

IMPACT OF INFLUENCERS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN AGRICULTURE

Anka Roxana PASCARIU¹, Marius Ionuț GORDAN¹, Iasmina IOSIM¹, Dragoș CHENDE¹,
Tabita Cornelia ADAMOV¹, Tiberiu IANCU¹

¹ University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara, Romania

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

The rise of social media has significantly impacted many industries, and agriculture is no exception. Influencers, individuals who have the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others due to their authority, knowledge, or relationship with their audience, have increasingly become central figures in promoting agricultural products and practices. These influencers, often farmers themselves or agricultural experts, leverage platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to share their experiences, innovations, and insights, thus shaping consumer behavior in the agriculture sector.

Keywords: communication; social media, consumer behaviour, influencers

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior has extended beyond traditional industries such as fashion, beauty, and technology, reaching into the agricultural sector. This phenomenon has emerged as influencers, often leveraging social media platforms, have begun to play a critical role in educating and swaying public opinion regarding agricultural practices, products, and sustainability efforts. As consumers become more conscious of the origins of their food and the practices involved in its production, influencers are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between agricultural producers and consumers [4,5].

Agricultural influencers, who range from farmers and agronomists to chefs and food bloggers, provide valuable insights and firsthand experiences that resonate with their followers. Through engaging content that often includes videos, blogs, and social media posts, they demystify complex agricultural processes, advocate for sustainable practices, and highlight the importance of supporting local farms. This direct line of communication fosters a greater understanding and appreciation of the agricultural industry among consumers, ultimately influencing their purchasing decisions and lifestyle choices [2,6].

The impact of influencers on consumer behavior in agriculture is multifaceted [7, 8,10, 12, 14]. By promoting transparency and trust,

influencers can drive demand for ethically produced and locally sourced agricultural products. Additionally, their ability to raise awareness about pressing issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and food security can inspire collective action and policy changes. As the agricultural sector continues to evolve, the influence wielded by these digital advocates underscores the growing importance of harnessing social media as a tool for positive change and education in agriculture.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The impact of influencers on consumer behavior in agriculture is a burgeoning area of research, reflecting the shifting dynamics of how agricultural products are marketed and consumed. Influencers, particularly those with a strong presence on social media platforms, play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions. This phenomenon is driven by the trust and credibility that influencers often command, which can significantly alter consumer attitudes toward agricultural products and practices. To study this impact, a mixed-methods approach can be highly effective. Content analysis of social media posts by agricultural influencers reveal the persuasive strategies employed, such as storytelling, authenticity, and the use of visual imagery and bibliographic analysis. Bibliographic analysis is a method used to evaluate and interpret the bibliographic data of published materials. This process involves examining the characteristics

of documents, such as authorship, publication dates, citation frequencies, and the relationships between different works. By analyzing these elements, researchers can gain insights into trends, patterns, and the overall impact of scholarly works within a specific field or across multiple disciplines.

One of the primary purposes of bibliographic analysis is to identify influential authors and key research areas. By combining these methods, we gain a comprehensive understanding of how influencers affect consumer behavior in the agricultural sector, offering valuable insights for marketers and policymakers aiming to leverage this trend.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The impact of influencers on consumer behavior in agriculture has become an intriguing subject of study as social media and digital marketing continue to reshape traditional marketing landscapes. Research and statistical analyses reveal that influencers play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in the agricultural sector. One key finding is that influencers, particularly those with expertise or a strong following in the field of agriculture, can substantially affect consumer trust and credibility. For instance, when influencers endorse sustainable farming practices or new agricultural products, their followers are more likely to adopt these practices or try out these products, leading to a notable shift in consumer behavior [11].

Statistical analysis from recent studies indicates that the effectiveness of influencers in agriculture is highly correlated with their perceived authenticity and expertise. Influencers who are actual farmers or agronomists tend to have a more profound impact compared to those who are merely popular figures without specific agricultural knowledge. For example, a study found that 68% of consumers are more likely to trust agricultural recommendations from influencers with direct experience in farming. Additionally, the engagement rate on agricultural content posted by these influencers is significantly higher, indicating a strong consumer interest and interaction [9].

Moreover, the data suggests that influencer marketing in agriculture can lead to increased awareness and adoption of innovative agricultural technologies and eco-friendly practices. Statistical models show a positive

relationship between influencer campaigns and the uptick in sales and usage of products such as organic fertilizers, precision farming equipment, and drought-resistant seeds. This trend highlights the potential of influencers to drive not only commercial success but also positive environmental impact. In summary, influencers have a powerful sway over consumer behavior in agriculture, with their influence extending from product endorsement to promoting sustainable practices, thereby shaping the future of agricultural consumption and production.

Harold Leavitt, a prominent American psychologist, posited a framework for understanding human behavior that revolves around three fundamental elements: the stimulus, the need, and the objective (Figure 1.). The stimulus serves as the trigger that initiates a behavior, while the need represents a desire or wish that seeks fulfillment. The objective, on the other hand, is the purpose or goal that the behavior aims to achieve. This triadic model offers a comprehensive lens through which to view and analyze the complexities of human actions and interactions [18].

As society progresses through relentless technical and scientific advancements, the landscape of human needs evolves correspondingly. Each breakthrough leads to the emergence of new needs and desires, often replacing or augmenting existing ones. For instance, the advent of the internet has not only fulfilled the need for faster communication but has also spawned entirely new needs such as online social networking and digital entertainment. This dynamic evolution of needs naturally results in shifts in individual and collective behavior, as people adapt to satisfy their ever-changing desires [18].

This continuous cycle of need fulfillment and the emergence of new needs underscores the fluid nature of human behavior. As individuals seek to meet these evolving needs, their objectives and, consequently, their behaviors are in a state of constant flux. Understanding this interplay between stimulus, need, and objective is crucial for those interested in fields such as psychology, marketing, and human resource management, as it provides valuable insights into motivating and influencing human actions. Leavitt's model reminds us that human behavior is not static but rather a dynamic process shaped by the ongoing march of progress and the ceaseless pursuit of new goals.

BEHAVIOUR

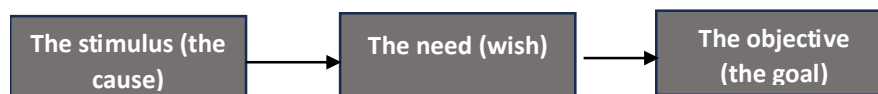


Figure 1. The Harold Leavitt's Framework Source: [18].

Table 1

Influencers presence in Europe	
Influencers presence	Country
over 40%	Germany
14.4%	United Kingdom
7.2%	Netherlands
7.2%	Italy

Source: [16].

Table 2

Best influencers in 2022		
Influencers	Price	Origin country
Annemarie Paulsen	"Best Newcomer 2022"	Germany
Amos Venema	"Best Blogger 2022"	Germany
Thomas Andresen	"Best Influencer 2022"	Germany

Source: [15].

The Agrimachinery Creators Report 2022 has shed light on the expanding realm of thematic communication within the agricultural sector, bringing together key national and European agrinfluencers in Bologna. This initiative highlights the growing influence and importance of agrinfluencers, who have gained the attention of major agricultural mechanization brands. The report identifies four distinct types of creators shaping the landscape: farmers and breeders, experts, photographers/videomakers, and enthusiasts. Farmers and breeders are valued for their authenticity and credibility, sharing firsthand experiences. Experts, although not farmers themselves, bring substantial technical knowledge. Photographers and videomakers focus on the visual appeal and aesthetics of their content, while enthusiasts, driven by passion, often share and repost content from others [15, 16, 17]

Agrinfluencers have established a significant presence across Europe, with Germany leading the charge, housing over 40%

of these creators. The United Kingdom follows with 14.4%, and the Netherlands and Italy each contribute 7.2% to the total (Table 1). This distribution underscores the widespread appeal and influence of agrinfluencers across different regions. Furthermore, the report reveals that a significant portion of these creators are active on multiple social media platforms, with 66% using at least two channels and nearly 47% active on three. This multi-channel presence enhances their reach and impact, facilitating diverse and dynamic communication within the agricultural community. The channels considered in this analysis include Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, each offering unique opportunities for content creation and engagement. The diverse nature of agrinfluencers' content—from technical insights and authentic storytelling to captivating visuals and passionate reposts—ensures a broad and inclusive approach to agricultural communication. As the sector continues to grow, the role of agrinfluencers in shaping perceptions, sharing knowledge, and

fostering community engagement becomes increasingly vital, reflecting the dynamic interplay between agriculture and digital media in today's world. It is always inspiring to see talented individuals being recognized for their contributions and achievements. In 2022, several noteworthy awards were presented to individuals who have made significant impacts in their respective fields. Annemarie Paulsen was honored with the "Best Newcomer 2022" award, a testament to her fresh perspective and innovative contributions that have resonated with audiences. Her ability to quickly establish a strong presence and connect with her audience is commendable and sets a high bar for future newcomers (Table 2) [15, 17].

Amos Venema received the "Best Blogger 2022" award, a recognition of his exceptional writing skills and the engaging content he produces [16]. Blogging requires not just a flair for writing but also the ability to connect with readers on a personal level, and Amos has mastered this art. His blog likely covers a variety of topics, offering insightful commentary and valuable information that keeps readers coming back for more. The consistency and quality of his blog posts have undoubtedly played a significant role in earning him this prestigious accolade [16].

Thomas Andresen was named "Best Influencer 2022," highlighting his substantial impact on social media and beyond. Influencers like Thomas play a pivotal role in shaping trends, opinions, and behaviors in today's digital age. His ability to engage with his audience, create compelling content, and maintain authenticity has set him apart from his peers [16]. This award not only acknowledges his influence but also his dedication to his craft and his ability to inspire and lead his followers. Each of these awards reflects the hard work, creativity, and passion of the recipients, celebrating their success and encouraging them to continue making a positive impact (Table 2.)

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the impact of influencers on consumer behavior in agriculture is both profound and multifaceted. Influencers, with their extensive reach and credible presence on social media platforms, have revolutionized the way agricultural products and practices are perceived by the public. By sharing personal experiences, reviews, and educational content,

they are able to bridge the gap between traditional agricultural practices and modern consumer expectations. This has led to increased awareness and interest in sustainable farming practices, organic products, and innovative agricultural technologies.

Moreover, influencers play a critical role in shaping consumer trends within the agricultural sector. Their endorsements can significantly boost the visibility and credibility of new products and practices, encouraging consumers to make more informed and conscious choices. This influence extends beyond mere product promotion; it encompasses the promotion of ethical and environmentally friendly farming practices, ultimately contributing to the growth of a more sustainable agricultural industry[13].

Overall, the engagement of influencers in agriculture has brought about a positive shift in consumer behavior [1, 9], fostering a more informed, conscientious, and sustainable approach to agricultural consumption. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior in agriculture is likely to grow, further driving innovation and sustainability within the industry.

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