

Fake Brand Collaborations on Social Media: Their Impact on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Abstract

Social media has expanded the use of influencer and brand collaborations as a promotional mechanism, while also creating opportunities for deceptive actors to imitate legitimate partnerships. This study examines the relationship between fake brand collaboration exposure, deceptive collaboration practices, disclosure awareness, consumer trust and buying behaviour. A structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale is proposed for social media users. For demonstration of the analytical procedure, a simulated dataset of 300 respondents was generated and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and one-way ANOVA. The simulated results illustrate how the proposed variables can be analyzed in SPSS. The findings in this version are methodological examples and must not be reported as actual field evidence until replaced with genuine respondent data.

1. Introduction

Influencer marketing and social-media-based brand collaborations have become important forms of digital promotion. Research indicates that influencer characteristics, post characteristics and source credibility can affect consumer engagement and purchase intention. Recent evidence also shows that consumers may have difficulty recognising advertising when promotional content resembles ordinary social-media content, making clear disclosure important. Fake brand collaborations extend this problem by imitating legitimate relationships between brands and influencers. Such posts may use copied logos, names, images, links or promotional language to create an appearance of authenticity. This study therefore focuses on how exposure to deceptive collaborations may relate to consumer buying behaviour, with disclosure awareness and trust included as important behavioural factors.

2. Statement of the Problem

One concern is that a misleading collaboration can look very similar to a genuine promotional post. A consumer may see a familiar brand name, logo, influencer image or promotional message and assume

that the partnership is genuine, even when the account or offer has no official connection with the brand. Such content can affect trust, information-search behaviour and purchase decisions. Against this background, the study examines whether exposure to deceptive brand collaborations is related to consumers' buying behaviour. It also considers whether disclosure awareness and consumer trust are associated with the way consumers respond to such promotional content.

3. Objectives

1. To measure consumers' exposure to fake brand collaborations on social media.
2. To identify deceptive practices associated with fake brand collaborations.
3. To assess consumers' awareness of collaboration disclosures and verification practices.
4. To examine the relationship between fake brand collaborations, consumer trust and buying behaviour.
5. To determine the influence of selected collaboration-related factors on consumer buying behaviour.

4. Review of Literature

Recent literature supports the importance of influencer credibility, disclosure and consumer responses. A 2025 meta-analysis covering 71 papers, 135 experimental studies and 571 effect sizes reported that influencer marketing can affect engagement and purchase intention, with credibility and attractiveness acting as mechanisms. Another 2024 meta-analysis synthesising 1,531 effect sizes from 251 papers identified post, follower and influencer characteristics as important antecedents of consumer responses. Research on advertising disclosure has found that consumers may respond differently to disclosed and undisclosed influencer advertising, while a 2026 consumer-awareness study reported that recognition of influencer advertising is not always accurate in fast-moving social feeds. These findings provide a basis for examining fake collaboration cues, disclosure awareness and consumer trust in the present research.

5. Research Methodology

Research design: descriptive and analytical survey design.

Population: social media users exposed to influencer or brand promotional content.

Sample size for this illustrative version: 300 respondents.

Sampling: a future field study may use purposive/convenience sampling, followed by appropriate screening criteria. Instrument: structured questionnaire with demographic items and 30 five-point Likert statements. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Variables: Fake Brand Collaboration Exposure (6 items), Deceptive Collaboration Practices (6), Disclosure Awareness (6), Consumer Trust (6), and Consumer Buying Behaviour (6). Statistical tools: frequency and percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and one-way ANOVA. Ethics: respondents should participate voluntarily, and personal identifying information should not be collected unnecessarily.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Fake_Brand_Collaboration_Exposure	0.897	6
Deceptive_Collaboration_Practices	0.901	6
Disclosure_Awareness	0.905	6

Consumer_Trust	0.894	6
Buying_Behaviour	0.926	6

Cronbach's alpha is used to assess internal consistency of the items within each construct. In actual research, reliability should be assessed on the collected responses; alpha alone does not establish unidimensionality.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	Range
Fake_Brand_Collaboration_Exposure	3.00	0.79	1.17–4.83
Deceptive_Collaboration_Practices	3.00	0.80	1.00–5.00
Disclosure_Awareness	2.99	0.80	1.17–5.00
Consumer_Trust	2.99	0.78	1.00–5.00
Buying_Behaviour	3.00	0.83	1.17–5.00

6.3 Pearson Correlation

Variables	FBC Exposure	Deceptive Practices	Disclosure Awareness	Consumer Trust	Buying Behaviour
FBC Exposure	1	.415**	-.147*	-.165**	-.255**
Deceptive Practices	.415**	1	-.067	-.360**	-.439**
Disclosure Awareness	-.147*	-.067	1	.382**	.421**
Consumer Trust	-.165**	-.360**	.382**	1	.583**
Buying Behaviour	-.255**	-.439**	.421**	.583**	1

Note: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01.
FBC = Fake Brand Collaboration.

Interpretation

The Pearson correlation results indicate several statistically significant relationships. Fake Brand Collaboration Exposure has a **positive moderate relationship** with Deceptive Collaboration Practices ($r = .415$, $p < .01$). Exposure also shows negative relationships with Consumer Trust ($r = -.165$, $p < .01$) and Consumer Buying Behaviour ($r = -.255$, $p < .01$). Deceptive Collaboration Practices are negatively associated with Consumer Trust ($r = -.360$, $p < .01$) and Consumer Buying Behaviour ($r = -.439$, $p < .01$). Disclosure Awareness has a positive relationship with Consumer Trust ($r = .382$, $p < .01$) and Consumer Buying Behaviour ($r = .421$, $p < .01$). The strongest relationship in the simulated results is between **Consumer Trust and Consumer Buying Behaviour** ($r = .583$, $p < .01$). These correlations indicate association only; they should **not be interpreted as proof of causation**.

6.4 Multiple Regression

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
const	2.039	0.273	7.467	0.0000
Fake_Brand_Collaboration_Exposure	0.005	0.049	0.098	0.9221
Deceptive_Collaboration_Practices	-0.334	0.053	-6.343	0.0000
Disclosure_Awareness	0.231	0.045	5.145	0.0000
Consumer_Trust	0.421	0.051	8.199	0.0000

Interpretation

Multiple regression analysis revealed that Fake Brand Collaboration Exposure, Deceptive Collaboration Practices, Disclosure Awareness, and Consumer Trust collectively explained 51.7% of the variance in Consumer Buying Behaviour ($R^2 = 0.517$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.510$). The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 295) = 78.892$, $p < .001$, indicating that the selected predictors collectively contribute significantly to variations in consumer buying behaviour.

6.5 One-Way ANOVA

The One-Way ANOVA results indicate that Consumer Buying Behaviour does not differ significantly across the four age groups, $F(3, 296) = 0.248$, $p = 0.863$. As the significance value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, no statistically significant difference in Consumer Buying Behaviour was observed across the age groups.

7. Discussion

The analysis is intended to show how the selected factors are connected with consumer buying behaviour. Correlation analysis provides an initial view of the relationships between the variables, while multiple regression helps determine the separate contribution of each predictor when the other factors are considered at the same time. The interpretation of actual results should be based on the sign, size, and significance of coefficients rather than on isolated descriptive means. Existing literature indicates that credibility, disclosure, and influencer characteristics can shape consumer responses, supporting the inclusion of these constructs in the present framework.

8. Conclusion

Fake brand collaborations are an important issue in the changing social-media marketplace because misleading posts can closely resemble legitimate influencer–brand promotions. The questionnaire developed for this study converts the main concepts into measurable statements covering exposure, deceptive practices, disclosure awareness, trust and buying behaviour. The simulated SPSS-style analysis demonstrates a comprehensive workflow, extending from reliability testing to regression and analysis of variance. For an empirical article or thesis chapter, the simulated dataset must be replaced with genuine responses, after which all tables, significance statements and conclusions should be regenerated from the real data.

References

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