



2024, 13 (1),404-421 | Research Article

## Consumer Cynicism in Influencer Marketing: An Impact Analysis on Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty

Mehmet GÖKERİK <sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Social media has become a significant platform that meets consumers' information, entertainment, and socialization needs in today's world. In this dynamic environment, consumer cynicism represents a sceptical and critical attitude developed towards brands and marketing messages. Influencer marketing involves the strategy of using social media influencers to promote businesses' products and services and is observed to have a significant impact on consumer cynicism. The study has shown that credible posts and influencer recommendations reduce consumer cynicism, thereby increasing brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Findings from a survey of 214 participants in Karabük, analyzed using structural equation modelling, indicate that the authenticity and realism of influencer content can enhance consumers' trust in businesses, significantly reducing consumer cynicism. This reduction leads to an increase in brand loyalty and purchase intentions. The research illuminates the interaction between influencer marketing strategies and consumer cynicism, emphasizing the potential of influencer marketing to mitigate consumer cynicism and its subsequent positive effects on brand loyalty and purchase behaviours. The findings of this study are particularly important in today's marketing understanding, where the importance of digital marketing strategies is increasing, and consumer scepticism is frequently observed. In this context, the research demonstrates the potential of the effective use of influencer marketing to create value for businesses and expand the consumer base, highlighting realism and trust as critical factors in influencer-business collaborations. Thus, the study provides awareness of how businesses can strategically use influencer marketing to impact consumer attitudes and decisions positively.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Consumer Cynicism, Purchase Intention, Brand Loyalty, Digital Marketing

Gökerik, Mehmet. (2024). Consumer Cynicism in Influencer Marketing: An Impact Analysis on Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty, *Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches*, 13 (1), 404-421. <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1422438>

Date of Submission	19.01.2024
Date of Acceptance	23.03.2024
Date of Publication	29.03.2024
*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC license.	

<sup>1</sup> Assist. Prof., Karabük University, Faculty of Business, Department of Business, Karabük, Türkiye, mehmetgokerik@karabuk.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-0827-5805



## Influencer Pazarlamasında Tüketici Sinizmi: Satın Alma Niyeti ve Marka Sadakati Üzerine Etki Analizi

Mehmet GÖKERİK<sup>1</sup>

### Öz

Sosyal medya, günümüzde tüketicilerin bilgi edinme, eğlenme ve sosyalleşme ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan önemli bir platform haline gelmiştir. Bu dinamik ortamda, tüketici sinizmi, markalara ve pazarlama mesajlarına karşı geliştirilen şüpheli ve eleştirel tutumu ifade etmektedir. Influencer pazarlaması, işletmelerin ürün ve hizmetlerini tanıtmak için sosyal medya influencer'larının kullanılması stratejisini içermekte ve bu stratejinin, tüketici sinizmi üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Çalışma, influencer'ların güvenilir gönderilerinin ve tavsiyelerinin tüketici sinizmini azalttığını ve bu durumun marka sadakati ile satın alma niyetlerini artırdığını ortaya konmuştur. Karabük'te 214 katılımcı üzerinden yapılan anket çalışması ve verilerin yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılarak analiz edilmesiyle elde edilen bulgular, influencer içeriğinin doğruluğu ve gerçekçiliğinin, tüketicilerin işletmelere olan güvenini artırarak tüketici sinizmini azaltabileceğini göstermiştir. Bu azalma, marka sadakati ve satın alma niyetlerinde artışa yol açmaktadır. Araştırma, influencer pazarlama stratejileri ve tüketici sinizmi arasındaki etkileşimi aydınlatırken, influencer pazarlamasının tüketici sinizmini hafifletme ve bunun sonucunda marka sadakati ile satın alma davranışları üzerindeki olası pozitif etkilerini vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, özellikle dijital pazarlama stratejilerinin öneminin arttığı ve tüketici şüpheliğinin sıkça gözlemlendiği günümüz pazarlama anlayışında oldukça önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda, araştırma, influencer pazarlamasının etkili kullanımının, işletmeler için değer yaratma ve tüketici tabanını genişletme potansiyeline sahip olduğunu, influencer-işletme iş birliklerinde gerçekçilik ve güvenin kritik faktörler olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, işletmelerin tüketici tutumları ve kararları üzerinde olumlu etki yaratmak için influencer pazarlamasını nasıl stratejik bir araç olarak kullanabilecekleri konusunda farkındalık sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Influencer Pazarlama, Tüketici Sinizmi, Satın Alma Niyeti, Marka Sadakati, Dijital Pazarlama

Gökerik, Mehmet. (2024). Influencer Pazarlamasında Tüketici Sinizmi: Satın Alma Niyeti ve Marka Sadakati Üzerine Etki Analizi. *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 13 (1), 404-421. <https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.1422438>

Geliş Tarihi	19.01.2024
Kabul Tarihi	23.03.2024
Yayın Tarihi	29.03.2024
*Bu CC BY-NC lisansı altında açık erişimli bir makaledir.	

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Karabük Üniversitesi, İşletme Fakültesi, Üretim Yönetimi ve Pazarlama Anabilim Dalı, Karabük, Türkiye, mehmetgokerik@karabuk.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0002-0827-5805

## Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of marketing strategies, particularly within digital platforms, influencer marketing has emerged as a rapidly ascending trend. This approach, which involves brands collaborating with social media influencers to promote products and services, has gained significant traction as a means to reach and influence target audiences. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer marketing creates a direct and personal communication channel between consumers and brands, offering a more authentic and trustworthy experience (Ki et al., 2023; Kamaldeep, 2021; Baranow, 2019; Gökerik, 2024). Consequently, it can potentially exert a more substantial impact on consumers. Influencer marketing facilitates more effective interaction between brands and their target audiences, enhancing awareness of products and services and ultimately shaping consumer behaviour (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This method plays a pivotal role in redefining relationships between consumers and brands and has become a critical element in the evolution of marketing strategies in the digital era (Chopra et al., 2021). Gaining increasing acceptance in the marketing world, influencer marketing offers a valuable communication channel for brands, providing closer, more genuine, and effective consumer engagement. Its effective utilization can help brands gain a competitive advantage and attract their target audiences more effectively.

Consumer cynicism is growing and becoming important in modern marketing and advertising fields. It refers to consumers' increasingly sceptical and critical attitude toward marketing efforts and advertising messages. Fundamentally, consumer cynicism encompasses the perception that advertisers are insincere and primarily self-interested. These perceptions can undermine the credibility and reputation of brands in the eyes of consumers, negatively impacting their purchasing decisions (Chylinski & Chu, 2010; Indibara, 2023; Schmuck, 2022). The rise of social media has led to an even more critical stance towards brands and advertising content. Social media platforms expose consumers to more advertising messages and facilitate easier access to such content. This not only increases consumers' exposure to information and content but also fosters a more sceptical view of advertising. Consumer cynicism makes it challenging for brands to convey their advertisements convincingly and necessitates greater efforts to inform consumers better (Odou & De Pechpeyrou, 2011). In this context, brands must develop more transparent, honest, and value-focused communication strategies to gain and maintain consumer trust. Sensitivity to consumers' critical attitudes has become indispensable to successful marketing and advertising strategies.

The relationship between influencer marketing and consumer cynicism is an important area of research in marketing literature. The authenticity and sincerity of content influencers present can enhance consumers' trust in brands, thereby reducing consumer cynicism. In this regard, the transparency and realism of influencers' content related to products can positively influence a brand's reputation among consumers. Conversely, overly commercial approaches or misleading advertisements by influencers can increase consumer cynicism towards brands, negatively affecting brand loyalty and purchase intentions (Tran et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding the impact of influencer marketing and its relationship with consumer cynicism is crucial for the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Aydin, 2021).

According to The State of Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report, the influencer marketing industry is expected to reach approximately \$21.1 billion in 2023, indicating its rapid growth. A key factor underlying this growth is the trust of brands and consumers in influencer content. Additionally, the report states that 67% of brands plan to increase their influencer marketing budgets throughout 2023, signifying their perception of influencer marketing as an effective strategy. Furthermore, over 83% of survey respondents believe influencer marketing to be an effective form of marketing. In contrast, research on consumer cynicism shows a decline in trust towards brands. According to a Havas report, a study involving 395,000 consumers worldwide indicates that consumer cynicism towards brands has reached an all-time high, with only 47% of brands perceived as trustworthy. Additionally, 75% of consumers stated that a brand could disappear and easily be replaced, indicating low brand loyalty (Marketing Mag, 2023). This study investigates whether influencer marketing can mitigate consumer cynicism and, if so, how it affects brand loyalty and purchasing behaviour.

This research aims to comprehensively examine the impact of influencer marketing on consumer cynicism and the relationship between this impact and consumer purchase intent and brand loyalty. The study uses quantitative methods to extensively analyze the link between influencers' credibility and sincerity, consumer cynicism, and brand loyalty. The research aims to develop recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of influencer marketing and reducing consumer cynicism. Additionally, it seeks to deeply explore the interactions between influencers and consumers' attitudes towards brands, aiming to understand better the impact of influencer marketing and its complex relationship with consumer cynicism. By focusing on the interplay between consumer cynicism and the interactions of influencer marketing, the study aims to fill existing gaps and contribute findings that can make marketing strategies more effective. This research is intended to significantly contribute to the existing literature on influencer marketing and help better understand how brands can influence consumers through influencer collaborations.

## **Literature Review**

### **Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing can be defined as a marketing strategy that leverages influential individuals in the digital realm to promote products or services. These influencers can be celebrities, experts, or individuals with a substantial social media following (Gökerik, 2024). Particularly in the current digital environment, it is recognized as an effective way to promote brands and products. Despite this, many marketing managers have yet to incorporate influencer marketing into their strategies. Therefore, further research is necessary to provide reliable data and information on influencer marketing, empowering marketing managers and teams (Rosário et al., 2023). Influencer marketing significantly impacts consumer lifestyles, especially among younger consumers. It aids in building brand loyalty based on the trust consumers place in influencers they know and admire. Effectively implementing influencer marketing by businesses positively affects consumer lifestyles (Nadanyiova et al., 2020). Influencer marketing is valuable in influencing consumer behaviour and can significantly impact brand image, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Understanding the antecedents and consequences of influencer marketing is crucial for marketers (Bansal & Bhati, 2022). In the tourism industry, influencer marketing

extends beyond the function of spreading marketing messages. It offers message reinforcement opportunities and reaches specific target audiences, making it an attractive strategy for travel marketers (Gretzel, 2017). The effectiveness of influencer marketing is influenced by factors such as authenticity, likability, authority, and targeting. Non-celebrity influencers can increasingly stand out over time compared to celebrity influencers (Moore et al., 2018; Gökerik, 2024).

Influencer marketing is gaining increasing influence in the digital world, significantly influencing consumer behaviour and brand perception. Influencers, particularly through social media platforms, facilitate the influence of target audiences and ease the reach of brands to consumers (Weiwei & Yongyue, 2021; Göktaş & Gökerik, 2024). Today, influencer marketing is popular in lifestyle, fashion, and beauty industries, where influencers' presentation styles, para-social interactions with followers, and credibility are key factors (Tanwar et al., 2021; Gökerik, 2018).

Social media influencers have been observed to positively influence tourists' intentions to revisit, with this effect varying depending on the influencer and the target audience's location (Ichii & Masuda, 2022; Gökerik, 2024). Additionally, influencer marketing positively affects brand awareness and reputation for businesses in their initial stages, where the online presence of influencers, consumers' desire to imitate, and preferred platforms are the three main factors (Alexis et al. et al., 2022). Gender also plays a significant role in influencer marketing. Studies have observed that female social media influencers are perceived as more trustworthy and attractive, while male influencers have lower expertise in the products they promote (Yıldız, 2022; Erkan et al., 2019). During the pandemic, the influence of influencer marketing on consumer purchasing behaviours, particularly among younger generations, has become more pronounced (Misshka Gupta, 2021).

Within this framework, the credibility of influencers and the sense of psychological ownership they evoke in followers positively affect consumers' purchase intentions, attitudes towards advertising, and perceptions of products (Pick, 2021). Additionally, a study conducted in Germany and Romania found that users' perceptions of the trustworthiness of social media influencers vary by country (Balaban & Mustăţea, 2019). Analyses on the future and development directions of influencer marketing show positive effects on brand attitudes and credibility but also highlight risks such as lack of transparency and potential negative impacts on consumers (Hudders & Lou, 2022). These studies collectively demonstrate that influencer marketing is an effective digital advertising tactic, and understanding its strategic use and impact is very important for businesses (Guoquan Ye et al., 2021).

## **Consumer Cynicism**

Consumer cynicism is defined as a reflection of distrust, dissatisfaction, and unmet expectations that consumers feel towards businesses (Keser & Söğütü, 2023). It is also considered a form of consumer behaviour adopted when consumers develop a negative attitude towards businesses or harbour mutual distrust towards a particular product or service (Basal and Suzen). Consumer boycotts refer to the act of consumers boycotting a particular business or product. This behaviour arises when consumers engage in such actions due to a specific concern or reaction. Motivations for participation in consumer boycotts refer to the motivations that encourage consumers to partake in such actions

(Indibara & Varshney, 2020). These motivations help us understand why consumers participate in boycotts and how they perceive the products or services of businesses.

Research indicates that consumer cynicism can lead to consumers developing a negative attitude towards a particular business or sector and boycotting it. Particularly, motivations for participation in consumer boycotts suggest that consumer cynicism can significantly impact such actions (Dissanayake, 2022). This situation helps us understand how consumer cynicism expresses consumers' distrust and reactions towards businesses. Social cynicism, which reflects individuals' scepticism towards society, has also been determined to impact consumer cynicism (Ketron, 2016). Individuals' sceptical attitudes towards social order, ethical norms, or social responsibilities can affect consumer cynicism, leading to a more critical approach towards businesses. Therefore, the relationship between social cynicism and consumer cynicism is considered important in understanding consumer behaviours and reactions.

Consumer cynicism is an important area of research in modern marketing and consumer behaviour. It is typically defined as consumers' scepticism and critical attitude towards brands, advertisements, and the general consumption culture. Chylinski and Chu (2010) state that consumer cynicism arises from repeated mismatches between consumers' goals or values and the actions of businesses. They also emphasize that value incongruence has a greater impact on the intensity of cynical behaviours.

Kuokkanen and Sun (2016) present a framework to bridge the gap between consumer attitudes and actual purchasing behaviours. This framework quantitatively measures the effects of social desirability and cynicism on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) survey results. Fox (2020) offers a study to understand negative reactions to CSR practices, stating that consumer cynicism is a more stable construct for employers and job seekers.

Indibara and Varshney (2020) state that social cynicism leads to consumer cynicism, with negatively motivated inference mediating this relationship and negative affectivity acting as a moderating factor. Tan and Tan (2007) examine Singaporean consumers' scepticism towards health claims and the fundamental reasons for this scepticism.

A study on how consumer cynicism affects behaviours and perceptions in the target market discusses issues such as activism, criticism, and increasing trust issues towards brand loyalty among cynical consumers (Helm, 2006). Ketron (2016) investigates how consumer cynicism leads to perceived deception about body sizes and how this reduces consumer issues. Similar to Influencer Marketing, these studies demonstrate the role of consumer cynicism in modern consumer society and its effects on purchasing decisions and brand perceptions.

## **Hypotheses Development and Research Model**

The growing field of digital marketing research has increasingly illuminated the pivotal role that social media influencers play in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours toward brands and products. Studies conducted by Hartzel et al. (2011) and Mir (2012) underscore the transformative potential of brand communication when mediated through social media platforms. These studies elucidate that when consumers encounter credible posts from influencers, there is a tangible shift in their perceptions and behaviours towards brands, suggesting a diminution in consumer cynicism. Further expanding on this notion, research by Johnston et al. (2018) and Bailey et al. (2020) delves

into the detailed ways in which positive receptions to social media advertisements and influencer endorsements can significantly recalibrate consumer behaviours, endorsing the efficacy of strategic influencer collaborations in brand promotion efforts.

The connection between influencer credibility, recommendations, consumer attitudes and purchase intentions has been the focal point of recent scholarly endeavours. In this vein, the research spearheaded by Ata et al. (2022) and Duffett (2017) has been instrumental in articulating influencers' substantial impact on consumer decision-making processes. This body of work is complemented by findings from Baum et al. (2019) and Singh (2021), which shed light on the specific dynamics of how influencers' social media campaigns can pivotally influence consumer attitudes towards novel products and shape their purchase intentions. Additionally, Schivinski et al. (2019) contribute to this discourse by examining the dual influence of both firm-generated and user-generated content on consumer attitudes and intentions, thereby offering a comprehensive overview of the multi-faceted ways in which digital content strategies can foster consumer engagement with brand activities. In the light of all this information, H1 and H2 hypotheses were formulated.

**H1:** Credible posts by social media influencers negatively and significantly effect on consumer cynicism.

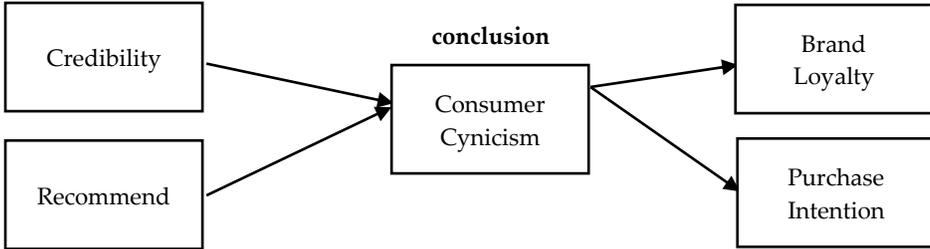
**H2:** Recommendations by social media influencers negatively and significantly effect on consumer cynicism.

Consumer cynicism is emerging as a significant variable in market dynamics, leaving profound effects on brand loyalty and purchase intention. The study by Helm (2006) examined the behaviours of cynical consumers stemming from a general distrust in the marketplace and its impacts on brand loyalty. This study showed that consumer cynicism is associated with brand support behaviours in cases where trust issues are more dominant in shaping brand loyalty than satisfaction or value. Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001) noted that brand trust is more critical in directing consumer loyalty and subsequent behaviours than overall satisfaction, especially in high-involvement situations. These studies highlight the significant effect of consumer cynicism on brand loyalty and underscore the central role of brand trust in this process. Additionally, while Krishnamurthi and Raj (1991) analyzed the relationship between consumer brand loyalty and price elasticity, Ghanbari, Yasemi, and Abasi (2017) explored the connections between consumer value, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. The latter study revealed that brand loyalty mediates the relationship between consumer value and purchase intention, which influences the behaviours of cynical consumers. The study by Jacoby and Kyner (1973) distinguished brand loyalty from mere repurchase behaviour, showing that brand loyalty entails a deeper commitment and involves six necessary and jointly sufficient conditions. The studies by Nam, Ekinci, and Whyatt (2011), along with Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), further detail the dynamic relationships between brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction, and brand performance. This comprehensive literature review elucidates consumer cynicism's complex effects on brand loyalty and purchase intention, emphasizing the importance of enhancing trust and loyalty for brands. Based on these studies, Hypotheses H3 and H4 have been formulated.

**H3:** Consumer cynicism negatively and significantly effects on brand loyalty.

**H4:** Consumer cynicism negatively and significantly effects on consumer purchasing intention.

**Figure 1:** Research Model



## Methodology

The research model is depicted in Figure 1. This study comprises five variables. The variables used in the research and the sources utilized to construct these variables are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Variables

Variables	Sources Utilized
Credibility	Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016).
Recommend	Mittal, A., Bhandari, H., & Chand, P. K. (2022).
Consumer Cynicism	Helm, A. E., Moulard, J. G., & Richins, M. (2015).
Brand Loyalty	Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2001).
Purchase Intention	Coyle, J. R., & Thorson, E. (2001).

The sample of this research consists of individuals over 18 residing in Karabük, Turkey, who follow influencers on social media. A survey was conducted based on the research model prepared for the study's objectives. The survey was conducted using face-to-face interview techniques and a convenience sampling method. 214 surveys were collected; the data were analyzed using SPSS 21 and AMOS 20 statistical software.

In the demographic composition of the survey participants, a notable gender distribution was observed, with females constituting 59% and males 41% of the respondents. This gender representation provides a balanced perspective on the perceptions and behaviours associated with influencer marketing across different genders. The age demographic was predominantly young adults, with the 18-26 age group representing the largest segment at 43%. This age group is particularly significant as it aligns with a highly active demographic on social media and is often the primary target audience for influencer marketing campaigns. The participants' educational background revealed that a majority, over half, had attained higher education levels, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. This aspect of the demographic data suggests that the sample consisted of relatively well-educated individuals, which could influence their discernment and engagement with influencer marketing content.

Regarding household income, the distribution among the participants did not show significant disparities, indicating a relatively homogeneous economic background. This uniformity in economic status could imply a level of consistency in the purchasing power and consumer behaviour within the sample.

A critical aspect of the study was the participants' engagement with social media. The data indicated a high level of social media usage among the respondents, with approximately 80% reporting over an hour of daily usage. This high engagement rate is crucial as it underscores influencer marketing strategies' relevance and potential impact on these individuals. Frequent social media users are more likely to encounter and be influenced by content from influencers, making their insights particularly valuable for understanding the effectiveness and reach of influencer marketing tactics.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	127	59
Male	87	41
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 26	93	43
27 – 42	66	31
43 – 58	36	17
59 and above	19	9
<b>Education Level</b>		
Elementary School	6	3
Secondary Education	44	21
Associate Degree	112	52
Bachelor's Degree	37	17
Postgraduate	15	7
<b>Household Income (Total)</b>		
0 – 17002 TL	52	24
17002 – 35000 TL	65	30
35000 – 50000 TL	49	23
50000 – 65000 TL	31	15
65000 TL and above	17	8
<b>How often do you use social media each day?</b>		
0 – 1 hour	45	21
1 – 3 hours	86	40
3 – 5 hours	61	28
5 hours and above	22	11

## Findings

Initially, the study involved conducting validity and reliability tests for the variables included. Subsequently, an exploratory factor analysis was applied, followed by a confirmatory factor analysis to test the appropriateness of the measurement model. As a final step, the structural model obtained was tested.

## Measurement Model

The research model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is

recognized as an effective method for model estimation (Bentler & Chou, 1987). Before examining the relationships between hypotheses, an assessment of the scale's reliability and validity was conducted. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate convergent validity, determining the inter-item relationships and their coherence within the same measurement structure. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), minimum threshold values of 0.70 for CR and 0.50 for AVE are required. Hair et al. (2010) suggest that AVE values above 0.4 and CR values above 0.6 are acceptable. As indicated in Table 3 of the study, all variables demonstrate sufficient convergent validity, with CR values exceeding 0.6 (ranging between 0.626 and 0.891) and AVE values surpassing 0.4 (between 0.420 and 0.592). Additionally, factor loadings for all variables in this research exceed the acceptable criterion of 0.30, as per Stevens (2002), varying between 0.47 and 0.85.

**Table 3:** Factor Loadings, CR and AVE Values

	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Credibility (SD = 1.153)	C1	0.668	0.852	0.592
	C2	0.758		
	C3	0.859		
	C4	0.781		
Recommend (SD = 1.107)	R1	0.728	0.778	0.540
	R2	0.716		
	R3	0.759		
Consumer Cynicism (SD = 1.143)	CC1	0.674	0.833	0.420
	CC2	0.743		
	CC4	0.681		
	CC5	0.716		
	CC6	0.623		
	CC7	0.478		
	CC8	0.584		
	Brand Loyalty (SD = 1.098)	BL1		
BL2		0.606		
BL3		0.700		
Purchase Intention (SD = 0.733)	PI1	0.762	0.891	0.420
	PI2	0.768		
	PI3	0.790		
	PI4	0.857		
	PI5	0.759		

### Structural Model Testing

In the model examining the impact of influencers' credibility and recommendations on consumer cynicism, and subsequently the effect of consumer cynicism on brand loyalty and purchase intention, the fit indices are observed to be within acceptable and excellent levels of fit ( $\chi^2/df = 1.384$ , GFI = 0.901, CFI = 0.965, AGFI = 0.871, RMSEA = 0.042). Furthermore, it is understood that all the proposed hypotheses in the model are supported.

The results particularly highlight how the posts of influencers can reduce consumer cynicism, which in turn significantly affects attitudes towards products and their

associated brands. Initially, it is observed that the credible posts of influencers ( $\beta = -0.282$ ) and their recommendations ( $\beta = -0.439$ ) negatively and significantly affect consumer cynicism, thereby supporting Hypotheses H1 and H2. On the other hand, consumer cynicism also shows a negative and significant impact on brand loyalty and consumer purchase intention, thus lending support to Hypotheses H3 and H4.

These findings underscore the pivotal role of influencers in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes in the digital marketing landscape. The negative correlation between influencers' credibility and consumer cynicism suggests that authentic and trustworthy influencer content can effectively mitigate sceptical attitudes among consumers. As indicated by the model, this reduction in cynicism subsequently enhances brand loyalty and purchase intentions, highlighting the interconnected nature of these variables in the consumer decision-making process.

The study's insights into the dynamics of influencer marketing and consumer behaviour provide valuable implications for marketers. By leveraging the trust and influence of credible influencers, brands can navigate the challenges of consumer cynicism, fostering stronger brand relationships and driving consumer actions. This research contributes to the evolving understanding of influencer marketing's role in modern consumer engagement strategies, emphasizing the need for authenticity and trust in influencer-brand collaborations.

**Table 4:** Structural Equation Model Hypothesis Test Results

	Hypothesis		E	t- value	p
H <sub>1</sub>	Credible posts by social media influencers	Consumer cynicism	-0.28	-4.058	***
H <sub>2</sub>	Recommendations by social media influencers	Consumer cynicism	-0.43	-5.360	***
H <sub>3</sub>	Consumer cynicism	Brand loyalty.	-1.185	-8.752	***
H <sub>4</sub>	Consumer cynicism	Consumer purchasing intention.	-0.21	-2.724	.006
Fit Measurements: $\chi^2 / \text{d.f.}$ : 1.384 GFI (Goodness-of-fit index): 0.901 AGFI(Adjusted GFI): 0.871 CFI (Comparative fit index): 0.965 RMSEA: 0.042					

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study analyzes the impact of influencer marketing on consumer cynicism and its subsequent effects on brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Survey data from 214 participants in Karabük were evaluated using structural equation modelling. The research found that credible posts and influencer recommendations decrease consumer cynicism, increasing brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Particularly, the authenticity and realism of influencer content can significantly reduce consumer cynicism by increasing trust in businesses, leading to an increase in brand loyalty and purchase intentions. The findings illuminate the complex interaction between influencer marketing strategies and consumer cynicism, highlighting the potential of influencer marketing to mitigate consumer cynicism and its possible effects on brand loyalty and purchase behaviours. These findings are especially relevant in today's digital marketing environment, where consumer scepticism frequently rises, and the authenticity of

marketing messages is questioned. Therefore, the research offers insights into how businesses can utilize influencer marketing to enhance success and consumer engagement in an increasingly competitive digital market.

The research was analyzed through structural equation modelling. The analysis results show that credible influencer content can increase consumer trust, reducing negative attitudes toward brands. Additionally, decreasing consumer cynicism positively affects brand loyalty and purchase intentions. These relationships are supported by hypothesis testing results, confirming that influencers' credibility and recommendations significantly and negatively affect consumer cynicism (H1 and H2), and consumer cynicism negatively impacts brand loyalty and purchase intention (H3 and H4). These results demonstrate the positive effects of influencer marketing in reducing consumer cynicism and enhancing brand loyalty and purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of influencers' role in digital marketing strategies. The study provides an in-depth examination of the critical role of influencer marketing within modern marketing dynamics and its effects on consumer behaviours, contributing to the marketing literature.

This research comprehensively examines the effect of influencer marketing on consumer cynicism and its indirect effects on brand loyalty and purchase intentions, achieving results comparable with similar studies in the literature. Studies by Nadanyiova et al. (2020) and Chopra et al. (2020) show that influencer marketing has a strong impact on consumers' behaviours and lifestyles, more pronounced among young consumers, supporting the influence of influencer marketing on consumer cynicism. Research by Lou and Yuan (2019), along with Saima and Khan (2020), emphasizes how the credibility and value of influencers' messages can increase consumer trust and, thereby, brand loyalty and purchase intentions. Studies by Pinto and Paramita (2021) and Jayasingh (2019) examining the effects of influencer marketing on Generation Z have shown positive outcomes on brand loyalty. Pick (2021) highlighted the significant role of psychological ownership in influencer marketing, reducing cynicism and positively influencing consumer behaviours. These studies' findings align with this research's outcomes, demonstrating the effective use of influencer marketing in reducing consumer cynicism and increasing brand loyalty and purchase intentions. These comparisons help better understand the importance of influencer marketing within digital marketing strategies and its effects on consumer behaviours.

The study makes theoretical and practical contributions to marketing and consumer behaviours literature. Theoretically, it sheds light on the complex relationship between influencer marketing and consumer cynicism, revealing how influencers can significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviours. This study demonstrates the potential of influencer marketing to reduce consumer cynicism and its positive effects on brand loyalty and purchase intentions, offering new perspectives for business management and marketing strategies. Practically, it highlights the importance of focusing on trust and authenticity in enhancing the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns. Especially in high-cynicism markets, credible and authentic influencer content can positively influence consumers' brand perception and foster long-term customer loyalty. Conscious decisions in influencer selection and content strategies can enable businesses to create a stronger and more positive impact on their consumer base. Consequently, this study highlights the strategic use of influencer marketing in creating value for brands and

expanding the consumer base, providing significant insights for academics and practitioners.

The study's limitations include factors related to methodology and sample diversity. Firstly, the quantitative nature of the research limits the depth of understanding regarding the underlying reasons for consumer cynicism and the effects of influencer marketing. This implies that future studies supported by qualitative methods could help gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions and behaviours. Secondly, since the study is generally limited to all influencers, caution should be exercised regarding the generalizability of findings to other platforms or interactions with micro and macro influencer types. Future research could comparatively examine the effects of influencer marketing across various social media platforms, shedding light on the unique characteristics of platforms and their effects on consumer behaviours. Further studies on the long-term effects of influencer marketing could help understand how the impacts of businesses and influencers on consumer loyalty and purchase intentions change over time. Lastly, more research on the ethical aspects of influencer marketing and how consumers' attitudes toward this type of marketing evolve could provide a better understanding of the influence of ethical standards and consumer expectations on designing and implementing influencer marketing strategies. These suggestions can potentially guide future research, expanding the body of knowledge in the field of influencer marketing and contributing to marketing practice.

Peer-Review	Double anonymized - Two External
Ethical Statement	It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited. (Karabuk University Rectorate, Social and Human Sciences Area Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board of the Social Sciences and Humanities Area Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board with the decision of 29.12.2023 date, E.306413 No. Ethics Committee Decision was taken).
Plagiarism Checks	Yes - Ithenticate
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Complaints	<a href="mailto:itobiad@itobiad.com">itobiad@itobiad.com</a>
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding supporting this research.
Değerlendirme	İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme
Etik Beyan	Bu çalışma yapılırken ve yazılırken bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve kullanılan tüm kaynaklara uygun şekilde atıfta bulunulduğu beyan olunur. (Karabük Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü, Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Alanı Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulunca 29.12.2023 Tarih , E.306413 Nolu kararı ile Etik Kurul Kararı alınmıştır.)
Benzerlik Taraması	Yapıldı - Ithenticate
Etik Bildirim	<a href="mailto:itobiad@itobiad.com">itobiad@itobiad.com</a>
Çıkar Çatışması	Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.
Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.

## References / Kaynakça

Ata, S., Arslan, H. M., Baydaş, A., & Pazvant, E. (2022). The effect of social media influencers' credibility on consumer's purchase intentions through attitude toward advertisement. *ESIC Market*, 53(1), e280-e280. Doi: 10.7200/esicm.53.280

Aydın, G. (2021). Consumer cynicism, skepticism, brand boycotts and social media. U. Bingöl (Ed.), *Trending Topics on Social Media Researches* (ss. 61-90).

Bailey, A. A., Bonifield, C. M., & Elhai, J. D. (2021). Modeling consumer engagement on social networking sites: Roles of attitudinal and motivational factors. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 102348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102348>

Balaban, D., & Mustăţea, M. (2019). Users' perspective on the credibility of social media influencers in Romania and Germany. *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 21(1), 31-46. <https://doi.org/10.21018/rjcp.2019.1.269>

Bansal, M., & Bhati, N. (2022). Influencer marketing: Its antecedents and behavioural outcomes. In *Digital Marketing Outreach* (pp. 29-42). Routledge India.

Baranow, R. (2019). The impact of influencer marketing in the fitness industry on consumers' trust.

Basal, M., & Suzen, E. (2023). Consumer cynicism toward management's handling of uncertainties a study in the aviation sector. In *E3S Web of Conferences* (Vol. 376). *EDP Sciences*. Doi:10.1051/e3sconf/202337605027

Baum, D., Spann, M., Füller, J., & Thürridl, C. (2019). The impact of social media campaigns on the success of new product introductions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 289-297. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.07.003>

Bentler, P. M., & Chou, C. P. (1987). Practical issues in structural modeling. *Sociological methods & research*, 16(1), 78-117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124187016001004>

Bonus, A. K., Raghani, J., Visitacion, J. K., & Castaño, M. C. (2022). Influencer Marketing Factors Affecting Brand Awareness and Brand Image of Start-up Businesses. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 4(1), 189-202. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jbms.2022.4.1.22>

Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of marketing*, 65(2), 81-93.

Chopra, A., Avhad, V., & Jaju, A. S. (2021). Influencer marketing: An exploratory study to identify antecedents of consumer behavior of millennial. *Business Perspectives and Research*, 9(1), 77-91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2278533720923486>

Chylinski, M., & Chu, A. (2010). Consumer cynicism: antecedents and consequences. *European Journal of Marketing*, 44(6), 796-837. [doi.org/10.1108/03090561011032720](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561011032720)

Coyle, J. R., & Thorson, E. (2001). The effects of progressive levels of interactivity and vividness in web marketing sites. *Journal of advertising*, 30(3), 65-77.

Delgado-Ballester, E., & Munuera-Alemán, J. L. (2001). Brand trust in the context of consumer loyalty. *European Journal of marketing*, 35(11/12), 1238-1258.

- Dissanayake, D. S. (2022). The Mediating Mechanism of Consumer Ethical Beliefs in Determining the Influence of Cynicism and Empathy on Green Buying Intention. *Vidyodaya Journal of Management*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.31357/vjm.v8i1.5602>
- Duffett, R. G. (2017). Influence of social media marketing communications on young consumers' attitudes. *Young Consumers*, 18(1), 19-39. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-07-2016-00622>
- Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption. *Computers in human behavior*, 61, 47-55.
- Erkan, I., Gokerik, M., & Acikgoz, F. (2019). The impacts of facebook ads on brand image, brand awareness, and brand equity. In *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship and Marketing for Global Reach in the Digital Economy* (pp. 442-462). IGI Global.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Ghanbari, M., Yasemi, M., & Abasi, E. (2017). The intermediate role of brand loyalty in the relationship between consumer value and purchase intention (case study: Consumers of Snowa household appliances in Kermanshah city). *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 7(4), 116.
- Gökerik, M., Gürbüz, A., Erkan, I., Mogaji, E., & Sap, S. (2018). Surprise me with your ads! The impacts of guerrilla marketing in social media on brand image. *Asia Pacific journal of marketing and logistics*, 30(5), 1222-1238.
- Gökerik, M. (2024). İnfliencer pazarlaması: Sosyal medya liderlerinin gücü ve etkisine teorik bir yaklaşım. In *Güncel Pazarlama Yöntemleri: Stratejilerden Uygulamalara* (ss. 1-21). Serüven Yayınevi. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10841433>
- Göktaş, F., & Gökerik, M. (2024). A Novel Robust Theoretical Approach on Social Media Advertisement Platform Selection. *International Journal of Engineering Research and Development*, 16(1), 373-382.
- Gretzel, U. (2017). Influencer marketing in travel and tourism. In *Advances in social media for travel, tourism and hospitality* (pp. 147-156). Routledge.
- Guptaa, M. (2021). Impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase behavior during the pandemic. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Engineering & Multidisciplinary Physical Sciences*, 9(4), 154-165. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/07aa/126d14f8b1f4f3024c538e9d4f6ac6d74bfe.pdf>
- Hair Jr., J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2010) *Multivariate Data Analysis: A Global Perspective*. 7th Edition, *Pearson Education*, Upper Saddle River.
- Hartzel, K. S., Mahanes, C. J., Maurer, G. J., Sheldon, J., Trunick, C., & Wilson, S. J. (2011). Corporate posts and tweets: brand control in web 2.0. *Journal of Information & Knowledge Management*, 10(01), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0219649211002821>
- Helm, A. E. (2006). *Cynical consumers: dangerous enemies, loyal friends* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri--Columbia).

Helm, A. E., Moulard, J. G., & Richins, M. (2015). Consumer cynicism: Developing a scale to measure underlying attitudes influencing marketplace shaping and withdrawal behaviours. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39(5), 515-524.

Hudders, L., & Lou, C. (2022). A new era of influencer marketing: Lessons from Recent Inquires and Thoughts on Future Directions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 41(1), 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2022.2031729>

Ichii, K., & Masuda, H. (2022). Influencer Attributes and Characterizations on Tourists' Intention to Revisit Destination in Social Media Influencer Marketing. Doi: 10.54941/ahfe1002533

Indibara, I., & Varshney, S. (2020). Cynical consumer: how social cynicism impacts consumer attitude. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 38(1), 78-90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCM-07-2019-3305>

Indibara, I., Halder, D., & Varshney, S. (2023). Consumer cynicism: Interdisciplinary hybrid review and research agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 47(6), 2724-2746. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12979>

Jacoby, J., & Kyner, D. B. (1973). Brand loyalty vs. repeat purchasing behavior. *Journal of Marketing research*, 10(1), 1-9.

Jayasingh, S. (2019). Consumer brand engagement in social networking sites and its effect on brand loyalty. *Cogent Business & Management*, 6(1), 1698793.

Johnston, W. J., Khalil, S., Nhat Hanh Le, A., & Cheng, J. M. S. (2018). Behavioral implications of international social media advertising: an investigation of intervening and contingency factors. *Journal of International Marketing*, 26(2), 43-61. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jim.16.0125>

Kamaldeep, S. (2021). Influencer marketing from a consumer perspective: how attitude, trust, and word of mouth affect buying behavior. *European Integration Studies*, 15(1), 231-241. <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.eis.1.15.28803>

Kenneth A. Fox (2020) When CSR backfires: understanding stakeholders' negative responses to corporate social responsibility, *Social and Environmental Accountability Journal*, 40:1, 93-94 Doi: 10.1080/0969160X.2019.1711330

Keser, E., & Söğütü, R. (2023). Investigation of the Mediating Role of Consumer Boycott Participation Motives in the Effect of Consumer Cynicism on Consumer Boycott Behavior. *Current Research in Social Sciences*, 9(1), 69-91. <https://doi.org/10.30613/curesosc.1261916>

Ketron, S. (2016). Consumer cynicism and perceived deception in vanity sizing: The moderating role of retailer (dis) honesty. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 33, 33-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.07.018>

Ki, C. W., Chow, T. C., & Li, C. (2023). Bridging the trust gap in influencer marketing: Ways to sustain consumers' trust and assuage their distrust in the social media influencer landscape. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 39(17), 3445-3460.

Krishnamurthi, L., & Raj, S. P. (1991). An empirical analysis of the relationship between brand loyalty and consumer price elasticity. *Marketing science*, 10(2), 172-183.

Kuokkanen, H., & Sun, W. (2016). Social desirability and cynicism: Bridging the attitude-behavior gap in CSR surveys. In *Emotions and organizational governance* (Vol. 12, pp. 217-247). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. doi.org/10.1108/S1746-979120160000012008

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 19(1), 58-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501

Marketing Mag. (2021). New report finds that consumers are cynical about brands. Retrieved December 30, 2023. https://www.marketingmag.com.au/news/new-report-finds-that-consumers-are-cynical-about-brands/

Mir, I. A. (2012). Consumer attitudinal insights about social media advertising: A South Asian perspective. *The Romanian Economic Journal*, 15(45), 265-288.

Mittal, A., Bhandari, H., & Chand, P. K. (2022). Anticipated positive evaluation of social media posts: social return, revisit intention, recommend intention and mediating role of memorable tourism experience. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 16(1), 193-206.

Moore, A., Yang, K., & Kim, H. M. (2018, January). Influencer marketing: Influentials' authenticity, likeability and authority in social media. In *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 75, No. 1). Iowa State University Digital Press.

Nadanyiova, M., Gajanova, L., Majerova, J., & Lizbetinova, L. (2020, June). Influencer marketing and its impact on consumer lifestyles. In *Forum Scientiae Oeconomia* (Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 109-120). Doi: 10.23762/FSO\_VOL8\_NO2\_7

Nam, J., Ekinci, Y., & Whyatt, G. (2011). Brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction. *Annals of tourism Research*, 38(3), 1009-1030.

Odou, P., & De Pechpeyrou, P. (2011). Consumer cynicism: From resistance to anti-consumption in a disenchanted world?. *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(11/12), 1799-1808. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561111167432

Pick, M. (2021). Psychological ownership in social media influencer marketing. *European Business Review*, 33(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-08-2019-0165

Pinto, P. A., & Paramita, E. L. (2021). Social media influencer and brand loyalty on generation Z: the mediating effect of purchase intention. *Diponegoro International Journal of Business*, 4(2), 105-115.

Rosário, A. T., Lopes, P. R., & Rosário, F. S. (2023). Influencer Marketing in the Digital Ecosystem. In *Influencer Marketing Applications Within the Metaverse* (pp. 132-166). IGI Global. Doi: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8898-0.ch009

Saima, & Khan, M. A. (2020). Effect of social media influencer marketing on consumers' purchase intention and the mediating role of credibility. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 27(4), 503-523.

Schivinski, B., Langaro, D., & Shaw, C. (2019). The influence of social media communication on consumer's attitudes and behavioral intentions concerning brand-

sponsored events. *Event Management*, 23(6), 835-853. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599518X15403853721268>

Schmuck, D., Hirsch, M., Stevic, A., & Matthes, J. (2022). Politics—simply explained? How influencers affect youth's perceived simplification of politics, political cynicism, and political interest. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(3), 738-762. <https://doi.org/10.1177/194016122210889>

Stevens, J. P. (2002). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (Fourth Edition). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Association. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410604491>

Tan, S. J., & Tan, K. L. (2007). Antecedents and consequences of skepticism toward health claims: An empirical investigation of Singaporean consumers. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 13(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260600963711>

Tanwar, A. S., Chaudhry, H., & Srivastava, M. K. (2021). Influencer marketing as a tool of digital consumer engagement: A systematic literature review. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 51(10), 27-42. Doi: 10.17010/ijom/2021/v51/i10/166439

The State of Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report. (2023). Influencer Marketing Hub. Retrieved December 30, 2023. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/>

Tran, H. A., Strizhakova, Y., Usrey, B., & Johnson, S. (2022). Consumer cynicism in service failures. *Psychology & Marketing*, 39(2), 346-359. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21599>

Weiwei, J., & Yongyue, B. (2021). Influencer Marketing from the Perspective of Internet Celebrity Economy: A Literature Review and Prospects. *Foreign Economics & Management*, 43(01), 23-43. Doi: 10.16538/j.cnki.fem.20201122.301

Ye, G., Hudders, L., De Jans, S., & De Veirman, M. (2021). The value of influencer marketing for business: A bibliometric analysis and managerial implications. *Journal of Advertising*, 50(2), 160-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2020.1857888>

Yıldız, S. Y. (2022). Instagram Influencerlarının Cinsiyetine Göre Tüketici Profillerinin Belirlenmesi. *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi*, 23(4), 943-953. <https://doi.org/10.37880/cumuiibf.1130303>

Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of business research*, 52(1), 1-14.