

# **Authenticity of SMIs – Construction and Validation of a Holistic SMI**

## **Authenticity Construct**

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### **Abstract**

Influencer marketing has become an established marketing format for brands in recent years. In particular, the cooperation of brands with social media influencer (SMIs) is deemed to be effective, provided the SMI is authentic. Consumers trust authentic SMIs more than inauthentic ones, as they perceive their product recommendations particularly credible. Despite the high relevance of SMI authenticity, no existing measurement model captures the construct holistically, i.e., relevant dimensions remain unconsidered. The authors conduct an extensive literature review to generate a comprehensive understanding of all potential dimensions of SMI authenticity. The model of Lee and Eastin (2021) then serves as a starting point for model refinement. The empirical results confirm that our proposed second-order SMI authenticity model is reliable and valid.

*Keywords: SMI authenticity, second-order construct, construct development*

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