Young Consumers' Emotions on Social Media: Perceptions and Responses to Influencer Communication

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This study examines how adolescents experience and respond to the emotional content of social media influencers and how they manage the associated persuasive influence. Sixty-eight 12- to 15-year-old social media users completed a 28-day diary in which they documented three posts per day. This was complemented by a follow-up questionnaire and qualitative interviews with 27 participants. The findings reveal that adolescents experience a wide range of emotions, including joy and inspiration, as well as frequent negative reactions, shaped by their parasocial relationships with influencers and features of the content, such as narrative, music, and visual design. Participants also reported ambivalent perceptions of influencers' persuasive intent and employed various strategies to manage emotional influence, such as selective attention, distraction, reflection, and content curation. These results underscore the vulnerability of this age group, given their extensive screen time and frequent emotional engagement, and highlight the importance of media literacy and ethical communication to support adolescents' health and well-being in digital environments.

Keywords: young consumers; emotions; social media; influencer content; digital marketing; coping strategies