

# Instagram celebrities and positive user responses. The mediating role of user “like”

The effects of  
two types of  
celebrities

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The objective of this paper is to compare the effects of two types of celebrities (Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity) on users' willingness to look for product information (promoted products). User “likes” (user's intention to give “like” the promoted brand post) and Instagram involvement are examined as applied moderators in the proposed theoretical model of this research.

**Design/methodology/approach** – 203 participants contribute to an experimental study and were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity). An American-South African woman as a traditional celebrity and an American woman as an Instagram celebrity were selected for this study.

**Findings** – The outcomes demonstrate the power of Instagram celebrity in excess of the traditional celebrity. In addition, the findings indicate how users are more eager to “like” the post promoted by the Instagram celebrity. It also confirms that highly involved users (vs. lowly involved users) have a greater effect on the relationship between the Instagram celebrity and users' willingness to look for the product information.

**Practical implications** – Managerial implications for social media marketing and Instagram marketing campaigns are provided. From the view of marketing planning, the findings speak to the potency of campaigns using Instagram celebrity as an effective branding strategy.

**Originality/value** – This research in addition to highlighting the role of user “like” and user involved with Instagram, contributes to a better understanding of the importance of the promoted product information search in online marketing campaigns.

**Keywords** Instagram celebrity, Traditional celebrity, User “like”, Instagram involvement, Promoted product information

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Introduction

In the last decade, social media platforms are growing at a staggering pace and attracted millions of new users across various platforms. With the rise of social media platforms, brands are starting to take interest in marketing opportunities through endorsements of influencers or celebrities on social media. Because consumers are more and more turning to celebrities and influencers for product advice (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). Influencers attract millions of followers by sharing content curated from their daily lives on platforms like



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Instagram and YouTube, evolving around one particular domain of interest (Chapple and Cownie, 2017; Mediakix, 2017). Although “traditional” celebrities have also found their way to social media. Instagram as a favorite social media app has newly experienced extraordinary development in fame as a communication channel through which brands can transmit their commercial messages (Rietveld *et al.*, 2020). Instagram reported that it had more than one billion monthly active users worldwide in January 2021, half of them using the platform daily (Statista, 2019). The increasing importance of Instagram has prompted firms to make considerable investments in social media activities to engage and connect with potential consumers (Perreault and Mosconi, 2018).

Through Instagram, fashion enthusiasts have achieved a reputation and gained huge success, partly because of the aesthetic appeal of Instagram filters and the platform’s capability to attain wide audiences (Jin *et al.*, 2019). The increase of fashion bloggers, referring to individuals who provide fashion tips and introduce specified products and brands through their social media accounts and blog posts, caught the attention of fashion brands (Paton, 2014).

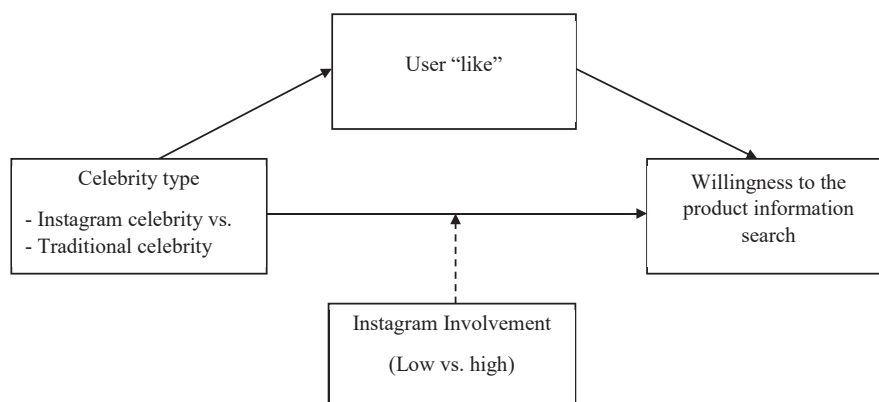
What some brands knew interesting is that these Instagram personalities are imposing in spreading messages about new products, opening and promoting new trends, and motivating up sales. According to extent of the effect, these Instagram personalities are identified as Instagram celebrities (Jin *et al.*, 2019). The phenomenon of Instagram celebrity has developed specifically in this platform due to its unique features: the ability for social interaction and aesthetical presentation, which allow users to build personal narratives and showcase identities that attract audiences (Abidin, 2016a). Nowadays, deploying Instagram celebrities for promoting fashion products has become a defining element of social media marketing campaigns (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017).

Research on comparing the effects of Instagram celebrities and traditional celebrities on customers’ online behaviors are limited, and only a few studies have recently been conducted in this area (Ahmadi and Ieamsom, 2021; Schouten *et al.*, 2019; Jin *et al.*, 2019), however, previous studies have focused on the metrics applied to assess the impact of Instagram influencers’ behaviors (e.g. Arora *et al.*, 2019; Abidin, 2016b; Casaló *et al.*, 2018; De Veirman *et al.*, 2017; Boerman, 2020). Thus, given the importance of this phenomenon, more research is critical to understand the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns in terms of their influence on customers’ online behaviors. In this research therefore we ran an experiment associating how users react in a different way to posts featuring the same product endorsed by two different types of celebrities: Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity. Before launching an Instagram influencer campaign, digital marketers need to test if partnering with an Instagram influencer is more effective for their clients than partnering with traditional celebrities. By way of the aim of going into better profundity in this research domain thus, this study examines how audiences are able to distinguish two types of celebrities (Instagram celebrity and traditional celebrity) as the independent variable, and how these two variables affect users’ willingness to look for product information (promoted product published by the celebrities), as the dependent variable. The research model also includes two moderating variables. We first test the moderating effect of user “like” (user’s intention to give “like”) and then examine the role of Instagram involvement as the second moderator. Brands and fashion companies can employ the research findings to develop effective marketing campaigns that lead to positive reactions of users. The research conceptual framework is displayed in Figure 1.

## 2. Literature review and development of hypotheses

### 2.1 The celebrities on social media

Celebrities of social media include individuals who became well-known via their social media presence, contrasted with traditional celebrities who are well-known from film, music and TV



**Figure 1.**  
The conceptual  
framework

shows (Khamis *et al.*, 2017). Conventionally, celebrity endorsement only reflects celebrities who shaped value for themselves through sports, music or movies, before contributing to advertising activities (Kamins *et al.*, 1989). However, the alternative forms of celebrities we see today fall outside the traditional categories, which is a phenomenon that arguably started with the rise of reality TV stars. When studying the effects of this new type of celebrities, it has been found that consumers have a stronger connectedness toward them (Tran and Strutton, 2014) and they perceive them as more authentic (Stefanone *et al.*, 2010). The perceived realness of those non-traditional stars and the deep connectedness results in higher purchase intention of the products they endorse because consumers personally identify with them and try to imitate them (Tran and Strutton, 2014). A variety of contemporary social media celebrities create value for their personal brands while engaging in quasi-promotional activities (Duffy and Hund, 2015). The brands of these influencers are perceived as real and relatable, so they become more approachable and compelling to imitate. Fashion bloggers on Instagram have a highly integrated relationship with and critical reliance on the brands they choose to feature because their livelihood and fame are mainly dependent on those factors (McQuarrie *et al.*, 2012). Conversely, traditional celebrities engage in social media as an instrumental and promotional tool for their work in mainstream media industry domains. The uniqueness of micro-celebrities is manifested by the way they connect with audiences and the interpersonal intimacy deeper than appearing in TV shows or mainstream movies (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016).

If celebrities of social media are non-traditional forms of celebrities, what makes them called “influencers” even on popular media, and why are they prominent in digital marketing to the extent that they sometimes overshadow mainstream celebrities? When discussing social media influencers, it has to be carefully explained if this term is the same as micro-celebrities. Influencers are defined as “people who built a large network of followers and are regarded as trusted tastemakers in one or several niches” (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand, micro-celebrities are defined as “[...] everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in ‘digital’ and ‘physical’ spaces, and monetize their following by integrating ‘advertorials’ into their blogs or social media posts and making physical paid-guest appearances at events” (Abidin, 2016a). These two terms are almost conceptually identical and the major characteristics of them are large numbers of followers, active engagement, and promotion of products or brands.

Famous fashion bloggers on Instagram can be described as both micro-celebrities and Instagram celebrities (Instagram influencers) interchangeably, as they meet the criteria for each term. The current study operationally defines an Instagram celebrity (influencer) as any popular Instagram character with a high number of followers, who has a high taste in fashion and lifestyle, which enables them to monetize their appearance. These influencers can be considered micro-celebrities because they have relatively high recognizability, and they use them for social influence and monetization. Social media influencers enjoy this unique identity of both being famous and ordinary people.

### *2.2 Effect of the celebrities on user's reactions*

When users look for product information of a brand post created by a celebrity, it could be because the brand post is attractive or strong enough (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016). In this manner, Instagram celebrities can be more effective in resonating with audiences as they are perceived as more similar to regular audiences, have a greater probability of communicating with enthusiasts, and are simpler to connect with or recognize than traditional celebrities (Jin *et al.*, 2019). They may more augment the audience's perception of the source as someone who can endorse and share the post (Schouten *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, the users are further interested to communicate with an Instagram celebrity than a traditional celebrity, and this communication can contain numbers of actual followers, followings, likes, comments, and sharing of the endorsed product/brand posts (Jin *et al.*, 2019). In fact, Instagram fashion celebrities are perceived to be further reliable when their visual appearance and lifestyle match the symbolic value of branded products (Lee and Watkins, 2016).

When people face a visual image of an Instagram celebrity with a promoted product, they would make an intention to seek the product information (Belanche *et al.*, 2020). The positive nature toward a more recognizable Instagram celebrity would result in more willingness to look for the information of promoted products. In contrast, since traditional celebrities appear on ads for numerous brands, their commercial motivation would be assumed by consumers (Bailey, 2007). An endorsement by traditional celebrities could be perceived as a business transaction with the sponsoring branded product without any emotional attachment to the product, whereas Instagram celebrities would be perceived as having greater standards in picking their endorsed brand to which emotional attachment and meanings are allocated (Jin *et al.*, 2019). With these tips in mind, it is a reasonable assumption that an Instagram celebrity will increase more consumer enthusiasm to look for the promoted product information. On the basis of this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H1. Compared to traditional celebrities, Instagram celebrities have a greater effect on the users' willingness to look for information about the promoted product.

### *2.3 Effect of user "like"*

In the Instagram environment, "likes" allow users to click a button to acknowledge they appreciate the published post. "Likes" reflect positive feedback from individuals on social networking sites (Wohn *et al.*, 2016). Effect of liking is so important that posts prefer to get more "likes" than long comments (Kaur *et al.*, 2019). For brand marketers, consumers' "likes" not only enhance brand connections and customer engagements but also benefit them through online brand endorsement (Bernritter *et al.*, 2016; Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; Malhotra *et al.*, 2013). Likers who are experts or innovators can exert considerable positive effects on focal brands through their liking behaviors that are observed by their friends on social media (Escalas and Bettman, 2003). These positive effects can help marketers promote brand images and increase product sales (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010; Mochon *et al.*, 2017).

The Instagram celebrity-user link can be more similar to an association between equals, or between friends who share similar values, problems, and requirements (Belanche *et al.*, 2020). These directories are more important for non-mainstream celebrities because a regular individual's fanatic and eager users and their "likes" can be ascribed to this person's active encouragement, openness to audiences, and popularity in the online community (Van Der Heide and Lim, 2016). The further communicating a public persona is, the more expected it will make greater affinity and trust (Van Noort *et al.*, 2012). The signals of this more interactivity and incentive can be containing likes, comments, and shares. In contrast, traditional celebrities having great followers and "likes" can be understood as a spread of the reputation they already have in the offline world, aside from their sociability or proactivity in social media (Jin *et al.*, 2019).

Instagram celebrities vs. traditional celebrities are more using their skills, knowledge, and experience to continually generate new content to become opinion leaders and attract a broad follower network (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). In addition, messages attraction and liking them can be much greater if traditional celebrities and professional models are not used (Schouten *et al.*, 2019). Instagram celebrities also are social network users who have developed the competence to affect a large group of followers through the media (Gilani *et al.*, 2018) and may determine their followers' behavioral intentions (Roelens *et al.*, 2016). In fact, Instagram celebrities are typically reflected as more likable for the followers, simply because they are more public (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). Based on these arguments we thus propose the following hypothesis:

*H2.* Brand posts promoted by Instagram celebrities will result in more users' intention to give "like" than brand posts promoted by traditional celebrities.

Ozanne *et al.* (2017) stated that a Facebook user who likes a post because of its entertainment value may also want to more reaction such as sharing information about it with some Facebook friends. For Instagram celebrities, liking their posts by their followers is exclusively important, because they probably lead to positive reactions such as user willingness to search for the information promoted products (Belanche *et al.*, 2020). In fact, Instagram celebrities are typically reflected as more likable for the users, simply because they are more public (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017). Considering this issue and considering the greater possible effect of the brand posts by an Instagram celebrity compared to brand posts by traditional celebrity, it's proposed that the users who have more willingness to give "like" to the Instagram celebrities' brand post may have more willingness to the promoted product information search. Based on these statements we thus propose the following hypothesis:

*H3.* User intention to 'like' mediates the better effect of Instagram celebrities than traditional celebrities on users' willingness to look for the promoted product information.

#### 2.4 Role of Instagram involvement

Instagram involvement contains the extent of Instagram usage, a number of profiles are followed and a number of profiles followed (Wnent, 2016), and other actions such as posting, liking, or commenting (pixlee.com, 2018). Former studies on social influencer advertising have provided slight deliberation to personal alterations that may clarify the effects of social influencer advertising (Amornpashara *et al.*, 2015; Tiggemann *et al.*, 2018). We assume there to be an alteration between people who are highly involved with Instagram and individuals who are lowly involved with Instagram. An earlier investigation has differentiated some forms of social media users, which are classified in terms of their behavior on social media (Krasnova *et al.*, 2013).

Highly involved social media users are usually people who occupy social media actively (e.g. posting, liking, and commenting). They are users who have been using Instagram for a long period of time in an orderly and energetic mode (Nijs, 2019). While lowly involved users are individuals who only view the content and are not taking part in an active manner. These two different types of users face diverse emotions when employing social media and thus may experience distinguished impacts from the messages they observe (Krasnova *et al.*, 2013). Through actively following social influencers users are continually confronted with brands and social influencers promoting those brands. Hence, for dynamic users those social influencers can become a group they compare themselves with (Jin and Phua, 2014).

Highly involved Instagram probably considers more Instagram as a place for motivation and considers more well-known Instagram influencers as a social comparison group (Wnent, 2016). They thus have more impact on information search of the product promoted by the Instagram celebrities. Whereas, lowly involved Instagram users probably less consider a brand post promoted by an Instagram celebrity as less worthy and probably will be less familiar with them (Wnent, 2016). Highly involved Instagram users probably do value the promoted product reviews on Instagram, they are familiar with the Instagram celebrities and view more the endorsed product posts by them. Whereas, lowly involved Instagram users are less accustomed to Instagram celebrities and usually disregard them (Nijs, 2019). On the basis of these statements thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

- H4.* Compared to traditional celebrities' brand posts, Instagram celebrities' brand posts are more important for highly involved users than for lowly involved users.

Highly involved Instagram users exposed to Instagram celebrities' brand/product posts perceive the post source to be more worthy, show a more positive approach toward the endorsed brand, and are more attracted to do positive responses such as sharing the posts (Ahmadi and Ieamsom, 2021). They have a stronger connectedness toward Instagram celebrities than traditional celebrities (Tran and Strutton, 2014) and perceive them as more authentic and attractive (Stefanone *et al.*, 2010). The perceived reality of those non-traditional stars and the deep connectedness leads to greater purchase intention of the products they endorse because consumers personally identify with them and try to emulate them (Tran and Strutton, 2014). Furthermore, if highly involved Instagram are users who are more familiar with Instagram celebrities and they occupy more in social media actively (e.g. more liking, commenting, or sharing) (Schouten *et al.*, 2019), we expect that they will be more eager to look for published posts product information of an Instagram celebrity than a traditional celebrity. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H5.* Compared to lowly involved Instagram users, highly involved Instagram users moderate the better effect of Instagram celebrities on users' willingness to look for the promoted product information than traditional celebrities.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Participants

Previous research highlighted that women are the more active Instagram users, due to its visual element (Sheldon and Bryant, 2016; King, 2019). In addition, employing the sample of women is fitting for the investigation context and frequent practice in fashion marketing research Michon *et al.* (2008). Thus, we considered only women as our research sample. The female graduate students from an International University in Thailand accepted to take part in our online survey. Nine data sets were excluded due to technical problems (e.g. slow Internet connection hindered proper display of comparison trials). The remaining 203



participants ( $M_{age} = 30.62$  years,  $SD = 1.48$ ) completed the study for monetary compensation and were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions.

### 3.2 Design and procedure

For the Instagram account of a traditional celebrity, an American-South African woman (Charlize Theron) was chosen as she represents a celebrity figure with high recognizability and attractiveness. Charlize has a high number of Instagram followers, which helps not only ensure ecological isomorphism and a reasonable level of external validity but also controls the level of quantitative Instagram popularity across conditions. For the Instagram account of an Instagram influencer, another American woman (Aimee Song) was selected with Instagram posts that insured that the character has similar physical features (e.g. skin tone, style, pose, etc.) with the corresponding traditional celebrity. The researchers found ecologically isomorphic, externally valid, realistic, and comparable photos of Charlize Theron and Aimee Song, with a similar product, very similar pose, angle, and fashion style. The number of posts, the number of followers, and the number of followings were modified to be equivalent across conditions, to control for the effects of quantitative indices and popularity cues on participants' perception of celebrities' active engagement and popularity.

We also explained the clear concept and definition of the celebrities to the participant. Then, to evaluate whether the person appearing in the post is perceived as an influencer or a celebrity (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree), we applied an independent samples test. The results indicated the more power of the Instagram celebrity than the traditional celebrity ( $M_{IC} = 6.14$ ,  $M_{TC} = 5.09$ ;  $t[201] = 20.36$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings showed the participants understood as well the concept and differences between the celebrities.

To measure the mediating role of user "like", participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agree with giving a "like" for the posts (e.g. "I would like to give a "like" for this post promoted"; 1 = "totally disagree", 7 = "totally agree";  $\alpha = 0.91$ ; averaged to form a user "like" index) adapted from [Bernritter et al. \(2016\)](#).

To evaluate Instagram involvement, we used several subscales altered from a study by [Tiggemann et al.'s \(2018\)](#), in this way that participants were asked a number of questions about their Instagram use. We asked (1) how many days per week the participant used Instagram (0–7), followed by (2) how many minutes per day the participants used Instagram on a typical day. These were then combined in minutes per week. Then, we asked (1) how many people the participants followed, and (2) how many followers they had. Next, we used three items altered from a study by [Ting \(2014\)](#) to create an understanding of participant's activities on the platform during the last three months (e.g. "In the past 3 months, how often do you give a "like" for someone's posts on Instagram?";  $\alpha = 0.84$ ). The scale consisted of 7-points ranging from 1 = never to 7 = frequently. Finally, three items modified from [Ellison and Steinfield \(2007\)](#) were used to measure participants' involvement on Instagram (e.g. "I feel out of touch when I have not logged onto Instagram for a while" and "I feel I am part of the Instagram-community";  $\alpha = 0.81$ ). The participants had to evaluate the answers on a 7-point scale, which ranged from 1 = totally disagree to 7 = totally agree.

We conducted a factor analysis to check if we could take all subscales together as one scale measuring Instagram involvement. Before interpreting the results of the factor analysis, it was checked if the factor analysis is an appropriate technique to use for clustering the data. Bartlett's test was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) indicating that the variables in the dataset are indeed related. Moreover, with a value of 0.74, KMO's measure for sampling adequacy is well above the 0.5 minimum value, which means that a substantial proportion of the variance can be accounted for by the factors. Hence, we can proceed by interpreting the factor structure. All components had an eigenvalue below 1 (0.738). The items measuring Instagram involvement all have a loading well above 0.40, meaning that they indeed cluster well together.

Information search willingness was evaluated by three items adapted from [Stewart et al.'s \(2018\)](#) and study, for example, “I predict I will share the post about this branded product in the near future” ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ). All scale items correlated positively and loaded on a single factor. [Table 1](#) displayed the item-total correlations.

4. Results

4.1 Manipulation check

We used an independent samples test to check manipulation of the Instagram celebrity’s brand post vs. traditional celebrity’s brand post manipulation on seven-point scales (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). The examination showed the superiority of Instagram celebrity to the traditional celebrity ( $M_{IC} = 5.94, M_{TC} = 4.11; t[201] = 16.57; p < 0.01$ ), demonstrating the accomplishment of the manipulation.

4.2 Effect of main variables

We once more used an independent samples test to assess the direct effect of types of celebrities (Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity) on user willingness to the product information search. The analysis displayed the more power of Instagram celebrity than traditional celebrity ( $M_{IC} = 5.82, M_{TC} = 4.23; t[201] = 17.34; p < 0.01$ ), indicating [H1](#) is supported.

4.3 Effect of user “like”

To examine the effect of the advertising posts on follower intention to like ([H2](#)), The analysis’s results of independent samples test exposed that the Instagram celebrity has a better effect on user intention to like than the traditional celebrity ( $t[201] = 13.48, p < 0.01, M_{IC} = 5.54, M_{TC} = 4.36$ ); thus, [H2](#) was supported.

To test the mediating role of user “like”, bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) were obtained ([Hayes, 2013](#); model 4, with 10,000 bootstrap samples) for inference about the mediation effect. The estimated indirect effect of the Instagram celebrity condition on willingness to product information search via user “like” was 0.45 and the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI was (0.02, 0.82). Whereas, the estimated indirect effect of the Instagram traditional condition on willingness to product information search via user “like” was 0.34, and the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap CI was (0.02, 0.82). These results support the [H3](#) (see [Table 2](#)).

4.4 Effect of the instagram involvement

The study employed a 2 (the celebrity type: Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity)  $\times$  2 (Instagram involvement: low vs. high) between-subjects design. To make a comparison between consumers on the basis of their involvement with Instagram, the participants were categorized into low involvement ( $\leq -0.01$ ) and high involvement ( $\geq 0.00$ ) based on their scores’ mean split on the Instagram involvement scale. The ANOVA run on the Instagram

**Table 1.**  
Item-total correlations  
per construct

Correlations	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. User “like”	4.56	1.23	0.885*		
2. Instagram involvement	4.38	1.44	0.519*	0.862*	
3. Willingness to the product information search	4.62	1.29	0.367**	0.311**	0.827*
<b>Note(s):</b> $n = 203$ ; Root square of the AVE shown on the diagonal; * $p < 0.05$ , ** $p < 0.01$					



involvement index showed a significant effect of celebrity type ( $F(2, 201) = 19.46, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.15$ ). Participants in the Instagram celebrity condition ( $M = 3.94$ ) reported higher involvement than those in the traditional celebrity condition ( $M = 3.02; F(1, 201) = 11.85, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$ ). These results then indicate that [H4](#) is supported.

To assess the moderating effect of Instagram involvement, we conducted a 2 (the celebrity type: Instagram celebrity vs. traditional celebrity)  $\times$  2 (low vs. high Instagram involvement) ANOVAs on willingness to the product information search. The analyses exposed a significant interaction effect between the celebrities and Instagram involvement on the user's willingness to product information search ( $F[2,201] = 10.17, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.01$ ). Findings also showed that contrary to individuals who have low involvement with Instagram, individuals who have high involvement with Instagram are more eager to search for information about the product promoted by an Instagram celebrity ( $M_{\text{HighI}} = 4.87$  vs.  $M_{\text{LowI}} = 3.17; F(1, 201) = 8.22, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.01$ ). On the other hand, individuals who have high involvement with Instagram (vs. individuals who have low involvement with Instagram) are less enthusiastic to search for information about the product promoted by an Instagram celebrity ( $M_{\text{HighI}} = 2.15$ , vs.  $M_{\text{LowI}} = 3.94; F(1, 201) = 7.12, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.01$ ). On the basis of these findings, thus [H5](#) is supported (see [Figure 2](#)).

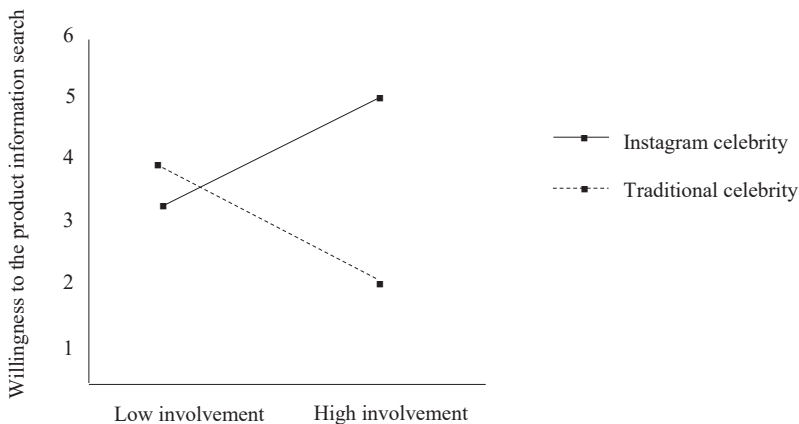
The results of hypothesis testing and a summary of all the analysis techniques are displayed in [Table 3](#).

## 5. Discussion

Nowadays, marketing campaigns on social media are progressively becoming a requirement for marketers. Collaborating with celebrities can help create online buzz about companies' products. In addition, it can strengthen their brand's reputation, improve audience engagement, and increase conversions. Hence, companies have been collaborating with

Indirect effects of X on Y at values of the mediator	Coefficient (SE)	95% confidence interval
Instagram celebrity	0.45 (0.15)	(0.02, 0.82)
Traditional celebrity	0.39 (0.12)	(0.23, 0.47)

**Table 2.**  
Mediation testing results



**Figure 2.**  
The communication impact of the celebrities and Instagram involvement on willingness to the product information search

**Table 3.**  
Summary of the  
analysis techniques  
and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	The analysis's method	The analysis's results
<i>H1</i> : Compared to traditional celebrities, Instagram celebrities have a greater effect on the user's willingness to look for information about the promoted product	Independent samples test	Supported
<i>H2</i> : Brand posts promoted by Instagram celebrities will result in more users' intention to give "like" than brand posts promoted by traditional celebrities	Independent samples test	Supported
<i>H3</i> : User intention to "like" mediates the better effect of Instagram celebrities than traditional celebrities on users' willingness to look for the promoted product information	Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (BCBCI)	Supported
<i>H4</i> : Compared to traditional celebrities' brand posts, Instagram celebrities' brand posts are more important for highly involved users than for lowly involved users	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	Supported
<i>H5</i> : Compared to lowly involved Instagram users, highly involved Instagram users moderate the better effect of Instagram celebrities on users' willingness to look for the promoted product information than traditional celebrities	Analysis of variance (ANOVA)	Supported

social media celebrities to bring their products to their target audience in a more natural way (Schouten *et al.*, 2019). Marketing campaigns are leveraging the reach of existing celebrities (e.g. Instagram celebrities and traditional celebrities) who have built a large following and strong brand reputation in a particular niche to support their brand, endorse their product, or co-create content, with the intent to increase brand awareness and drive sales. These Marketing campaigns actions have been extensively implemented on Instagram, whose visual nature creates the platform of choice for marketers (Relatabe, 2019). This current research shaped the marketing campaign, through the brand posts including Instagram celebrity with the promoted product and the traditional celebrity with the same endorsed product, and compare and clarify their effects on user willingness to the product information search.

The results of the research showed that users' willingness to look for the product information is relatively affected more through the Instagram celebrity than the traditional celebrity. This means that users are more tended to look for the product information of a brand post published by an Instagram celebrity compared to a brand post published by a traditional celebrity. The reason behind this is that users more interact with Instagram celebrities, and people feel more similar to Instagram celebrities than traditional celebrities and as a result like their endorsements more (Schouten *et al.*, 2019), and are more inclined to look for the information of their endorsed products. Another valid reason could be in line with earlier studies that stress the role of more authenticity and trust in Instagram celebrity endorsements (Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014). In addition, each Instagram celebrity is recognized as a promoter of a particular class of products (e.g. fashion products). Therefore, as they are considered experts in a particular area of knowledge (Rahman *et al.*, 2014), users search their promoted products information more because they want to keep up to date with developments there.

Besides, the findings showed that users are more interested in liking the post published by the Instagram celebrity, whereas liking the post promoted by a traditional celebrity is less important for the users. In addition, the research's findings displayed that users' interest in giving 'like' boosts the higher effect of the posts advertised by an Instagram celebrity on the

users' willingness to product information search. The reason behind this is that users more interact with Instagram celebrities. People feel more similar to influencers than celebrities and as a result like their endorsements more (Schouten *et al.*, 2019), and are more inclined to search their endorsed products' information.

The results of the study testing the effect of the celebrities' brand posts on Instagram involvement showed that an Instagram celebrity's promotional post in contrast to a traditional celebrity's promotional post is more significant for highly involved users than for lowly involved users. These findings support previous research (Ahmadi and Ieamsom, 2021) verified that highly involved Instagram users are more familiar with the Instagram celebrities and consider more the endorsed product posts by them, while lowly involved Instagram followers are less familiar with Instagram influencers. Moreover, the consequences of the assessment of the moderating effect of Instagram involvement showed that Instagram involvement plays an important role in determining the customer's behavior toward the posts. Users who are more involved with Instagram have a higher interest in looking for information about the products promoted through an Instagram celebrity (vs. a traditional celebrity). Users who are more highly involved (vs. lowly involved) with Instagram tend to develop more positive behavioral intentions toward the brands/products promoted by Instagram influencers. These results are logical, given that users highly involved with Instagram tend to have more positive attitudes toward commercial campaigns developed through Instagram influencers (Nijs, 2019). This degree of involvement of an Internet user even affects the attitude to the advertisement, the brand, and the purchase intention (Yang, 2011). Therefore, highly involved Instagram users have a greater positive impact on their subsequent behaviors toward the brand post advertised by the Instagram celebrity (vs. the traditional celebrity), and further reinforce the influences of campaigns shaped through an Instagram celebrity.

### 5.1 Theoretical contributions

The present study examines a comparison of two types of social media celebrities (Instagram influencer vs. traditional celebrity) with the brand posts advertised in their account on the Instagram environment and tests their effects on users' willingness to look for the information of the promoted product. The research thus provides several theoretical contributions. First, for researchers, the study adds to the new literature about the role of Instagram celebrities and traditional celebrities on Instagram marketing campaigns and assesses this effect on different behaviors of users. However, previous research evaluates this comparison on different reactions of customers on Instagram (Jin *et al.*, 2019; Ahmadi and Ieamsom, 2021), on other social networks (Schouten *et al.*, 2019), or out of the subject of posts have been investigated (Khamis *et al.*, 2017). Thus, according to marketing activities on social networks, especially Instagram are increasingly commonplace, this research tries to clarify this phenomenon to extent a deeper understanding of how brands might collaborate with celebrities to promote their products. In this respect, this investigation underscored that the products promoted by the Instagram celebrity (vs. the traditional celebrity) are a more crucial factor in developing further positive behavioral intentions.

The findings of the study have shown that Instagram celebrities are deemed more effective than traditional celebrities, and users are more engaged with Instagram celebrities' brand posts. Users are more willing to give more "like" to the brand post formed by the Instagram celebrity. Therefore, the second theoretical contribution for the study is that Instagram celebrities may be more effective product endorsers than traditional celebrities and a practical recommendation is therefore to continue to use these endorsers on Instagram marketing campaigns. This paper also highlights the effect of users' "like" that plays an important role in the relationship between celebrities' posts and users' willingness to the

product information search, though this effect reveals more the superiority of the effect of brand posts of an Instagram celebrity. The published brand posts in addition to achieving users' "like", can lead to users' willingness to look for the product information of these posts.

The third theoretical contribution is investigating the role of Instagram involvement. It is an important explanation for why users who are highly involved with Instagram are more engaged with the Instagram celebrities' advertising posts than traditional celebrities' advertising posts. Due to frequent Instagram use highly involved Instagram users are probably more confronted with Instagram celebrities and their advertisements (Ahmadi and Ieamsom, 2021). Consequently, they are more familiar and involved with the influencers than lowly involved Instagram users. Lowly involved Instagram users, in contrast, are possibly less familiar with influencers and their efficiency in promoting the products and care less about the posts advertised by influencers. Furthermore, this research highlighted the moderating role of Instagram Involvement in an upsurge in users' willingness to look for the product information of the celebrities' brand posts. The variable is important in understanding the efficacy of promotional messages. Though, the brand posts of Instagram celebrities have a better effect on users who are more involved with Instagram to look for the promoted product information of posts.

### *5.2 Managerial implications*

Some management implications are provided for this article. The first is that this research highlights the effectiveness of relying on Instagram celebrities in marketing campaigns. It points out the strength of social media as an informational and inspirational source for marketing planning (Jim *et al.*, 2019). In terms of marketing planning, the present findings point out Instagram marketing campaigns as an effective approach to promoting products. Traditional celebrity endorsement is still a reliable strategy, but for reaching out to consumers who prefer to engage with their product on social media, Instagram celebrities could be more effective in especially targeting consumers.

The research findings showed that brands should manage accurately the promotion of their products when using Instagram celebrities. It is important for brand managers to increase their knowledge of the users interested in specific Instagram celebrities, as this is a determining factor in attaining a better consideration of the efficiency of marketing actions on Instagram. They should undertake prior market research studies to select the most appropriate Instagram celebrities, individuals whose style, themes, and orderly content correspond to the products they want to promote in their influencer-based campaigns (CasalO *et al.*, 2018). Preferably, brands should collaborate with Instagram celebrities to create stories that intertwine their products with the regular content published by them. These actions will make a higher perception of the endorsed product by the Instagram celebrity which, in turn, will raise positive behaviors toward the products.

The next managerial implication is the importance of users' "like" such that publishing brand posts of Instagram celebrities with products engage more users to give more "like" to such posts, which results in obtaining valuable feedback from the community (Algesheimer *et al.*, 2005; CasalO *et al.*, 2007). Because, achieving more users' "like" can increase by choosing the brand and boosting consumers' purchases (Facebook, 2019). This action will make a higher perception of brand posts advertised by the Instagram celebrity which, in turn, will raise positive behaviors toward the brands/products such as promoted product information search. In addition, brands should analyze the level of Instagram involvement of users interested in Instagram celebrities. This is important because, if these users are involved with the posts the provider desires to promote in the marketing campaign, the consequences of this association will be more productive. Therefore, when they plan to collaborate with brands, they must be aware of the posts of products promoted that the brands offer.

## 6. Limitations and the direction of future research

Some limitations are existing in this study that can be the way to the expansion of future research directions. First, the study is conducted by comparing just two celebrities (an Instagram celebrity and a traditional celebrity) who in spite of being well-known in the country of origin of the participants may have some particularities and special features in comparison to other similar celebrities. Therefore, to generalize the results, future research should replicate the study with other celebrities. Second, it is significant to note that numerous social media apps have affordances and spirits dissimilar from what Instagram offers. Future research can reflect cross-platform assessments. Third, our research sample was made up of women, nevertheless, future research should include a gender-balanced sample to generalize the fallouts, and analyze if gender might play a moderating role in this research context. The last limitation and future research direction for this study are that the paper only concentrated on a single product category and brand. Thus, future studies can comprise different products/brands.

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