buying behavior. Also, they are frequent buyers of skincare products. At the end of the study, the researchers expect to answer and prove how influencer marketing affects the skincare brands, namely: Snail White, Ponds, Luxe Organix, Belo, Garnier in the Philippines. Furthermore, this would further help the said brands build and utilize celebrity endorsers and social media influencers more effectively as their ambassadors. The researchers chose these brands since they are using both social media influencers and, at the same time, celebrity endorsers. Also, these brands are readily available in the Philippines.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to understand the viewpoints of Filipinas ages 18 to 25 on the effectiveness of social media influencers (SMI) vs celebrity endorsers as skincare brand ambassadors. Influencer marketing is one of the advertising tactics that has attracted the attention of consumers and has a substantial impact on the consumer's purchasing behavior. The study will focus on their demographics, knowledge of the respondents about social media influencers and celebrity endorsers, purchase drivers and attributes of an effective endorser.

2.1 Social Media

Hypothesis 1: **Social media influencers** are more effective as brand ambassadors than celebrity endorsers.

The growth of social media has been increasing worldwide, from how people communicate, interact, and engage. According to Smith (2018), 71% of consumers are more likely to recommend a brand to others, such as their friends and family, if they have a positive experience on social media. According to social media statistics (2019), with 3.2 billion users worldwide, 68% of adults reportedly have a Facebook account. Active social media users consist of 48.2% Baby Boomers, 77.5% Generation X and 90.4% Millennials. Reviews, or an individual's opinion about a product purchased, are commonly seen on social media. Understanding the consumers from the demographic perspective would help marketers establish concrete marketing plans and strategies for the brand.

According to Sanchez (2021), the most popular social media platforms used by Philippine beauty influencers in 2019 are Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

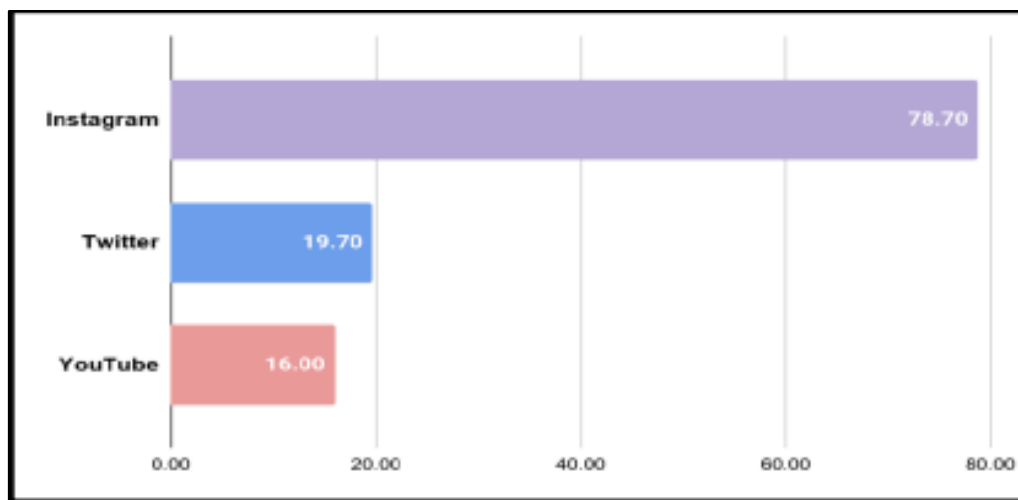


Figure 1. Social media platforms used by Philippine beauty influencers (2019)

a. Instagram

According to Tankovska (2021), *Instagram* is a social media application that allows users to take pictures and videos to edit with a selection of digital filters on the application. Instagram also has a feature of video sharing and Instagram Stories. Additionally, Instagram is one of the most used social media platforms of social media influencers. According to Sanchez (2021), in 2019, 78.7% of the beauty influencers in the Philippines used Instagram. Beauty influencers use Instagram to promote brands and share their personal experience about their use. Moreover, Belanche et al. (2021) stated that greater consumer-product congruence creates a significant impact towards sponsored products by the Instagram social media influencers and has a favourable brand attitude.

b. Twitter

According to Piyawathin (2018), People use Twitter for communicating and for news updates immediately. In addition, they can use hashtags in order to follow updated news and find more information or product reviews from real users. The most engaging content is the hook messages because this platform leads by text and hashtags. As Fricke (2018) stated, Twitter gathers followers and follows joint users or companies whose activities, opinions, or information users are interested in and regularly get notifications.

c. YouTube

YouTube has been one of the popular social media platforms that consistently performs well since 2005. It has been a platform for people to watch videos online in a convenient and easily accessible way. In addition, YouTube is one of the first social media platforms that introduced and connected influencers to brands (Taylor, 2017). Research shows that 16% of the beauty influencers in the Philippines use YouTube. Since YouTube has billions of users, influencers use it to promote their lifestyles and gain more followers (Sanchez, 2021). Lastly, YouTube has grown important as a communication channel, commissioning a more significant proportion of marketing and communications. (Giber et al., 2019).

2.2 Consumer buying behavior influenced by Social Media Influencers (SMI)

Hypothesis 2: Identify well-trusted **brands** that Filipino millennials skincare product users prefer.

Nowadays, businesses and companies usually invite social media influencers, such as bloggers with thousands of followers on their social media accounts, to participate as brand ambassadors based on the tenets of influencer marketing (Tapinfluence, 2017). Social media influencers have been regarded as more reliable, trustworthy, and competent than celebrity endorsement marketing strategy, particularly for businesses that target the younger generations, due to their amiability in building rapport with customers.

According to recent influencer marketing surveys, approximately 50% of brands have increased their budget allocation for recruiting social media influencers to promote their brands (Forbes, 2017). Furthermore, social media influencers are more sincere when offering and explaining the supported product to their fans (Tapinfluence, 2017).

2.3 Attributes of Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsers

Hypothesis 3: The **attributes**; Authenticity, Credibility, Confidence, Engagement, Interactivity, Reach of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers influence Filipino millennials on their purchasing intention.

Influencer marketing is a strategy where businesses promote their brand with social influencers with a large following and strong brand reputation in a particular niche to support the brand, endorse the product, or co-create content to increase brand awareness and drive sales. The case study conducted by Skrba (2021) states that "*Influencing is about connecting, and that is what marketing revolves around today – making us feel connected with the product and people who use/promote that product.*". According to Piyawathin (2018), online influencer marketing is significant for the skincare industry since most people do not believe what the brand says, but they tend to believe people they follow. According to the Linqia survey (Linqia, 2017), 86% of marketers used online influencer marketing as their marketing strategy in 2017, and 92% asserted that it is effective. Furthermore, 39% of marketers planned to increase their budget for influencer marketing in 2018.

However, according to Glucksman (2017), influencers should have the specific characteristics:

a. Influencer Confidence

Brands want influencers who are confident in themselves to promote their goods. When influencers show belief in themselves, it instills trust in the brand. This brand assurance leaves a lasting impression on supporters, prompting them to consider purchasing the product. According to the Influencer Orchestration Network, "51% of marketers believe influencer marketing helps them get sure customers." It is because the partnership started with the influencer's confidence (Glucksman, 2017).

b. Influencer Interactivity

Traditional public relations influencer marketing strategies target audiences across media such as newspapers, television, and radio. Traditional strategies can help raise brand awareness, but they do not always result in a partnership among brands and their customers, as social media influencer marketing does today. Influencers use social video content to promote brand goods and encourage their followers to buy them and try them out for themselves (Glucksman, 2017).

c. Influencer Authenticity

Authenticity is crucial for social media influencers who concentrate on lifestyle branding. Authenticity is a characteristic of an influencer being factual, truthful, and accessible with her followers in this study. Authenticity enables influencers to connect with their fans deeper and helps develop a partnership between brands and their customers. Authentic YouTube content allows influencers to express their thoughts, views, and style with their subscribers, who can then follow in their footsteps (Glucksman, 2017).

2.4 Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsers

Hypothesis 4: **Social media influencers and celebrity endorsers** greatly influence Filipino millennials on buying skincare products

in relation to their perceptions and different marketing strategies.

2.4.1 Social Media Influencer

Social media influencers gained millions of followers on social media sites like Instagram, Youtube, and Instagram. Younger generations, specifically Millennials and Generation Z, are social media influencers' target markets for broadening the reach of brands with which they collaborate. Moreover, Gräve also stated in his study that Managers should give the followers an emphasis on determining the effectiveness of a social media influencer. However, this would not invalidate the metrics of using reach and interaction rate, but it is still an essential metric in evaluating the quality content of social media influencers.

Lastly, the study has concluded that opinion leadership as professional opinion from an individual and parasocial relationship affects a consumer's purchase intention through a personal bond. Moreover, the followers of a social media influencer associate the influence they receive to brand engagement, expected value, and behavioral intention. According to a Nielsen marketing survey, influencer marketing yields and returns on investments are 11 times higher than digital marketing. At the same time, social media influencers play a significant role in driving product engagement and brand loyalty, communicating to a niche segment. At the same time, social media influencers play a significant role in driving product engagement and brand loyalty, communicating to a niche segment. A study analyzed the power of social media influencers to influence consumer attitudes toward brands.

StarNgage (2018) stated that the Pyramid of Influence has three categories: Mega Influencers, Macro-Influencers, And Micro-Influencers.



Figure 2. Pyramid of Influence

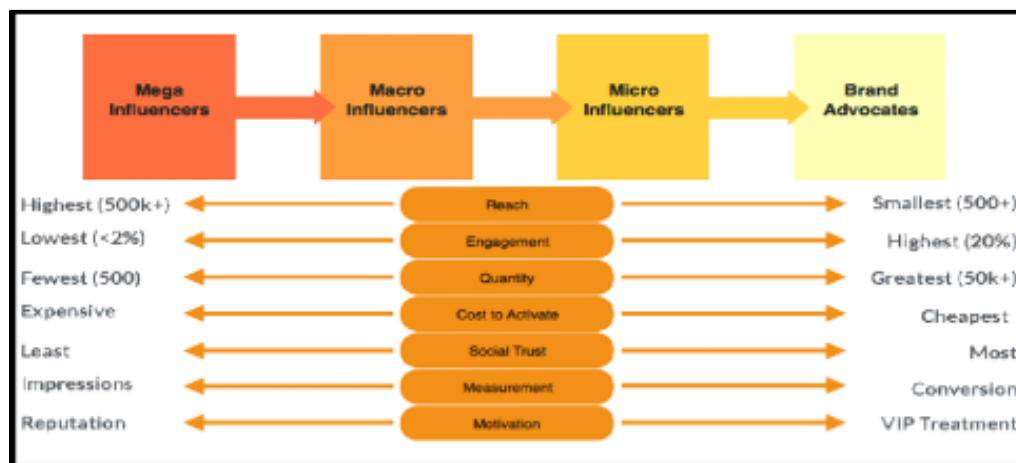


Figure 3. Spectrum of Influencer

a. Mega-Influencers

Mega-influencers have 500k+ followers and engagement rates ranging from 2% to 5% per post. These people have the most significant reach on the influencer spectrum. They are athletes, actors, artists, top models, celebrities and make their influence a secondary source of income.

b. Macro-influencers

Macro-influencers are bloggers with a large following of 50,000 to 500,000 followers who drive 5 to 20% engagement posts. They have the highest topical relevance on the spectrum, with category-specific influences such as lifestyle, fashion, or business.

c. Micro-influencers

Micro-influencers are everyday consumers with 500 to 100,000 followers and drive 25 to 50 percent engagement per post. They are also the people with the highest brand relevance and resonance on the influencer spectrum. Their influence is fueled by their brand experiences and the strength of their networks.

d. Brand Advocates

Brand Advocates are the consumers who are passionate and willing to share but have little influence.

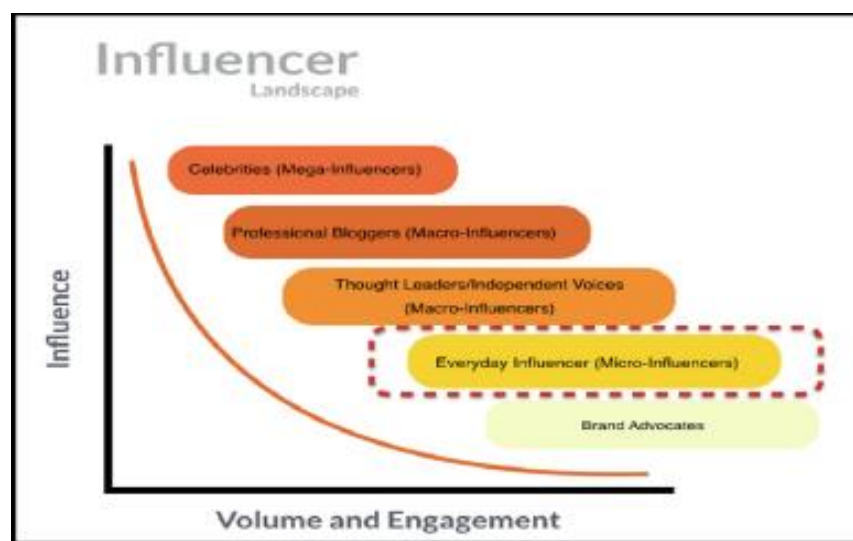


Figure 4. Social Media Influencer Landscape in Philippines (StarNgage, 2018)

Social Media Marketing (SMM) uses social media platforms that engage with an audience to create brand awareness, increase sales, and drive website traffic in this medium. In most cases, social media marketing is done primarily in one of two ways. First is free resources such as brand communities embedded in social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter, where businesses build online communities to connect with their followers (Tuten & Solomon, 2017).

Social media has been a growing trend in the Philippines. One trend is influencer-generated content. Study shows that 78% of consumers prefer brands and companies that deliver custom content instead of outright advertising. (StarNgage, 2017). Additionally, paid advertisements on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are the second practice (Nielsen, 2016). Furthermore, social media marketing is still a relatively new activity. Many aspects need more research and investigation, especially because academic publications have not kept up with the industry's rapid adoption (Barger et al., 2016).

a. Social Media Influencers on the use Instagram

Many influencers use Instagram because it is a fast and easy way to post authentic content. Tagging products Allows curious customers to go straight to the source of the product. The act is an Instagram advertisement, and the agent is the influencer (Glucksman, 2017).

b. Social Media Influencers on the use Youtube

YouTube allows influencers to make and post videos that go deeper into their personal lives. Viewers watch how-to videos, advice videos, and other videos created by social media influencers. Brands are now concentrating their efforts on selling goods based

on experience.

2.4.2 Celebrity Endorser

A celebrity endorser is a type of advertising star who works for a company. Athletes, actors, comedians, and entertainers are examples of celebrities. Hovland, the provision of endorser credibility by consumers' skills (expertise) and trust (belief) (Fitrianto et al. 2021). However, according to Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2019, as it becomes more difficult for firms to differentiate their brands through rational attributes such as quality and dependability, companies are turning to celebrities to help them gain an edge in the market.

3. Methodology

The primary purpose of this paper is to identify the perception of females aged 18 to 25 years old living in Quezon City, Philippines, which is more effective between social media influencers and celebrity endorsers as brand ambassadors. To quantify the perception of the female skincare users towards their baseline on buying skin care products, the researchers decided to use quantitative research as their research design. This study aims to take into consideration the opinions and the perceptions of females regarding the popularity of skincare brands such as Snail White, Ponds, Luxe Organix, Belo, Garnier since the aforementioned brands use social media marketing and brand ambassadors as part of their marketing strategies. Furthermore, to conduct a fair study, the group's main criterion for the mentioned brands will be authenticity in terms of the consumers' purchase intention towards the contents posted on the brands' social media accounts. Quantitative research evaluates data to understand the facts and show the pattern, which involves statistical and mathematical tools to analyze the results. Moreover, the researchers' design will reduce the possibility of bias in the study's results, and it is reliable, precise, easy to measure, and consistent.

4. Results and Discussion

The study mainly focused on Filipino skincare product users' perception of whether social media influencers or celebrity endorsers are more effective as brand ambassadors. The survey respondents are mostly aged 20 to 22 years old, are college undergraduates, and belong to poor households where monthly income is under 10,999 Philippine pesos. The researchers presented five brands in this study; they are chosen specifically since they cater to social media influencers (SMI) and celebrities as endorsers. 22% of the respondents answered that the moisturizer of Snail White is the most popular skincare product of the brand. Moreover, 36% of the respondents said that their facial foam is Ponds' most popular skincare product. Almost half of the respondents (48%) said that the most popular skincare product of Luxe Organix is their soothing gel. The micellar water of Garnier is the most popular skincare product of the brand, which was conveyed by 47% of the respondents. Lastly, Belo's sunscreen was the most popular skincare product of the brand, according to 39% of the respondents. Overall, the famous brand and skincare product is Luxe Organix's soothing gel, followed by Garnier's micellar water, Belo's sunscreen, Ponds' facial foam, and snail white's moisturizer.

The second section discussed the respondents' knowledge between the social media influencers and celebrity endorsers. 95.4% of the respondents use social media to get information on skincare products. Moreover, about 90.8% follow a social media influencer and a celebrity in social media. The researchers identified three terms to summarize the respondents' knowledge about social media influencers and celebrity endorsers: Superfans, Conscious, and Oblivious. Superfans are the respondents who are highly knowledgeable of the two endorsers. Conscious, who is somewhat familiar. Oblivious who are not aware between social media influencers and celebrity endorsers. Results show that 94.36% of the respondents are superfans, 5.13% are conscious, and 0.51% are oblivious.

The profile plot on the effectiveness of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers as brand ambassadors can be seen in Figure 8 of the study. The qualities of an effective endorser, namely Authenticity, Confidence, Credibility, Engagement, Interaction, and Reach, are based on the analysis of Glucksman (2017). The study results show a vast difference between the authenticity and credibility of a social media influencer and a celebrity endorser. The graph trend indicates that social media influencers have higher authenticity and credibility than celebrity endorsers. Profile analysis is a multivariate technique used in situations where a collection of attributes is administered to 2 or more groups of subjects, in this case, social media influencers and celebrity endorsers (Johnson & Wichern, 2002). Results show that the null hypothesis is rejected since all the multivariate tests are less than 0.05. Therefore, we can see an interaction between the attributes of effective brand ambassadors and the type of endorsers.

Bonferroni method is used to calculate the 95% simultaneous confidence interval for the attributes of an effective brand ambassador. The lower and upper intervals should show both positive results to show the confidence level. Results show that Authenticity and Credibility are only the two factors that indicate a significant difference. However, there is no significant difference between the level of confidence, engagement, interaction, and reach between social media influencers and celebrity endorsers, respectively. Another reference for this is Figure 8, which shows an overview of the attributes through the profile plot. According to the findings, respondents believe that social media influencers are more effective brand ambassadors. Lastly, 60% of the

respondents prefer to buy skincare products endorsed by social media influencers, while only 8% said they like products endorsed by celebrities. Furthermore, approximately 32% of the respondents have no preference for the skincare product's brand ambassador.

5. Conclusion

The researchers have concluded that social media influencers are more effective than celebrities as brand ambassadors based on the survey results. Social media has a significant impact on today's advertising since everyone has a social media account, and most people rely on social media to purchase products. Based on the study conducted by Glucksman (2017), only two attributes show a significant difference between social media influencers and celebrity endorsers, namely: Authenticity and Credibility.

This will be beneficial to Skin Care brand owners on how they find the exemplary ambassadors for their product because they will understand the point of view of their consumers and how it affects their purchasing behavior. Skincare brand owners can expand their marketing strategies because of this study since using ambassadors can effectively reach their target audience. With a clear understanding of how influencer marketing can accelerate their online goals, they can commit to implementing their promotion quickly to experience these results in their business.

As marketing majors, it can significantly contribute to the success of this study through the different professional courses that marketers are taking. Aspiring ambassadors will also benefit from this study as they know the qualifications that brands will establish for their brand ambassadors. Lastly, this study will help future researchers that would use this study as a reference.

Future studies can focus on other age groups, brands, and a more comprehensive range of places to study and expand to foreign countries. This study will significantly help other researchers determine the credibility of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers. When this study is conducted, we can see Filipina skincare product users' changing perception of how social media influencers affect their purchasing behavior. Moreover, expanding the study in a foreign country will help future researchers better understand whether authenticity and credibility affect foreigners in their perception of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers.

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