

The confluence influence

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Someone once infamously remarked that the public has "had enough of experts." This is so obviously not the case in so many walks of life, of course, including marketing and commerce. Social media, for instance, has given a platform to experts in products in a way that members of the public never had before. Those who study popular culture and fashion will have seen the growing follower counts on social media outlets for a

small number of people with expertise in a niche area who have colloquially become known as influencers.

Research has now demonstrated what might seem obvious: the greater the expertise an influencer is perceived to have by their followers, the more likely the message they send is to be received positively and acted on by those followers. The research by Kyoo-Hoon Han and Eunmi Lee Department of the department of Public Relations and Advertising at Sookmyung Women's University, in Seoul, South Korea is detailed in the International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising.

This finding reinforces what some observers suggest is a positive effect of social [media](#) and that observers in the opposite camp see as worrying. Influencers have gained [power](#), it seems, through [social media](#), and with power, there comes responsibility but also the potential for abuse of that power.

The COVID pandemic has led to the move online of many endeavors and activities that traditionally involved physical and face-face interactions. As such, there is perhaps a pressing need to ensure new checks and balances are in place to reduce the risk of the abuse of newly wielded power without stifling freedom of expression, personal choice, and privacy, of course. Nevertheless, given a [positive outlook](#), there is great potential for the new normal of the online world of influencers and their followers. There is also now great scope for research into this burgeoning area within the commercial realm.

More information: Kyoo Hoon Han et al. Viewer responses to product messages using one-person media influencers, *International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising* (2021). [DOI: 10.1504/IJIMA.2021.112790](#)

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