

Social Media Influencer Marketing to Teens on TikTok: Disentangling the Effects of Emotion, Influencer Type, Authenticity, and Brand-influencer Congruence on Attitudinal and Behavioral Outcomes

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Abstract

TikTok has emerged as a significant platform in the rapidly growing global influencer marketing industry finding particular success targeting teen consumers. Unlike other influencer marketing platforms, TikTok's algorithm prioritizes video entertainment and engagement value, rather than who the user follows, meaning that all videos compete evenly for views regardless of follow counts. Collaborating with a teen influencer marketing agency, a 3 (Influencer Type: peer/macro-influencer/celebrity) by 3 (Emotion level: low/medium/high) lab experiment was conducted among Israeli teens. The direct effects of influencer type and emotion level on attitudinal and behavioral outcomes are examined along with the mediating role of authenticity and the brand-influencer congruence's moderation of mediation effects. Results show that teens respond differently to emotion used by different influencer type with authenticity often mediating effects. Further, brand-influencer congruence often moderates authenticity's mediation of outcomes. Influencer marketing on TikTok involves nuances not found on other platforms.

Keywords: influencer marketing, TikTok, teens, emotion, authenticity