

EXCITEMENT, TRUST, AND FOMO: A PERSPECTIVE IN INFLUENCER MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the influencer marketing industry positions consumer trust in influencers as a key psychological mechanism driving the fear of missing out (FOMO). Previous studies, such as Liu et al. (2025), have explained trust formation through the source credibility model but have not yet examined the role of source personality dimensions as antecedents to trust in a fully mediated relationship. This study examines the mediating role of trust in the influencer within the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO. Data were collected via an online cross-sectional survey of 147 respondents recruited through Prolific, who met the criterion of following at least one social media influencer, and were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results support all three hypotheses: perceived influencer excitement positively influences trust, trust positively influences FOMO, and trust fully mediates the relationship between the two ($\beta=0.299$, $p<0.001$). Preliminary testing also revealed a "halo effect" phenomenon between perceived source personality and trust, prompting a refinement of the research instrument. These findings extend the influencer marketing literature by integrating Brand Personality Theory as an alternative lens to the source credibility model and offer practical implications for brands regarding influencer selection based on personality dimensions that effectively build trust and drive audience FOMO.

Keywords : Brand Personality, Fear of Missing Out, Halo Effect, Influencer Marketing, Trust

A. INTRODUCTION

The influencer marketing industry has experienced explosive growth in the past decade, growing from a marginal marketing tactic to a major commercial force, reflecting a fundamental shift in the way brands interact with consumers through digital figures trusted by millions of followers. This surge in investment is in line with a real shift in digital content consumption patterns: consumers are now increasingly relying on recommendations from people they personally follow, rather than conventional one-way advertising. Influencer marketing, thus, is no longer just a digital marketing experiment, but has become a mainstream strategic channel to which brands in various industry sectors allocate serious budgets, in line with the observations of Vrontis et al. (2021) that the popularity of social media influencers (SMI) has grown exponentially in the last decade.

Behind this rapid growth, consumer trust in influencers is a central psychological mechanism that drives urgency-based purchasing behavior, particularly through fear of missing out (FOMO): an emotional urge not to miss out on experiences or products that others deem valuable. This central role of trust is in line with Commitment-Trust Theory in relationship marketing in general, which positions trust as a key explanatory variable behind various positive relational outcomes (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The relevance of this relationship is supported by Liu et al.'s (2025) recent findings, which show that SMI credibility dimensions, including trustworthiness, are proven to encourage FOMO and ultimately increase purchase intention. The link between trust, source personality, and FOMO has also been documented in other contexts; Verma (2024), for example, found that FOMO, brand personality, and brand trust are interrelated in driving consumer behavior in the context of culinary nostalgia, indicating that these three concepts are theoretically interrelated and worth testing together in other contexts. The question that then arises is what antecedent is the perception of an influencer's personality that is most effective in building the trust that drives FOMO.

The study most relevant to this research is Liu et al. (2025), which examines how three dimensions of source credibility of an SMI, homophily, trustworthiness, and expertise, in parallel drive parasocial relationships and FOMO, which in turn increases purchase intention. Although Liu et al.'s (2025) contribution is significant, the model tests credibility dimensions separately as direct antecedents, and has not tested specific personality dimensions rooted in a different theoretical umbrella, namely Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997), as fully mediated antecedents of trust. This argument is strengthened by the findings of Zhang, Shao, and Wang (2025), who show that excitement is empirically proven to be an independent perception dimension in the evaluation of an influencer, different from sincerity and other dimensions of credibility. As far as research has been carried out, there has been no research that specifically tests the mediating role of trust in the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO.

To fill this gap, this research aims to examine the mediating role of trust in influencers in the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and consumer FOMO. This research contributes to the influencer marketing literature by integrating Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997) as an alternative lens to the source credibility model that dominates previous studies, including Liu et al.

(2025). In practical terms, the findings of this research are expected to provide guidance for brands and marketers in selecting influencers based on personality dimensions, especially excitement, that are most effective in building trust and encouraging FOMO responses from audiences.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section B presents the literature review and hypothesis development, Section C explains the research method, Section D presents the results and discussion, and Section E closes with the research conclusion.

B. LITERATURE STUDY

Commitment-Trust Theory as an Umbrella Framework

This research is based on the Commitment-Trust Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), a theoretical framework that positions trust as a central variable that explains how a relational relationship between two parties can be formed and produce positive behavioral outcomes. Trust, in this framework, is defined as confidence in the reliability and integrity of another party in an exchange relationship, which allows one party to be willing to take psychological risks by relying on the other party. Although this theory was originally formulated for the context of transactional business-to-consumer relationships, its basic principle, that trust is a mechanism that reduces relational uncertainty, remains relevant to apply to parasocial relationships between consumers and an influencer, where the audience still forms a relational assessment of the extent to which they can rely on what the influencer conveys. Expanding the application of Commitment-Trust Theory to the contemporary digital marketing realm is not an isolated step, as shown by Liu et al. (2025), who utilizes similar logic to explain how the credibility of a social media influencer (SMI) translates into consumer behavioral outcomes.

Influencer Marketing as a Field of Study

As a marketing phenomenon, influencer marketing has developed into its own field of academic study, as documented in a systematic review by Vrontis et al. (2021) who identified 68 articles from 29 indexed journals in various scientific disciplines. Their findings show that although research interest in this topic continues to grow, the resulting body of knowledge remains scattered and fragmented across digital contexts. In line with this, a review of digital brand personality literature by Ghorbani, Karampela, and Tonner (2022) also notes that studies regarding how consumers perceive the personality of a brand or digital figure still require a stronger theoretical foundation. Two theoretical perspectives that have dominated influencer effectiveness studies are the source credibility model and the parasocial relationship framework, as exemplified by Liu et al. (2025) who combines the two in one integrated model. The dominance of these two perspectives tends to divide the audience's evaluation of an influencer into separate dimensions such as expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily, so that it rarely captures the more holistic impression of personality that the audience actually forms when evaluating an influencer.

Perceived Influencer Excitement and Brand Personality Theory

Different from the source credibility approach, this research adopts Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997) to conceptualize an influencer's personality as an impression that reflects the human characteristics associated with that figure. Aaker (1997) identified five dimensions of brand personality, namely Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness. Among these five dimensions, Excitement, namely the dynamic and interesting impression that the audience perceives of a source, has been empirically proven to stand alone as a perception dimension that is different from other dimensions. Zhang, Shao, and Wang (2025) show that virtual influencers are perceived as less sincere but more exciting than human influencers, and this perception also influences how the endorsed brand is viewed by consumers. Similar findings also emerged in the study of Hussain, Khaneja, Pacholi, Yousef, and Kourtoubelides (2023), which mapped nine dimensions of celebrity personality, including sincerity and excitement as dimensions that are statistically separate and have different influences on consumer attitudes. This research therefore focuses on Perceived Influencer Excitement as an antecedent of trust, an approach that is theoretically different from the source credibility model used by Liu et al. (2025), because it is rooted in the tradition of brand personality studies, not from the tradition of studies of persuasion and communicator credibility.

Trust to Influencer as a Relational Mediator

In a parasocial context, trust in an influencer represents followers' belief that the influencer is honest, reliable, and acts with integrity in recommending products. Liu et al. (2025) suggests that such beliefs play an important role in explaining why perceptions of a source translate into emotional responses and consumer behavior. Based on the logic of Commitment-Trust Theory, source characteristics do not automatically trigger emotional responses in consumers; an intermediate psychological process is needed where consumers first form a trust assessment of the source. In Liu et al.'s (2025) model, trust is positioned as one of three parallel antecedents to FOMO, so its role as a full mediator of a single antecedent has not been explicitly tested. This research positions Trust to Influencer as a single mediator that explains the full mechanism behind the relationship between Perceived Influencer Excitement and FOMO, an approach that allows a more precise identification of how large a proportion of the influence of excitement on FOMO actually runs through trust.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in Digital Consumption

Fear of missing out (FOMO) is defined by Przybylski et al. (2013) as a pervasive anxiety that others may be experiencing valuable experiences that one does not have, a construct that has its roots in the social psychology literature before being widely adapted to the marketing realm. Hodgkinson (2016) explains how this construct was adapted to the marketing realm, specifically how appeals based on urgency, scarcity, and social proof were deliberately used as promotional strategies to trigger FOMO in consumers. The FOMO construct has been extensively

researched in various digital contexts, including consumer behavior regarding influencers. Liu et al. (2025) shows that FOMO is proven to be influenced by the SMI credibility dimension and the strength of parasocial relationships, and ultimately becomes a strong determinant of purchase intention. Verma (2024) also confirms this relationship by showing that FOMO, brand personality, and brand trust mediate each other in driving consumer behavior. Based on this evidence, FOMO is a relevant outcome variable and has been empirically proven to be responsive to variables related to credibility and trust in sources.

Hypothesis Development

Based on Brand Personality Theory, influencers who are perceived as having high excitement, namely a dynamic and interesting impression, are expected to build higher trust among their followers, because a consistent and positive personality impression reduces the audience's uncertainty in assessing the credibility of the source. Psychologically, when the audience consistently observes positive personality impressions from an influencer over time, they form a cognitive schema that makes it easier to predict the influencer's future behavior, and this predictability is the main foundation for the formation of trust according to Commitment-Trust Theory. This argument is also in line with indirect supporting evidence from Liu et al. (2025), where positive perceptions of source characteristics are shown to be related to positive relational outcomes. Based on this description, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H1: Perceived influencer excitement has a positive effect on trust to influencers.

When followers trust an influencer, they tend to internalize product recommendations as something valuable and urgent to have, so high trust has the potential to trigger FOMO. Without trust, claims of urgency from an influencer tend to be ignored or suspected as mere marketing tactics, rather than triggering genuine anxiety in consumers. This relationship has been empirically supported by Liu et al. (2025), who found that trustworthiness as one of the dimensions of SMI credibility is positively and significantly related to FOMO. Based on this description, the second hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H2: Trust to influencer has a positive effect on FOMO.

Considering that trust is theorized as a psychological bridge between perceptions of the source and consumers' emotional responses, this research proposes that trust fully mediates the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO. The hypothesized mediation is full, not partial, because this research argues that the impression of an influencer's excitement, no matter how attractive, does not have a meaningful direct influence on FOMO without first going through the formation of trust. This argument for testing full mediation is in line with broader methodological precedents in the relationship marketing literature, as outlined in the Commitment-Trust Theory framework. Based on this description, the third hypothesis is proposed as follows.

H3: Trust to influencer mediates the influence of perceived influencer excitement on FOMO.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review and the three hypotheses developed above, the conceptual framework of this research is depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates the relationship between perceived influencer excitement, trust, and FOMO. This research integrates Brand Personality Theory and Commitment-Trust Theory to explain the formation of FOMO through the trust mechanism, a model configuration that, as far as the literature search has been conducted, has never been tested in this form before.

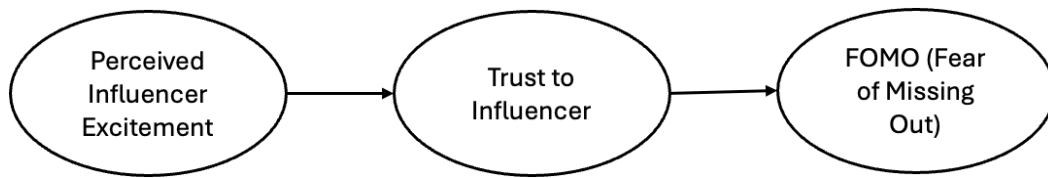


Figure 1.
Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors' own creation

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This research uses a cross-sectional design with a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between perceived influencer excitement, trust to influencer, and FOMO. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a technique chosen because of its suitability for exploratory predictive models involving relatively new constructs in combination, as well as testing perceived influencer excitement as an antecedent of trust in this research (Hair et al., 2021). All analyzes were carried out using R software via the seminar package.

Population, Sample, and Screening Procedures

The population of this research is social media users who actively follow at least one influencer. Participants were recruited through Prolific, an online subject pool platform widely used in social science and behavioral economics research (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Eligibility criteria required that participants must follow at least one influencer on social media and have seen that influencer promote or showcase a product in the last three months. The initial sample size target was set at 150 respondents referring to the R^2 -based minimum sample size table (Cohen, 1992, as referenced in Hair et al., 2022) for a model with three maximum predictors towards one construct, assuming R^2 ranges from 0.10 to 0.25. After the data filtering process, which included excluding respondents who did not meet the screening criteria and verifying the completeness of answers, a final sample of 147

respondents were obtained who were suitable for analysis, a number that remained well above the minimum required threshold.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through an online questionnaire built using Google Forms and distributed to participants via Prolific. Before starting the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide informed consent after reading information regarding the purpose of the research, data confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequences, in accordance with the provisions of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Participants were asked to enter their Prolific ID at the beginning of the questionnaire for the purposes of verifying participation and payment, separately from their substantive answers. Participants who met the screening criteria were then directed to a context page, which asked them to recall one specific influencer they followed and who had previously promoted a product, before answering all the substantive items based on that experience. The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is three to five minutes.

Research Instruments

The research instrument consists of seven items measuring three constructs, plus one attention check item, using a five-point Likert scale with a range of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Perceived Influencer Excitement was initially measured using three items adapted from the Sincerity, Excitement, and Competence dimensions of the Brand Personality Scale (Aaker, 1997). Trust to Influencer was measured using three items adapted from Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). FOMO was measured using three items adapted from the conceptualization of Przybylski et al. (2013) and Hodgkinson (2016). The results of discriminant validity testing at the data analysis stage, which are explained further in Section D, show that two of the three Perceived Influencer Excitement items do not show adequate discriminant validity regarding Trust to Influencer. These two items were then re-moved, so that Perceived Influencer Excitement was ultimately measured as a single item construct using items that represent the Excitement dimension. The use of single item constructs in PLS-SEM is a methodologically accepted practice for constructs that are concrete and have a clear and single object of assessment (Ang & Eisend, 2018; Diamantopoulos et al., 2012), including specifically for the trust construct (Castro et al., 2023), although some researchers still warn of the need to be careful in selecting representative single items (Sarstedt et al., 2016). One attention check item is inserted discreetly among the substantive items to support the data filtering process at the analysis stage.

Mitigation of Common Method Bias

To reduce the risk of common method bias, the order of all items, including attention check items, was randomized individually for each respondent using Google Forms' built-in shuffle feature. This procedure is consistent with

recommendations for psychological separation, namely mixing items from different constructs so that respondents cannot guess the relationship being tested and do not answer consistently following a recognized pattern (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Hiddenly inserted attention checks serve as an additional layer of mitigation against careless responding and are used to filter data in the post-collection data cleaning stage.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM through two evaluation stages, following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2021). The first stage is evaluation of the measurement model, including testing convergent validity via outer loading and Average Variance Extracted, as well as discriminant validity via the Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio with a threshold of 0.85 for publications in the marketing field (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for multi-item constructs, while internal reliability could not be calculated for single-item constructs, a limitation that is explained further in Section E. The second stage was the evaluation of the structural model, including testing path coefficients, coefficients of determination, and the significance of relationships between constructs through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. Testing the mediating effect of trust to influencer on the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO was carried out using a specific indirect effect procedure with bootstrapped confidence intervals.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

This research involved 147 respondents who had gone through a screening and data cleaning process. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1.
Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=147)

Characteristics	Category	n	%
Age	Range 18-68 years, M=31.8, SD=10.4		
	18-24	33	22.4%
	25-34	73	49.7%
	35-44	24	16.3%
	45-54	8	5.4%
	55-64	8	5.4%
	65+	1	0.7%
Sex	Male	78	53.1%
	Female	68	46.3%
	Choose not to answer	1	0.7%
Country of Residence	26 countries, largest: United Kingdom (16.3%), South Africa (10.9%), United States (10.2%)		

Source: Authors' own research

Respondents follow influencers mainly via Instagram (64.6%) and YouTube (59.9%), with the most frequently promoted products being the Beauty/Skincare

(42.2%) and Electronics/Gadgets (36.7%) categories. Because screening does not limit country of residence, the study sample is international, a characteristic discussed further as a limitation in Section E.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Evaluation of the measurement model was carried out following the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2021), including convergent validity, reliability and discriminant validity as shown in 2 and 3.

Table 2.
Outer Loadings

Item	Construct	Loading	T-stat	p
PIE1	Perceived Influencer Excitement	1.000	(single item)	(single item)
TRS1	Trust to Influencer	0.844	21.25	<0.001
TRS2	Trust to Influencer	0.952	24.10	<0.001
TRS3	Trust to Influencer	0.699	9.77	<0.001
FMO1	FOMO	0.988	13.72	<0.001
FMO2	FOMO	0.831	9.13	<0.001
FMO3	FOMO	0.590	5.50	<0.001

Source: Authors' own research

Table 3.
Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Trust to Influencer	0.871	0.873	0.697
FOMO	0.847	0.855	0.671
Perceived Influencer Excitement	(single item)	(single item)	(single item)

Source: Authors' own research

Table 4.
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct pairs	HTMT	95% CI
Perceived Influencer Excitement - Trust	0.515	[0.355 ; 0.653]
Perceived Influencer Excitement - FOMO	0.385	[0.219 ; 0.535]
Trust - FOMO	0.580	[0.439 ; 0.711]

Source: Authors' own research

All HTMT (Table 4) values were below the 0.85 threshold recommended for publications in the field of marketing (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016), indicating adequate discriminant validity between the three constructs. It should be noted that the initial measurement of Perceived Influencer Excitement with three items, covering the dimensions of sincerity, excitement, and competence, at the preliminary testing stage showed inadequate discriminant validity for Trust to Influencer, with an initial HTMT value reaching 0.983. This kind of overlapping pattern is consistent with the halo effect phenomenon in source evaluation, where positive impressions of one source attribute, in this case sincerity, tend to spread and influence assessments of other conceptually different attributes, in this case trust (Lanero et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2025). Similar phenomena have also been

reported in other instruments; Radomir and Moisescu (2019) found that even well-established corporate reputation scales can fail to meet the HTMT criteria despite passing the more relaxed Fornell-Larcker criteria. Based on these findings, the items sincerity and competence were removed from the measurement, so that Perceived Influencer Excitement was ultimately measured as a single item construct using items that specifically represent the excitement dimension, as explained in Section C.

Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 shows that perceived influencer excitement explains 25.7% of the variance in trust in the influencer, while trust in the influencer, along with its indirect effect, explains 34.8% of the variance in FOMO; both represent weak-to-moderate effects, which is reasonable for a consumer behavior model involving three constructs. Table 6 confirms that all three research hypotheses are statistically supported, with p-values below 0.001 and 95% confidence intervals that do not include zero across all paths, including the mediation effect in H3, thereby demonstrating that the research model is empirically valid.

Table 5.
Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Trust to Influencer	0.257	0.252
FOMO	0.348	0.343

Source: Authors' own research

Table 6.
Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	T-statistic	p-value	95% CI	Decision
H1	Perceived Influencer Excitement → Trust to Influencer	0.507	6.569	<0.001	[0.345, 0.647]	Supported
H2	Trust to Influencer → FOMO	0.590	9.069	<0.001	[0.458, 0.716]	Supported
H3	Perceived Influencer Excitement → Trust to Influencer → FOMO (indirect effect)	0.299	—	<0.001	[0.187, 0.418]	Supported

Source: Authors' own research

Discussion

The test results support H1, indicating that perceived influencer excitement has a positive and significant effect on trust in the influencer ($\beta=0.507$, $p<0.001$). This finding is consistent with Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which posits that trust is formed through consistent impressions of a source's characteristics. It also aligns with empirical evidence from Zhang, Shao, and Wang (2025), showing that excitement is a perceptual dimension that significantly influences audience evaluations of both the influencer and the endorsed brand. H2

is also supported; trust in the influencer has a positive and significant effect on FOMO ($\beta=0.590$, $p<0.001$). This reinforces Liu et al.'s (2025) finding that trustworthiness, as a dimension of SMI credibility, is positively associated with FOMO, while also reaffirming the link between trust and FOMO previously documented by Verma (2024) in a different consumer context.

H3 is also supported, with trust in the influencer found to fully mediate the effect of perceived influencer excitement on FOMO ($\beta=0.299$, $p<0.001$). Since this study's structural model does not include a direct path from perceived influencer excitement to FOMO, the findings indicate that the influence of excitement on FOMO operates entirely through the formation of trust rather than directly. This reinforces the argument that an influencer's personality impression, however engaging, does not automatically trigger consumer anxiety about missing out on trends without first being processed through an assessment of trust in the source.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by demonstrating that Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997), specifically the "excitement" dimension, serves as a valid and relevant lens for explaining the formation of trust in an influencer. This offers an alternative to the source credibility model that has dominated previous studies, including Liu et al. (2025). Furthermore, the instrument refinement process undertaken in this study contributes methodologically by empirically showing how the "halo effect" can influence the discriminant validity between the source personality construct and trust, aligning with patterns reported by Wang and Huang (2025) as well as Radomir and Moisescu (2019).

For brands and marketers, these findings indicate that selecting influencers who project a dynamic and engaging personality can be an effective strategy for building audience trust; this, in turn, drives FOMO and potentially boosts purchasing behavior. Marketers are advised to consider the "excitement" dimension as a criterion for influencer selection, alongside the conventional credibility criteria, such as expertise and trustworthiness, that are already widely used.

E. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of trust in the influencer within the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO. The analysis results support all three proposed hypotheses. Perceived influencer excitement was found to have a positive effect on trust in the influencer; trust in the influencer was found to have a positive effect on FOMO; and trust in the influencer was found to fully mediate the relationship between perceived influencer excitement and FOMO. These findings indicate that the dynamic and engaging impression an audience forms of an influencer does not directly trigger anxiety about missing out on trends; rather, it operates through the prior formation of trust.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by demonstrating that Brand Personality Theory, specifically the excitement dimension, serves as a relevant lens for explaining the formation of trust in an influencer. It acts as a complement to and an alternative for the source credibility model that has long dominated influencer marketing literature. The instrument refinement process undertaken in this study also contributes methodologically by empirically demonstrating how the halo effect can influence the discriminant validity between source personality constructs and

trust, aligning with patterns reported by Wang and Huang (2025) as well as Radomir and Moisescu (2019). From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that brands and marketers might consider the excitement dimension as a criterion for selecting influencers, alongside the conventional credibility criteria that are commonly used.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design employed does not allow for definitive causal conclusions, even though the mediation relationship tested is grounded in strong theoretical arguments. Second, perceived influencer excitement was ultimately measured as a single-item construct after two other items were excluded due to discriminant validity issues. Although the use of single-item constructs is a methodologically accepted practice for concrete constructs (Ang & Eisend, 2018; Castro et al., 2023; Diamantopoulos et al., 2012), this approach limits the measurable content scope compared to multi-item measures, and some researchers caution against generalizing findings based on single items (Sarstedt et al., 2016). Third, the study sample is international, comprising respondents from 26 countries without specific domicile restrictions; consequently, uncontrolled cultural variations could potentially influence the results, although this also enhances the generalizability of the findings compared to single-country samples. Fourth, respondents were asked to recall their experiences with an influencer retrospectively, meaning their responses could be subject to recall bias.

Future research should develop and validate multi-item instruments specifically designed to measure perceived influencer excitement, ensuring adequate discriminant validity vis-à-vis trust, to address the limitations of the instrument used in this study. Future studies could also replicate this model using an experimental design to strengthen causal claims and extend the model by incorporating other outcome variables, such as purchase intention, to build a more comprehensive understanding of the nomological network surrounding trust and FOMO in the context of influencer marketing. Furthermore, future research could investigate the halo effect mechanism identified in this study through a qualitative approach to gain deeper insight into how consumers simultaneously form impressions of an influencer's personality and establish trust.

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