



The Impact of Exaggerated and Deceptive Influencer Advertising and Influencer Attractiveness on Consumer Purchase Intentions



Abartılı ve Aldatıcı Influencer Reklamlarının ve Influencer Çekiciliğinin Tüketici Satın Alma Niyetleri Üzerindeki Etkisi

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Abstract

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Influencer marketing is a growing trend where companies hire social media influencers to promote their brands through paid content. Influencers create engaging posts and interact with their followers to share personal experiences. However, consumers have expressed concerns about the potential negative effects of these promotions. Focusing on the negative aspects of influencer marketing, this study illustrates how followers perceive the misleading techniques used by influencers. This research aims to see how influencer appeal affects consumers' purchase intentions in exaggerated advertising generated by influencers. The data was gathered through an online survey. Three hundred eighty-eight valid responses were received from active Instagram users. SPSS and AMOS programs were utilized to assess the data and examine hypotheses. This study finds that deceptive adverts made by influencers negatively affect their attractiveness and significantly reduce purchase intentions. In contrast, exaggerated advertisements do not affect purchase intention. As expected, influencers' attractiveness is positively related to purchase intention. These findings emphasise the importance of ethical advertising practices in influencer campaigns.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, purchase intention, deceptive ads., consumer behaviors.

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Influencer pazarlaması, şirketlerin ücretli içerik yoluyla markalarını tanıtmaları için sosyal medya influencer'larını işe aldıkları ve giderek büyüyen bir trenddir. Influencer'lar ilgi çekici paylaşımlar yaratmakta ve kişisel deneyimlerini paylaşmak için takipçileriyle etkileşime geçmektedir. Ancak tüketiciler bu promosyonların potansiyel olumsuz etkileri konusunda endişelerini dile getirmektedir. Influencer pazarlamasının olumsuz yönlerine odaklanan bu çalışma, takipçilerin influencerların yanıltıcı tekniklerini nasıl algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Çalışmanın amacı, influencerlar tarafından oluşturulan abartılı reklamlarda influencer çekiciliğinin müşterilerin satın alma niyetlerini nasıl etkilediğini öğrenmektir. Veriler çevrimiçi bir anket ile elde edilmiştir. Ankete aktif Instagram kullanıcılarından 388 geçerli yanıt gelmiştir. Veriler SPSS ve AMOS yazılımları ile değerlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, influencerlar tarafından yapılan aldatıcı reklamların çekiciliklerini olumsuz etkilediğini ve satın alma niyetlerini önemli ölçüde azalttığını ortaya koymaktadır. Buna karşın, abartılı reklamlar satın alma niyetini etkilememektedir. Beklendiği üzere, influencer'ların çekiciliği satın alma niyeti ile pozitif yönde bağlantılıdır. Bu bulgular, influencer kampanyalarında etik reklam uygulamalarının önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Influencer pazarlaması, satın alma niyeti, aldatıcı reklamlar, tüketici davranışları.

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1. Introduction

An influencer is defined as an individual who produces content that is perceived as interesting, gains a considerable following on social media, and uses that following to influence the opinions of their followers. This is achieved by the posting of content on social media platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Influencer marketing is defined as the activities carried out on social media by influencers who include brand-related content in their posts in return for various types of direct/indirect monetary remuneration and establish an interactive, reciprocal relationship with their followers (Campbell and Farrell, 2020; Lou, 2022; Shen et al., 2022;). An increasing proportion of advertising funds are being allocated by businesses to influencer marketing, which involves advocating a portion of their products and services. They use it as compensation for social media influencers (Taillon et al., 2020). Influencers attempt to build close relationships in return by sharing posts about their personal lives, answering questions from followers, or attempting to boost interaction by projecting that image to their followers. Influencers have the capacity to disseminate information to their followers regarding a multitude of products and services, including options for selection. The implementation of techniques such as gamification and sweepstakes enables the dissemination of content in an engaging manner, thereby enhancing the user experience. (Campbell and Farrell, 2020).

Even though influencer marketing has grown in popularity recently, there are negatives to the practice. Deceitful marketing techniques have more and better potential to spread online because of the rise of influencer marketing and social media. Concern over influencer advertising's possible negative effects on consumers is growing. Sponsored posts highlight the unique appeal of influencers in the context of influencer marketing and seek to translate that appeal to the product (Shen et al., 2022). However, consumers can view influencer marketing as deceptive and phony, which could harm the campaign's efficacy. Studies reveal that when deceptive advertising strategies are employed, consumers start to question the efficacy of promotional initiatives. It is frequently noted that the development of defensive judgments results from consumer mistrust caused by misleading or deceptive actions (Darke and Ritchie, 2007).

The research on influencer marketing is still in its preliminary stages (Shen et al., 2022). The majority of research in this field concentrates on the following areas: influencers' popularity and trust (De Veirman et al., 2017; De Veirman and Hudders, 2020), social and physical attractiveness (Yap and Ismail, 2022), Previous research has focused on follower interaction, similarity (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Taillon et al., 2020; Naderer et al., 2021), and purchasing tendency (Taillon et al., 2020). It is evident that most previous research has focused on the benefits of influencer marketing. While influencer marketing has been the subject of numerous other studies, this one seeks to highlight its drawbacks as well. It explores how followers perceive the deceptive tactics used by influencers, particularly in situations where they engage in misleading advertising practices. The study seeks to understand how the attractiveness of influencers affects consumers' intention to purchase products promoted through exaggerated advertisements. The research will examine perceived exaggeration and perceived deception as key variables in measuring the impact of exaggerated advertisements. While exaggerated statements in advertising can initially attract attention, if the product or service does not match the exaggeration, it can ultimately harm the brand's reputation. This highlights the potential detrimental effects of perceived exaggeration and dishonesty in influencer-led advertisements. Perceived deception refers to a consumer's belief that a marketer is trying to mislead them through any advertising, while perceived hyperbole involves using subjective, superior, or exaggerated ideas to praise the product being marketed. According to Riquelme and Román (2014), the use of deceptive advertising tactics and how consumers perceive them can lead to negative perceptions of the advertisement and a reduction in its persuasive power. These responses can, therefore, significantly decrease the overall efficacy of marketing communication techniques and result in major issues for marketers, such as loss of business and image.

The focus of this research on a younger age group is a further indication of its originality. As influencer marketing represents a highly lucrative approach to reaching young people (Boerman and Van Reijmersdal, 2020), the target audience of the research was selected as young followers. Young followers are sensitive and vulnerable to the impacts of unwanted advertising due to their underdeveloped advertising literacy, which hinders their ability to reflect on persuasive advertising activities critically (Hudders and Lou, 2023). Research into how teenagers and children react to influencer marketing is limited (De Veirman et al., 2019).

This research aims to address these research questions in order to fill the existing gaps;

1. How do perceived exaggeration and perceived deception affect purchase intention?
2. How do perceived exaggeration and perceived deception affect influencer attractiveness?
3. How does influencer appeal influence the relationship between perceived exaggeration, perceived deception, and purchase intention?

The present article is structured as follows: The initial step involved a comprehensive review of literature pertinent to the subject matter. Secondly, hypotheses were formulated using the relevant literature as a point of reference. Subsequently, the methodology employed in the study is outlined. The results of the study are presented in tables. In conclusion, both the theoretical and practical aspects are addressed, and the study's results are compared with existing literature. The study concludes with recommendations for further research and limitations.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical framework of this research is outlined in relation to influencer marketing, influencer attractiveness, and deceptive and exaggerated advertising.

2.1. Influencer Marketing

Influencers are users with a large number of followers on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok (Kim and Park, 2023). They often collaborate with companies to create sponsored content that showcases the companies' products or services. According to Alboqami (2023), this type of advertising is evolving into a multi-layered strategy that involves interactions between brands and customers, influencers and consumers, and companies and consumers.

It is a marketing strategy carried out through influential people who can establish a special bond between a business and its target audience, who can recommend products, services, or brands on social media platforms and reach new consumers. Using their fan bases as leverage, brands combine with these individuals to transform influential people into product endorsers (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). Brown and Hayes (2008) underline the necessity of finding and connecting with key influencers who can have a substantial impact on purchasing decisions. Researchers highlight how influencers may establish credibility and trust with their followers, which makes them excellent brand collaborators. Dajah (2020) discusses the many strategies used by influencers to market items, including affiliate marketing and giveaways. In summary, influencer marketing is an effective strategy for product promotion on digital platforms, audience attitude shaping, and brand loyalty. It is also a crucial part of word-of-mouth and social media marketing campaigns. Given its impact on consumer behavior and purchase intention, influencer marketing has attracted significant attention. A review of the literature on the analysis of social media influencers is presented below.

In their research, Ooi et al. (2023) explore how gender moderates the relationship between source credibility theory, interaction theory, and consumer attitudes toward final purchase decisions. Additionally, it is observed that gender plays a crucial role in the connection between influencer credibility and product/service attitude, with men exhibiting a more pronounced influence.

Nadanyiova et al. (2020) demonstrate the considerable impact of influencer marketing on consumer behaviors, especially among younger groups.

Sesar et al. (2022) highlighted the significance of advertising transparency and influencer credibility in influencer marketing, examining their influence on purchase intention. According to Lou et al. (2019) in an examination of Instagram campaigns from leading US fashion brands, influencer-created had a higher user engagement rate than brand-created ads. Influencers' shared and emphasized content may pique the interest of consumers. Similar to this, Weismueller et al. (2020) provided useful information on customer buy intention and marketing strategy by analyzing the effectiveness of source credibility and advertising transparency in influencer marketing. Furthermore, in their study on the impact of product difference and follower count on brand attitudes in influencer marketing, De Veirman et al. (2017) emphasized the significance of these factors in shaping consumer attitudes and brand perceptions. This illustrates how these elements interact in influencer marketing, aligning with the findings of Sesar et al. (2022) and Weismueller et al. (2020) regarding the influence of advertising disclosure and influencer credibility on customer purchase intention.

In summary, a great deal of research has been done on influencer marketing in the literature, with particular attention paid to elements like product differentiation, follower count, advertising transparency, and influencer credibility, all of which are significant determinants of consumer behavior and brand perceptions. The scholarly literature offers significant perspectives for marketers and industry professionals to formulate efficacious influencer marketing tactics and augment customer involvement.

2.2. Influencer Attractiveness

Nunes et al. (2018) define attractiveness as a collection of favorable implications that belong to individuals based on their physical, psychological, and personality traits. Perceived attractiveness among followers can foster strong connections, leading to increased engagement, shares, and content reach. Several factors contribute to an influencer's attractiveness and ability to attract a loyal following.

Research highlights that attractiveness significantly influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2021) claim that trustworthiness is the crucial factor for an influencer's success, followed by attractiveness. This is consistent with the findings of Chawla et al. (1994), which indicated that physical attractiveness plays a role in the endorsement process, with attractive individuals being perceived more favorably. Widyanto and Agusti (2020) highlight the significant impact of attractiveness and persuasion skills on purchase intention, particularly in the digital realm of beauty influencers. Collectively, these results highlight the importance of appeal in consumer behavior.

Some influencers may engage in puffery to enhance the appeal or persuasiveness of their content without providing any supporting data or disclaimers. It is not uncommon for influencers on social media to disseminate false or misleading information in their marketing campaigns when endorsing products or services. To illustrate, an influencer may assert, without offering any substantiating evidence or comparisons, that a product is the most optimal solution for a specific issue or that it is the most utilized product by celebrities. In such cases, the influencer's persuasive power relies heavily on how consumers perceive their attractiveness. A person's subjective attitudes can be influenced through persuasion, and the attractiveness of the source enhances this effect, as per the source attractiveness model. In some cases, a source's attractiveness is linked to an increase in communication effectiveness (Alboqami, 2023; Frank and Mitsumoto, 2023).

2.3. Exaggerated and Deceptive Advertisements

Advertisements are beneficial because they give consumers the specific information they need to evaluate products with accuracy. Positive parts of advertising do exist, though, such as encouraging participation in socially beneficial activities (i.e., environmental protection) and discouraging engagement in dangerous habits (i.e., drunk driving). Nevertheless, advertising is not without its disadvantages. For example, consumers may be misled and confused, resulting in the provision of inaccurate information. This is concerning as advertising can have a significant impact on consumer behavior, both positively and negatively (Davis, 1994). Consumers can recognize exaggerated promises as less believable, but that does not mean exposure to them will result in lower brand ratings (Cowley, 2006). Additionally, erroneous ideas can be created, and customer behavior can be influenced by deceptive advertising promises, especially those that suggest unrealistically high brand attribute performance (Burke et al., 1988).

Research has shown that deceptive advertising, including exaggerated claims, can significantly influence consumer beliefs and behavior (Darke and Ritchie, 2007; Gupta, 2023). The findings of Darke and Ritchie's (2007) study showed that deceitful advertising increases customer mistrust. These findings highlight the need for stricter regulations and increased consumer awareness to confront the negative effects of exaggerated and deceptive advertisements. Some social media users may prioritize convenience over caution, making them vulnerable to false rumors or hoaxes aimed at influencing their decision-making and behavior (Rubin, 2017). It is difficult to determine whether deceptive inflated advertisements are real or not. Consumers' skills, experience, and understanding of persuasion all play a role in their capacity to recognize deceit and puffery. Persuasion knowledge is the ability to recognize an agent's attempts at persuasion (Huang et al., 2023). Conversely, some consumers might not give the deceptive offer enough thought and wind up being deceived without even realizing it (Riquelme and Román, 2014).

Overall, the perception of deception is a complicated construct influenced by a variety of environmental, cultural, and personal factors. Understanding the influence of perceived exaggeration and deceit on decision-making, relationships, and customer behavior necessitates knowledge of these effects. For example, cultural and religious components have been proven to influence how consumers perceive deceit; idealism and deception have a good relationship, but egoism and deception have a negative correlation (Agag and El-Masry, 2016). According to Riquelme and Román (2014), not all consumers are equally receptive to deception, nor do all manipulation techniques have the same potential for deception. For instance, there is no deception if consumers reject and do not believe a claim made in the material that is clearly exaggerated or so ambiguous that they cannot trust it. This is because the deceptive attempt is unsuccessful in swaying the consumers' decision to buy. Furthermore, self-control and emotional regulation skills might serve as motivating cues that affect people's perceptions of deception (Wu et al., 2017).

3. Development of Hypotheses

There is no doubt that influencers and social media can reach a wide range of consumers globally. It is undeniable that social media influencers play a growing role in influencing consumers' buying choices; however, the prevalence of dishonest marketing and misinformation online poses a significant problem for shoppers (Kariyawasam and Wigley, 2017). Influencer marketing, while effective, presents significant challenges in terms of transparency and consumer protection. Ducato (2020) highlights the potential for deception in influencer advertising. Gürkaynak et al. (2018) address the following issues: how will consumers determine whether influencers are paid by brands to promote their products or if they actually use the product when creating content about it on social media sites such as Instagram? Is the influencer truly posting about this product because of this type of relationship? In actuality, puffery and other deceptive tactics are simpler to execute online than they are through conventional media, as it is not difficult to appear credible.

Online influencer reviews are a type of consumer information that is becoming increasingly important in online markets and, in general, influencing consumers' product understanding and purchasing decisions. According to Rao (2021), deceptive advertising methods can be damaging if they encourage consumers to engage in activities they would not normally do (e.g., purchase a low-quality product). Positive responses to false advertising can result in financial and emotional losses (Sheehan, 2013). According to Ukaegbu (2020), deceptive advertising has a negative long-term influence on consumer demand and loyalty. Ullah and Hussain (2015) also noted that consumers' purchasing intentions are negatively impacted by misleading information and advertising. According to Alqaysi and Zahari (2022), deceptive marketing techniques like brand deception can have a negative effect on consumers' perceptions of brands, which in turn can affect their propensity to make purchases. A celebrity does not necessarily utilize or think well of a product or service just because they endorse it. Consumers typically decide to purchase based on their perception of such recommendations (Baltezarević, 2023). Molina (2022) highlights the significant role that both companies and influencers can play in deceiving consumers during the purchasing process. It is essential to be aware of such deceptive tactics to make informed decisions while buying products or services.

Influencers may employ immoral strategies, such as lying, in an effort to convince consumers. In particular, perceived deceit decreases purchase intent and fosters a negative attitude toward the brand. People's beliefs and behaviors are significantly impacted by what they perceive as falsehoods and hyperbole. Studies suggest that perceived deception can result in various effects. These impacts consist of decreasing satisfaction scores (Timmerman and Piqueras-Fiszman, 2019), changing opinions about progress (Afzal et al., 2021), and impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty intentions in e-commerce (Román, 2010). In addition, it raises questions and skepticism and lowers customer trust in the brand (Darke and Ritchie, 2007).

Based on all this, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Perceived exaggeration has a significant and negative effect on purchase intention.

H₂: Perceived deception has a significant and negative effect on purchase intention.

The effectiveness of an advertisement is largely dependent on the credibility of the influencer endorsing it (Lee and Kim, 2020). According to Cheung et al. (2009), when consumers perceive promoted products as false and invalid, it is not only their view of the business but also the celebrity endorser. The findings of this study indicate that consumers' perception of an influencer's attractiveness is negatively influenced when they encounter a deceptive and exaggerated product review.

H₃: Perceived exaggeration has a significant and negative effect on influencer attractiveness.

H₄: Perceived deception has a significant and negative effect on influencer attractiveness.

The Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985) posits that an attractive source can affect a person's subjective attitudes and increase persuasion. In a study conducted by Chekima et al. (2020), it was found that influencers with attractive qualities are perceived to have desirable personalities and characteristics by their followers. Additionally, these influencers are more effective in persuading and influencing the opinions of their followers, leading to a positive perception of the product and increased intent to purchase. According to Baltezarević et al. (2022), influencers significantly impact consumer decision-making in the digital environment due to their perceived credibility and competence in a specific subject. Torres et al. (2019) claim that the attractiveness of digital influencers can greatly impact consumers' intentions to make purchases. Lou and Yuan (2019) found that an influencer's perceived attractiveness in sponsored content positively influences their followers' trust, leading to increased purchase intentions. Improving the source of a message can increase the chances of its recipients taking action. This is because people are mainly influenced by the source and content of the message. If consumers admire and respect a celebrity who endorses a product, they

are more likely to buy it. Therefore, making the source more attractive can make the message more effective and persuade the recipient to take action (Kim and Park, 2023).

Based on all this, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H₅: Influencer attractiveness has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention.

Figure 1 shows the research model, which presents the conceptual framework and illustrates the research variables.

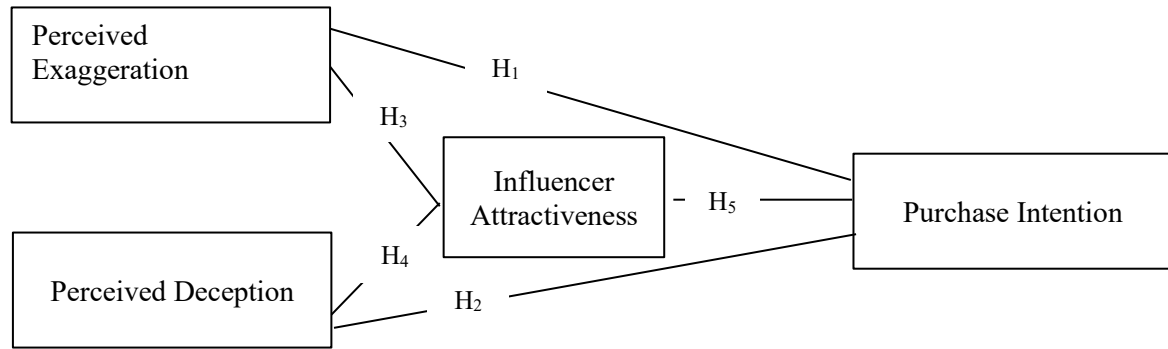


Figure 1. Research Model

4. Method

This study aims to understand the dark side of influencer marketing, with a particular focus on instances in which online influencers use deceptive promotional techniques. The purpose of the study is to discover how influencer attractiveness affects consumer intentions to buy after seeing exaggerated influencer marketing. The study incorporates factors for perceived exaggeration and perceived deceit to measure exaggerated advertising. In order to comprehend the viewpoint of consumers regarding social media influencers and their influence on purchasing behavior, a quantitative research approach was selected for this study. With the use of a survey, research hypotheses were effectively tested, and the necessary data was obtained to verify them.

The data for this study were gathered through an online survey that was conducted between January 2024 and April 2024, spanning a duration of approximately four months. The survey was conducted among young people who use Instagram. It was aimed at youth who regularly follow influencers on Instagram. Influencers now favor Instagram more than other media platforms due to its strong visual component (Kim and Park, 2023). There is limited research on how young people react to influencer marketing (De Veirman et al., 2019). The most recent statistics from January 2023 indicate that India currently has the highest number of Instagram users in the world, with a total of 229 million active accounts. The United States and Brazil follow closely with 143 million users and 113 million users respectively. Indonesia, Turkey, and Japan occupy the fourth, fifth, and sixth positions with 89.15 million, 48.65 million, and 45.7 million users respectively. As for the age distribution, around 31 percent of the global Instagram audience falls under the 18-24 age group, while 30.3 percent of users are aged between 25 and 34. The 35-44 age group constitutes 15.7 percent of users (Statista Research Development, 2023). Based on this information, it was determined that the research questionnaire should be distributed to Instagram users between the ages of 18 and 25. A total of 415 responses were collected through convenience sampling; 27 were excluded. Using this sampling approach allowed the researcher to reach participants for the experiment easily. This method of sampling allowed for the effective and successful recruitment of a wide range of experiment participants.

The survey consists of four sections. The first section collects demographic data, the second section focuses on consumers' perceptions of social media influencers, the third section examines purchase intentions, and the final section includes statements related to the perception of exaggeration and deception in influencer advertising. The research survey was developed by using scales that were previously validated and reliable in other studies. The questions for determining purchase intention, perceived exaggeration, and deception were taken from the research of Amyx and Lumpkin (2016), while the questions for determining influencer attractiveness were taken from the study of Kim and Park (2023). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items to which respondents had to answer using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = totally disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4=agree, 5= totally agree). The items are given in Table 1.

To ensure compliance with ethical rules for this study, ethics committee approval was obtained from the Çankırı Karatekin University Ethics Committee with the decision dated 20-12-2023 and numbered 37. In this study, a model was developed to analyze the research variables examined in the literature review.

Table 1. Variables and Items of This Study

Variable	Items
Purchase Intention (Amyx and Lumpkin, 2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I am very interested in buying the product that the influencer is promoting.2. I will buy the product the influencer is promoting when I need it in the future.3. I will certainly buy the product the influencer is promoting in the future.4. Suppose a friend called you last night and asked for your advice on a product search. Would you recommend her to buy the product this influencer is promoting?
Perceived Exaggeration (Amyx and Lumpkin, 2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advertising by this influencer is exaggerated.2. The advertisement made by this influencer is exaggerated to the extent that it changes reality.3. The advertisement made by this influencer embellishes and magnifies the truth.
Perceived Deception (Amyx and Lumpkin, 2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The advertising made by this influencer is honest.2. Advertising by this influencer is misleading.3. Advertising by this influencer is realistic. (reverse-encoded expression)
Influencer Attractiveness (Kim and Park, 2023)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I think the influencer (social media phenomenon) I follow is quite beautiful.2. I find the influencer I follow physically attractive.3. The influencer I follow looks nice.4. The influencer I follow looks very stylish.5. The influencer I follow looks striking.6. I think I could make friends with the influencers I follow.7. The influencer I follow looks like me.8. The influencer I follow seems to share my values.9. The influencer I follow seems to act like me.10. The influencer I follow seems to have ideas and behaviors similar to mine.

4.1. Data Analysis

It was used to evaluate the data using statistical package tools (SPSS and AMOS). Using the AMOS package application, the structural model between the research variables was examined. First, confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess each construct's validity and reliability (CFA). The suggested research model was then put to the test using structural equation modeling.

5. Findings

This section first presents statistics on the demographic data of the participants. Then, the evaluation of the measurement model is conducted, after which the evaluation of the structural model is undertaken.

5.1. Participants

Table 2 provides details regarding the research participants' demographic characteristics. As seen in Table 2, the majority of the participants in the research are female participants (62%), and 73% of the participants are influencer followers. However, the majority of participants (62.4%) have never purchased any product or service recommended by influencers.

Table 2. Sample Demographics

Variables		N	%
Gender	Woman	240	61.9
	Male	148	38.1
Are there any influencers she/he follows?	Yes	284	73.2
	No	104	26.8
Having previously purchased a product or service recommended by an influencer (social media influencer)	Yes	146	37.6
	No	242	62.4
			n= 388

5.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

Items were checked for distribution before analysis. All items had acceptable skewness and kurtosis values between ± 2.0 , indicating a normal distribution (George and Mallery, 2012). Since the scales used in the study were tested for validity and reliability in previous studies, confirmatory factor analysis was used for validity.

According to the standardized values analysis, the latent variables' factor loadings ranged between 0.601 and 0.901. (Influencer attraction items 6, 7, 8, and 9, as well as perceived deception items 2, were excluded from the analysis because their factor loadings were less than 0.6. Thus, the analysis continued with six items on influencer attraction and two items on perceived deception) (Table 3).

Table 3. Factor Loads

Variables	Item	Factor Load
Exaggeration (Mean: 3,310 Std:1,075)	Ex1	0.861
	Ex2	0.921
	Ex3	0.777
Deception (Mean: 3,310 Std: 0,952)	De1	0.862
	De3	0.895
Attractiveness (Mean: 3,137 Std: 1,015)	At1	0.800
	At2	0.862
	At3	0.888
	At4	0.875
	At5	0.879
	At10	0.608
Intention (Mean: 2,860 Std: 0,986)	In1	0.794
	In2	0.850
	In3	0.825
	In4	0.797

All the items in the study were found to have a CR greater than 0.7 and an AVE greater than 0.5, as reported in Table 4. This indicates that the data in the study have sufficient convergent validity, as stated by Hair et al. (2014). Table 5 shows that the square root of AVE for all constructs is higher than the correlations between factors. This provides evidence of discriminant validity. Table 4 illustrated that the composite reliabilities and Cronbach's alpha values of the latent variables in the

model are within the acceptable range. The KMO value obtained was 0.901, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was found to be significant. These values indicate that the sample size is appropriate, and that the data are obtained from a multivariate normal distribution (Kan and Akbaş, 2005).

Table 4. Results for the Measurement Model

	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Factor Loadings
Exaggeration	0.890	0.731	0.889	0.777 – 0.921
Attractiveness	0.926	0.680	0.923	0.608 – 0.888
Deception	0.871	0.772	0.871	0.862 – 0.895
Intention	0.889	0.667	0.889	0.794 – 0.850

CR: Combined Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Table 5. Correlations for the Measurement Model

	Exaggeration	Attractiveness	Deception	Intention
Exaggeration	(0.855)			
Attractiveness	0.035	(0.825)		
Deception	0.396	-0.505	(0.879)	
Intention	-0.173	0.632	-0.662	(0.817)

The Square roots of AVE are given in parentheses.

Table 6. Goodness of Fit Values

X²/df	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NNFI	NFI	RMR	SRMR
2.840	0.000	0.069	0.963	0.925	0.893	0.954	0.970	0.068	0.050

The 15-item model without items 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the influencer attractiveness variable and item 2 of the perceived deception variable shows an acceptable fit (Table 6). When evaluating the goodness of fit between a model and data, there are certain criteria to consider. To determine a good model-data fit, it is important to look for a χ^2/df value below 3, an RMSEA value below 0.08, and CFI, GFI, and AGFI values above 0.90. These values are based on the recommendations of Hu and Bentler (1999) and Kline (2011), and serve as important indicators of the adequacy of the model in representing the data.

5.3. Structural Model

The Structural Equation Model was utilized to test the research hypotheses. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is widely used with special interest by researchers in the field of marketing (Koubaa et al., 2014). Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a statistical method used to analyze the relationships between observed and latent variables. It involves measuring the underlying constructs identified by factor analysis and assessing the paths of hypothesized relationships between these constructs (Klem, 2000). The Structural Equation Modeling analysis values have revealed that the data and the model share an acceptable fit. This can be seen in Table 7. Figure 2 and Table 8 presents the testing of the hypotheses.

Table 7. Goodness of Fit Values of the Model

X²/df	p	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NNFI	NFI	RMR	SRMR
2.598	0.000	0.064	0.968	0.930	0.899	0.960	0.970	0.066	0.049

harmful to consumers. It is important to be aware of these practices and to make informed decisions when making purchases. A negative and significant relationship has been found between perceived deception and purchase intention in influencer advertising. However, it did not confirm the negative effect of perceived exaggeration on purchase intention. Sometimes, positive, exaggerated online reviews can lead to increased popularity of the product. Online exaggeration can be challenging to identify. Unlike in-person communication, online interactions lack visual and auditory cues like facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language that can indicate deception. This makes it easier for people to exaggerate online and harder for others to detect (Kapoor et al., 2021). Additionally, Caspi and Etgar (2023) emphasize that exaggerated emotional reactions can become the norm on social media platforms due to the natural characteristics of the online environment. Based on this evidence, it can be said that consumers may not change their purchase intentions in cases of exaggeration, that is, exaggerating the facts or giving an impression that exceeds the truth. According to Jeong and Yun Yoo (2011), consumers who perceive advertising as deceptive are less likely to make a purchase. Deceptive advertising can harm both consumers and companies by eroding trust and resulting in unfair practices (Gokcekus, 2023). Oparinde and Agbede (2019) note that deceptive advertising, characterized by false claims and exaggerations, can potentially influence consumer perceptions and behaviors (Oparinde and Agbede, 2019). Companies must ensure that influencer partnerships are transparent and truthful. It appears that perceived exaggeration is one of the elements that constitute perceived deception. While perceived exaggeration has no effect on purchase intention, deception has a significant effect on purchase intention. However, perceived exaggeration, along with perceived deception, had a negative and significant effect on influencer attractiveness.

The findings of this research suggest that exaggerated and deceptive advertising practices have a negative impact on influencer attractiveness. By resorting to deceitful and exaggerated advertising practices, influencers risk losing their attractiveness. This research highlights that such strategies have a negative impact, and it is crucial for influencers to maintain authenticity and transparency to retain their audience's trust. According to Lee and Wan (2023), viewers are more inclined to believe a streamer when they have a strong parasocial relationship with them, which can affect their purchase decisions. A reliable and parasocial influencer greatly raises the value of a consumer, according to their research. The concept of attractiveness plays a significant role in the formation of parasocial relationships. In order for parasocial connections to occur, the idea of influencer attractiveness is crucial (Fadilah and Alversia, 2021). In particular, Ashraf et al. (2023) argue that influencers must enhance their personalities in order to foster parasocial relationships with their followers. These attributes include being attractive, informed, reliable, and having common qualities with their followers. Additionally, perceived Influencer attractiveness is positively related to consumer purchase intentions. Lou and Yuan's (2019) research reveals that followers' trust in influencers' branded posts is influenced by their trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity, leading to increased brand awareness and buying intentions.

It has been discovered that influencers' attractiveness is highly dependent on their honesty and transparency with consumers. This result makes specific reference to the findings of Agag (2019) and the relationship between non-deception, e-trust, and e-commitment. The research confirms that influencers must be truthful, accurate, and fair when describing products to avoid deceiving shoppers. Ethical practices build customer trust and loyalty. The research highlights the negative impact of deceptive influencer advertisements that involve false claims or exaggeration on consumer purchase intention, perception, and behavior. It emphasizes how important it is for marketers to maintain ethical standards and comprehend the implications of such actions in order to forge long-term connections with customers.

7. Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Several managerial and theoretical implications can be drawn from the findings. The impact of influencer attractiveness on purchase intention is a significant finding. Marketers will succeed when collaborating with influencers who are perceived as attractive and aligned with the products they endorse. The study found that exaggerated claims do not have any effect on purchase intention. The involvement of influencers who align with the brand can facilitate consumer belief in even exaggerated claims, which may subsequently lead to an increased likelihood of purchase. However, making exaggerated and misleading claims negatively affects influencer attractiveness. When influencers make exaggerated and misleading claims, they can damage brand reputation by assuming that consumers are not good at spotting fake reviews. Trustworthy influencers are seen as credible sources of information, enhancing their ability to influence their audience. Building and maintaining trust is crucial for an influencer's long-term success and relevance.

In general, the synthesis of these studies highlights the complex interplay among deceit, attractiveness, and consumer behavior within influencer marketing contexts. Influencers may resort to dishonest attempts to preserve or increase their interest as they strategically use their trustworthiness and attractiveness to interact with viewers. To successfully manage the complexity of influencer-driven advertising, marketers and consumers alike must have a solid understanding of these relationships.

8. Limitations

The first limitation of this research is the study group, which consisted of young consumers. Other age groups may be included in future studies. Second, the study focused on only Instagram influencers. Expanding the scope by testing apps like Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, or Youtube may reveal different results. This research was not conducted targeting any brand. In future research, influencers' own branded products can be specifically targeted. Nowadays, when influencers reach a certain number of followers, they have started to create their own products and brands. This research model can produce interesting results when targeted at these products and brands.

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