



# “How to convert Millennial consumers to brand evangelists through social media micro-influencers”

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# HOW TO CONVERT MILLENNIAL CONSUMERS TO BRAND EVANGELISTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MICRO-INFLUENCERS

## Abstract

Undoubtedly, in the modern age of digitalization, Millennials, who are considered digital natives, have become a massive target market for salespersons. Changes in the way Millennials think accompanied by an explosion of social media have led to an increased focus on social media influencer marketing in the company sector. To help establish a new marketing paradigm that accounts for these changes, this research aims to conceptualize and investigate the process of building consumer-brand relationships with Millennial consumers through social media micro-influencers. Findings based on structural equation modeling revealed that four core characteristics of social media micro-influencers (i.e., authenticity, the meaning of the influencer, specific content, and secret sharing) were a significant antecedent of brand engagement and brand love, which, in turn, mediated the pathway from social media micro-influencer characteristics to brand evangelism. Understanding what social media micro-influencers mean to Millennials offers the promise of improving brand evangelism through more precise market analysis and market strategy. In the discussion, the paper introduces a three-stage building method towards brand evangelism through social media micro-influencer, including: (1) the stage of selecting influencers; (2) the stage of constructing intense emotional responses to the brand (brand engagement and brand love); and ultimately (3) the stage of becoming a brand evangelist. Lastly, limitations and future directions were discussed.

## Keywords

influencer marketing, millennials, brand evangelism, brand engagement, brand love, purchase intention, positive brand referrals, oppositional brand referrals

**JEL Classification** M30, M31, M37

## INTRODUCTION

Millennials have perpetually been considered to be an impressive generational group for marketers with the most purchasing power (Bolton et al., 2013; Moreno et al., 2017; Smith, 2012) and the highest use of social media (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). Millennials are known as digital natives (Anaya-Sánchez et al., 2020; Bolton et al., 2013) born in the digital world from 1980 to 1995 (Buzza, 2017). The earlier research has shown that Millennials habitually interact with others on a social media platform for their purchasing activities (Bolton et al., 2013; Moreno et al., 2017). For example, they actively exchange, share, and search for opinions and reliable information about products and services on social media (Bolton et al., 2013; Smith, 2012). In response, the effectiveness of digital marketing aimed at this market segment is also increasingly becoming a priority on both research and corporate agendas.

Since Millennials rely more heavily on peer-to-peer communications more than traditional media (Goldghen, 2004; Hughes, Swaminathan, & Brooks, 2019; Smith, 2012), this phenomenon is manifested as a critical possibility for marketers to strengthen the consumer-brand relationships with this influential segment. In practice, there has been an unprecedented surge in the company involved in developing social media influencer marketing (Casaló et al., 2018). Nearly 93 percent of marketers use influencers as the focal action to reach online consumers (Fertik, 2020), especially in the cosmetic industry (Biron, 2019). Unsurprisingly, cosmetic companies keep investing in digital marketing to enlarge the market share and engage with their online customers (Casaló et al., 2018). Over 75 percent of consumers preferred to buy cosmetic products recommended by the influencer (Marketeer, 2019).

In the same vein, the power of social media influencers has evoked a plethora of researches on this issue during the last decades. Most academic researchers have confirmed the ability of mega- and macro-influencers leading to higher purchase intention (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011; Hsu et al., 2013; Meng & Wei, 2015), positive word-of-mouth (Casaló et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2019), brand trust (Bijen, 2017; Kolarova, 2018), brand attitude (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011; Xiao et al., 2018), and brand engagement (Hughes et al., 2019). However, it has not yet clearly explicated the relative strengths of micro-influencer. On the contrary, from a business perspective, the company reported that micro-influencers with 1,000-99,000 followers (Gómez, 2019) generate the highest interaction and engagement compared to mega- and macro-influencers (Nachum, 2019). As they are perceived as authentic (Gómez, 2019) and a relatable person like friends or family members, this leads to a strong connectedness between social media micro-influencers and their followers (Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Jin et al., 2019).

To support this perspective, a framework for building brand evangelism through social media micro-influencer has been developed (Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020). The findings offer compelling evidence of a positive relationship between the characteristics of social media micro-influencer (i.e., authenticity, the meaning of the influencer, specific content, and secret sharing) and consumer-brand relationships, including brand engagement, brand love, and brand evangelism. However, the effects of social media influencers on brand evangelism are not as straightforward as initially expected. It is completely mediated by brand engagement and brand love. It has been suggested that brand engagement and brand love are the crucial stages in building brand evangelism.

In apparent recognition of this, this research has devoted considerable attention to unveil the model that contributes most to maximizing influencer marketing. To the best of knowledge, this process has been primarily studied in the general population, leaving aside specific questions about the process in which these critical characteristics of social media micro-influencer can drive brand success within the digital native group. This is caused by the fact that Millennials are the first generation that completely use social media for information (Bolton et al., 2013) and for socializing with their community and friends (Paulin et al., 2014). They are being influenced and influencing others through their social networking platforms (Smith, 2012). Chatzigeorgiou (2017) proved that the value approach to reach this generation is social media. Consequently, it can be predicted that social media micro-influencer has the potential to be highly impactful in Millennials' perception of the brand.

The research marks a number of contributions to the digital marketing literature. First, this paper generalizes the prior process of building brand evangelism applicable to a wide range of adaptations by focusing on Millennials and their responses to social media micro-influencers. Second, it explicitly demonstrates that social media micro-influencers play a significant indirect role in developing brand evangelism. Third, this research stresses the pivotal mediation effects of brand engagement and brand love along the path from social media micro-influencer to brand evangelism.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. Social media influencer

An explanation for the role of social media influencers was drawn from a multi-step flow model of marketing communications (Robinson, 1976). The theory suggested that the initial mass media information flows to wider population directly and indirectly through an information intermediary called opinion leader (Dlodlo, 2014; McQuail & Windahl, 1983). It observes that opinion leaders tend to have more social networks (Liu, 2007), higher education (Marshall & Gitosudarmo, 1995), and more significant interests in the topic (Robinson, 1976). Additionally, it can be noted that they favorably share their knowledge with others in networks (Dlodlo, 2014). For example, to apply this model to social media influencers, it has been shown that the initial messages flow directly to individuals in the whole and are transmitted by influencers (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2018). It has been argued whether influencers will interpret brand messages, share their experience, and act as a reference to their followers through their social media platform (Kenechukwu, 2015). Ultimately, audiences disseminate this message to their friends and their networks (Dlodlo, 2014).

The conceptual importance of social media influencers is reflected in the extensive research attention concentrated on the topic. The first research stream deals with the power of social media influencers in this era. The majority of studies exist in the realm of behavioral intentions (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Dân, 2018; Ge & Gretzel, 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012; Lim et al., 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Loureiro & Sarmento, 2019; Meng & Wei, 2015). It is worth to note that social media influencers are perceived as a useful source of recommendation (Hsu et al., 2013; Meng & Wei, 2015), enabling purchase intention of consumers to buy a product (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Meng & Wei, 2015). More specifically, Chatzigeorgiou (2017) has proved that social media influencer significantly influences Millennials' buying decision.

Another stream suggests the crucial effects of influencers embedded in social media influencer on branding constructs, including brand atti-

tude (Bijen, 2017; Colliander & Dahlén, 2011; Jin et al., 2019; Xiao et al., 2018), emotional brand attachment (Tang, 2016), brand image (Dreifaldt & Drennan, 2019), brand trust (Bijen, 2017; Kolarova, 2018), brand engagement (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Hughes et al., 2019; Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020; Rooderkerk & Pauwels, 2016), brand love, and brand evangelism (Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020).

### 1.2. Social media micro-influencer characteristics

It can be recognized that intimate influencers, namely friends, family members, and co-workers, influence consumer purchase decision. As stated by Chatzigeorgiou (2017), Millennials commonly consider their friend's reviews trustworthy and realistic. This phenomenon accounts for a new type of influencer called micro-influencer, which has been widely used in the marketing sector over the recent decade (Burke, 2017). Additionally, this trend leads to the inevitable issue for company confronted by the age of globalization when communication technology is improved dramatically (De Perthuis & Findlay, 2019) and social media micro-influencers become a crucial key for the company (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2018).

In a similar vein, Casaló (2018) highlighted that micro-influencers are typically interesting because of their ability to share specific content authentically. Evidently, an increased number of followers may lead to higher perceptions of popularity and likeability (De Veirman et al., 2017). However, it does not mean that consumers will engage with posted content such as retweeting, sharing, or replying. (Romero et al., 2010). Due to the fact that a high number of followers lead to the idea that the product is not unique, consumers may not generally consider the macro-influencer as an opinion leader after all (De Veirman et al., 2017).

For this reason, it is necessary to delineate the core characteristics of micro-influencers that significantly enhance the positive outcomes. According to Pornsrimate and Khamwon (2020), four crucial aspects were selected for describing social media micro-influencer characteristics, including; (1) authenticity; (2) the meaning of the

influencer; (3) specific content; and (4) secret sharing. It has been shown that these aspects tend to represent the micro-influencers and provide favorable outcomes.

Firstly, authenticity refers to the influencers who use their intrinsic motivation and inner desires generating content on social media in order to represent their identity (Audrezet et al., 2018; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). It was illustrated that this facet influences consumer-brand relationship (Michael, 2019), as well as consumer behavioral intentions such as the intention to recommend, intention to follow the advice, and intention to purchase (Casaló et al., 2018).

Secondly, the meaning of the influencer refers to the characteristic of influencers who have the ability to form an intimate relationship with audiences as real friends (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). This aspect enhances the positive effect of influencers on emotional brand attachment (Zhou & Jia, 2018), brand engagement, and brand love (Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020).

Thirdly, specific content refers to the characteristic of an influencer who specializes in a specific area of interest (Gómez, 2019). A significant effect of post characteristics on brand engagement (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Hughes et al., 2019; Rooderkerk & Pauwels, 2016) and brand trust (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019), specifically, unique content, has been proved. Moreover, Godey et al. (2016) pointed out that unique content positively promotes consumer engagement on social media, including comments, likes, and sharing, ultimately building brand awareness and brand image.

Lastly, secret sharing refers to the characteristic of influencers who share their secrets to strengthen the audience and personal brand (Kim et al., 2013). Enhancing secret sharing helps influencers and companies gain favorable word-of-mouth (Kim et al., 2013; Sicilia et al., 2016), likeability (Collins & Miller, 1994), and a positive attitude of love (Wheless & Grotz, 1977).

Notably, it can be expected that these social media micro-influencer characteristics have a greater impact on consumer-brand relationships in the perspective of brand love and brand engagement, spe-

cifically the importance they place on Millennials. This argument is based on the notion that the specific personalities of social media influencers significantly influence the trust in influencer marketing among Millennials (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017).

### 1.3. The process of building brand evangelism

Brand evangelist can be defined as an active consumer who truly has a strong emotional commitment to the brand (Riivits-Arkonsuo et al., 2015) by purchasing the brand, praising the brand, defending the brand, convincing others to attach to the same brand (Kautish, 2010), and even providing negative comments about rival brands (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

The importance of brand evangelism has been widely recognized in the marketing literature (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Doss, 2014; Matzler, Pichler, & Hemetsberger, 2007). In the context of maintaining the consumer-brand relationships, Matzler et al. (2007) firstly found a positive link between brand passion and brand evangelism. It was noted that brand evangelists actively provide word-of-mouth and induce others to engage in their admired brand. Lee and Hsieh (2016) investigated a link between brand love and brand evangelism in driving participation in the online brand community. Recently it have been attempted to investigate the antecedents of brand evangelism in several aspects, including brand trust (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Riorini & Widayati, 2016), brand identification (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Doss, 2014; Riorini & Widayati, 2016), brand involvement (Riorini & Widayati, 2016), and brand commitment (Riorini & Widayati, 2016; Shaaria & Ahmadb, 2016).

In addition, the process of building brand evangelism through social media micro-influencer was found (Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020). Importantly, the effect of social media micro-influencer on brand evangelism is not direct but primarily mediated through brand engagement and brand love. It can be argued that empowering brand evangelism requires an intense emotional attachment to the brand before becoming a brand evangelist.

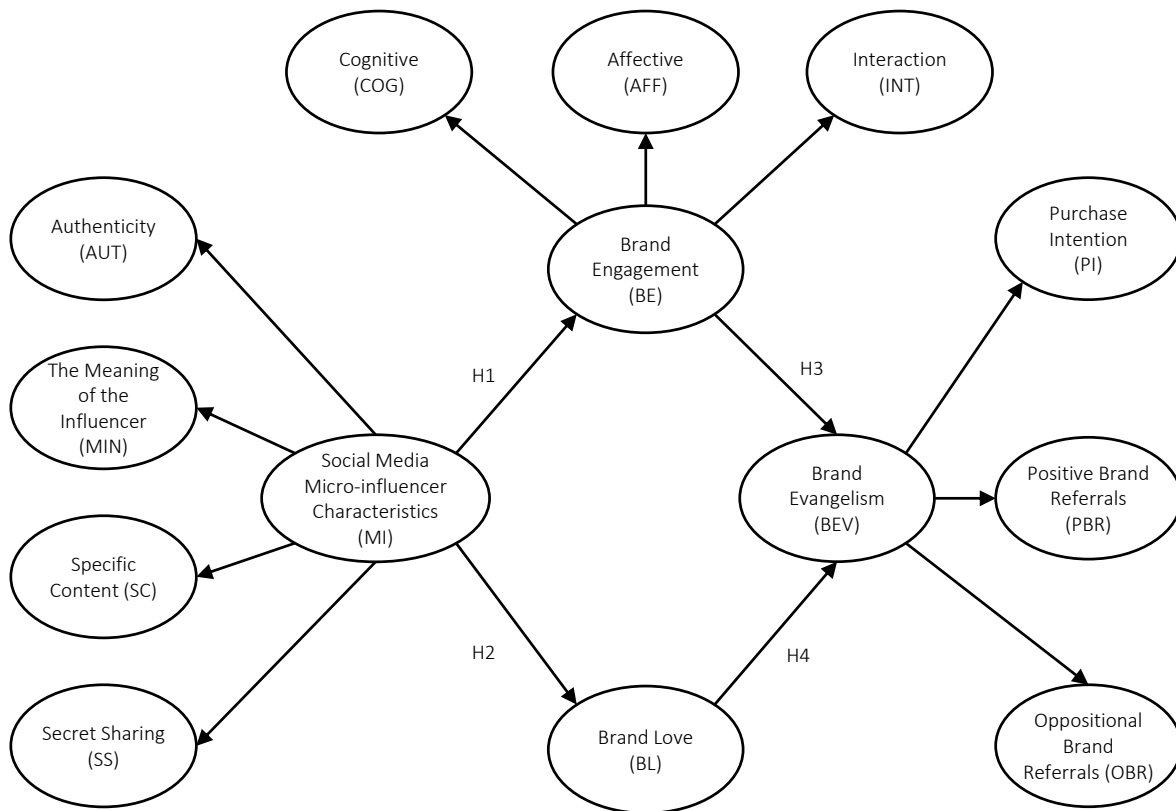


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

## 2. AIM AND HYPOTHESES

This study aims to investigate the mediating effect of brand engagement and brand love as potential mechanisms explaining how social media micro-influencers convert Millennial consumers to brand evangelists. In the conceptual model (See Figure 1), both brand engagement and brand love act as mediators of the relationship between social media micro-influencer and brand evangelism. The following hypotheses were set:

- H1: Social media micro-influencer characteristics have a positive impact on brand engagement among Millennials.*
- H2: Social media micro-influencer characteristics have a positive impact on brand love among Millennials.*
- H3: Brand engagement has a positive impact on brand evangelism among Millennials.*
- H4: Brand love has a positive impact on brand evangelism among Millennials.*

## 3. METHOD

### 3.1. Data collection and sample

The sample frame in this study comprised Facebook users of beauty communities, selected from three major communities in Thailand. Three hundred respondents participated in the research questionnaire and met the requirement of millennial ages (25-40 years old), following at least one cosmetic micro-influencers, engaging with the recent last month cosmetic posts of Facebook fan pages by likes, shares, or comments.

The research design was used to collect data on social media micro-influencers, brand engagement, brand love, and brand evangelism. A web-based survey including the scales of these constructs was developed via Google Form. Initially, the backward translation approach was used to translate the instrument to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding between two languages. In stage one of the pre-test, the content validity of the measurement items was performed. Three professors majoring in Marketing offered constructive

suggestions about the comprehensibility, ambiguity, readability, and wording of the developed measurement items of this study. According to the suggestions and comments, there were some modifications: (1) deleting two items of brand love that create relative terminological confusion with brand engagement; (2) changing some words and sentences. Later, the pilot study was conducted to represent the reliability of the developed scale and indicate the potential of the questionnaire. Ultimately, 50 valid for data analysis copies of online questionnaires were collected by convenience sampling. The result clearly showed that all Cronbach's alpha exceeded the threshold value of .70 (Hair et al., 2010).

Lastly, the survey link was sent to the participants at the end of February 2020. Respondents firstly answered three screening questions to ensure that they follow the social media- micro-influencer: (1) Do you follow any cosmetics micro-influencers who have 1,000-99,999 followers?; (2) If yes, which platforms do you follow them on? (Instagram/Facebook/others); (3) Which type of cosmetic products they share on their channels? Those who did not meet the following criteria were eluded. At the cut-off date, 300 completed questionnaires were returned. There was no missing data because the questionnaire was set up not to allow respondents skip questions without answering.

### 3.2. Measure

A set of 7-point Likert scale questionnaires was designed to measure variables. Characteristics of social media micro-influencer were measured with a thirteen-item scale developed and validated by Pornsrimate and Khamwon (2020) including subscales for authenticity (three items), the meaning of the influencer (three items), specific content (three items), and secret sharing (four items). Brand engagement was adapted from the extant research (Dessart et al., 2015; Pornsrimate & Khamwon, 2020; So et al., 2013) and included seventeen items measuring cognitive, affective, and interactional components of brand engagement. Brand love was measured with six items validated by Pornsrimate and Khamwon (2020). Finally, brand evangelism was drawn from the extant marketing literature (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013) and included nine items measuring purchase intentions, pos-

itive brand referrals, and oppositional referrals (See Appendix A).

### 3.3. Data analysis

The statistical processes for assessing the hypotheses and the research framework were done using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The statistical software SPSS and AMOS was chosen to perform the model estimation. Initially, variables were tested for normality and multicollinearity. The results showed that the value of skewness (-0.558 to 0.096) and kurtosis (-0.827 to 1.128) fell within the range of -2 to 2. Thus, the data collected is normally distributed. Then the absence of multicollinearity was also proved with the correlation matrix and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The results showed that all tolerance values (.234 to .325) were higher than .10 and all VIF values (3.076 to 4.272) were less than 10 for all variables (Hair et al., 2010). It also approved that multicollinearity was not an issue in this study.

The final step of statistical analysis is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM consist of two sub-models including the measurement model and the structural model (Hwang & Takane, 2014). First, to emphasize convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, measurement models were empirically tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Second, the SEM is applied to test proposed hypotheses in the structural model. The analysis results of the confirmatory factor, reliability, validity and SEM are discussed in the following paragraph.

## 4. RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents were Millennial women representing 87.7 percent. About half of the respondents' highest educational backgrounds were bachelor's degrees (62 percent). Moreover, as many as 92.7 percent of respondents follow micro-influencer on Facebook, 29 percent on Instagram and 2.7 percent on other platforms (i.e., YouTube, Twitter, Line). The absolute majority of respondents answered that face care was a product type that micro-influencers immensely share on their platform, demonstrating 85 percent. The remaining answers included body care (47.3 percent),

**Table 1.** Respondents' profile

	N	%		N	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Platform</b>		
Woman	263	87.7	Instagram	87	29
Man	37	12.3	Facebook	278	92.7
<b>Age</b>			<b>Others</b>		
25-34	205	68.3		8	2.7
35-40	95	31.7			
<b>Education</b>			<b>Industry</b>		
Primary School Education	3	1	Hair care	75	25
Junior Secondary School Education	24	8	Aerosol	57	19
Senior Secondary School Education	37	12.3	Face care	255	85
Diploma	23	7.7	Body care	142	47.3
Bachelor Degree	186	62	Fragrance	130	43.3
Postgraduate	27	9			

fragrance (43.3 percent), hair care (25 percent), and aerosol products (19 percent), respectively.

To examine the data and test the proposed hypothesis model, this research employed a two-stage structural equation modeling approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Firstly, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to investigate the unidimensionality of each factor. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the constructs were approved in this stage. Secondly, the theoretical relationships between constructs were analyzed through a structural equation model (SEM).

The reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were evaluated by a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), including all the multi-item constructs in the theoretical framework. As shown in Appendix A, the results of the CFA suggested that the measurement model provides an excellent fit to the data based on a number of fit statistics. In

terms of convergent validity, it can be seen that the Cronbach's coefficient alphas of all the constructs exceeded the required level of .80 (Hair et al., 2010). The squared multiple correlations (SMC) exceeded 0.50 for all items (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results illustrated the values of Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), calculating from the formula proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). It can be observed that the CR varied from .833 to .956, satisfying the criteria of .70. Moreover, the AVE varied from .790 to .864, thus, exceeding the criteria of .50 (Hair et al., 2010).

Furthermore, to ensure that each construct was empirically unique and demonstrated phenomena of interest that other constructs in the model do not represent (Hair et al., 2010), the discriminant validity should be assessed. Table 2 shows that the square root AVE of each construct, varying from 0.889 to .930, was greater than its correlation. Thus, discriminant validity was confirmed by this study.

**Table 2.** Discriminant validity assessment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Authenticity	<b>0.911</b>										
2. The meaning of the influencer	.680**	<b>0.892</b>									
3. Specific Content	.740**	.708**	<b>0.889</b>								
4. Secret Sharing	.777**	.733**	.736**	<b>0.913</b>							
5. Cognitive	.440**	.476**	.584**	.435**	<b>0.930</b>						
6. Affective	.412**	.439**	.499**	.398**	.772**	<b>0.925</b>					
7. Interaction	.388**	.445**	.505**	.370**	.700**	.780	<b>0.915</b>				
8. Brand love	.410**	.502**	.562**	.381**	.737**	.772	.730	<b>0.916</b>			
9. Purchase Intention	.410**	.488**	.519**	.403**	.751**	.676	.618	.757	<b>0.925</b>		
10. Positive Brand Referrals	.347**	.366**	.431**	.322**	.659**	.633	.586	.687	.778	<b>0.914</b>	
11. Oppositional Brand Referrals	.343**	.518**	.474**	.358**	.575**	.585	.581	.678	.739	.681	<b>0.904</b>

Note: The bold diagonal elements are the square root of average variance extracted. Off diagonal elements are the correlations of latent constructs.



Finally, the goodness of fit of the model was verified. The results showed that the measurement model proposed is fit to the actual data ( $\chi^2=786.568$ ,  $df = 848$ ,  $p = .935$ ,  $\chi^2/df = .928$ ,  $GFI = .901$ ,  $CFI = 1.000$ ,  $sRMR = .0329$ , and  $RMSEA = .000$ ). The ratio of the chi-square to degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df = .928$ ) is below the recommended cutoff point of 5 (Hair et al., 2010). All indices of model fit ( $GFI = .901$ ,  $CFI = 1.000$ ) exceeded 0.9 (Kline, 2010), and the value of precise conformance measures ( $sRMR = .0329$ ,  $RMSEA = .000$ ) were below .08 (Hair et al., 2010; Byrne, 2010). Hence, all fit indices achieved satisfactory levels.

The estimation results of the model revealed that social media micro-influencers have a positive effect on brand engagement ( $\beta = .623$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and brand love ( $\beta = .528$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn positively predicted brand evangelism. Thus, *H1* and *H2* were fully supported. As expected, the indirect effects of social media micro-influencers on brand evangelism were indeed mediated by brand engagement ( $\beta = .363$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and brand love ( $\beta = .536$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, *H3* and *H4* were also supported. Overall, the structural model showed a superior explanato-

ry power. The model explains 76 percent of the variance in brand evangelism. Figure 2 graphically portrays the results of the final model.

## 5. DISCUSSION

With respect to all hypotheses, this study makes a contribution to the digital marketing literature and offers comprehensive influencer marketing for salesmen. From a theoretical point of view, this study has further expanded the process of building brand evangelism through social media micro-influencer, as previously drawn by Pornsrimate and Khamwon (2020). This study empirically tests the model by eliminating the path from social media micro-influencer characteristics to brand evangelism and shedding light on the mediation effects of brand engagement and brand love on the path to brand evangelism. Importantly, this study focuses on the Millennials, who are highly active in social media and being promoted as a potential consumer market with tremendous buying power (Klein & Sharma, 2018). Additionally, Millennials are generally being influenced by others through their social networking platforms (Smith, 2012).

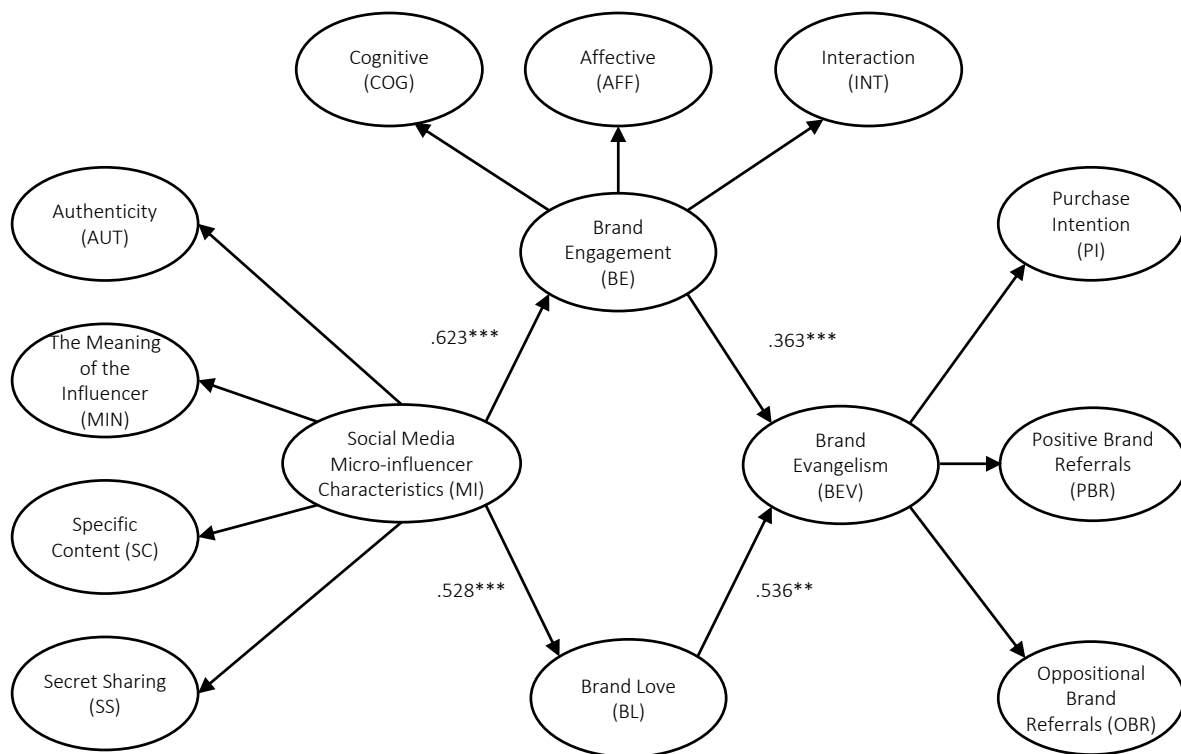


Figure 2. Structural model analysis results

As expected, this study supports the suggestion that social media micro-influencers potentially build brand evangelism. This research adds additional empirical evidence to the recent observation by confirming the mediation role of brand engagement and brand love on the relationship between social media micro-influencer and brand evangelism among Millennials. The proposed model produces a better fit than the previous model with excellent fit indices. It can be argued that social media micro-influencer has the ability to be highly impactful in building brand evangelism with Millennial consumers.

From a practical point of view, this framework can help marketers to explain how social media micro-influencer can serve as a key marketing tool to improve an influencer marketing for a company. To capitalize on new influencer opportunities for Millennials, this framework displays three main stages that emerged from substantive findings.

Firstly, the stage of selecting influencers provides several important calls for marketers. Based on the findings, the framework offers the evidence that four key characteristics (i.e., authenticity, the meaning of the influencer, specific content, and secret sharing) play an essential role in determining the brand evangelism. In this stage, marketers can consider these four criteria for choosing the right micro-influencer to assure that the audience is reached in terms of a marketing campaign. Consequently, it is critical for marketers to assess: (1) Where are they based?; (2) What are their character traits?; (3) What values do they share with the brand?

Applying the proper criteria for influencer selection is critical in this stage.

Secondly, the stage of constructing intense emotional responses to the brand by using social media micro-influencer was performed. It can be recognized that the four key micro-influencer characteristics positively influence brand engagement and brand love. It represents a strong connectedness between micro-influencers and consumers. Thus, at this stage, the company can increase the level of consideration and encourage consumers to learn more about the brand, and what the brand can offer. There are several points that marketers should consider: (1) the primary marketing objectives; (2) target audience; (3) influencer selection; and (4) content creativity (Levin, 2020). This stage holds the key to success in influencer marketing which leads to brand engagement and brand love.

Thirdly, the stage of becoming brand evangelist causes the vigorous behaviors among consumers, including purchase intentions, positive brand referrals, and oppositional brand referrals. These outcomes are the ultimate result of the framework for building brand evangelism. Following the steps outlined in the framework, the last stage is to measure the effects and results of the influencer marketing. According to Levin (2020), it can be argued that the purpose of influencer marketing is to gain a comprehensive understanding of why the company launches an influencer marketing campaign and how to define success. Thus, marketers can set brand evangelism as their main outcome of measuring the results of a campaign. For example, marketers can evaluate success based on sale numbers or positive reviews from customers.

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## CONCLUSION

The Millennial's use of social media is a dramatic force in changing the marketplace and challenging marketers. It will ultimately lead to new business paradigms, processes, and strategies. Integrating literature streams of social media micro-influencer, millennials, and brand evangelism, this study adds to the marketing literature by empirically investigate the mediation influence of brand engagement and brand love on the relationship between social media micro-influencers and brand evangelism. These findings indicate that social media micro-influencer plays an important role in the everyday life of Millennial consumers and can even influence the construction of superior consumer-brand relationships (i.e. brand engagement, brand love, and brand evangelism). This framework provides the tool for marketers to find the right micro-influencer that meets their marketing needs and helps turn Millennial consumers to brand evangelists.

While this study addresses the effectiveness of social media micro-influencer from multiple perspectives, it also provides a starting point for future research. First, this study only focused on four characteristics of the social media micro-influencer. Academic researchers still need to investigate conceptual development of relevant characteristics such as product/brand involvement, perceived quantity, and quality of the content.

Second, a fruitful avenue for future research is to examine other antecedents of brand evangelism in the context of social media micro-influencer. For example, it has been noted that social media influencer has beneficial impact on brand trust (Bijen, 2017; Kolarova, 2018). It seems possible that authenticity and secret sharing could exert an amplifying effect on brand trust, which leads to favorable behavioral intentions.

One other promising area for further research is to investigate comparative research of the different influencer types (i.e., mega-influencer, macro-influencer, and micro-influencer) to build brand engagement, brand love, and brand evangelism.

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## APPENDIX A

**Table A1.** Confirmatory factor analysis of the final model

	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>SMC*</b>	<b>Cronbach's</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Authenticity (AUT)</b>			0.858	0.869	0.830
Micro-influencers have an attractive personality	0.822	.675			
Micro-influencers' channels are genuine.	0.808	.653			
It is important that paid posts match with the micro-influencer's personality	0.859	.737			
<b>The Meaning of the Influencer (MIN)</b>			0.84	0.839	0.796
Micro-influencers seem to understand things I want to know	0.770	.592			
I like comparing my ideas with what the micro-influencers say	0.785	.616			
When I am on their channels, I feel as if I am part of the micro-influencers	0.833	.693			
<b>Specific Content (SC)</b>			0.837	0.833	0.790
Micro-influencers tend to be less broad in their cosmetic contents	0.774	.598			
Micro-influencers' contents are highly unique	0.810	.657			
Micro-influencers' contents are one of a kind	0.787	.619			
<b>Secret Sharing (SS)</b>			0.907	0.901	0.834
Micro-influencers often disclose online intimate, personal things about themselves without hesitation.	0.847	.718			
Micro-influencers statement online about their feelings, emotions, and experiences are always accurate	0.820	.673			
Micro-influencers completely sincere when they reveal online with their own feelings and experiences	0.835	.698			
Micro-influencers intimately disclose online who they really are, openly and fully	0.832	.692			
<b>Cognitive (COG)</b>			0.905	0.937	0.864
I pay a lot of attention to the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.888	.789			
I spend a lot of time thinking about the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.899	.808			
I make time to think about the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.834	.696			
I concentrate a lot on the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.882	.620			
I focus a great deal of attention on the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.817	.667			
<b>Affective (AFF)</b>			0.955	0.956	0.855
I feel excited about the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.811	.658			
I feel excited about what the cosmetic brands do	0.878	.772			
The cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers generate in me a feeling of excitement	0.887	.786			
I feel enthusiastic about the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.865	.748			
The cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers make me enthusiastic	0.840	.705			
I am heavily into the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.866	.750			
I enjoy being a fan of the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.851	.724			

**Table A1 (cont.).** Confirmatory factor analysis of the final model

	<b>Factor Loadings</b>	<b>SMC*</b>	<b>Cronbach's</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
The cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers make me feel good	0.841	.708			
Interaction (INT)			0.91	0.904	0.838
Participating in interacting with the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers is like a treat for me	0.848	.720			
I am someone who enjoys interacting with like-minded others in the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.845	.713			
I am someone who likes actively participating in discussions about the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.813	.661			
In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other people in the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.844	.713			
Brand Love (BL)			0.937	0.935	0.839
The cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers is a mythical brand	0.915	.838			
To what extent do you feel that using this cosmetic brand says something "true" and "deep" about whom you are as a person?	0.794	.631			
Do you feel emotionally connected to the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers?	0.864	.747			
I feel captivated for the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.837	.701			
Suppose this cosmetic brand was to go out of existence, to what extent would you feel anxiety?	0.813	.661			
I love the cosmetic brands recommended by micro-influencers	0.808	.653			
Purchase Intention (PI)			0.896	0.892	0.856
In the near future, I would probably buy the brand recommended by micro-influencers	0.913	.833			
In the near future, I intend to buy cosmetic products made by the brand	0.826	.683			
In the near future, I would possibly buy the brand	0.828	.686			
Positive Brand Referrals (PBR)			0.877	0.875	0.836
I spread positive word of mouth about the brand	0.811	.657			
I recommend the brand to my friends	0.839	.705			
If my friends were looking for cosmetic products, I would tell them to buy the brand	0.858	.737			
Oppositional Brand Referrals (OBR)			0.866	0.859	0.817
When my friends are looking for..., I would tell them not to buy any of the other brands	0.867	.752			
I would likely spread negative word of mouth about the other brands	0.740	.548			
If someone tries to decry this brand, I will tell him off unmistakably	0.845	.714			