



"Trust in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Roles of Influencers and Experts in Promoting Household Durables"

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Abstract

The aims of this research are to assess how the social media influencer and/or the traditional expertise influence consumer trust in household durables. As influencer and expertise shifts have assumed importance in the modern consumer's decision process, this research examines this neglected area in the prose and presents research that may be beneficial to both the academia and the advertising industry. Built on the application of Mandala, stream graph, and trend analyses via Voyant, this paper examines the constantly shifting relationships between specific concepts like trust, authenticity, and expertise on the consumer behaviour timeline. The study confirms that both influencers and experts play their part in developing the trust of consumers prominently. Experts give strategic, realistic, objective, and relevant type of information in contrast to influence, which gives empathy based and appealing messages. Analysis of the stream graph confirms the influence and trust between the two as the most influential factors in consumers' decision-making process. The trend analysis extends and reinforces how trust emerges and changes particularly vigorously; this depicts the mutual interactions between consumers' perspective and these information sources. This study makes a unique contribution by examining trust dynamics in the context of household durables, a



high-involvement product category often overlooked in previous research on fast-moving consumer goods. While the study offers valuable insights, it has limitations, including its reliance on textual data and the barring of offline or offline influences that may also influence trust. Additionally, the findings may not be generalizable across all cultures or markets, and other factors such as product pricing and brand reputation were not considered.

Keywords-Consumer trust, Social media influencers, Traditional experts, Household durables, Trust Dynamics

Introduction

The advent of the digital age has transformed the way clients interact through brands and make purchasing decisions. With the zero-cost ubiquity of multiple social media site, trust has heralded a new significant facet where social media stars stand as equals with traditional expert authorities' opinion. Consumer durable, furniture and furnishing which are expensive items with a long product lifespan can be noted as a product category where information source received by consumers have a significant influence. Consequently, the impact that influencers and experts have on engaging consumers' trust remains relevant for academics' analysis and business implementation.

Trust as a construct has received substantial attention in the consumer behaviour and marketing literature. Using information elaboration model by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) it was argued that trust in the persuader depends on whether the consumer is engaging in central or peripheral processing of information. Professionals tend to follow the central route by presenting rational information and presenting facts regarding details of the aspects of the product. Instead, influencers manage to address the peripheral route, using popular emotions, similar experiences, and peers.

Source Credibility theory extends the explanation of trust by considering the perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attraction of the source, according to Hovland and Weiss (1951). While experts are generally perceived as knowledgeable and credible owing to their professional background, influencers derive their trustworthiness from authenticity and relatability, which resonates with a digital audience increasingly sceptical of corporate messaging (Audrezet et al., 2020).

However, to the best of the author's knowledge, research probing the role of social media influencers particularly in influencing Australian consumer trust in virtual to traditional experts is limited in the specific context of household durables. Prior surveys have mainly been directed on FMCGs and fashion, and how influencers and experts build trust in the context of more large, capital-intensive purchases, namely household durables, has not been adequately illuminated (Jin & Ryu, 2019). This is unfortunate given that the risk escalation is present for components within the durables, and perceived credibility plays a huge role in consumer decision making processes. In addition, their budgets are being dedicated to influencer marketing, but they fail to realize how this method compares to marketing by experts.



Currently, social media influencers are arguably some of the most important personalities in digital marketing; brands currently exploit the large following in promoting home essentials. It is why differing platforms such as Instagram, YouTube and TikTok let influencers offer customers a little touch of fun regarding the product, and a demonstration of how the product can be used in their daily activities. This trend has raised concern when it comes to reliability and credibility of the recommended products from the influencer especially where the influencer has been paid a consideration (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Industry analysts – along with other certified specialists – continue to be valuable for selling household durables. Their endorsements are viewed from a position of authority and what is considered normatively unbiased, thus they possess an added layer of specific intel touching influencers may well lack. Nevertheless, more efforts were placed in an effort to get in touch with people as opposed to the influencers because the latter's contents were less trenchant and participatory.

There is a huge issue here with regard to the believability of the people who engage in the construction of the advertising communication. Some key influencers provide genuine information about themselves, although cases of fake recommendations or partnership, which mislead consumers have been observed at certain times (FTC 2022). Nonetheless, there is likely to be low perception of immediacy of the source, following the identification of the experts with professional endeavour, which is a bit detached from day-to-day, life minutiae, consumer concerns. These dynamics peg a Mult structure trust framework within which consumers are compelled to strain information from several trust agents. The significance of this study emerges from a limitation that has Assad with the distinction of recommending influencers as more effective than other authoritative sources of consumer trust when, in fact, it remains unstudied. In doing so, this study provides insight into how various information sources are involved in high-involvement product category such as household durables. The result of this study will be useful for marketers as it will help them understand how to better communicate with consumers, as well as provide important findings to academic community regarding trust and consumer behaviour in the digital age.

This study includes a detailed analysis of the trust-building mechanisms employed by influencers and experts, with particular attention to their impact on the purchase decisions of household durables. It also explores the demographic and psychographic variables that moderate trust perceptions, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding these dynamics in different consumer segments.

Theoretical Background

The concept of trust is central to understanding buyer behaviour, particularly in the background of household durables. Trust influences how consumers process information, evaluate product quality, and make purchase decisions. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing trust-building mechanisms. ELM posits two routes for persuasion: the central and peripheral routes. The central route involves analytical processing, where consumers evaluate the logic and evidence



presented, which is often favored by experts who provide detailed technical insights. In contrast, the peripheral route relies on superficial cues, such as emotional appeal, likability, and relatability—strategies commonly employed by social media influencers.

Source Credibility Theory, introduced by Hovland and Weiss (1951), identifies three key dimensions of trustworthiness: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Experts gain trust from their professional qualifications and knowledge, making them reliable sources of high-involvement products such as household durables. On the other hand, influencers derive credibility from their relatability and perceived authenticity. Their ability to connect with audiences on a personal level fosters a sense of trust, even when technical expertise is limited (Audrezet et al., 2020).

The strain between these two sources of trust reflects broader changes in consumer behavior in the digital age. While experts provide detailed and rational information, the emotional and social dimensions of trust that influencers evoke have become increasingly significant, particularly among younger digital-savvy consumers (Jin & Ryu, 2019). These theoretical perspectives underscore the need for a comprehensive evaluation of how influencers and experts shape consumer trust, particularly in high-stakes purchasing contexts, such as household durables.

Review of Literature

Consumer Trust Comparison

Consumer trust in household durables varies significantly, depending on whether recommendations originate from social media influencers (SMIs) or traditional experts. SMIs, often perceived as relatable and authentic, can foster trust by showcasing expertise in relatable everyday contexts (Al Jaed & Badghish, 2021). Their embeddedness in online social networks enhances their perceived transparency and connection with consumers (Mardon et al., 2023). However, traditional experts are often viewed as more credible in their field because of their formal qualifications and long-standing authority (Weismueller et al. 2020). Studies suggest that trust in SMIs may be conditional on perceived authenticity and expertise, whereas trust in traditional experts relies heavily on professional credentials (Ki et al. 2023). This distinction shapes consumer purchase intentions, with SMIs being more effective in influencing younger audiences accustomed to digital platforms, while traditional experts retain influence among demographics, valuing institutional credibility (Pittman & Abell, 2024; Pittman & Abell, 2021). The nuanced trust dynamics between these sources reflect broader shifts in consumer behavior in the digital age.

Trust-Influencing Factors

Consumer trust in household durables is significantly influenced by factors such as credibility, reliability, and perceived expertise, with notable variations between confirmations from social media influencers (SMIs) and traditional experts. SMIs often foster trust by leveraging personal



relatability and frequent interactions with audiences, which creates a perception of transparency and authenticity (Mardon et al., 2023). However, their influence depends heavily on perceived expertise and alignment with consumer values (Weismueller et al. 2020). In contrast, traditional experts derive trust primarily from their established authority and credentials in relevant fields, which appeals to consumers seeking reliability and detailed knowledge (Pop, Săplăcan, & Dabija, 2022). Additionally, SMIs often dominate driving engagement with younger demographics on digital platforms, while traditional experts hold sway among older consumers who value formal authority (Pittman & Abell, 2021). These dynamics highlight the nuanced interplay between personal connections and professional credibility that shapes consumer trust.

Credibility-Building Strategies

Social media influencers employ several strategies to build credibility and trust among consumers, which often differs significantly from those used by traditional experts. Influencers primarily rely on authenticity, relatability, and emotional connections with their audience to foster trust. They often share personal involvements and showcase products in real-life scenarios, thereby creating a sense of transparency and relatability (Audrezet et al., 2020). Their success in building credibility is linked to their ability to present themselves as "real people" rather than authoritative figures, which allows them to connect on a more personal level with their followers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). By contrast, traditional experts build trust through their perceived authority, expertise, and technical knowledge, typically offering in-depth, fact-based insights into product features and performance (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Experts are often viewed as objective, providing well-researched, unbiased opinions, which helps them establish credibility in high-involvement product categories, such as household durables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). While influencers leverage social proof and community engagement to enhance trust, experts depend more on their professional qualifications and experiences to build consumer confidence. This contrast highlights the different pathways through which both influencers and experts shape consumer perceptions, with influencers focusing on emotional appeal and experts emphasizing rational and authoritative information (Jin & Ryu, 2019).

Expertise and Relatability

Perceived expertise, authenticity, and relatability are crucial factors in determining the credibility of influencers and experts, ultimately influencing consumers' trust in them. Expertise action a key role in shaping consumer trust, as individuals with technical knowledge or professional qualifications are generally regarded as more reliable sources of information, especially in high-involvement product categories, such as household durables (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Experts are perceived to offer objective, fact-based insights that help consumers make informed decisions (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). However, authenticity is a defining feature of influencers. Research has exposed that consumers are more likely to trust influencers who appear genuine and transparent in their content as this fosters a sense of emotional



connection (Audrezet et al., 2020). Sincerely, elimination of professional bias regularly happens through telling personal history, sharing information about a private life, and presenting products in everyday use, which contributes to the relatability perception (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Relevant influence personalities that reflect the same L'enfant Terrible consumer qualifications and personal ethos can create social proof influences, when consumers trust others similar to them (Jin & Ryu, 2019). Whereas professionals establish audiences' confidence in knowledge and competence, affecters focus on familiarity and sincerity to engage with people, which could be rather thin line between professionals and friends (Lou & Yuan, 2019). These varying dynamics evidence how expertise, authenticity and relatability respectively form trust that consumers give to influencers compared to that given to traditional experts. It is thus seen that attaining the perception of relatability commonly demands personal storytelling, behind-the-scenes vignettes and different actual uses of products (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Thus, those referring to concepts of life and approaching among followers may help to fill the gap through social proof, which consumers use when trusting results from experiences within a group (Jin & Ryu, 2019). While authorities work at building credibility and trust in the offered information within a certain domain, the influencers focus on being friends with the audience they are targeting in the same process (Lou & Yuan, 2019). These are the differences show the way that credibility, engagement and relevance are proved for influencers not for traditional authorities by consumers. Is there an influence of demographic variables on trust Age, gender and income level are powerful drivers for buyer trust in traditional experts compared to social media influencers.

Demographic Influences on Trust

A study revealed that age is even more essential because young people have more trust in social media influencers compared to older people due to their interactions with digital platforms (Jin & Ryu, 2019). Demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level knowingly influence consumer trust in social media influencers compared with traditional experts. Research suggests that age plays a critical role, as younger consumers tend to trust social media influencers more than older generations do, primarily because of the familiarity and engagement they experience on digital platforms (Jin & Ryu, 2019). Younger consumers often perceive influencers as relatable and authentic, valuing personal connections over formal expertise (Audrezet et al. 2020). However, older consumers may lean toward traditional experts, valuing the credibility associated with professional qualifications and experience (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Another factor that determine trust was found to be influenced by gender with women listed as trusting influencers more than men especially in lifestyle and beauty product triggered by perceived similarity and emotional appeal (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In addition, the income level has been realised to have impact on trust in both groups. Essentially, wealthy people expect only the best results and, because they are less willing to take risks compared to average consumers, high involvement leads to a susceptibility to technical details given by an expert (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). On the other hand, comparing two types of consumers – lower-income, they trust influencers more since they consider influencers'



endorsements more relatable and closer to their level, particularly if influencers post how they use products in real life, and use content-specific posts. These demographic variations bring out the differences with regards to the strategies used by influencers and experts to sustain trust and how those used are effective or otherwise to contrasting consumer brackets.

Psychographics and Trust

How consumers relate with aspects of personality and lifestyle about the product or facility influence their near of trust in influencers more than experts. Incredibly, research has shown that social media advocacy decreases with increased age, but buyers who are receptive to experience, curiosity and who are open to new ideas and concepts are more likely to follow social media advocacy by innovative or unconventional influencers (Jin & Ryu, 2019).. These consumers are drawn to influencers who offer relatable personal narratives and emphasize authenticity, as influencers typically resonate with those seeking novelty and emotional connections (Audrezet et al. 2020). In contrast, consumers with more conscientious personalities, who prioritize reliability and structure, tend to trust experts more, especially in high-involvement products such as household durables, where detailed, technical information is essential (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986I). Besides demographic factors, there are more significant lifestyle factors like a lifestyle that those who prefer community-oriented, socially driven content trust influencers. Consumers with affinity for social contacts and related recommendations are inclined to trust influencers because they create content that creates societal associations with others (Lou & Yuan, 2019). On the other hand, the auditoriate who tend to consider evidence from experts as more correct and accurate because they adhere to conventional values, will turn to expert endorsements (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Hence, the enumerative psychographic factors of personality and the chosen lifestyle influence the extent of trust in influencers and over experts; the post moderns who seek novelty and social interaction embraced the influencers, while. Marketers looking for expertise and reliability opted for the experts.

Perceived Authenticity

Social media influencers and traditional experts are perceived differently by the consumers and their manner of communication, rapport with the audience and type of endorsement differ significantly. People regard social media influencers as more sincere because they portray them as everyday users with their likes and dislikes. Authenticity is strengthened by their ability to engage with followers through direct and informal communication, creating a sense of transparency and trustworthiness (Audrezet et al., 2020). Influencers often integrate products into their everyday lives, offering what appears to be unbiased and spontaneous content that resonates with consumers seeking sincerity in brand endorsements (Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, this perceived authenticity can be challenged by the commercialization of influencer content, especially when endorsements are not clearly disclosed, leading to concerns about the genuineness of their recommendations (FTC 2022). In contrast, traditional experts are generally viewed as more credible because of their qualifications and professional experience,



but their endorsements may be perceived as less authentic because they are often viewed as more formal and detached. Experts typically provide in-depth, factual analysis that appeals to consumers seeking objective, knowledgeable advice (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, the impersonal nature of expert endorsements, coupled with the potential for perceived bias due to corporate affiliations, may reduce their perceived authenticity compared with the more personal and engaging approach of influencers (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Thus, while influencers' endorsements are valued for their relatability and personal touch, experts are considered authentic for their expertise and authority, although both face challenges in maintaining their perceived sincerity.

Recommendation Reliability

Consumers' perceptions of the reliability of the recommendations provided by influencers versus experts are shaped by several factors, including source credibility, authenticity, and perceived bias. Experts are often considered more reliable because of their expertise and objective knowledge, which are associated with professional qualifications and experience (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Their ability to provide detailed, evidence-based information on products or services contributes to their perceived reliability, particularly in high-involvement categories, such as household durables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In contrast, influencers gain reliability through authenticity and relatability. Their perceived trustworthiness is built on the emotional connections they foster with their followers and their ability to demonstrate products in real-life settings (Audrezet et al., 2020). However, the financial incentives associated with influencer endorsements can sometimes reduce their perceived reliability, as consumers may question whether the recommendations are genuinely reflective of the influencer's opinion or are motivated by sponsorship deals (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Furthermore, perceived bias can influence consumer trust, with experts generally seen as less biased because of their professional backgrounds, while influencers may be viewed as more biased because of their commercial relationships with brands (Jin & Ryu, 2019). Therefore, while experts are valued for their factual and technical knowledge, influencers are trusted for their personal engagement and authenticity; however, both face challenges in maintaining perceived reliability, particularly when financial motives are involved.

Trust and Purchase Decisions

The level of trust in social media influencers and traditional experts significantly influences consumers' purchase decisions for household durables, as trust directly affects consumers' perceptions of product quality, reliability, and value. Social media influencers, who often cultivate close personal relationships with their followers, can drive purchasing decisions through emotional connections and relatable content (Audrezet et al. 2020). Influencers' trustworthiness is bolstered by their authenticity and ability to provide real-life demonstrations of products, making them particularly effective in influencing consumers who prioritize personal experiences over technical expertise (Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, trust in influencers can be compromised if consumers perceive their endorsements as overly



commercialized or lacking transparency (FTC 2022), which can negatively affect purchase intent. In contrast, traditional experts build trust through their established credibility, professional experience, and authoritative knowledge, which appeals to consumers making high-involvement decisions such as purchasing household durables (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Trust in experts is often linked to their ability to offer in-depth, factual information about a product's features and benefits, thus reassuring consumers about the long-term value of their purchases (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). However, experts may struggle to emotionally connect with consumers, which could limit their influence on the decision-making process. Overall, while both influencers and experts impact purchase decisions, the effectiveness of their influence varies depending on the type of consumer and perceived trustworthiness of the source.

Trust Dynamics and Loyalty

The long-term effects of trust dynamics between influencers and experts on consumer loyalty and repeat purchases of household durables are influenced by the sustainability of the trust built between consumers and these sources. Trust in social media influencers often hinges on the authenticity and reliability they establish with their followers, fostering emotional connections that can lead to initial purchases and continued brand engagement (Audrezet et al., 2020). However, the longevity of this relationship is contingent on influencers maintaining transparency and consistency, as any perception of inauthenticity or over-commercialization can erode trust and undermine long-term loyalty (FTC, 2022). Research suggests that while influencer-driven purchases may result in short-term gains, a lack of deep expertise can hinder repeat purchases of durable goods, which require ongoing trust based on product quality and performance (Lou & Yuan, 2019). On the other hand, experts provide consumers with the technical knowledge and authority needed to build enduring trust, particularly for high-involvement purchases, such as household durables. Since specialists provide detailed information about the product and stress dependability, then their persuasion results in customers' brand loyalty and repeated business (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). However, it is much more challenging for the experts to develop more profound emotional experience with consumers, and therefore, their impact. In general, although influencers help to initially make consumers interested and even entice them to make a purchase, experts are known for making consumers loyal to the extent that they continuously support their argument with facts that the consumers trust as they listen to the experts (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Therefore, trust in influencers and experts is key determinants of consumers' behaviors; while influencers have short term effect in influencing purchase behavior, experts help to develop long term loyalty customer behaviors.

Significance of the Study

Practical Relevance: Understanding the success of influencers and experts can help marketers develop targeted and efficient communication strategies for household durables.



Academic Contribution: This study fills a gap in the existing literature by focusing on high-involvement products, a category underexplored in influencer and expert trust dynamics studies.

Consumer Insights: By analysing the trust-building mechanisms of influencers and experts, this study provides understandings into how consumers process information and make decisions in a digital-first environment.

Policy Implications: Findings can inform guidelines for ethical advertising practices, particularly in ensuring transparency in influencer marketing campaigns (FTC 2022).

Strategic Implications for Brands: This research help brands balance their investments in influencers and expert endorsements to maximize consumer trust and loyalty.

Research Objectives

- To compare the impression of social media influencers and traditional experts on consumer trust in household durables.
- To examine the mechanisms through which influencers and experts build credibility and trust among consumers.
- To explore the demographic and psychographic factors that moderate consumer trust in influencers versus experts.
- To analyze consumer perceptions of authenticity and reliability in influencers and expert endorsements.
- To evaluate the implications of influencer and expert trust dynamics on the purchase decisions of household durables.

Scope of the Study

As for this particular study, the roles of influencers and experts within consumer trust with regard to household durables are of interest. The scope includes:

Trust-building mechanisms: Review the actions employed by influencers and experts when building their reputations as the latter; these may include aspects of content and manner of expression, disclosure.

Product Category: The analysis concentrates on the major household durables means like washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioners etc., which are defined by their relatively high cost and long-life expectancy.

Consumer Segments: The research examines the considerations in the choice of demographic variables work, such as age, income, and psychographic variables such as lifestyle and values.

Digital Context: Namely, this research involves digital sites in which influencers and relevant specialists are most active, such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.



Comparative Analysis: Sequential comparison of trust relationship between existing influencers and experts is an important focus of this research.

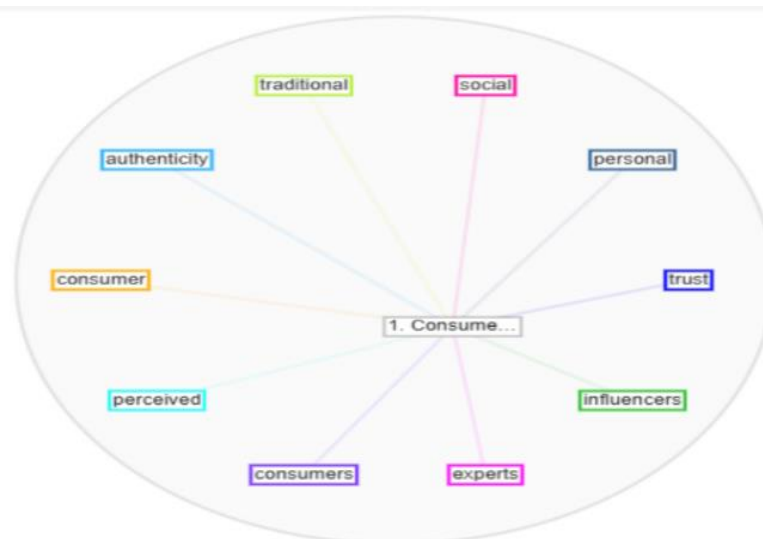
This research is focused on one segment of the consumer market as the type of the market is stated, for example, Indian market or American market, which provides a lot of attention to cultural characteristics of a specific region

Methodology

The data of this research has been analyzed using the Mandala, stream graph and trend analysis with the help of Voyant tool to identify how influencers and experts influence the consumer trust for household durables.. Mandala analysis was used to map the central concept of "trust" and its connections with surrounding terms such as "influencers," experts, "authenticity," and "perceived," providing a comprehensive view of how these elements interact. Stream graph analysis visualizes the frequency and distribution of key terms across document segments, highlighting shifts in their prominence and revealing the dynamic relationship between influencers, experts, and trust. Trends analysis identified the rising and falling patterns of term usage over time, offering insights into how consumers' perceptions of trust evolve and the changing influence of different information sources. Together, these analytical methods provide a multifaceted understanding of how trust is shaped by influencers and experts in the context of household durables.

Findings and Suggestions

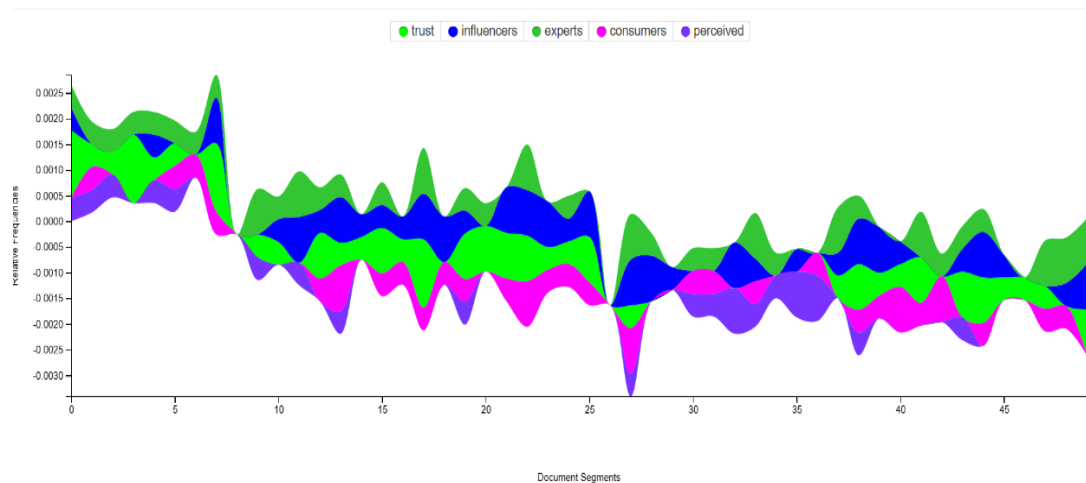
Mandala Analysis





Voyant tool when used on the Mandala style allows one to see the connections between trust, influencers, experts and consumer concerning household durables. The essence of trusting has been taken as the central parameter to ease the understanding of consumer decision processes. The two forms of influencers and experts that are presented and critical in shaping trust between a business and consumers are discussed below. Extracts from these sources are further grounded in the domains of conventional marketing and of new media, including TV, print and social networks, in order to depict how both play a part in constructing trust through various processes. This engagement also incorporates consumers' perception results, the primary factors being authenticity, self-experience and perceived credibility. Such factors speak to a blurring of the lines on consumer behavior, where a modern specialist doesn't necessarily replace the traditional expert's opinion with the information provided by a social media influencer, but uses it instead. Through the mapping of these variables, Mandala analysis offers important implications on how consumers in today's society make decisions based on trust and mistrust, but recommends that exploration on how other variables like authenticity and perceived reliability influences consumer decisions in the high-risk market of household durables needs to be carried out. It allows to gain broader insights into how trust is built through different information channels and helps create the foundation for customer loyalty and repurchase behavior.

Stream Graph Analysis

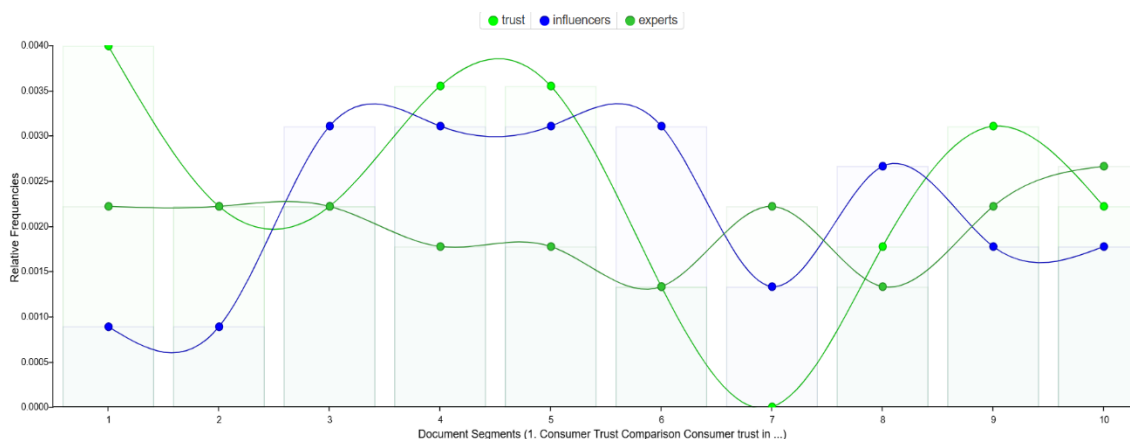


Bibliometric graphs and statistics derived from Voyant tools depict the spread and interaction of important term bases concerning trust, influencers, experts, and consumer sentiments in a stream-graph. The horizontal axis of the graph is taken up by the bars corresponding to different segments of the document and the vertical axis shows the relative frequency or usage of term within these segments. The quantitativity of the elements demonstrates the closeness of terms with the unique ratios in which they appear represented by the height of the graph. However, the resemblance of terms “influencers” and “trust” indicates a high correspondence; that means discussion of trust issues usually implies references to influencers. Similarly, the interaction of



the “experts” with reference to trust strongly indicates their important position in influencing consumers trust. The study demonstrates how the factors such as “consumer”, “perceived” are entangled with the trust related issues, underlining importance of trust in consumer decision making process. The fluctuations of these terms in sub-samples identify the topics within the content set and how trust, influencers, and experts are discussed across segments. Drawing from the stream graph analysis, the following conceptual insights help deconstruct the dynamics of the shift of emphasis on trust and its implications for consumer behaviors especially, household durables.

Trends Analysis



Voyant analysis of an unconventional format facilitates trend analysis that shows the development of such concepts as trust, influencers, experts, and consumer perception across a document. The x-axis identifies the different document segments, the y-axis quantifies the recurring or importance of each term within the segments. The findings of the present study show that the terms, such as ‘influencers’, ‘experts’ appear frequently in the document, underlining their importance for the formation of trust among consumers. Since we observed that ‘trust’ and ‘influencers’ frequently co-occur we can conclude that document is apt to relate the term of trust to the influencers of social media platforms. Terms such as ‘consumer’ and ‘perceived’ demonstrate that consumer perceived trust is closely related to trust concerning influencers and expert personnel. If we take a frequency distribution of the term ‘trust’ with regard to its occurrence across the sections 1 to 7, it is clear that the term ‘trust’ is as recurrent but certain sections have a stronger thematic emphasis on the term than others. The analysis of the topic trends can therefore help give much needed insights into adjusting the concern about trust, the role of trust in consumer behavior and the level of influence of influencers and experts in consumer decisions.



Conclusion

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for managers in the household durables industry, particularly regarding their approach to building consumer trust through both influencers and experts. Managers should also understand the part played by these two sources of influence in the process of perception. Being relatable, genuine, and emotionally appealing, influencers are influential in modifying consumers' purchasing behaviors hence can help numerous tech-savvy young individuals immensely. In contrast, from an expert point of view, credibility is derived from the information and position of the expert; this is quite important particularly where the consumer has to make important decisions on long-term products such as household durables. It is suggested that managers use both types of endorsements effectively and link the emotional factors of the influencers to the rational motives of the professionals within the industry. Furthermore, marketing communications should shift to social media platforms while establishing conventional professional approaches to appeal to various classes of audiences. The implications of these findings are diverse at the societal level. With social media influencers being increasingly popular the public is concerned with issues of transparency and/or authenticity and the ethical standard the influencers are setting for the market space. As influencer marketing continues to rise, there is a need for the industry to have regulation and self-regulation practices lest customers be influenced by the authorities, which comprises of the influencers or the brands. On the other hand while most experts, deemed to be more credible often appear in the form of 'middlemen' they serve to make up for lack of trust perhaps in what can be seen as situations where consumers need some recommendations from informed personnel in major purchases. These two factors produce the aforementioned more complex consumer scenario for a particular person in which he has to contend not only with reason but with feelings also. And it becomes important that there be checks and balances, especially when producing marketing/communication that speaks of ethical practice other than 'consumers'. This work contributes to the current literature discourse on trust effects and consumer behaviour particularly in the household durables product category. It makes a remark on the shifts in the process of consumer decision making, for the professionals and the social media influencers. By applying of Mandala analysis, stream graph analysis and trends analysis give a new practical and theoretical approach on the investigation of the trust patterns and gives more profound and diverse insight of the relations between the sources of trust. Future research can also proceed with investigation of the distinctions between followers' outcomes caused by influencers and experts and the norms that might control it in terms of certain product kinds, using the criteria like age, gender, and personality. However, other works could further examine the degree regarding the duration of trust dynamics in the brand consumer relationship and repeated consumption on household durables. Future research could expand on the findings of this study by exploring the role of influencers and experts in shaping trust across different geographic regions and cultural contexts. Understanding how trust-building strategies differ globally could provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of influencers and experts in diverse markets. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how consumer trust in



influencers and experts evolves over time, particularly as new platforms emerge and marketing practices evolve. Future studies could also investigate the impact of influencer and expert authenticity on brand reputation and consumer behaviour in the long term. Furthermore, research could explore the role of other psychological factors, such as consumers' need for cognitive closure or their susceptibility to persuasion, in moderating the trust placed in different sources of influence.

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