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THE DISCLOSURE DILEMMA: HOW SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE AND NON-DISCLOSURE BY CELEBRITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS SHAPE CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION AND BRAND ATTITUDE

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Abstract

Brands have long relied on celebrity endorsers to promote their products and services. However, the rapid growth of the internet and social media has reshaped the persuasion landscape, prompting marketers to shift attention from traditional celebrities toward social media influencers such as Instagram personalities, vloggers, and bloggers. A persistent feature of both forms of endorsement is sponsorship disclosure: endorsers sometimes reveal that a post is paid and sometimes conceal it. This paper investigates two focused questions: how does the disclosure versus non-disclosure of celebrity sponsorship influence consumer purchase intention and brand attitude, and



how does the disclosure versus non-disclosure of social media influencer sponsorship influence the same outcomes. Using a 2 (endorser type: celebrity vs. influencer) × 2 (disclosure: disclosure vs. non-disclosure) full factorial experiment with 357 Instagram users in Pakistan, the study finds a strong interaction between endorser type and disclosure. For celebrities, non-disclosure produced significantly higher purchase intention than disclosure. For influencers, disclosure produced significantly higher purchase intention than non-disclosure. The results imply that brands should generally avoid disclosing celebrity sponsorships and avoid concealing influencer sponsorships, because the wrong pairing depresses both purchase intention and brand attitude. The findings advance the literature by bringing two previously separate streams—endorser type and sponsorship disclosure—into a single comparative frame, and they offer concrete guidance for marketers and policymakers navigating native advertising on social media.

1. Introduction

Marketers have used celebrity endorsement to promote brands since the late nineteenth century, and a large body of research confirms that celebrity endorsement can enhance advertising effectiveness (Erdogan, 1999; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). When marketers transfer the positive image and characteristics of a celebrity onto a brand, they can more readily persuade consumers to buy (Schouten et al., 2020). Yet the digital revolution has changed who delivers these persuasive messages. The explosive growth of internet use and social media has encouraged marketers to invest in social media influencers—bloggers, vloggers, and Instagram personalities—rather than relying solely on traditional celebrities (Marwick, 2015; Schouten et al., 2020). As global social media usage has risen, brands have increased their spending

on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube while reducing investment in traditional media (eMarketer, 2019), and influencers can be especially effective because consumers often trust them more than they trust celebrities (Schouten et al., 2019). Companies have, in effect, migrated from radio, magazines, and television toward social networking sites for promotion, and within these channels they rely on both celebrities and influencers to build brand image and drive sales.

Running through both celebrity and influencer endorsement is the phenomenon of sponsorship disclosure. Celebrities sometimes reveal that a post is a paid endorsement and sometimes do not (Wojdyski & Evans, 2016), and influencers behave the same way, alternately disclosing or concealing paid relationships (Kay, Mulcahy &

Parkinson, 2020; Campbell & Grimm, 2019). Despite how common this practice is, research has paid it relatively little attention, and the few existing studies have examined celebrity disclosure and influencer disclosure largely in isolation. Boerman et al. (2014, 2015) and Wojdyski and Evans (2016) reported that disclosing celebrity sponsorship can reduce purchase intention and brand attitude, while Yao and Huang (2017) found that non-disclosure through product placement meaningfully shaped both outcomes. On the influencer side, Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson (2020) argued that disclosure raises purchase intention and brand attitude whereas non-disclosure lowers them, and Weismueller et al. (2020) found that a clear disclosure statement improves source attractiveness and indirectly lifts online purchase intention. What the literature does not resolve is a direct, side-by-side comparison: is disclosure better when the endorser is a celebrity or when the endorser is an influencer?

This paper asks whether these two patterns are mirror images of each other. It proposes that when celebrities do not disclose their endorsements, their influence appears more organic and is more positive, whereas when influencers do disclose their endorsements, they are perceived as more credible and exert a more positive influence than when they

conceal the relationship. To keep the analysis focused, the paper concentrates exclusively on the first two research questions and objectives of the broader project: the effect of celebrity disclosure versus non-disclosure, and the effect of influencer disclosure versus non-disclosure, on consumer purchase intention and brand attitude. Accordingly, the first research question asks what influence the sponsorship disclosure and non-disclosure of a celebrity has on the purchase intention and brand attitude of consumers, and the second asks the same of a social media influencer. The corresponding objectives are to investigate each of these effects empirically. Examining the two side by side, within a single experiment, is a deliberate choice: earlier studies have generally examined one endorser type at a time, leaving open the possibility that the disclosure effects reported for celebrities and for influencers are artefacts of different samples, products, or settings rather than genuine differences rooted in the endorser. By manipulating endorser type and disclosure simultaneously while holding the product, platform, and post format constant, this study can attribute any divergence directly to the interaction of the two factors, testing not just whether disclosure matters but whether its direction depends on who is doing the endorsing.



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The study matters for both researchers and practitioners. For researchers, it helps fill a gap in the academic literature by comparing celebrity and influencer disclosure within a single experimental frame rather than treating them separately. For marketers, it clarifies when disclosure helps and when it hurts, offering an actionable rule of thumb: disclose influencer sponsorships and avoid disclosing celebrity sponsorships in order to maximise purchase intention and brand attitude. The findings are also relevant to consumers and policymakers, because they illuminate how disclosure and non-disclosure practices shape the persuasive power of sponsored content and where consumers may be misled by undisclosed promotion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Celebrity Endorsement and Social Media Influencers

Social media is used by billions of people worldwide and has transformed how brands and consumers communicate (Kostic, Ivanovic & Okanovic, 2018). As traditional media has lost ground, brands have moved spending toward Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube (Opreana & Vinerean, 2015; eMarketer, 2019). Within this environment, brands recruit active, popular users—social media influencers—to promote products, giving rise to influencer marketing as a powerful communication tool (Schomer, 2019).

Influencer marketing reaches large audiences quickly and at lower cost than traditional media (Evans et al., 2017). Influencers are typically experts or enthusiasts in fields such as cooking, travel, beauty, fitness, and fashion, and they share favourable opinions about brands that can spread virally (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017; De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Much of this activity is paid, which positions it as sponsored or native advertising (Campbell & Grimm, 2019).

Celebrities, meanwhile, have themselves migrated to social media, promoting brands from personal accounts—sometimes without disclosing sponsorship. The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is well documented (Erdogan, 1999; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Aleti et al., 2019), as is the role of celebrities in health and even political campaigns (Knoll & Matthes, 2016). A growing literature also examines influencers and their effect on purchase intention (Lim et al., 2017; Hermanda et al., 2019; Isyanto, Sapitri & Sinaga, 2020; Kay, Mulcahy & Parkinson, 2020). Schouten et al. (2020) compared celebrities and influencers and concluded that influencers can be more effective because consumers identify with and trust them more readily. What remains underexplored is a direct comparison of celebrity and influencer endorsement under conditions of

disclosure versus non-disclosure—precisely the focus of this paper.

It is worth clarifying why the celebrity-versus-influencer distinction is not merely a difference of degree. The two endorser types occupy different positions in the consumer's mind. A traditional celebrity—an actor, musician, or athlete—earns fame primarily outside the product domain and is understood by audiences to be a public figure whose endorsements are professional engagements. Influencers, by contrast, typically build their following within a content niche such as beauty, fitness, or fashion, and their appeal rests on a perception of relatability and peer-like authenticity. This difference in the basis of their appeal is what makes disclosure operate so differently across the two. For the celebrity, the persuasive illusion is that the famous person happens to genuinely use the product; disclosure shatters that illusion. For the influencer, the persuasive foundation is honesty and closeness to the audience; disclosure reinforces it. The present paper builds directly on this distinction, treating it as the reason the disclosure effect should reverse rather than simply weaken across endorser types.

1.2 2.2 Purchase Intention and Brand Attitude

Purchase intention is the willingness of a consumer to buy a particular product or service in a given situation or time (Baz et al., 2018). Because

intention forecasts actual purchasing, it is a critical predictor of future sales (Morwitz, 2012). Brand attitude—the consumer's overall evaluation of a brand—is a closely related outcome that endorsement campaigns also seek to improve. Research links celebrity endorsement to higher purchase intention (Subbiah & Sathish, 2020), with attributes such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, familiarity, and product match-up playing a role (Khan, Memon & Kumar, 2020; Frimpong, Donkor & Frimpong, 2019). Influencer research reaches similar conclusions: micro-influencer marketing, post popularity, and clear disclosure have all been linked to stronger purchase intention (Isyanto, Sapitri & Sinaga, 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020; Kay, Mulcahy & Parkinson, 2020). The missing piece is how disclosure interacts with endorser type to drive these outcomes.

Purchase intention and brand attitude are treated together in this study because they tend to move in concert and because campaigns pursue both simultaneously. Brand attitude captures a relatively durable evaluative judgement, while purchase intention captures a more immediate behavioural readiness. An endorsement that improves how consumers feel about a brand generally also makes them more inclined to buy, and conditions that depress one outcome usually depress the other. Treating them as a paired



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set of dependent variables therefore gives a fuller picture of how disclosure strategy shapes consumer response than focusing on either alone, while keeping the analytical frame parsimonious.

1.3 2.3 Sponsorship Disclosure as a Strategic Variable

Sponsorship disclosure is the announcement to consumers that content is paid (Kay, Mulcahy & Parkinson, 2020). Regulators and consumer-protection advocates increasingly require influencers to label paid posts clearly—for instance with terms such as 'ad' or 'sponsored'—so that audiences are not misled (Weismueller et al., 2020; Stewart, 2017; Marsh, 2017). Against these requirements, brands sometimes use native advertising, presenting paid content so that it blends with non-sponsored posts (Campbell & Grimm, 2019). The strategic question is whether revealing or concealing this paid status helps or harms persuasion—and whether the answer depends on who the endorser is.

1.4 2.4 Celebrity Endorsement and Sponsorship Disclosure

Celebrities endorse brands across both traditional and social channels (Khamis et al., 2017), and high-profile figures often promote products from personal accounts without revealing sponsorship. Evidence suggests that for celebrities, concealment can be advantageous. Yao and Huang (2017) found that non-disclosure through

product placement significantly shaped purchase intention and brand attitude, while Boerman et al. (2014, 2015) and Wojdyski and Evans (2016) found that disclosing celebrity sponsorship negatively affected these outcomes. The proposed mechanism is that when a celebrity does not disclose, consumers infer that the celebrity genuinely and personally uses the product, making the endorsement feel natural and organic. When disclosure is present, consumers may instead view the celebrity as a paid 'hired gun,' discounting the message. This reasoning yields the first hypothesis.

H1: Celebrity sponsorship non-disclosure (versus disclosure) on social media will have a more positive impact on consumer purchase intention and brand attitude.

1.5 2.5 Influencer Endorsement and Sponsorship Disclosure

Influencer marketing is fertile ground for non-disclosure, because influencers can readily intermix sponsored and non-sponsored content and may sign paid agreements without revealing them (Campbell & Grimm, 2019; Friedman, 2017). New regulations increasingly push influencers to disclose. Importantly, the evidence suggests that, for influencers, disclosure is beneficial rather than costly. Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson (2020) found that influencer disclosure raises purchase intention and brand attitude while non-disclosure lowers them, and Lim et al.

(2017) reported that disclosure positively shapes these outcomes. The proposed mechanism is one of credibility and honesty: an influencer who openly discloses a paid relationship is seen as sincere and trustworthy, so consumers believe the recommendation; an influencer who conceals sponsorship is seen as less honest, undermining the post. This reasoning yields the second hypothesis.

H2: Social media influencer sponsorship disclosure (versus non-disclosure) will have a more positive impact on consumer purchase intention and brand attitude.

Taken together, H1 and H2 predict a crossover interaction: the favourable disclosure condition for celebrities (non-disclosure) is the opposite of the favourable condition for influencers (disclosure). The conceptual model therefore treats endorser type as the independent variable, disclosure versus non-disclosure as a moderating variable, and purchase intention and brand attitude as the dependent variables.

1.6 2.6 Conceptual Framework

The framework guiding this study is straightforward but consequential. Endorser type (celebrity versus influencer) is the independent variable. Sponsorship disclosure (disclosure versus non-disclosure) is the moderating variable that conditions the effect of endorser type. Purchase intention and brand attitude are the

dependent variables. The model does not predict a simple main effect of endorser type; instead, it predicts that the effect of disclosure on consumer outcomes will differ in direction depending on the endorser. For celebrities, the model anticipates a downward effect of disclosure relative to non-disclosure. For influencers, it anticipates an upward effect of disclosure relative to non-disclosure. The empirical test of the framework is therefore the significance and shape of the endorser-type-by-disclosure interaction term, with the supporting evidence found in the pattern of condition means. If the framework holds, the two endorser types should reverse, not merely differ in magnitude, as disclosure changes.

3. Research Methodology

1.7 3.1 Philosophy and Approach

The study adopts a positivist philosophy and a deductive approach, empirically testing theorised hypotheses through quantitative methods. Because the goal is to establish causal effects of disclosure and endorser type, an experimental design is appropriate.

1.8 3.2 Design

An experimental method was used. The initial design was a 2 (endorser type: celebrity vs. influencer) × 2 (disclosure: disclosure vs. non-disclosure) × 2 (endorser gender: male vs. female) full factorial. Because the three-way interaction involving endorser gender was not significant,



gender was dropped, leaving a 2 (endorser type) × 2 (disclosure) full factorial design. Participants were exposed to a single Instagram post about a product, attributed either to a celebrity or to an influencer, with sponsorship either disclosed or not. Four fictitious but realistic Instagram posts were created using two real-life celebrities (one male, one female) and two real-life influencers (one male, one female). The hashtag '#sponsored' was used to mark the disclosure conditions. To hold post popularity constant, every post was designed to display 27,560 likes, and a similar product appeared in each.

1.9 3.3 Population and Sample

The target population was consumers of perfumes and deodorants in Pakistan aged 18–35 who are also active Instagram users. Owing to time constraints and the COVID-19 pandemic, the sampling frame was limited to university students in the twin cities (Islamabad and Rawalpindi) and Peshawar. Convenience sampling was used. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (1) Disclosure × Celebrity, (2) Non-Disclosure × Celebrity, (3) Disclosure × Influencer, and (4) Non-Disclosure × Influencer. The survey was built on Qualtrics and distributed by email and social media messengers, with randomisation giving each respondent an equal chance of assignment. Of roughly 500 users invited and 386 who participated, 29 responses were empty

or invalid, leaving a valid sample of 357. A cross-sectional time frame was used.

1.10 3.4 Measures

Endorser type and disclosure were manipulated following Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson (2020) and Schouten et al. (2020). All constructs were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales. Purchase intention used four items and brand attitude used three items, both adapted from Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson (2020); ad/sponsorship disclosure used two items from the same source. Responses were entered in Microsoft Excel and analysed in SPSS, where frequency, reliability, and validity tests were run, with multivariate ANOVA used for hypothesis testing. Several design features support the internal validity of the experiment. Random assignment to the four conditions equalised the probability of any respondent landing in a given cell, helping to balance unobserved differences across groups. Holding the product category, the displayed like count, and the post format constant across conditions removed obvious confounds, so that differences in outcomes could be attributed to the manipulated factors rather than to extraneous features of the stimulus. The use of previously validated, published scales for the dependent and manipulation-check measures further strengthens construct validity, and the strong reliability coefficients



reported below confirm that the scales measured their intended constructs consistently. Care was taken at each stage to avoid data manipulation and to limit the risk of bias.

4. Results and Analysis

1.11 4.1 Sample Profile

Of the 357 valid respondents, 292 (81.8%) were male and 65 (18.2%) were female. The largest qualification group was graduates (203; 56.9%),

followed by master's-level respondents (81; 22.7%). Most respondents reported monthly income between 20,000 and 40,000 (214; 59.9%), and the largest age band was 18–25 years (200; 56.0%). The sample therefore skews young, educated, and lower-to-middle income – consistent with a university-student Instagram population. Table 1 summarises the key demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Demographic profile of respondents (N = 357).

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	292	81.8
	Female	65	18.2
Qualification	Graduation	203	56.9
	Masters	81	22.7
	Intermediate	53	14.8
	Other / Matric / PhD	20	5.6
Monthly Income	20,000–40,000	214	59.9
	41,000–60,000	64	17.9
	61,000–80,000	39	10.9
	81,000 and above	40	11.2
Age	18–25 years	200	56.0
	26–30 years	104	29.1
	31–35 years	32	9.0
	36 years and above	21	5.9

1.12 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Mean scores on the seven-point scales were 4.62 for ad disclosure, 5.15 for brand attitude (the highest), and 4.14

for purchase intention (the lowest). Skewness values were negative but close to zero and kurtosis values were below three for all variables,



indicating distributions that were acceptably near-normal, slightly left-skewed, and somewhat thin-tailed.

Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Ad Disclosure	357	4.62	6.00	2.35	-0.41	-1.51
Brand Attitude	357	5.15	5.66	1.51	-1.05	0.48
Purchase Intention	357	4.14	4.00	1.85	-0.17	-1.23

1.13 4.3 Reliability

All scales showed strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the 0.70 threshold throughout: ad disclosure 0.817, brand

attitude 0.932, and purchase intention 0.973. Reliability was therefore satisfactory for hypothesis testing, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Reliability of measurement scales.

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Ad Disclosure	2	0.817
Brand Attitude	3	0.932
Purchase Intention	4	0.973

1.14 4.4 Manipulation Checks

The manipulations worked as intended. Respondents in the disclosure condition strongly perceived the post as sponsored ($M = 6.64$, $SD = 0.84$) relative to the non-disclosure condition ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 2.37$, $p < .05$). They also recognised celebrities as celebrities ($M = 6.70$ vs. 3.78 for the influencer comparison, $p < .05$) and influencers as influencers ($M = 6.28$ vs. 3.76 , $p < .05$). Both the disclosure and the endorser-type manipulations were thus valid.

1.15 4.5 Hypothesis Tests

A two-way ANOVA tested the effects of endorser type and disclosure on purchase intention. The main effect of endorser type alone was not significant, $F(1, 353) = 0.55$, $p = .458$, indicating that being a celebrity or an influencer did not by itself change purchase intention. The decisive result was the interaction between endorser type and disclosure, which was highly significant, $F(1, 353) = 64.18$, $p < .001$, $\text{partial } \eta^2 = .154$. This interaction is exactly the crossover pattern predicted

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by H1 and H2. Table 4 reports the full ANOVA results.



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Table 4

Two-way ANOVA Results for Purchase Intention

Source	F	p	Partial η^2
Endorser Type	0.55	.458	.002
Disclosure	5.21	.023	.015
Endorser Type \times Disclosure	64.18	.000	.154

H1 (celebrity). Within the celebrity conditions, non-disclosure produced significantly higher purchase intention ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.72$) than disclosure ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.68$). H1 is supported: when celebrities conceal sponsorship, purchase intention rises, consistent with the idea that an undisclosed celebrity endorsement feels organic and personal, whereas a disclosed one is discounted as paid.

H2 (influencer). Within the influencer conditions, disclosure produced significantly higher purchase intention ($M = 5.13, SD = 1.65$) than non-disclosure ($M = 3.28, SD = 1.72$). H2 is supported: when influencers disclose sponsorship, purchase intention rises, consistent with disclosure signalling honesty and credibility, while concealment undermines trust.

Table 5

Purchase intention by condition (7-point scale).

Condition	Mean Purchase Intention	SD
Celebrity \times Non-Disclosure	4.59	1.72
Celebrity \times Disclosure	3.56	1.68
Influencer \times Disclosure	5.13	1.65
Influencer \times Non-Disclosure	3.28	1.72

The same crossover logic extends to brand attitude, which moves in tandem with purchase intention across conditions: the celebrity advantage lies in non-disclosure and the influencer advantage lies in disclosure. The 'wrong' pairing in each case – disclosing celebrity sponsorship or concealing influencer sponsorship – depresses both outcomes.

5. Discussion

The central finding is a clean crossover interaction. Endorser type alone does not move purchase intention; what matters is the fit between the endorser and the disclosure strategy. For celebrities, secrecy pays: when a famous figure does not flag a post as sponsored, consumers infer authentic personal use, and the endorsement carries more weight. The moment the

same post is labelled as paid, the celebrity is recast as a commercially motivated spokesperson, and persuasion falls. This pattern aligns with Yao and Huang (2017) and with Boerman et al. (2014, 2015) and Wojdyski and Evans (2016), who found that disclosing celebrity sponsorship dampens consumer response.

For influencers the logic reverses. Influencers derive much of their persuasive power from a perception of authenticity and peer-like sincerity. Disclosure reinforces that perception by signalling honesty, so a clearly labelled influencer post is more persuasive than a concealed one. When an influencer hides sponsorship and the audience nonetheless infers a commercial relationship, the influencer appears less trustworthy and the message loses force. This is consistent with Kay, Mulcahy and Parkinson (2020) and Lim et al. (2017), who found that influencer disclosure raises purchase intention and brand attitude.

Theoretically, the study's contribution is integrative: it joins two literatures – endorser type and sponsorship disclosure – that have largely developed in parallel, and it shows that their effects cannot be understood independently. Disclosure is neither uniformly good nor uniformly bad; its value is conditional on the source. This conditional, interaction-based

view is the paper's key advance over single-stream studies.

The non-significant main effect of endorser type deserves emphasis because it is easy to misread. It does not mean celebrities and influencers are interchangeable. Rather, it means that averaging across disclosure conditions washes out two opposing forces: celebrities do well when concealed and poorly when disclosed, while influencers do well when disclosed and poorly when concealed. Pooling these conditions cancels the differences, producing a flat main effect that masks a powerful interaction underneath. This is a useful caution for practitioners and researchers who might otherwise ask the simpler question – 'are celebrities or influencers more effective?' – and conclude there is no difference. The more accurate question is conditional: effective under which disclosure regime?

The findings also speak to the tension between marketing effectiveness and regulatory compliance. The result that celebrity non-disclosure outperforms celebrity disclosure is, in effect, a finding that the most persuasive celebrity strategy is the one regulators increasingly restrict. This places brands in a genuine dilemma: the persuasion-maximising choice for celebrity endorsements can collide with disclosure rules and with ethical expectations about transparency. For influencers, happily, there is no such



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tension—the persuasion-maximising choice, disclosure, is also the compliant and ethical one. From a policy perspective, this asymmetry suggests that enforcement attention and consumer-education efforts may yield the most benefit when focused on undisclosed celebrity promotion, where the commercial incentive to conceal is strongest and the persuasive payoff to concealment is largest.

6. Conclusion

This paper examined how sponsorship disclosure versus non-disclosure influences purchase intention and brand attitude for two endorser types—celebrities and social media influencers—using a 2×2 factorial experiment with 357 Instagram users in Pakistan. The results support both hypotheses. Celebrity sponsorship non-disclosure produced higher purchase intention and brand attitude than disclosure, while influencer sponsorship disclosure produced higher purchase intention and brand attitude than non-disclosure. The driving result is a significant endorser-type-by-disclosure interaction; endorser type on its own had no significant effect.

In short, the persuasive value of transparency depends on who is being transparent. Disclosure helps influencers by reinforcing credibility and hurts celebrities by puncturing the illusion of organic, personal use. Brands that ignore this asymmetry—by disclosing celebrity deals or

concealing influencer deals—risk lowering both purchase intention and brand attitude.

1.16 6.1 Practical Recommendations

- Disclose influencer sponsorships clearly. Labelling an influencer post as paid strengthens perceived honesty and lifts purchase intention and brand attitude; concealment does the opposite.
- Be cautious about disclosing celebrity sponsorships. Where legally permissible, an undisclosed celebrity endorsement reads as organic personal use and is more persuasive; disclosure tends to depress response.
- Match the disclosure strategy to the endorser, not to a blanket policy. The same disclosure choice that helps one endorser type can harm the other.
- Balance effectiveness with regulation and ethics. Because non-disclosure can mislead consumers and may breach advertising rules, marketers should weigh the persuasion gains from celebrity non-disclosure against legal and reputational risk, and policymakers should note that consumers respond differently to disclosure depending on source.

1.17 6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations qualify these findings. The cross-sectional design captures responses at a single point in time and cannot track how disclosure effects evolve. The sample was limited to 357 university students recruited

through convenience sampling, so future work could use larger probability samples and include working professionals. The stimulus was a single static Instagram post for one product category; future research could test Instagram Stories or short videos, additional product categories, and real rather than fabricated posts. Finally, while this paper deliberately concentrated on the direct effects of disclosure and non-disclosure on purchase intention and brand attitude, future studies could examine mediators such as source credibility, opinion leadership, social identification, or product knowledge to explain the underlying mechanisms more fully.

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