

Exploring the Credibility of Fitness Instagram Micro-Celebrities on Young British Males

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This study explores the influence fitness micro-celebrities have on young British males. Content analysis of micro-celebrities Instagram pages and questionnaires with the followers identify the strong impact that micro-celebrities have on the purchase intentions, fitness routines and self-consciousness of young males. The Source Credibility, Attractiveness Model and Match-up Theory have been reviewed, with the focus on their relevance to the online environment. This research finds that Match-up Theory was applicable in an online environment however a number of characteristics that increase the credibility of an endorsement in traditional media did not have the same outcome on Instagram. The findings not only suggest the lack of relevance that existing celebrity endorsement models have on an online platform, but additionally identify several characteristics that play a more influential role in increasing the effectiveness and credibility of the celebrity endorsements on Instagram.

Keywords: credibility models, fitness, Instagram, micro-celebrities, young males.

Introduction

Newly identified micro-celebrities have become a key commercial marketing tool for companies. The authenticity of these individuals makes them an effective communication intermediary for organisations to disseminate information about their products and services (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

The majority of existing literature demonstrates a relationship between the usage of the social media site Facebook and body dissatisfaction among young women (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013, 2017; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010; Fardouly & Vartanian, 2015; Fardouly et al., 2015). Meier and Grey (2014) criticise these studies for their broadness and suggest that exposure to photographs on Facebook is associated with greater body dissatisfaction rather than general usage of the social media platform. Therefore, due to the visual nature of Instagram, it is more likely to increase the levels of body dissatisfaction among its users (Meier & Grey, 2014). Little research has been carried out on the relationship between social media usage and the influence it has on young males. Studies focus on women due to the emphasis placed on their appearance in western cultures (Carey et al., 2014). Male body image concerns have increased due to the body ideals portrayed through traditional media (Agilata & Tantleff-Dunn, 2004; Bartlett et al., 2008; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2009). Societal pressures to imitate these muscular body ideals forces young males to change their eating behaviours and exercise routines with the hope of increasing their muscle mass (Kim & Chock, 2015).

Based on the findings in the literature this study determines if the male fitness

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micro-celebrities on Instagram influence the health and fitness habits of young males in Great Britain. It verifies the impact of the Source Credibility, Attractiveness Model and Match-up Theory within the health and fitness social circle on Instagram. Previous studies testing these models focus on the effectiveness of traditional celebrities influencing their fans (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990; Friedman & Friedman, 1978; Solomon et al., 2013; Choi & Rifon, 2012). Limited research has been carried out on the relevance and effectiveness of these theories on digital platform, which has provided accommodation for the new social media micro-celebrities (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

Literature Review

Micro-Celebrities and Instagram

Micro-celebrities are non-traditional celebrities, that come from a variety of fields including bloggers, vloggers, fitness models and "instafamous" personalities that have large amounts of followers on social media platforms (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Wells, 2014). They are also cheaper and readily available (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). These characteristics have persuaded companies to engage with these personalities as they can create a more meaningful, authentic connection with their target audience as they are not subject to the process of the star-making system (Marwick, 2015; Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). The most influential people on social media have great commercial value for companies. Compensating opinion leaders to disseminate information to their millions of followers is a proven way to guide public opinion, influence selling or stimulate demand (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Chu & Kim, 2011).

For the context of this study Instagram is chosen as 58% of millennial internet users are active on this social media site (Statista, 2016). This young audience, that accounts for the majority of Instagram's consumers, admire and emulate the good life, good looks and conspicuous consumption that these micro-celebrities promote through their Instagram pages (Khamis et al., 2017). Due to the increased activeness of millennial males and fitness influencers on Instagram (Statista, 2016; Mintel, 2016b), this social media provides a potential to understand the relationship between these two target segments.

Instagram has a user base of 800 million people and 500 million of these use the application daily (Statista, 2017a; Statista, 2017b). The magnitude of these figures provides users with the opportunity to become "Instafamous." Instafame is the condition of having an excessive number of followers on Instagram (Khamis et al., 2017).

Researches apply Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory to the social media platform as content shared on the site provides the opportunity for users to make comparisons between their self-perceptions and other users (Liu et al., 2016; Fardouly et al., 2015; Jang et al., 2016; Kim & Chock, 2015). Festinger (1954) states that individuals make social comparison to individuals with similar opinions and abilities. Wnent (2016) agrees and adds that Instafamous girls used to be "the

girl next door" and have evolved into opinion leaders due to the popularity of their posts and fan base. Followers admire these girls but still see them as peers (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Peer-created social content is trusted more than other types of media, so these social media stars are more likely to serve as a target for appearance comparison than models or celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Isosuo, 2016). Comparisons with peers who closely match the thin-ideal bodies creates greater thoughts about dieting and body dissatisfaction (Fardouly et al., 2015).

An increase in the number of male Instagram fitness models and the promotion of athletic male bodies has created an epidemic of body-conscious young males (Mintel, 2016a). Seventeen percent of 16–24 years old agreed that seeing male models in advertising campaigns made them more conscious about their looks (Mintel, 2016b). This dissatisfaction has forced them to seek information from aspirational athletic male models, with the hope of changing their self-image to mirror that portrayed throughout social media, the audience copies the purchase and consumption of supplements (Mintel, 2017a).

The Fitness Industry and its Role on Social Media

The use of micro-celebrities as a marketing communication tool has been exploited in numerous industries, the fitness and gym culture utilising it more than most (Mulcahy & Parkinson, 2016). It is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, with the UK health and fitness club market estimated to be worth £3.9 billion by 2022, up from £3.1 billion in 2017 (Mintel, 2017b). The socio-cultural trend of individuals wanting to become fitter is instigating this enormous industry growth, and having a domino effect on the consumption of gym clothing, supplements and work-outs (Mintel, 2017b; Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016).

Individuals have become fashion conscious when participating in sports or exercise, however less formal in their day to day lives (Marlowe, 2016; Armstrong, 2016; Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). These societal changes have fashioned a demand for trend-led sports apparel, influencing the sportswear markets growth to reach a staggering \$348.51 billion in 2017 (Statista, 2017b).

Literature suggests that the millennial generation are most susceptible to this fitness and gym trend (Wells et al., 2015). Seventy-six percent of 16–24 year olds exercise at least once a week and 45% of them became healthier in 2016 (Valentine, 2017; Mintel, 2017b). Many agree that this desire for a healthy lifestyle, lean body and on-trend fitness clothing is fuelled by the content on millennials favourite social media platforms like Instagram (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016; Mintel, 2017b). As a result of the industry growth, having an athletic body ideal with minimal body fat percentage can make you famous, as they serve as an inspirational referent to many of their followers. These followers purchase these products or copy their workout routines with the hope of attaining the same body as their inspiration (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). Companies competing in the health and fitness industry recognise this commercial opportunity and pay fit Instagrammers to post pictures with their products and services (Wnent, 2016).

Celebrity Endorsement Theories

The use of testimonials in advertising is not a new phenomenon and abundant amounts of research has been undertaken to understand the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement (Byrne et al., 2003; Kim & Na, 2007; Erdogan, 1999; Alsmadi, 2006). Hovland et al. (1953) understanding of the credibility of an endorser led to the development of the Source Credibility Model. The Source Attractiveness Model followed later with McGuire (1985) identifying a further four characteristics that increase the effectiveness of a testimonial. Forkan (1980) investigated the similarities between the product and endorser and generated his Match-up Theory.

Over the years the testing of these models has become exhaustive on traditional celebrities and traditional media (Kamins, 1990; McDaniel, 1999; Ang & Dubelaar, 2006; Kim & Na, 2007; Amos et al., 2008; O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997). However, due to the novelty of organisations utilising micro-celebrities as a marketing communication technique on social media sites, limited research has been undertaken to understand the relevance of these widely accepted endorsement concepts on online platforms (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

Source credibility is a term commonly used to describe the reliability of an influencer's communication that will impact the receiver's acceptance of a message, typically dependant on the characteristics of the influencer (Ohanian, 1990). Hovland et al. (1953) Source Credibility model suggests that the perceived credibility of the communicator is dependent on two factors; expertise and trustworthiness. Erdogan (1999) identifies expertise as the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions. The extant literature proposes that if the influencer is perceived to be an expert then this positively impacts the audience's attitude towards the product or service being endorsed (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999; Seiler & Kucza, 2017; Neal, 2017).

The fact that the influencer has large followership on Instagram and offers coaching plans to his followers for a fee suggests he is a fitness industry expert, which will positively influence the audience's attitude towards the product. Norton (2017) and Korotina & Jargalsaikhan (2016) suggest this increases their purchase intents. However, Neal (2017) argues that even if an endorser has enough perceived expertise of an industry to communicate valid assertions, these messages may be rejected if the audience believes the communicator has something to gain from the persuading their following.

Ohanian (1990) suggests the trust paradigm in communication is the listener's degree of confidence in the level of acceptance of the speaker and the message. Erdogan (1999) argues the level of acceptance is greater amongst the audience if the messenger shows greater levels of honesty, integrity and believability, as this is what makes an endorser trustworthy. Friedman & Friedman (1978) believe that brands should exploit celebrities with a greater sense of likability amongst their target market to advertise their products, as their findings conclude that likeability is the most important element of trust.

McGuire (1985) created the concept of the source attractiveness model to explain that the effectiveness of a message depends on the communicator's

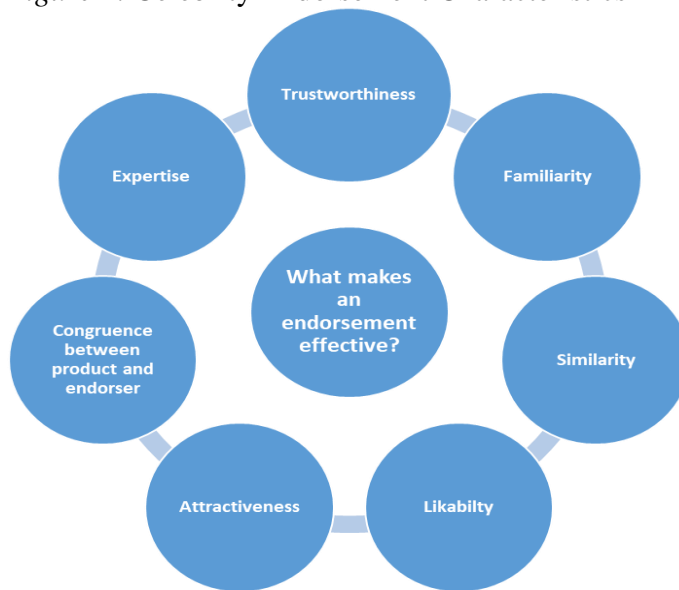
familiarity, likability, similarity and attractiveness. Hung (2014) suggest that through promoting these individualities, the likelihood of the recipient making positive associations with the brand based on their affirmative opinion of the endorser is high.

Match up theory suggests that if the greater the degree of congruence between the endorser and the product the more effective the communication is (Forkan, 1980; Erdogan, 1999; Seiler & Kucza, 2017). If the relationship lacks congruence the sense of credibility is lost. Choi & Rifon (2012) suggest that the influence of an endorsement is more influential when impacting purchase decisions if there is a match between the customer's perception of the endorser and their ideal self.

Brands competing in the health and fitness industry operationalise match up theory. There is a clear congruence between the endorser and the product but there is also likely to be a match between the physique of the endorser and the audiences desired ideal self-image (Schiffman et al., 2011; Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016).

The literature has identified 7 characteristics that celebrities need to have if their endorsement of a product or service is to be effective. Figure 1 identifies these characteristics. Their applicability to micro-celebrities on Instagram is tested in this study.

Figure 1. Celebrity Endorsement Characteristics



Research Methods

The authors consider that a multiple methods research design provides scope for a richer approach to data collection whilst overcoming the weaknesses associated with using only one method. Carrying out a content analysis of Instagram and deploying surveys with young males delivers this dual data collection technique.

To understand the impact that micro-celebrities have on the health and fitness

routines of young males, the authors conducted a content analysis of the micro-celebrities’ Instagram pages that communicate with their target audience. Carrying out a content analysis enabled the authors to systematically convert the social media content in to quantifiable data that was then utilised to make inferences from the communication techniques of the chosen influencers (Collis & Hussey, 2009). Researchers analysed ten fitness opinion leaders who communicate with their audience through this social media site.

The influencers were chosen after meeting criteria set by the authors; they all have an active affiliation with at least one health and fitness brand, over 150,000 followers on Instagram and posted at least twice a week. Table 1 identifies the chosen influencers and their alignment with the criteria.

Table 1. Fitness Opinion Leaders chosen for Content Analysis

Name	Number of Followers	Number of Brands Affiliated with	Average Amount of Weekly Posts (10 Month Average)
1. Joss Mooney	346 k	17	5.2
2. Dickerson Ross	1.6 M	3	6.3
3. Simon Searles	177 k	8	3.6
4. Joe Delaney	189 k	3	5.3
5. Rykard Jenkins	318 k	5	3.8
6. Uzome Obilor	469 k	2	4.8
7. Steve Cook	1.9 M	2	5.5
8. Rob Lipsett	405 k	3	5.5
9. Christian Guzman	1 M	4	3.5
10. Lex Griffin	397 k	1	4

Each influencer was coded based on their number of followers, then each selected post was coded for sponsorship, type of post (picture or video), engagement (number of likes and comments), the content and the influencer’s description.

An online random sample generator provided 5 posts from each influencer that forms the base of the analysis, which was generated from their last 100 posts. Using a random sample means that every post has an equal chance of being generated, and this allows to generalise the results to the entire population of posts published on the ten fitness opinion leaders’ accounts.

The authors used self-administered questionnaires as another type of data collection. The authors distributed the questionnaires electronically through the use of Qualtrics survey software, with the rationale stemming from the positives of self-completion questionnaires identified by Sekaran & Bougie (2016) and Bryman & Bell (2015) earlier. Purposive sampling was utilised when distributing the questionnaire by the author to generate a non-probability sample which meant that zero probabilities are attached to the participants for being chosen as a subject (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). A total of 100 respondents completed the questionnaire, providing a complete representation of the target audience.

Findings and Analysis

Content Data Analysis

A total of 50 images were coded. The data sets were examined using the SPSS frequency test to expose the occurrences of each variable. Majority of the pictures coded were organic posts (33), with the remaining 17 being organic. 40% of coded posts had between 0–14,999 likes (40%), this means the remaining 60% had greater than 15,000 likes from fans. Fifty-eight percent of the posts coded had between 0–249 comments (58%) which means that over at least 250 fans commented on 42% of the images analysed.

The authors conducted a chi-squared test to test the association between the amount of likes a micro-celebrity receives on their posts and the number of followers they have. Results show that the association is statistically significant as $p \leq 0.005$, therefore it can be concluded that the larger following base micro-celebrities have on Instagram the greater engagement on their posts.

Findings show that these influencers have a significant number of sponsored posts and the engagement with fans is substantial. This supports Chen et al. (2016) suggestion that companies utilise opinion leaders who have large followings as they create greater engagement with their fans which has great commercial value for companies. Therefore, the level of engagement with fans is a characteristic that increases the influence of these opinion leaders.

The content of images analysed were predominantly made up of high-quality modelling photos (30%), either shirtless (22%) or fully clothed (8%). These findings highlight that the quality of images posted is significant to the influencers, and therefore could play an important role in increasing their credibility. Therefore, these characteristics tested through the survey to see if it plays any significance in influencing young males.

Although the post with the greatest number of likes was sponsored by a brand, the cross tabulation shows that there were four organic posts that received 50,000 to 74,999 likes in comparison to 1 sponsored post. This suggests that in general users have a stronger liking to the organic posts of these health and fitness influencers.

Findings show that 63 respondents actively follow micro-celebrities on the social media site. The extant literature suggested that the millennial generation are becoming increasingly concerned about their fitness and health (Wells et al., 2015). Valentine (2017) finds that 76% of 16–24 year olds exercise at least once a week. Findings from the survey state that 96% of the sample exercise at least once a week suggesting that males may be more susceptible to the socio-cultural health and fitness trend than females.

When asked if an Instafamous individual has ever made them feel self-conscious about their self-image, the majority of respondents disagreed (75), with the remaining 25 suggesting that an image or video posted by a micro-celebrity has increased their level of self-consciousness. This supports Mintel's (2016b) findings of 17% of young males agreeing that seeing male Instagram fitness models in advertising made them more self-conscious. Twenty-nine respondents have purchased a product or service being endorsed on Instagram by a micro-

celebrity with the remaining 71 disagreeing. This suggests that this technique highlighted in the literature is effective to an extent as it increased the purchase intentions of 29% of the sample.

Health and Fitness Routines

Literature suggests social media sites like Instagram have pressured their users to live healthier lifestyles (Intel, 2017b; Norton, 2017; Tiggemann & Slater, 2017). Seventy respondents said they had previously copied a work-out routine or recipe that a micro-celebrity had posted on Instagram and data suggests that 62 of these try to live healthy lifestyles as they exercise more than 3 times a week. The cross tabulation displayed highlights a clear positive relationship between the two variables, the more active you are as an individual the more likely you are to copy or take guidance from a health and fitness influencer.

The authors conducted a chi-squared test to test the association between the amount of exercise and individual does and the likelihood of them copying a micro-celebrities health and fitness routine. Results show that $p < 0.001$, therefore it can be concluded that individuals are more likely to copy or take guidance from an Instafamous personality if they exercise more.

Source Credibility Model

Hovland et al. (1953) identify expertise and trustworthiness as the two deciding characteristics that make a communicator effective when endorsing products or services. Hovland et al.'s (1953) thesis was developed well before the evolution of electronic word of mouth, where users can now refer to electronic media before making purchase decisions (Cheung & Lee, 2012). The authors question the relevance of these characteristics on online platforms. To test this, respondents were asked how important they felt certain characteristics of micro-celebrities were when deeming their credibility.

Majority of respondents (80%) agreed that the expertise of an individual increased their credibility when endorsing products. These findings support discussions of Hovland et al. (1953), Ohanian (1990), Erdogan (1999), Seiler & Kucza (2017) and Neal (2017). These findings also support the literature surrounding reference groups, as Escallas & Bettman (2005) and McFerran et al. (2009) which suggest that individuals seek recommendations from reference groups with perceived expertise before making informed decisions

However, a greater number of respondents disagreed (45%) rather than agreed (35%) that the trustworthiness of these online personalities makes them a credible source. This suggests that the trustworthiness of micro-celebrities does not make them a credible source, and that these characteristics are not relevant on online platforms like Instagram.

Source Attractiveness Model

The relevance of McGuire's (1985) source attractiveness model characteristics

is also tested. Sixty-one respondents agreed that the attractiveness of a micro-celebrity increases their influence and credibility with 22 disagreeing: 37 agreed that the familiarity of the personalities was an influencing characteristic however a larger proportion disagreed (41): the same amount of respondents agreed that the likability increases their credibility as disagreed (40) with the remaining 20 neither agreeing or disagreeing: lastly a larger proportion of respondents agreed (36) that the similarity of the online personalities to themselves increased their credibility, and more respondents neither agreed or disagreed (33) about this characteristics than agreed (31).

Wnent (2016) suggests that organisations compensate fit and attractive micro-celebrities to endorse their products as their fans are likely to copy the consumption. The findings support Wnent (2016) as the respondents find that the attractiveness of individuals made them a more credible source. However, the significance and relevance of the remaining three characteristics of McGuire's (1985) Source Attractiveness Model on Instagram can be questioned as the level of agreement between respondents is marginal. Apart from the attractiveness, Hung (2014) proposed that promoting the individualities of the Source Attractiveness Model that the influencer holds increases the likelihood of the recipient making positive associations with the brand, findings suggest there is no clear relationship between the likability, familiarity and similarity of the endorser increasing the effectiveness of a message. The authors therefore suggest that Hung's (2014) proposal may not be relevant to micro-celebrities on Instagram.

New Influential Characteristics

The content analysis highlights the extensive amount of likes and followers Instafamous individuals have on Instagram, and the significant number of high-quality images they post. Leading the authors to believe characteristics like these (that are only present on online platforms) potentially have a significant influence on the perceived credibility of an influencer. The characteristics identified by the authors that are unrelated to the models are tested to see their influential significance when defining an individual perceived credibility on these online platforms.

Findings highlight three characteristics identified from the content analysis that are only relevant to social media sites and the respondent's level of agreement that they increase the credibility of these micro-celebrities. The most significant characteristic the sample felt increased the influencer's credibility, was the high quality of posts/images as 77 agreed it increased the credibility of the influencers on Instagram with only 13 disagreeing. The majority of respondents agreed (61) that the number of followers an influencer has on Instagram also increases their credibility, with 23 disagreeing. Finally, 54 respondents agreed that the number of comments and likes on their posts increased their credibility, with 30 disagreeing and the remaining 16 neither agreeing nor disagreeing

The authors also tested further three characteristics. From the three new characteristics tested 76 respondents agree that the perceived experience of the influencer is a characteristic that makes them a credible source with only 11

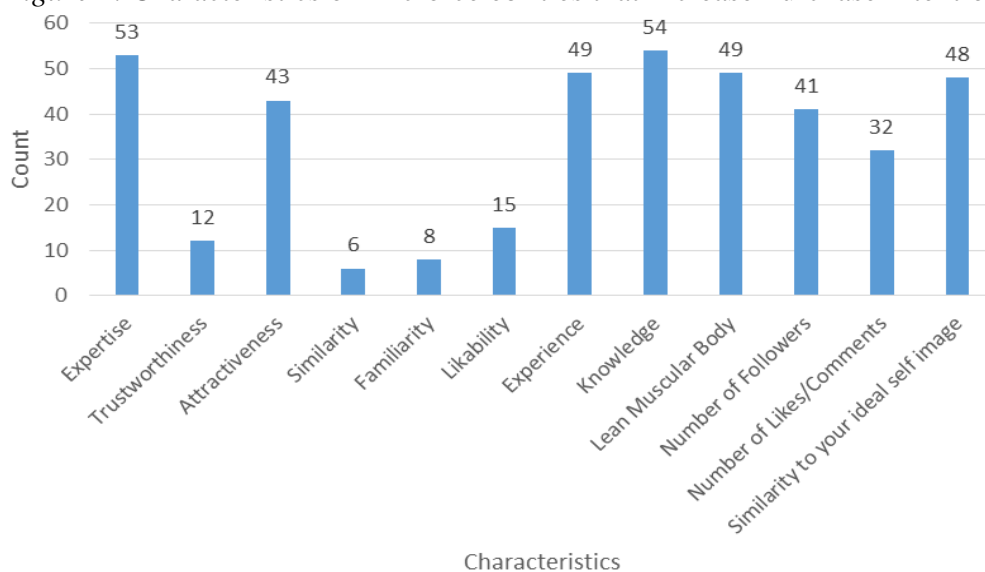
disagreeing. Half (50) of the respondents agree that their uniqueness increases their credibility with 19 disagreeing. Finally, 40 agree that the charisma of the endorser makes them a credible source, with 33 neither agreeing nor disagreeing and the remaining 27 disagreeing.

Respondents identify the experience of a micro-celebrities as a significant characteristic that increases their credibility. This is unsurprising as name date concluded that, particularly in the health and fitness industry, the influencers who acquire fame, do so due to their perceived experience which many of their audience use as guidance or inspiration. Henceforth the authors used the Spearman rank correlation coefficient to understand if there is a relationship between the activeness of respondents and whether they value the experience of an Instafamous individual. The test identifies a strong positive correlation between the two variables of 0.322 which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. It can therefore be concluded that the more active an individual is, the more important it is to them that a micro-celebrity is experienced.

Forkan (1980), Erdogan (1999) and Seiler & Kucza (2017) agree that an endorsement is more effective if there is a clear congruence between the endorser and the product. Mulchay & Parkinson (2016) suggest that the health and fitness industry have operationalised match-up theory on Instagram by using instafamous health and fitness influencers as a marketing communication tool. The authors ask the respondents if they would be more likely to purchase a health and fitness, product or service if it was being endorsed by an Instafamous health and fitness influencer. Sixty-seven agree that it would increase their purchase intentions with the remaining 33 disagreeing.

These findings support the past literature as 67 of respondents agree that they are be more likely to purchase a health and fitness product if it is endorsed by a health and fitness influencer, which supports Forkan’s (1980) Match-up Theory as the high level of congruence between the endorser and the product clearly has a positive impact on the purchase intentions of the audience.

Figure 2. Characteristics of Micro-celebrities that Increase Purchase Intentions



Those that agreed were then asked to identify which characteristics of the micro-celebrities would influence their decision. Figure 2 shows the characteristics of the individuals and the total of respondents who agreed that it would influence their purchase intentions.

The 5 most influential characteristics as displayed in Figure 2 are: Knowledge (80.6%); Expertise (79.1%); Lean Muscular Body (73.1%); Experience (73.1%); Similarity to respondent's ideal self (71.6%).

Choi & Rifon (2012) added to Forkan's (1980) Match-up thesis, suggesting an endorsement will be more influential if there is a match between the customer's perception of the endorser and their ideal self. This is clearly supported by the findings displayed in Figure 2 as 71.6% of the 67 respondents inclined to purchase a health and fitness product if it was endorsed by a health and fitness influencer felt that the influencer's similarity to their ideal self was a characteristic that would influence this decision.

The respondents feel the influencer's lean muscular body is a more influential characteristic with 73.1% of them selecting this option. These findings reinforce Norton's (2017) suggestion that organisations who supply supplements and meal preparation services utilise individuals with a lean muscular figure to endorse their products as the audience assumes the products play a role in the attainment of their body and are thus more likely to copy this consumption.

The majority of literature investigates the use of micro-celebrities in advertising as they are a new era of famous individuals who have a strong influence on the behaviours and actions of their fans and audience (Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016; Wells, 2014; Marwick, 2015). However, interface with these individuals through online platforms is now becoming a daily occurrence, significant for the millennial generation and also the wider audience on social media (Statista, 2016; Mintel, 2016b). This active engagement means individuals will form strong feelings and opinions towards these opinion leaders, which has been insignificantly touched on by previous research due to the novelty and significance of these micro-celebrities.

To understand the feelings that young males have towards these micro-celebrities, respondents were asked to state the reasons (if any) why they may dislike the micro celebrities on Instagram. Seventy-six respondents were in agreement that their Instagram content consists of too much product advertisement. This supports the findings of the content analysis as 34% of posts analysed were sponsored posts, and the most frequent post content in the analysis was product placement (26%).

From the 10 fitness opinion leaders analysed in the content analysis, 9 of them were affiliated with more than one brand and one of them had associations with a total of 17. It is therefore unsurprising that 66 respondents feel these individuals only post for monetary gain and is a trait the audience has a disliking towards.

The authors choice to use open ended questions based on the advantages highlighted by Saunders et al. (2016), meant that respondents were able to state potential other reasons why they may have a disliking towards Instafamous individuals that the author may have otherwise missed. One respondent suggested they had a disliking towards these personalities due to the fact it is,

"incredibly easy to create an un-achievable body image as a result of filters and apps such as photoshop...particularly for teenage girls."

Conclusion

Research findings show that micro-celebrities influence the behaviours and attitudes of young males. Literature and the findings also confirm that dissatisfaction of self-image forces individuals to seek advice and copy the consumption and fitness routines of instafamous personalities. The results further identified that product endorsement from Instafamous individuals increases the purchase intentions of their audience.

The relevance of Hovland et al. (1953) and McGuire's (1985) celebrity endorsement models has been applied to traditional media and traditional celebrities, many unable to find criticisms and most concluding the significance of the 6 characteristics identified by the models and their ability to increase the effectiveness of a product endorsement. The authors' findings supported the models to an extent as the expertise and attractiveness of micro-celebrity increased their credibility. However, the findings rejected the effectiveness of the remaining characteristics identified in the endorsement models as they were significantly less relevant than the characteristics identified from the content analysis of this study.

The findings concluded that respondents would be more likely to purchase a fitness product when it is being endorsed by a fitness influencer, thus accepting the relevance of Forkan's (1980) Match-Up theory within the health and fitness industry on Instagram.

Figure 3. Characteristics that Increase the Effectiveness and Credibility of an Endorser in an Online Environment



Based upon the testing of the characteristics identified in the source credibility models and theories alongside new characteristics identified by the content analysis carried out by the authors. A number of the original characteristics shown in Figure 3 have been updated (see Figure 1) as the findings revealed new characteristics that are more applicable to micro-celebrities in an online context.

Findings conclude that expertise, trustworthiness and the congruence between the product and endorser are all characteristics that are applicable to both on online and offline context. However, Instagram users felt the experience, uniqueness, number of followers, quality of posts and images and number of likes and comments micro-celebrities make them a more credible source than if they were similar, likable, familiar or trustworthy.

Findings identify that the audience disliked the fact micro-celebrities are compensated to endorsing products as it increases their advertising content. The lack of trust between the audience and the endorser is an influential factor why the "trustworthiness" characteristic identified in the Source Credibility model is not relevant in an online environment.

Some of the research findings contradicted the literature, particularly in relation to the celebrity endorsement models acknowledged. The authors identified 5 new characteristics that increase the credibility and effectiveness of endorsements on Instagram. Further research could be carried out to test these characteristics on other social media sites.

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