EXPLORING THE ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE AND PARA SOCIAL INTERACTION ON THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY ON PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to study the effect of influencer credibility on consumers' purchasing intention towards the brand while highlighting the moderating role of parasocial interactions as well as introducing other variables such as brand image and attitude. To realize this work, we carried out a quantitative study with a sample of 312 Tunisian subscribers to the Instagram accounts of parapharmaceutical products. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to evaluate the research model.

The results of the analysis show that the credibility of influencers has a positive impact on brand image, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention. Brand image has a positive effect on attitude towards the brand which in turn positively influences purchasing intention. We also verified the moderating role of para-social interactions between the credibility of influencers and purchasing intention.

Keywords: Credibility of Influencers, Brand Image, Attitude Towards the Brand, Instagram, Parapharmaceutical Products, Purchase Intention, Parasocial Interaction.

INTRODUCTION

With the advent of social media, digital opinion leaders, more commonly called digital influencers, have emerged in diverse and varied fields (Ouahi & Melghagh, 2020). Indeed, platforms like YouTube and Instagram have become a source of influencers who are brand ambassadors (Duffy, 2016; Scott, 2015). They help subscribers satisfy other needs and goals such as entertainment needs (Hsiao et al., 2013; Hsu et al., 2014). They develop strategies for promoting products and services in several formats, such as videos, photos and blogs.

In accordance with (Mrabet& Stili, 2022), these influencers have acquired a strong online identity expressed by a significant number of followers by constructing seductive and attractive content. From then on, they are regularly approached by advertisers to support products, brands, organizations or ideas on their social media profiles (De Veirman et al., 2017). Influencers shape attitudes and behaviors through the use of social media (Mrabet & Stili, 2022). They may elicit direct subscriber behaviors through liking, giving comments or sharing and may affect subscribers' opinions and decisions by sharing their own thoughts, feelings or experiences about fashion, travel, fitness or even their daily routines (Mrabet & Stili, 2022).

These influencers, whether they are tweeters, Instagrammers, consumer actors or YouTubers, want to offer their community authentic content and real experiences in order to share their expertise and passion.The big challenge for brands is certainly not remuneration but

building trust. Relationships remain crucial in partnership and collaboration with influencers and this must be sustainable and above all based essentially on trust (Ouahi & Melghagh, 2020). Brands typically invite influencers to endorse their products either through invitation to promotional events, sending them free products for testing or by providing monetary compensation. This helps build reputation and brand image among influencers and followers who are often potential customers (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The use of influencer marketing is one of the promotional strategies implemented by online shopping owners, including using influencers from various platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube in order to promote their products and encourage their subscribers to make purchasing decisions. Parasocial interactions help consumers make purchasing decisions, thus potentially benefiting the company (Penttinen et al., 2022).

Indeed, with the presence of these interactions, subscribers can feel a feeling of proximity to the influencer and decide to purchase products based on this perceived proximity. In this research, we address the credibility of influencers on Instagram towards parapharmaceutical products.The intervention of content marketing in the parapharmaceutical industry constitutes one of the most effective marketing strategies that an organization can exploit to target the notoriety, commitment and loyalty of its customers. Internet users seek to be informed and reassured, especially when it concerns their health.

Hence, the importance of offering them informative content that includes clear, coherent and reliable information. Thus, being in collaboration with influencers to market products is very important to know their needs, which represents a real competitive advantage for the company. It is in this context that we are interested in studying the concept of the credibility of influencers on Instagram and its impact on purchasing intention. Our problem is stated as follows: What is the impact of influencer credibility on purchasing intention?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Marketing influencers

Several marketing researchers have been interested in defining the concept of influencer in social media. In accordance with (De Veirman et al., 2017), an influencer is an individual who has a base of "followers" on social media platforms such as Instagram or Youtube and who represents a reliable and credible source to raise the interest of a brand in collaborating with him in order to create a certain notoriety for a particular product or service.

They are more likely to express their thoughts and communicate their positive and negative experiences about the product as well as attract the attention of consumers (Dalagin et al., 2021).

Corresponding to (Liu, 2021), influencers are defined as effective marketing agents who regularly post content on social media in order to promote the brand and increase the number of followers. These are people who have many fans and who create content for their followers (Mabkhot et al., 2022). They can also be opinion leaders who can influence other people (Jiayan & Talib, 2022). Their role is to present new products on their accounts, to encourage users to increase their interaction through the number of likes, comments, sharing of content and also by how to attract new subscribers (Belanche et al., 2019). (Hanafiah & Irwansyah, 2022) specify that influencers aim to generate content in order to increase the number of followers and benefit from the promotion of sponsored content to their subscribers.

The credibility of influencers on social networks

In accordance with (Goldsmith et al., 2000), credibility refers to the extent to which the source is perceived to have relevant expertise and the ability to be trustworthy. It is generally perceived based on the attractiveness, expertise and reliability of the endorser as the main factors that determine its influence (Lafferty et al., 2002).

Attractiveness

Attractiveness is based on the influencer's familiarity, likeability and proximity to their followers (Till & Busler, 2000). Indeed, researchers like (Kahle & Homer, 1985) and (Joseph, 1982) have specified that attractive influencers generally have more followers than less attractive ones. On Instagram, attractiveness depends on users' perception of influencers who must be elegant, chic and attractive (Ohanian, 1990). Additionally, (Vander Waldt et al., 2009) consider that influencers who are perceived as attractive are more likely to encourage purchase intention.

Corresponding to (Erdogan, 1999), attractiveness refers not only to physical attractiveness but also to other attributes such as intellectual skills, personality traits and lifestyle. Referring to the literature, several researchers have shown that there is a positive relationship between the attractiveness of influencers and brand image. Corresponding to (Shimp & Andrews, 2013), the attractiveness of celebrities as influencers increases the power of brand image. Similarly, research conducted by (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019) and (Chantya et al., 2022) revealed that influencer attractiveness has a significant positive effect on brand image. Our hypothesis is then stated as follows:

H1.1. The attractiveness of influencers has a positive impact on brand image.

According to with previous studies by (Tanjung & Hudrasyah, 2016), attractiveness has a significant positive impact on brand attitude. Furthermore, (Holzwarth et al., 2006) state that the use of attractive influencers on websites leads to favorable consumer attitudes and high purchase intentions towards the product. Based on the above research results, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2.1. The attractiveness of influencers has a positive impact on attitude towards the brand.

Based on (Ahn & Bailenson, 2011), attractive influencers help promote favorable attitudes towards the product and high purchase intentions. For their part, (Van der Waldt et al. 2009) and (Guo et al., 2018) specify that influencers who have a high level of attractiveness among their subscribers are those who will help increase purchasing intentions. In addition, (Coutinho & Dias, 2023) consider that attractiveness makes influencers more convincing and attractive in creating purchasing intentions.

H3.1. The attractiveness of influencers has a positive impact on purchasing intention.

Expertise

In accordance with (Ohanian, 1990), expertise is explained by the way of perceiving influencers as experienced, competent and qualified experts. It is defined as the extent to which a communicator is perceived as a source of valid assertions (Erdogan, 1999). Expertise is

manifested by the professionalism that an influencer possesses in order to convince consumers to purchase a product (Goldsmith et al., 2000). For other researchers like (Vander Waldt et al., 2009), expertise is also identified as the degree to which the endorser is perceived to have adequate knowledge, experience, or skills to promote the product. Expertise refers to the knowledge, experience, or skills possessed by the source (Shimp and Andrews, 2013). For (Abdussalam & Johnson, 2017), expertise has strong predictive power on the brand image variable. Furthermore, research by (Ohanian, 1991), (Amos et al., 2008) and (Chantya et al., 2022) consider that when an influencer has a high level of expertise, consumers will be more likely to be convinced by the advertising message. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

H1.2. *The expertise of influencers has a positive impact on brand image.*

Information or recommendations about brands and products that come from an expert, attractive source with good skills and knowledge will have a positive effect on consumer behavior towards brands (Till & Busler, 2000). Celebrities considered experts appear to be more persuasive and likely to influence consumer purchasing behavior (Ohanian, 1991). Thus, the expertise of influencers affects both the attitude and the purchasing intention of followers (Till & Busler, 2000). Drawing on this research, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2.2: *The expertise of influencers has a positive impact on attitude towards the brand*

Ohanian (1991) specified that the expertise of influencers is the fundamental quality that impacts purchase intention. Researchers like (Pornpitakpan, 2003), (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015) and (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018) show that there is a positive and significant effect between source expertise and purchase intention.

According to (Schouten et al., 2019), expertise will not only determine the level of perceived credibility among influencers but could also influence customers' purchasing behaviors.

For (Coutinho & Dias, 2023), influencers who can demonstrate their expertise in a particular area are more likely to increase purchase intention.

H3.2. *The expertise of influencers has a positive impact on purchasing intention*

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is related to confidence in the ability of influencers to give reliable claims (Ohanian, 1990). It refers to the honesty, sincerity and truthfulness of the source (Zhafira et al., 2022). Corresponding to (Wiedmann, 2020), trustworthiness is the most important element of credibility that influences subscriber behavior (Wiedmann, 2020).

Corresponding to (Nugroho et al., 2022), the reliability of influencers constitutes one of the credibility attributes which has a direct and significant effect on the brand image of the product. Indeed, the more followers perceive the reliability of influencers on social media, the more this will positively influence the brand image.

H1.3: *trustworthiness of influencers has a positive impact on brand image.*

Referring to the work of (Walster et al., 1966), consumers are more likely to respond

positively to endorsers who are viewed as trustworthy. This is explained by the fact that confident endorsers have stronger powers of persuasion (Mc Ginnies & Ward, 1980). For their part, (Bhatt et al., 2013) state that the most crucial factor contributing to the formation of followers' attitudes towards brand recommendations is the perceived trustworthiness of influencers. Similarly, (Tanjung & Hudrasyah, 2016) found that influencers who are trustworthy exert a stronger impact on customers' purchasing decisions related to products and services and positively influence brand attitude. Our hypothesis is then stated as follows:

H2.3: trustworthiness of influencers has a positive impact on attitude towards the brand.

According to (Pornpitakpan, 2004), the reliability of influencers is a predictive factor of purchasing intentions. This characteristic makes it possible to make the consumer's behavioral intentions more favorable (Wei & Wu, 2013). (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015) and (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018) also indicate that there is a positive relationship between source fiability and purchase intention.

H3.3:trustworthiness of influencers has a positive impact on purchasing intention.

Brand Image

Corresponding to (Keller, 1993), brand image is defined as the way a brand is perceived by consumers with respect to the benefits or features it offers. It contains the set of beliefs held about certain brands (Meenaghan, 1995) and can affect the customer's attitudes and emotions towards a brand and the way in which they are perceived by consumers (Esch et al., 2006). For (Keller, 2008), brand image is a symbolic concept generated in the minds of consumers, which includes all the data and perceptions linked to a product and a service. Also, brand image can help consumers recognize their needs and desires as well as differentiate the brand from other competitors (Anwer et al., 2011). Based on (Hartono & Dewi, 2019), brand image presents the consumer's knowledge and trust towards the brand. For their part, Karunarathne and Thilini (2022) specify that brand image is a higher perception by consumers of perceived quality and associated benefits. Several researchers such as (Ranjbarian, 2013), (Shin et al., 2014), (Yu et al., 2018) specified that brand image has a positive effect on attitude towards the brand. Similarly, (Dulek & Saydan, 2019) pointed out that brand attitudes are often shaped by brand image. Therefore, our hypothesis is stated as follows:

H4: Brand image has a positive impact on attitude towards the brand.

Purchase Intention

According to (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), purchase intention is the objective intention of a consumer towards a product. It is defined as the consumer's willingness to purchase a given product at a specific time or moment in a specific situation (Lu et al., 2014). For (Dadwal et al., 2020), purchasing intention represents all the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects towards the adoption, purchase and use of the product, services, ideas or certain behaviors. In addition, purchase intention is an indicator of actual purchase and is used to measure consumer actions (Kim et al., 2008; Pavlou, 2003).

Referring to the marketing literature, researchers such as (Suraworachet et al., 2012)

and (Chétioui et al., 2020) show that consumers' attitude towards the brand positively influences their purchasing intentions. On Instagram, (Wardhani & Alif, 2018) show that the possibility of purchasing a brand on Instagram is higher if consumers already have a positive attitude towards the advertiser of the products, services or brands. Likewise, (Hsu & Yang, 2021) also specify that attitude towards the brand has a significant and positive influence on purchase intention. So, our hypothesis is stated as follows:

H5. Consumer attitude towards the brand on Instagram positively influences purchase intention.

Parasocial Interaction

According to (Pornsakulvanich & Tongnok, 2022), the concept of parasocial interaction was first introduced by (Horton & Whol, 1956). From the early 1970s, this concept was responded to with the advent of uses and gratifications (Giles, 2002). Based on with (Labrecque, 2014), parasocial interaction is an illusory experience during which consumers interact with characters or celebrities as if they were present and engaged in a reciprocal relationship. It refers to an imaginary social relationship, an imaginary friendship, an illusion of face-to-face relationship and interpersonal interaction (Tsiotsu, 2015). For (Aw & Labrecque, 2020), parasocial interaction is a one-sided relationship formed by individuals with celebrities, although this one-sided relationship can feel as real and personally meaningful as knowing the celebrity personally (Aw & Labrecque, 2020).

Parasocial interactions in social media improve the perceived credibility of the influencer as a brand spokesperson, which promotes consumers' purchasing intentions (Chung & Cho, 2017). Research by (Hwang & Zhang, 2018) reveals that parasocial interactions can improve influencer credibility, which could increase brand liking and purchase intention. (Kim 2020) & (Lin et al., 2021) show that parasocial interactions with influencers on Instagram and YouTube are significantly linked to purchase intention.

H6. Parasocial interactions moderate the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention.

H6.1. Parasocial interactions moderate the relationship between influencer attractiveness and purchase intention.
H6.2. Parasocial interactions moderate the relationship between influencer trustworthiness and purchase intention.
H6.3. Parasocial interactions moderate the relationship between influencer expertise and purchase intention.
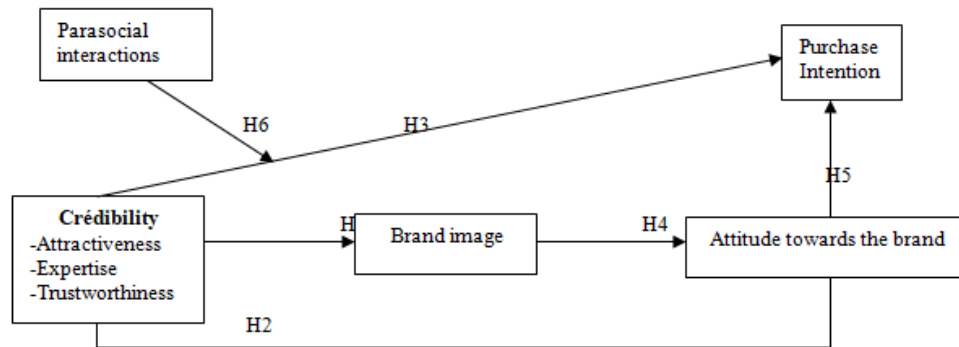
Figure 1
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

METHODOLOGY

This part will be devoted to the presentation of the sample, the method of collection, measurement and analysis of the data see figure 1.

Sample Characteristics

We considered it important to submit our questionnaire to a pre-test. The final version is distributed to the 330 subscribers to the parapharmaceutical products Instagram accounts. However, 312 questionnaires were retrieved. The sampling method used in our quantitative study is the snowball method. Our sample is made up of 60.3% women and 39.7% men. The largest percentage of subscribers to Instagram accounts for parapharmaceutical products concerns firstly the age category between 40 and 59 years (30.8%) then the age category between 30 and 39 years (28.5%).

Measurement of variables and data analysis tools

To measure the dimensions of influencer credibility, we referred to several measurement scales. For trustworthiness, we used the (Ohanian scale, 1990).

The second attractiveness dimension is measured by referring to the (Wiedmann & Mettenheim scale, 2020). As for expertise, it is measured using the (Ohanian scale, 1990). Each dimension is made up of four items. Brand image is measured by referring to the scale of (Lien et al., 2015). For attitude towards the brand, we used the scale of (Belanche et al., 2021).All measurement scales are composed of four items.

In order to analyze the data, we started with an exploratory (PCA) and confirmatory analysis. A structural equation method is used to test the research hypotheses. We used SPSS 22 software for the exploratory analysis and AMOS 22 software for the confirmatory analysis.

Presentation and discussion of results

Presentation of results

The credibility measurement scale is divided into three dimensions (Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) indicates a meritorious predisposition of the data to be factorized (KMO = 0.877) and very good internal consistency. For the confirmatory analysis of this scale, the adjustment indices are compatible with the critical levels of acceptance (Hair et al., 1998). GFI:0.913;RMR:0.076;RMSEA:0.067,TLI:0.965;CFI:0.974 and $\chi2$ / df=0.122, (<5) (Satorra & Bentler, 1994). BIC: 242.297 Ms= 379.0.38 and CAIC: 267.297 Ms 445.038. The Joreskhog Rho of the three dimensions is as follows (0.915; 0.892 and 0.818) which indicates that there is very good internal consistency. The convergent validity of the three dimensions respectively is greater than 0.5 (0.730; 0.676; 0.603), which respects the threshold defined by Fornell and Lacker (1981). As shown in the following table, the discriminant validity of credibility is verified since the squared correlation coefficients are lower than the average variance extracted.

For brand image, the results of the exploratory analysis show that there is a meritorious predisposition of the data to be factorized (KMO=0.824>0.8; Bartlet test: $\chi2$ =710.485, df = 6, p =0.000) (Hair et al., 1998) and very good internal consistency (α=0.891).

The confirmatory analysis of this scale gives us acceptable adjustment indices. For absolute indices: GFI: 0.922; AGFI: 0.923; RMR: 0.023 and RMSEA: 0.023. The incremental indices: TLI:0.909 and CFI:0.995. Parsimonious indices: $\chi2$/ df=4.844; BIC: 56.531 Ms 57.430 and CAIC: 65.531 Ms 67.430.

Convergent validity is good with a value of 0.670 (ρvc>0.5) and Joreskog's Rho is 0.890, which shows the existence of good internal consistency.

For the attitude measurement scale, there is a meritorious predisposition of the data to be factorized. Cronbach's alpha (0.883) indicates that there is very good internal consistency. The results of the confirmatory analysis are acceptable.GFI: 0.994; AGFI: 0.939; RMR: 0.021; RMSEA: 0.095; TLI: 0.976; CFI: 0.99; This scale has very good internal consistency and convergent validity (ρvc>0.5). As shown in the following table, the fit indices of the overall measurement model are generally satisfactory. The quality of fit of the model is considered acceptable.

The parasocial interactions scale the results of the exploratory analysis show that there is a meritorious predisposition of the data to be factorized (KMO=0.825; Bartlet test: $\chi2$ =688.442, df = 6, p =0.000) and a very good internal consistency (α=0.887).

The confirmatory analysis of this scale gives us acceptable adjustment indices. Convergent validity is good with a value of (ρvc>0.5) and Joreskog's Rho is therefore internal consistency is good.

For purchasing intention, the results of the exploratory analysis show that there is a meritorious predisposition of the data to be factorized (KMO=0.820>0.8; Bartlet test: $\chi2$ =627.905, df = 6, p =0.000) and very good internal consistency (α=0.875).

The confirmatory analysis of this scale gives us acceptable adjustment indices. For absolute indices: GFI: 0.994; AGFI: 0.940; RMR: 0, and RMSEA: 0.028. The incremental indices: TLI:0.996 and CFI:0.976. Parsimonious indices: $\chi2$/ df=3.781; BIC: 55.468 Ms 57.430 and CAIC: 64.468 Ms 67.430.

Convergent validity is good with a value of 0.652 (ρvc>0.5) and Joreskog's Rho is

0.882, so internal consistency is good see table 1.

Table 1 FIT INDICES OF THE OVERALL MEASUREMENT MODEL									
Absolute indices				**Incremental indices**			**Parsimonious indices**		
X^2	GFI	AGFI	RMR	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	X^2/ddl	BIC	CAIC
797,508	0,927	0,879	0,080	0,073	0,972	0,990	3,692	1142,088 Ms 1585,069	1202,088 Ms 1861,069

Test of direct effects

The test of the hypotheses of our model is as follows:

Table 2 TESTING THE MODEL HYPOTHESES					
Hypotheses		**Standardized structural link**	**CR**	**P**	**Significance**
H1.1	Brand Image <--- Attractivité	0,353	6,431	***	Significant
H1.2	Brand Image <---Trustworthiness	0,339	5,963	***	Significant
H1.3	Brand Image <--- Expertise	0,429	7,187	***	Significant
H2.1	Attitude <--- Attractivité	0,186	3,329	***	Significant
H2.3	Attitude <--- Expertise	0,315	4,929	***	Significant
H3.1	Purchase intention<--- Attractiveness	0,223	4,446	***	Significant
H3.2	Purchase intention <--- Trust	0, 361	5,776	***	Significant
H3.3	Purchase intention <--- Expertise	0,349	5,164	***	Significant
H4	Brand Image<---Attitude	0,358	4,889	***	Significant
H5	Purchase intention<--- Attitude	0,345	4,513	***	Significant

As shown in the table 2 above, there is a positive and significant relationship between each dimension of influencer credibility and brand image. Therefore, hypotheses H1.1; H1.2 and H1.3 are confirmed.

Hypothesis H2 is also confirmed (The structural link between these two constructs is 0.368 with c.r= 5.019>1.96 and p= 0.000).

The third hypothesis with these three sub-hypotheses are confirmed (standardized structural links respectively t (0.136; 0.182; 0.171) with CR>1.96, p<0.05)

Hypotheses H4 and H5 are accepted: (CR respectively (4.889;4.513) >1.96) and p respectively <0.05)

-Test of the mediating effect of brand image between influencer credibility and attitude.

The following table shows that the mediation effect of brand image between the credibility of influencers at the level of each dimension (attractiveness, expertise,trustworthiness) and attitude towards the brand is verified. The lower and upper bounds of (axb) (indirect effect of X on Y) are positive and significant, C (effect of X on Y without mediation) and C' (effect of X on Y with mediation) are positive and significant.

For each mediation the product (axbxc) is positive so it is a complementary mediation. The

verification of mediations is based on the Hayes method.

Table 3 MEDIATION EFFECT OF BRAND IMAGE BETWEEN CREDIBILITY AND ATTITUDE									
Direct effect									
Regression	Coefficient			Valeur t			Significance		
X → M (a)	0,3752	0,401	0,448	71,256	7,722	8,834	P=0,000	P=0,000	P=0,000
M → Y (b)	0,6308	0,611	0,605	14,218	13,740	13,250	P=0,000	P=0,000	P=0,000
X → Y (c)	0,3680	0,417	0,438	69,682	80,773	0,5111	P=0,000	P=0,000	P=0,000
X → Y (c')	0 ,1313	0,171	0,166	29,603	38,547	36,454	P=0,000	P=0,000	P=0,000
Indirect effect									
Regression	Coefficient			Confidence interval					
	0,236	0,2455	0,271	Lower value			Higher value		
X→ M → Y (a x b)				0,1582	0,1680	0,1917	0,3235	0,3290	0,3625

The table 3 mentioned below shows the moderating role of para-social interactions between the credibility of influencers and purchasing intention. To test this moderation we used the Hayes method.

Table 4 MODERATION EFFECT				
		X : Purchase intention		
	Moderation	Y : Attractiveness		
		W : Parasocial interaction		
Direct effects and interaction effect				
	Regressions	Coefficient	T value	Significance
X Y	0,0325	0,2026	0,0000	
W Y	0,9065	0,9135	0,0000	
XW Y	0,0270	0,3743	0,0270	
	X : Purchase intention			
Moderation	Y : tTrustworthiness			
	W : Parasocial interaction			
Direct effects and interaction effect				
Regressions	Coefficient	T value	Significance	
X Y	,0341	0,9538	0,0001	
W Y	,0337	0,2546	0,0000	
XW Y	,0305	0,5188	0,6043	
	X : Purchase intention			
Moderation	Y : Expertise			

	W : Parasocial interaction		
Direct effects and interaction effect			
Regressions	Coefficient	T value	Significance
X ⟶ Y	0,1628	0,1967	0,0000
W ⟶ Y	0,7868	0,1679	0,0000
XW ⟶ Y	0,0198	0,6876	0,0492

The table 4 shows that parasocial interactions moderate the relationship between each dimension of influencer credibility and purchase intention because the XW intercept is significant and positive see figure 2.
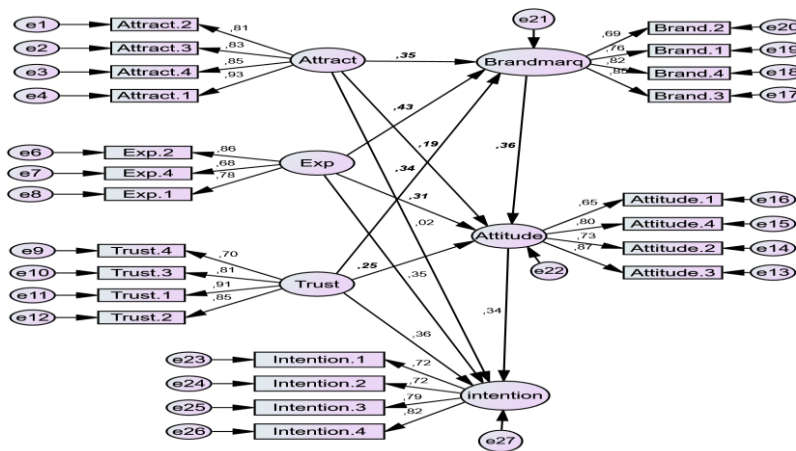

Figure 2
CONCEPTUAL MODEL TESTED

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The empirical results of our research are consistent with the majority of works in the literature. First of all, we noted that the credibility of the influencers who ensure the sale of parapharmaceutical products in terms of attractiveness, reliability and expertise constitutes a very important factor which strengthens the brand image.

For attractiveness, this result is consistent with those obtained by other researchers such as (Chantya et al., 2022) having indicated that for beauty products, the attractiveness of influencers has a positive effect on brand image. Similarly, researchers like (Malshan & Weerasiri, 2016) and (Nugroho et al., 2022) clarified that for fashion brands, the attractiveness of an influencer can positively affect the brand image.

Regarding trustworthiness, research by (Lomboan, 2013) and (Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim , 2020) shows that the level of trustworthiness of influencers has a significant effect on brand image. Furthermore, (Chantya et al., 2022) and (Nugroho et al., 2022) indicate that for beauty products the level of reliability and trust towards beauty influencers increases thanks to the selection of sincere and trustworthy influencers, which will make the brand image stronger in the mind consumers.

For expertise, (Amos et al., 2008) and (Nugroho et al., 2022) consider that when a

consumer perceives that a celebrity endorser has a high level of expertise, he or she becomes more likely to be convinced by the advertising message disclosed by the brand. However, the result obtained by (Chantya et al., 2022) contradicts the results of those previously cited. Indeed, these researchers explained that for beauty products, influencers who have experience and knowledge of skincare products have failed to build a strong brand image.

Regarding the effect of credibility (attractiveness, reliability and expertise) on attitude, the results of our research show that there is a positive effect between the credibility of influencers and attitude. This is consistent with the literature. Indeed, (Holzwarth et al., 2006) and (Tanjung & Hudrasyah, 2016) consider that the attractiveness of influencers has a positive impact on attitude towards the brand. For their part, (Bhatt et al., 2013) and (Tanjung & Hudrasyah, 2016) specified that the reliability of influencers has a positive effect on attitude towards the brand. (Ohanian, 1991) and (Till & Busler, 2000) emphasize that the expertise of influencers has a positive effect on attitude towards the brand.

For the effect of brand image on attitude, the results of our research are consistent with those of (Belanche et al., 2021), (Nafees et al., 2021) and (Huthasuhut et al., 2022) having indicated that there is a positive effect between brand image and attitude. This is explained firstly by the fact that the appeal of endorsers plays a very important role in increasing the value of the brand, which leads to an increase in commercial performance and creates brand equity. Physically attractive people are more successful in changing consumers' beliefs and attracting their attention to the product. In addition, the choice of influencers who will talk about the brand is very important because those who are more expert and more professional will strengthen the power of the brand and improve its image. Reliability is also another factor that improves brand image in the minds of consumers. Furthermore, the credibility of influencers is an important factor that affects perceptions of the brand and makes product evaluation positive.

According to literature, researchers like (Samarakonn et al., 2021), (Martiningsih & Setyawan 2022), (Coutinho & Dias, 2023) and (Nugroho et al., 2023) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of influencer credibility (Attractiveness, trustworthiness and Expertise) and purchase intention. This result is consistent with our research. We can explain the positive effect between the attractiveness of the influencer and the purchase intention by the fact that when an influencer is perceived as attractive, charismatic and having an enviable lifestyle, this can arouse admiration and aspiration among his followers which will romote their purchasing intentions.

Therefore, the positive image that the influencer projects will make consumers more inclined to buy the products or services they recommend. The positive effect of influencer trustworthiness and purchase intention is explained by the fact that when consumers perceive an influencer as reliable, they are more inclined to believe in the quality of the products or services they recommend. This increased confidence can influence their purchase intention, as they are more likely to be convinced that the product or service will meet their needs and expectations. Furthermore, when an influencer regularly recommends quality products and these recommendations are aligned with consumers' expectations, this strengthens their trustworthiness and can positively influence their purchase intention.

Regarding the expertise of the influencer, it constitutes an important factor which has a positive effect on purchasing intention. Indeed, when an influencer is considered an expert in a specific field, consumers tend to grant them a certain credibility and trust. This expertise can also help educate consumers about the features and benefits of a product, which can positively influence their purchase intention. Additionally, the influencer can share their personal experience

with the product, which can help consumers project themselves and imagine how the product might respond to their needs. It can also create a feeling of connection and identification with the influencer, which can increase purchase intent.

The moderation effect suggests that influencer attractiveness can strengthen or attenuate the impact of parasocial interactions on consumers purchase intention. If an attractive influencer interacts positively with their followers, this can strengthen consumers' purchase intent. On the other hand, if a less attractive influencer interacts in a negative way, it can dampen consumers' purchase intention. The moderation effect occurs when influencer trustworthiness influences the relationship between parasocial interactions and purchase intention.

For example, if an influencer is perceived as untrustworthy, consumers may be less likely to be influenced by parasocial interactions and therefore less likely to purchase the products or services recommended by the influencer. In contrast, if an influencer is perceived as highly trustworthy, consumers are more likely to be influenced by parasocial interactions and therefore more likely to purchase the recommended products or services. The moderation effect suggests that the impact of parasocial interactions on purchase intention depends on the level of expertise of the influencer. If the influencer is considered expert in his field, parasocial interactions will have a greater effect on consumers' purchase intention. On the other hand, if the influencer is not perceived as an expert, parasocial interactions will have a less significant effect on purchase intention.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITS AND EXTENSIONS

The study of influencer marketing for parapharmaceutical products constitutes an interesting field of investigation because it is of considerable importance for consumers. The theoretical contribution of our research is to address the effect of the credibility of influencers on attitude towards the brand. Indeed, few researchers have been interested in treating this relationship like (Till & Busler, 2000), (Bhatt et al., 2013) and (Tanjung & Hudrasyah, 2016). It is therefore important to study this relationship on social media and more particularly on Instagram. Another contribution consists of analyzing the mediating effect of brand image between the credibility of influencers and attitude towards the brand. To our knowledge, work that is interested in addressing this impact is rare or even non-existent.

We have proposed a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between these different variables. A third contribution is to have taken into consideration parapharmaceutical products because despite the importance of this type of product, there are gaps in the literature regarding the consideration of this area. Most searches focused only on cosmetic, luxury or fashion products. Through our survey, we then classified these products into several categories such as equipment (blood pressure monitor, glucometer, etc.), care products, hygiene products (masks, disinfectants, etc.), dietary products (fat burner, food supplements). ,…) and orthopedic products (shoes, mattresses, venous support, etc.). We can also add another important contribution to this research work which is the test of the moderating role of parasocial interactions between the credibility of influencers and purchasing intention.Referring to the literature, there are gaps in research that studies the role of parasocial interactions in the context of influencer marketing with the exception of the work of (Purnamaningsih & Nosica, 2020), (Ermeç, 2022) and (Um, 2022) who studied the effect of parasocial interactions on attitude.

As managerial recommendations, we suggest that the company search for relevant influencers who create quality content by highlighting the brand's products or services in an

attractive and attractive way which will help strengthen the Purchase intention. and to arouse the interest of subscribers. On the other hand, it is important to encourage users to interact with the brand by asking questions, launching challenges or organizing competitions. Provide quick, personalized responses to comments and direct messages to attract followers' interest. It is also important to recommend that the company verify the authenticity of influencers by thoroughly researching potential influencers to ensure that they are authentic.

The company should use social media monitoring tools to track the brand on Instagram. It's about reacting positively to positive reviews and using negative comments as opportunities for improvement.

The company should focus on highlighting its reputation online and offline, highlighting testimonials from satisfied customers and quality certifications. Additionally, it is important to foster positive parasocial interactions by encouraging parasocial interactions with one's customers through developing an active presence on social media. We also suggest that the company monitors negative parasocial interactions and addresses them appropriately and responsively. Provide training to staff responsible for parasocial interactions in order to achieve adequate communication with customers. This research work is not without limitations. We limited our study to treating the credibility of influencers with regard to parapharmaceutical products on Instagram while it is possible to do this study on other social networks such as Facebook, Tik Tok, etc.

We limited ourselves to introducing brand image as a mediating variable between the credibility of influencers and attitude, although it is possible to introduce other variables. It also turns out that the number of samples is limited.

As future avenues of research, we propose testing our conceptual model on a larger sample of subscribers. It is also possible to introduce other moderating or mediating variables such as gender, satisfaction, e-wom, loyalty, etc.

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