



**Sinergie SIMA**  
Management Conference



# **Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society**

*Conference Proceedings*

*Short Papers*

*Parma (Italy)*

**13-14 June 2024**

Sinergie-SIMA Management Conference Proceedings  
*Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society*  
13-14 June 2024  
University of Parma - Italy

ISBN 978-88-94-7136-5-7

The Conference Proceedings are published online on <https://www.sijmsima.it>

© 2024 FONDAZIONE CUEIM  
Via Interrato dell'Acqua Morta, 26  
37129 Verona - Italy



# **Management of sustainability and well-being for individuals and society**

**13-14 June 2024**

## ***Conference Proceedings***

**Short Papers**

edited by

*Arabella Mocciaro Li Destri, Marta Ugolini,  
Guido Cristini and Beatrice Luceri*

# Perceived authenticity of green influencers: An experiment on components and determinants

STEFANO ROMITO<sup>1</sup> GAIA GIAMBASTIANI<sup>2</sup> CLODIA VURRO<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

*This research examines how the authenticity components affect consumer perceptions of green influencers' sponsored and non-sponsored communications and their influence on sustainable behavioral intentions. In an experimental study involving 486 participants, we assess the impact of the six authenticity components—accuracy, connectedness, integrity, legitimacy, originality, and proficiency, as identified by Nunes, Ordanini, and Giambastiani (2021)—on consumers' intentions within the realm of green influencers. In addition, an exploratory cluster analysis identifies distinct consumer segments based on their evaluation of these components in judging the effectiveness of green influencers' communication. Our results illuminate the diverse ways consumers perceive authenticity, showing that authenticity judgments not only differ based on the consumption context but also vary individually, as consumers attribute different levels of importance to these components.*

**Key words:** Green influencers; Authenticity; Green Marketing; Influencer Marketing

**Framing of the research.** Firms are increasingly relying on green influencers – social media figures who advocate for minimizing or eliminating the negative environmental impacts of human behavior (Jacobson and Harrison 2022), to promote a greener brand image when communicating in the digital landscape (De Fano, Schena, and Russo, 2022). Similar to traditional influencers, these individuals act as independent third-party endorsers, shaping audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other social media platforms (Freberg et al., 2011, p. 90).

Green influencers, while recognized as highly effective communicators in the digital realm, particularly with younger audiences, face a significant challenge when aligning with corporate interests (Zollo et al., 2020). Their promotional partnerships with companies, particularly in the form of sponsored content, often lead to a perceived reduction in their communicative effectiveness. This is largely due to the risk such sponsorships pose to green influencers' perceived authenticity (Audrezet, De Kerviler and Moulard, 2020). Followers may perceive these influencers as compromising their values for financial gain, leading to negative reactions to sponsored posts and skepticism about the underlying marketing intentions (Xie and Feng, 2023). As a result, an influencer's authenticity can be compromised by the intrusion of brands into their content.

**Purpose of the paper.** Recent literature has attempted to explain why some collaborations between green influencers and firms succeed while others do not, focusing on communication strategies to preserve authenticity in sponsored content (Audrezet, De Kerviler and Moulard, 2020). However, this research is based on a conceptualization of authenticity viewed as a monolithic construct, overlooking how perceptions of authenticity can significantly vary depending on different consumption contexts (Morhart et al., 2015)

With the aim to provide a finer grained understanding of the determinants of green influencers' authenticity, we first build on the most recent contributions on authenticity, which consider it as the result of a holistic assessment of six component judgments: accuracy, connectedness, integrity, legitimacy, originality, and proficiency (Nunes, Ordanini, and Giambastiani, 2021). According to recent literature, we consider authenticity a higher-order construct comprising various components each one contributing to the perceived authenticity of an experience. Building on the findings of Nunes et al. (2021), our research aims to identify which components of authenticity are most significant for consumers in evaluating green influencers and in predicting sustainable behavioral intentions in both sponsored and non-sponsored content. Specifically, our study aims at responding to two interviewed research questions: RQ1: Which are the most important authenticity components in the context of green influencers communications? RQ2: How the relevance attributed to each authenticity component shapes judgments about sponsored communications?

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Milano  
e-mail: stefano.romito@unimi.it

<sup>2</sup> e-mail: g.giambastiani@vu.nl

<sup>3</sup> University of Milano  
e-mail: clodia.vurro@unimi.it

**Methodology.** To answer our research questions, we run an experiment with a sample of 496 active social-media users recruited on Prolific Academic (Mage = 28.39, 49% female). The study employs a 2 groups (sponsored vs. non-sponsored) between subjects' design. At the beginning of the study, we provided participants with a definition of green influencers, which are "social media influencers whose main goal is to promote sustainable, ecological, and environmentally friendly habits (e.g., choosing biological foods, buying organic clothing, recycling, and waste reduction). In general, green influencers promote actions aimed at minimizing or eliminating negative effects of human behavior on the environment." We then asked participants to indicate how many of these influencers they follow on social media. Only participants who follow at least one green influencer were considered eligible to complete the study.

Participants indicated the name of one green influencer they follow and on which social media they follow this green influencer. After this, we provided all participants with a description of two types of content that green influencers can create: (1) sponsored content, where the green influencer develops content in collaboration with a brand or another entity that is financially supporting the creation of that content (paid advertisement) and clarified that when the content is sponsored, influencers have to signal that to their audience; and (2) non-sponsored content, where the content created by the green influencer is not developed in collaboration with a brand or another entity, so the green influencer is not receiving extra monetary compensation for the creation of that content (no advertisement). We then randomly assigned participants to the two conditions and asked them to describe the typical post that their chosen green influencer creates when publishing sponsored (vs. non-sponsored) content. We also asked participants to specify which kind of green behavior the influencer was communicating. We collected our main dependent variable, behavioral change intentions, by asking respondents to indicate how likely they would change their behavior following the advice of this green influencer's sponsored (vs. non sponsored) content on a scale going from 1 = Not at all to 5 = Very much.

After collecting our main dependent variable, we provided participants with a list of 20-items developed using the authenticity component's definitions by Nunes et al. (2021). For each of the six components, participants rated the importance of to three to four items describing a specific characteristic aligned with the components' definitions. Among those items we also included an attention check question. In Table 1, we report the full list of items together with the corresponding Cronbach's alpha calculated for each authenticity component.

Table 1. List of items for each authenticity component and Cronbach's alphas

| Component     | Item                                                                                                               | Alpha |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Accuracy      | The extent to which you consider the green influencer as sincere in their communications                           | .86   |
|               | The extent to which you consider the green influencer as transparent in how they communicate                       |       |
|               | The extent to which you consider the green influencer to be reliable in terms of what they communicate             |       |
| Connectedness | The extent to which you feel connected and engaged by the green influencer's communication                         | .79   |
|               | The extent to which you feel inspired to change your behavior by the green influencer's communication              |       |
|               | The extent to which you see the green influencer as someone like you                                               |       |
| Integrity     | The extent to which the green influencer really believes in what they are doing                                    | .75   |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer is not acting out of its own financial interests                          |       |
|               | The extent to which you consider the green influencer's communication as consistent over time                      |       |
|               | The extent to which you see the green influencer behaving coherently with what s/he is advising                    |       |
| Legitimacy    | The extent to which you see the green influencer following the common rules and norms in the social media platform | .80   |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer has a high number of followers                                            |       |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer has a verified profile                                                    |       |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer is recognized as highly influential by other influencers                  |       |
| Originality   | The extent to which the green influencer's communication is unique                                                 | .72   |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer stands out from the mainstream                                            |       |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer is able to communicate without unnecessary frills                         |       |
| Proficiency   | The extent to which the green influencer is properly knowledgeable about sustainable topics                        | .75   |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer shows skills and abilities                                                |       |
|               | The extent to which the green influencer has expertise in their sustainable domain                                 |       |

Ratings given on the scale: Not at all important (1) Slightly important (2) Moderately important (3) Very important (4) Extremely important (5)

**Results.** Overall, 11 participants failed the attention check question and were therefore removed from the analysis, leaving a final sample size of 486 respondents (247 in the sponsored condition and 239 in the non-sponsored condition, keeping the removed participants does not change the results). Considering the satisfactory levels of the Cronbach's alphas, for each of the six components, we created one unique measure averaging the items scores. We report in Table 2 the summary statistics of the main variables included in our analyses

Table 2. Summary statistics

| Variable                     | N   | Mean  | SD   | Min | Max |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|-----|
| Intention to change behavior | 486 | 3.54  | 1.09 | 1   | 5   |
| Accuracy                     | 486 | 4.22  | 0.76 | 1   | 5   |
| Connectedness                | 486 | 3.65  | 0.86 | 1   | 5   |
| Integrity                    | 486 | 4.17  | 0.67 | 1   | 5   |
| Legitimacy                   | 486 | 2.82  | 1.00 | 1   | 5   |
| Originality                  | 486 | 3.49  | 0.82 | 1   | 5   |
| Proficiency                  | 486 | 4.03  | 0.72 | 1   | 5   |
| N of influencers followed    | 486 | 3.20  | 2.41 | 1   | 10  |
| Age                          | 486 | 28.05 | 7.43 | 19  | 59  |

Mean score values for each authenticity component are above the scale mid-point, indicating that these are overall relevant for consumers in the decision-making process. In addition, some components seem to be more relevant than others, we see accuracy ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ) and integrity ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) appear as the most important components, followed by proficiency ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ), then by connectedness ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ), originality ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ) and lastly by legitimacy ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). In Table 3 we include the pairwise correlations among the key variables of interest.

Table 3. Pairwise correlations among variables

|                   | Cond.   | B. change | Acc.   | Conn.  | Int.   | Leg.   | Orig.  | Prof. | N of inf foll |
|-------------------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|---------------|
| Condition         | 1.000   |           |        |        |        |        |        |       |               |
| Behavior change   | -.171** | 1.000     |        |        |        |        |        |       |               |
| Accuracy          | -.054   | .292**    | 1.000  |        |        |        |        |       |               |
| Connectedness     | -.005   | .386**    | .534** | 1.000  |        |        |        |       |               |
| Integrity         | -.023   | .261**    | .634** | .479** | 1.000  |        |        |       |               |
| Legitimacy        | .018    | .189**    | .119** | .309** | .093*  | 1.000  |        |       |               |
| Originality       | .028    | .309**    | .391** | .509** | .378** | .373** | 1.000  |       |               |
| Proficiency       | -.028   | .324**    | .585** | .472** | .547** | .214** | .475** | 1.000 |               |
| N of inf followed | -.054   | .280**    | .035   | .166** | .048   | .103*  | .142** | .040  | 1.000         |

\* Indicates significant at  $p < .05$ , \*\* Indicates significant at  $p < .01$

Looking at the values, we see a negative significant correlation between the variable condition (sponsored content vs. non-sponsored content) and behavioral change intentions. We also see significant positive correlations among each of the six components and with behavioral change intentions. We also note that the numbers of green influencers followed is significantly correlated with behavioral change intentions, indicating an overall positive relationship between interest in green influencers and intentions to behave more sustainably. Importantly we find no significant correlations between the six authenticity components and our manipulation, indicating that the importance of each component does not vary according to the condition. In Table 4 below we include the results of the pairwise comparisons of score values' importance between the two conditions. In line with the results of Table 4, we confirm the absence of significant differences in the importance of each component for participants in the sponsored vs. non-sponsored content conditions when deciding whether to follow the advice of a green influencer or not.

Table 4. Pairwise comparisons of components across conditions

| Component     | Sponsored Mean (SE) | Non-sponsored Mean (SE) | t(484) | p-value |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| Accuracy      | 4.18 (.05)          | 4.26 (.05)              | 1.19   | .236    |
| Integrity     | 4.15 (.04)          | 4.18 (.04)              | 0.51   | .610    |
| Proficiency   | 4.05 (.04)          | 4.01 (.05)              | 0.62   | .535    |
| Connectedness | 3.65 (.06)          | 3.66 (.05)              | 0.10   | .921    |
| Originality   | 3.52 (.05)          | 3.47 (.05)              | -0.61  | .541    |
| Legitimacy    | 2.81 (.06)          | 2.81 (.07)              | -0.41  | .685    |

We then assessed whether there are differences in participants intention to change their behavior following the recommendations of the green influencer when the content is sponsored (v. non sponsored). We expect non-sponsored content to be considered as more impactful due to the lack of a clear commercial nature (i.e., without financial supporting for the creation of the content). Indeed participants reported a higher likelihood to follow the advice of the green influencer when the content they described was non-sponsored compared to the sponsored one ( $M_{\text{non-sponsored}} = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.92$  vs.  $M_{\text{sponsored}} = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ,  $F(1, 484) = 14.50$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.34$ ). This indicates a general tendency of consumers to penalize sponsored content, resulting in a lower likelihood to engage in sustainable behaviors whenever there is a declared commercial partnership between the green influencer and another organization.

To test the role of each authenticity component in shaping the negative effect of sponsored (vs. non-sponsored) content on behavioral change intentions we conducted a regression analysis with behavioral change intentions as dependent variable, and condition (sponsored vs. non-sponsored) together with the six authenticity components and the interactions between condition and the six as main independent variables. Since the numbers of influencers followed appears to be significantly correlated with several of our variables of interest, we include it as a control in the model. Table 5 below reports the results of the two regression analyses.

Table 5. Linear regressions results

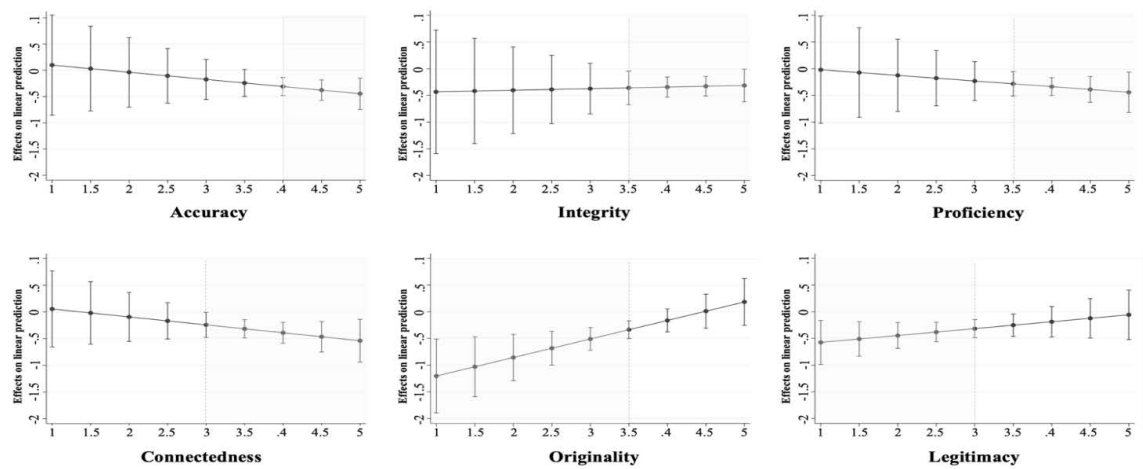
|                                  | <b>Model 1 – Behavioral Change Intentions</b> |                | <b>Model 2 – Behavioral Change Intentions</b> |                |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                  | <i>Coeff.</i>                                 | <i>p-value</i> | <i>Coeff.</i>                                 | <i>p-value</i> |
| <i>Sponsored</i>                 | #CAMPO!<br>(.09)                              | .000           | -0.50<br>(.53)                                | .352           |
| <i>Accuracy</i>                  | 0.06<br>(.08)                                 | .407           | 0.14<br>(.11)                                 | .210           |
| <i>Accuracy x Sponsored</i>      |                                               |                | -0.14<br>(.15)                                | .368           |
| <i>Connectedness</i>             | 0.25<br>(.07)                                 | .000           | 0.34<br>(.09)                                 | .000           |
| <i>Connectedness x Sponsored</i> |                                               |                | -0.15<br>(.13)                                | .269           |
| <i>Integrity</i>                 | 0.03<br>(.09)                                 | .728           | 0.00<br>(.13)                                 | .997           |
| <i>Integrity x Sponsored</i>     |                                               |                | 0.03<br>(.18)                                 | .868           |
| <i>Legitimacy</i>                | 0.05<br>(.05)                                 | .363           | -0.00<br>(.07)                                | .951           |
| <i>Legitimacy x Sponsored</i>    |                                               |                | 0.13<br>(.10)                                 | .210           |
| <i>Originality</i>               | 0.10<br>(.07)                                 | .146           | -0.06<br>(.08)                                | .504           |
| <i>Originality x Sponsored</i>   |                                               |                | 0.35<br>(.14)                                 | .012           |
| <i>Proficiency</i>               | 0.21<br>(.08)                                 | .016           | 0.23<br>(.12)                                 | .064           |
| <i>Proficiency x Sponsored</i>   |                                               |                | -0.11<br>(.17)                                | .534           |
| <i>N of inf followed</i>         | 0.10<br>(.02)                                 | .000           | 0.09<br>(.02)                                 | .000           |
| <i>Constant</i>                  | 1.10<br>(.30)                                 | .005           | 0.82<br>(.35)                                 | .019           |
| <i>R-squared</i>                 | .26                                           |                | .28                                           |                |
| <i>N</i>                         | 486                                           |                | 486                                           |                |

Note: VCE Robust standard errors appear in parenthesis

Looking at the regression's coefficients, we see connectedness appears as a strong significant predictor regardless of content type. While it appears that the importance of originality shapes the effect differently whether the content is sponsored or non-sponsored.

We further run conditional marginal analyses to look at the effect of sponsored vs. non-sponsored content on behavioral change intentions at every degree of importance for each of the six authenticity components. This analysis increases the informativeness of our results, as values in the regression table are taken at means, while the six components are measured on continuous scales going from 1 to 5. Furthermore, mean importance scores range from 4.22 (the average importance of accuracy) to 2.82 (the average importance legitimacy). We used the floodlight approach (i.e., Johnson-Neyman technique), which allows to calculate the conditional value of condition – comparing sponsored to non-sponsored content – across all range of values for each one of the six components. We report the results of these moderating analyses below and summarize in Figure 1 the marginal linear predictions effects with 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs) displayed.

Figure 1 Conditional Marginal effects of sponsored content with 95% CIs



Taken together, our results indicate a main negative effect of sponsored (vs. non sponsored) communication from green influencers on participants' behavioral change intentions. In addition, the conditional marginal analyses calculated for each of the six authenticity components reveal this effect is more nuanced than expected. Different levels of importance attributed by participants at each of the different authenticity components lead to different reactions.

On the one side, three components seem particularly relevant for companies that want to make use of green influencers to sponsor a product or service, these are accuracy, proficiency, and connectedness. In fact, consumers who attribute more value to these aspects ( $JN > 4$  and  $3.5$  respectively) significantly punish sustainable sponsored content by lowering their behavioral change intentions. At the same time, our results indicate that targeting consumers who do not attribute high value to accuracy, proficiency, and connectedness might be a successful strategy as they do not react differently depending on content type.

On the other side, two other components seem particularly strategic for companies that want to make use of green influencers to sponsor a product or service, these are originality and legitimacy. Consumers who attribute more value to originality and legitimacy ( $JN > 3.5$  and  $3$  respectively) consider sustainable sponsored content as highly as non-sponsored content. So, our results indicate that targeting consumers who do attribute high value to originality and legitimacy might be a successful strategy as they do not react differently depending on content type.

When it comes to integrity, our results suggested a somehow unexpected effect, such that consumers who attribute more value to this component ( $JN > 3.5$ ) have a reduction in the negative effect of sponsored vs. non-sponsored content on behavioral intentions. This result seems to indicate that targeting consumers who attribute high value to integrity might be optimal.

In addition to that, we run an exploratory cluster analysis (Everitt, 1992) aimed at identifying different groups of consumers who assign distinct importance to the authenticity components when making a judgment about green influencers' communication effectiveness. We used a k-means clustering method, which selects a pre-determined number of observations to be used as group means. Afterwards each observation is assigned to the group whose mean is closest, and then, based on that categorization, new group means are determined. This allows to break observations into a distinct number of nonoverlapping groups.

By experimental design, we randomly assigned participants to either evaluate sponsored or non-sponsored content, therefore we run two separate cluster analyses, one for each experimental condition. As additional investigation, we run an exploratory cluster analysis on all the observations, regardless of condition. Results are reported in Table 6.

Table 6: Cluster Analysis Condition

| <b>A. SPONSORED CONTENT</b>     |                |           |           |               |               |             |               |             |               |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
|                                 | <b>Cluster</b> |           |           | <b>T-test</b> |               |             |               |             |               |
| Variable                        | <b>A1</b>      | <b>A2</b> | <b>A3</b> | <b>1vs2</b>   | <b>Signif</b> | <b>1vs3</b> | <b>Signif</b> | <b>2vs3</b> | <b>Signif</b> |
| Accuracy                        | 4,49           | 4,54      | 3,4       | -0,05         | N.S.          | 1,09        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Integrity                       | 4,43           | 4,39      | 3,55      | 0,04          | N.S.          | 0,88        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Proficiency                     | 4,48           | 4,12      | 3,36      | 0,36          | 0             | 1,12        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Connectedness                   | 4,2            | 3,78      | 2,88      | 0,42          | 0,0001        | 1,32        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Originality                     | 4,02           | 3,61      | 2,85      | 0,41          | 0,0001        | 1,17        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Legitimacy                      | 3,77           | 2,08      | 2,74      | 1,69          | 0             | 1,03        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Behavior Change                 | 3,87           | 3,29      | 2,86      | 0,58          | 0,0006        | 1,01        | 0             | N.S.        | 0,012         |
| Age                             | 29,04          | 27,27     | 27,45     |               |               |             |               |             |               |
| Female                          | 0,48           | 0,56      | 0,39      |               |               |             |               |             |               |
| N                               | 82             | 90        | 75        |               |               |             |               |             |               |
| <b>B. NON SPONSORED CONTENT</b> |                |           |           |               |               |             |               |             |               |
|                                 | <b>Cluster</b> |           |           | <b>T-test</b> |               |             |               |             |               |
| Variable                        | <b>B1</b>      | <b>B2</b> | <b>B3</b> | <b>1vs2</b>   | <b>Signif</b> | <b>1vs3</b> | <b>Signif</b> | <b>2vs3</b> | <b>Signif</b> |
| Accuracy                        | 4,47           | 4,58      | 3,48      | -0,11         | N.S.          | 0,99        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Integrity                       | 4,37           | 4,44      | 3,52      | -0,07         | N.S.          | 0,85        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Proficiency                     | 4,29           | 4,22      | 3,46      | 0,07          | N.S.          | 0,83        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Connectedness                   | 4,15           | 3,8       | 2,76      | 0,35          | 0,003         | 1,39        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Originality                     | 4,03           | 3,37      | 2,86      | 0,66          | 0             | 1,17        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Legitimacy                      | 3,92           | 2,12      | 2,36      | 1,8           | 0             | 1,56        | 0             | N.S.        | 0,0295        |
| Behavior Change                 | 4              | 3,84      | 3,16      | 0,16          | N.S.          | 0,84        | 0             | N.S.        | 0             |
| Age                             | 30,11          | 26,24     | 30,84     |               |               |             |               |             |               |
| Female                          | 46%            | 60%       | 41%       |               |               |             |               |             |               |
| N                               | 83             | 95        | 61        |               |               |             |               |             |               |

Taken together, results of the cluster analyses indicate a pattern of stability in authenticity evaluations, regardless of whether content is sponsored. Our data, in fact, reveal uniformity in how authenticity components are evaluated by corresponding clusters (A1-B1, A2-B2, A3-B3) in both sponsored and non-sponsored scenarios. Revealing that the assessment of the importance of the six components is relatively stable for consumers when judging green influencers



sponsored and non-sponsored communication. This suggests a consistent framework used by consumers in judging the authenticity of green influencers' communication.

Importantly, our findings reveal that the intention to change behavior varies significantly among the clusters, particularly influenced by the nature of the content—sponsored or non-sponsored. For individuals valuing tangible authenticity and expertise over perceived social authority or trendiness (those in clusters A2 and B2) exposure to sponsored content correlates with a lower intention to change behavior. Conversely, for the other participants the propensity to change behavior seem to remain stable, unaffected by whether the content is sponsored. For those valuing authenticity not just for its informational content but also for its relational depth (clusters A1 and B1) the persuasive capacity of green influencers remains robust, while for those that are skeptical in their engagement with influencer content (cluster A3 and B3) the intention to change behavior is generally lower, regardless of the content's sponsorship status.

The two cluster analyses indicate that despite being the least valued component, legitimacy varies considerably in its importance among the different clusters. This suggest that it is key for marketers to assess the extent to which their customers attribute value to legitimacy to select the appropriate green influencers.

**Research limitations.** While the study provides valuable insights, it acknowledges limitations such as the reliance on self-reported measures, which can be subject to biases. The experiment's design, focusing on a specific sample from Prolific Academic, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore these dimensions in more diverse contexts and through longitudinal designs to capture the dynamic nature of authenticity perceptions. In addition, research might sought deeper into the relationship among sponsored content and green influencers by analyzing how the structure of the content proposed might hinder/foster behavioral change intentions.

**Managerial implications.** Overall, our results suggest that the role of each component can change not only according to the consumption context (Nunes et al. 2021), but also at the individual level, by manifesting differently according to consumers' distinct attribution of importance. As such our research underscores the importance of tailoring sponsoring strategies based on the specific authenticity components that resonate most with an influencer target audience. The process of identification and partnering might require an in-depth assessment of its audience to enhance the effectiveness of sponsored content.

**Originality of the paper.** This paper stands out by providing a granular analysis of authenticity in the context of green influencer marketing, a relatively underexplored area. It expands on existing literature by breaking down authenticity into its constituent components and examining their distinct roles in influencing consumer behavior towards sustainable practices. The study's methodological approach, combining experimental design with advanced statistical analyses, adds depth to the investigation, offering fresh insights into the interplay between authenticity, influencer content, and consumer intentions in the realm of sustainability.

## References

- AUDREZET A., DE KERVILER G., MOULARD J.G. (2020), "Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation", *Journal of business research*, vol. 117, pp. 557-569.
- DE FANO D., SCHENA R., RUSSO A. (2022), "Empowering plastic recycling: Empirical investigation on the influence of social media on consumer behavior", *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, vol. 182, 106269.
- EVERITT B.S. (1992), *The analysis of contingency tables*. CRC Press.
- FREBERG K., GRAHAM K., MCGAUGHEY K., FREBERG L.A. (2011), "Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality", *Public relations review*, vol. 37, n. 1, pp. 90-92.
- JACOBSON J., HARRISON B. (2022), "Sustainable fashion social media influencers and content creation calibration", *International Journal of advertising*, vol. 41, n. 1, pp. 150-177.
- MORHART F., MALÄR L., GUÉVREMONT A., GIRARDIN F., GROHMANN B. (2015), "Brand authenticity: An integrative framework and measurement scale", *Journal of consumer psychology*, vol. 25, n. 2, pp. 200-218.
- NUNES J.C., ORDANINI A., GIAMBASTIANI G. (2021), "The concept of authenticity: What it means to consumers", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 85, n. 4, pp. 1-2
- XIE Q., FENG Y. (2023), "How to strategically disclose sponsored content on Instagram? The synergy effects of two types of sponsorship disclosures in influencer marketing", *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 42, n. 2, pp. 317-343.
- ZOLLO L., FILIERI R., RIALTI R., YOON S. (2020), "Unpacking the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity: The mediating role of consumers' benefits and experience", *Journal of Business research*, vol. 117, pp. 256-267.