

The Influence of YouTube Influencer Attributes on Information Credibility and Purchase Intention in Malaysia: The Mediating Effect of Consumer Information Adoption

Nurashikin Nazer Mohamed^{a*}, Norizan Jaafar^b

^ai-CATS University College, Malaysia

^bUniversiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Consumers are placing greater trust in influencers for information about products and services, appreciating the authenticity of their personal experiences. In Malaysia, women are particularly drawn to beauty influencers on YouTube, trusting their recommendations for cosmetic products. This study seeks to examine the impact of influencer characteristics on the perceived credibility of information and how this, in turn, shapes Malaysian women's adoption of information and purchasing decisions regarding cosmetics. Data were gathered through an online survey utilising purposive and snowball sampling techniques, resulting in 393 responses available for analysis. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was conducted utilising IBM SPSS AMOS version 24.0. Findings indicate that the individual traits of influencers significantly influence the credibility of the information they provide. Additionally, information credibility is shown to have a direct effect on both the adoption of information and consumers' purchase intentions, with information adoption further directly influencing purchase intentions. The study highlights the critical importance of information credibility in connecting influencer attributes with consumers' willingness to adopt information and make purchases, offering actionable insights for marketers aiming to maximise the effectiveness of social media influencer collaborations.

Keywords: influencer marketing, information adoption, information credibility, purchase intention, YouTube

JEL Classification: M3, M31

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, consumers are willing to adopt new technologies and include them in their daily activities. The internet is a widely used medium that provides access to a broad range of information and data sources framed from various viewpoints (Keshavarz, 2020). Thus, due to the advancement of technology and the widespread use of the internet, consumers are being exposed to excessive information about the products and services available in the marketplace. As e-commerce has developed, it has redefined consumer transactional behaviour, replacing many traditional in-person purchases with digital platforms (Bakar et al., 2025). The internet has facilitated conversations among consumers, allowing them to share information easily with a large audience within a short period. As consumers increasingly engage in online discussions about their purchasing experiences, marketing managers now have an exceptional opportunity to acquire market insights (Erevelles et al., 2016). The digital footprints consumers leave in virtual environments provide insights into their perceptions of products or services and their personal experiences and evaluations of companies' performance (Peltier et al., 2020). This evolution has reshaped the flow of information from a conventional one-way communication model to an interactive and dynamic exchange, where users actively share and receive information across multiple online platforms (Dahl et al., 2019).

Understanding the credibility of information shared by influencers has become crucial in the modern digital age, when social media platforms are crucial to consumer behaviour. It is imperative for marketers to determine the information credibility variable, as it can help them present information in a way that makes businesses seem more trustworthy (Ghaisani et al., 2018). However, despite its importance, a limited number of studies have been conducted to evaluate the factors influencing the credibility of information shared on social media (Li & Suh, 2015; Lis, 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Several studies on the effect of social media influencers have been done in different contexts in Malaysia, such as the impact of social media influencers on consumer behaviour (Khan & Phung, 2021), the effect of social media influencers on consumer attitude (Chekima et al., 2020), the effect of trustworthiness and style of promotion on purchase intention (Lokithasan et al., 2019), the effect of attitude towards user-generated content on purchase intention (Muda & Hamzah, 2021; Muda & Khan, 2020), the effect of consumer attitude on purchase intention (Lim et al., 2017), the influence of trust on purchase intention (Hassan et al., 2021), and the effect of social media influencers' characteristics on purchase intention (Abdullah et al., 2020), the influence of influencers' expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness on purchase intention (Koay et al., 2021). Further, only a few studies have been conducted on Malaysian beauty influencers (Chin, 2019).

Influencer marketing has been growing in popularity over the years. The influencer marketing industry was estimated to have a value of \$6.5 billion in 2019 and more than 100,000 influencers worldwide (Yıldırım, 2021). Social media influencers are engaged by approximately 80% of marketers worldwide to attract customers' attention to their businesses and to spread words about those businesses (Dinh & Lee, 2021). Internet users who have amassed a high number of followers as a result of their content creation and sharing activities across social media platforms are known as social media influencers (Yuan & Lou, 2020). The rapid rise of social media platforms has significantly amplified the need for effective customer interaction and engagement (Dinh & Lee, 2021). Social media platforms have transformed how individuals exchange and disseminate information online.

The internet and social media platforms are the most popular resources for consumers that are seeking information about particular products or services (Dedeoglu, 2019). The way consumers engage with products or services is changing due to social media influencers positioning themselves as relatable and knowledgeable figures on these platforms. The number of social media influencers has been increasing in recent years, and this trend has a significant effect on consumer behaviour (Dinh & Lee, 2021). The online reviews that customers leave for each other could be a good source of user-generated content (Fang et al., 2016). Consumers engage in electronic word of mouth to reduce uncertainty and risk when purchasing new products or services by finding useful information regarding a preferred product before making a purchase decision (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014). The surge in online product review sources has increasingly complicated the process for consumers to identify trustworthy reviews (Hlee et al., 2019).

With the growing prominence of social media, consumers increasingly use these platforms to share and exchange information (Dimitriu & Guesalaga, 2017). Among these platforms, YouTube stands out as a popular choice for seeking product-related insights before making purchase decisions, owing to the abundance of user-generated content available (Yuksel, 2016). Furthermore, user-generated videos created by beauty influencers are a new sensation on YouTube and are very popular with women. Beauty influencers use such videos to share their views of a beauty product or to compare similar products from various brands (Afifah, 2019). 'Beauty influencer' is a term that primarily refers to an aesthetic expert who teaches others about various issues related to enhancement and beauty practices (Tran et al., 2020). Customers' interest in watching videos online is becoming more intense, and YouTube has risen quickly to become the preferred social media platform among beauty influencers (Dankwa, 2021). The usage of YouTube is projected to grow substantially in Malaysia, increasing from 48.3% in the year 2018 to 80.6% in 2020. As depicted in Figure 1.4, the number of beauty videos viewed on YouTube each year is increasing year by year, with the total number of views predicted to reach 169 billion by the end of 2018 (Pixability, 2018). This scenario not only demonstrates that there is an increasing number of beauty videos available on YouTube but also indicates that these videos are growing in popularity among viewers (Sun, 2021).

Inaccurate and deceptive information impacts how consumers adopt information, prompting them to evaluate the credibility of what they encounter (Jiang et al., 2021). Trustworthy information enhances consumers' confidence in utilising user-generated content, including product reviews or posts, as a resource for making purchasing decisions (Rahim et al., 2015). Social media influencers are perceived as providing more credible information compared to celebrity endorsers (Schouten et al., 2020). Although interest in influencer marketing continues to rise, there has been limited research on the broader effects of influencers on consumer behaviour (Pick, 2020). The relationship between consumers' adoption of the information shared on social media and their purchase intentions remains uncertain due to limited studies (Tien et al., 2018). While the influence of information adoption on purchase attention has received some attention, previous research has primarily focused on electronic word of mouth (Abedi et al., 2020; Daowd et al., 2020; Erkan & Evans, 2014; Intansari & Roostika, 2022; Khwaja et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2021), leaving a gap in understanding how information provided by influencers, particularly beauty influencers, affects purchase intention. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which credible information provided by social media influencers on YouTube, more specifically beauty influencers, affects the consumers' adoption of in-

formation and their intention to make purchases.

LITERATURE REVIEW

User-Generated Content as a Form of Electronic Word of Mouth

User-generated content is the same as electronic word of mouth, which works exactly like traditional word of mouth (Manap, 2013), except the information spreads through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Conventional media, or traditional media (such as television and magazines), is continuously being replaced by social media, which has become an essential platform for marketers to promote brands and products. Users produce and upload multimedia content, including their thoughts on brands and products, which they can then share with others (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). User-generated content is a way for online users to express themselves by expressing their thoughts, opinions, and feedback on the products and services they have used or consumed (Bahtar & Muda, 2016).

User-generated content refers to a variety of online information sources that can be developed, initiated, and shared for consumers to refer to (De Costa & Abd Aziz, 2021). User-generated content may come in any form of material, and it typically comes in the form of images, videos, reviews, or testimonials on social media. The usage of user-generated content is one of the most effective and sensitive digital marketing strategies available today, as the information spreads quickly, extensively, and successfully (Al-Rawabdeh et al., 2021). Social media marketing is associated with the utilisation of user-generated content (Hudson et al., 2016). Social media users are mostly female; they usually have a large number of followers and share self-generated content on social media regarding topics such as beauty, fashion, food, and fitness (Lin et al., 2018). These types of social media users are typically known as influencers, and they obtain popularity by successfully identifying themselves as experts on specific topics on social media platforms (Khamis et al., 2017).

Influencer Attributes

The increasing discussions on expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness emphasise their critical role in shaping the effectiveness of social media influencers (Weismueller et al., 2020). These dimensions are central to the perceived credibility of influencers, which directly impacts consumer engagement and behaviour. Expertise refers to the influencer's knowledge or skills within a specific domain, while attractiveness extends beyond physical appearance to include relatability and likeability. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, hinges on the influencer's authenticity and the audience's belief in their intentions. Song et al. (2021) further elaborate that information credibility on social media hinges on two core factors: the perceived quality of the information and the trust derived from the influencer's reputation. This indicates that an influencer's ability to present credible, high-quality content significantly affects consumers' trust and ultimately their decision-making processes. These findings underscore the importance of strategic alignment between influencer credibility attributes and marketing objectives in leveraging social media platforms effectively. Additionally, homophily seems to be another crucial aspect in determining credibility (Daowd et al., 2020). The credibility of internet recommendations is higher when there is

a high degree of homophily between the information provider and the reader (Pentina et al., 2018). As a result, customers might perceive recommendations from sources that share similarities with them as more trustworthy (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Therefore, alongside the three components of the source credibility model applied in this study, homophily and information quality were also considered key factors influencing information credibility.

Expertise

Consumers can evaluate and recognise influencers' expertise in various ways by identifying their product-related abilities, their awareness, and their sharing of experiences in dealing with or using a product. Consumers usually favour the products and services supported and marketed by celebrities and influencers with higher levels of expertise. An influencer will not be regarded as an expert in a certain field unless the followers feel that the influencer is skilled, competent, and knowledgeable (Schouten et al., 2020). The influencer's experience, which includes the ability to recognise a product's benefits and drawbacks, is believed to be reliable. Consumers who lack experience are more likely to seek expert advice. The expertise of an individual is a critical factor when it comes to increasing the persuasiveness of a user-generated message and purchase intention (Ismagilova et al., 2020). When an influencer has extensive experience in a variety of fields, they are often referred to as experts. When the expert influencer uses a supported product that is illustrated on their video blog, the followers will consider purchasing the same product. Thus, influencers who are experts in the industry offer more credible information on the products (AlFarraj et al., 2021). It is widely acknowledged that the information shared by people with a high level of expertise has more persuasive power, as individuals are more likely to embrace the information they receive when the communications appear to be more credible (Lis, 2013; Tien et al., 2018). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H1: Expertise has a significant and positive impact on information credibility.

Attractiveness

Consumers tend to favour adopting and purchasing products from a specific brand when they observe individuals they admire showcasing, utilising, or endorsing those products (Forbes, 2016). The attractiveness of the source is conceptualised and measured by how beautiful, elegant, classy, likeable, and physically attractive the source is perceived to be (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019). Besides, influencers who are beauty vloggers are perceived to have knowledge in the beauty industry. They are often physically attractive, especially among the influencers who endorse beauty products. A person's attractiveness is measured in terms of their physical appearance (Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2020). Consumers tend to be easily convinced by physically appealing influencers, especially when these influencers make recommendation videos in their vlogs. Likewise, an influencer who recommends a skincare product and appears to have flawless skin is more convincing in influencing their followers to use the endorsed skincare products. The endorsement of a product by an attractive social media influencer is likely to be accepted (Lim et al., 2017). It is easier to believe in a brand or product when the brand or product is recommended by an attractive influencer (Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2020). If the endorser is likeable, consumers may have more confidence in the endorsement. Attractiveness is regarded as a key factor in spreading important messages (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017).

Attractiveness helps influencers keep their followers, and the majority of their followers are likely to follow their product recommendations, resulting in product or service purchases. The attractiveness of social media influencers not only influences customers' trust in the information but also has the potential to increase brand recognition (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Previous studies have shown that the attractiveness of social media influencers has a significant impact on the credibility of the information they share (Pinda et al., 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H2: Attractiveness has a significant and positive impact on information credibility.

Trustworthiness

Influencers are often perceived as credible because they share videos showcasing themselves using or demonstrating the products they endorse. A social media influencer who consistently shares meaningful and engaging content with their audience can build an emotional connection with their followers, which may encourage them to buy the suggested products (Ki et al., 2020). Trust and loyalty between customers and social media influencers have been found to positively influence the sustainability of their relationship, as well as enhance brand sales and overall market performance (AlFarraj et al., 2021). This dynamic boosts trust perceptions, as influencers frequently promote products in authentic, real-life contexts. Trustworthiness reflects the degree to which consumers believe the provided information is dependable and accurate (Shamhuyenhazva et al., 2016). Consumers tend to evaluate products based on information obtained online from reliable sources. When the source is seen as trustworthy and credible, consumers are more likely to consider purchasing the product or service. Therefore, the perceived trustworthiness of social media influencers plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' behavioural intentions (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Credible influencers are considered to have a high level of trustworthiness because they demonstrate a high level of objectivity and sincerity (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H3: Trustworthiness has a significant and positive impact on information credibility.

Homophily

Consumers who share common interests are more likely to identify themselves as part of a particular group and actively share brand-related information within brand communities on social media platforms (Chih et al., 2020). The concept of homophily is attracting increasing interest in marketing literature due to the widespread use of social media and its diverse social contexts, including blogging, social commerce, and social services (Mainolfi & Vergura, 2021). Homophily influences consumers' intentions to seek opinions and user interaction on social networking platforms. It could help customers understand their responses to the content generated by other users or influencers. The likelihood of a sustained relationship increases when users perceive a greater alignment between their perspectives and those of a media personality. Consumers are more inclined to engage with a source they perceive as similar to themselves, fostering the development of a trusting relationship (Hopp & Gallicano, 2016). The sense of compatibility between personal

and social public opinions encourages individuals to engage and express their opinions in interactions. Social media users like to follow the influencers whom they believe have similar personalities to theirs. Consumers are more likely to interact with those that hold similar ideas or interests to their own. A rise in homophily is facilitated if the recommendation includes specifics that indicate the influencer will help the consumer feel similar values or preferences to the influencer's. If a subscriber feels that they have something in common with a beauty influencer, they will want to keep watching the beauty influencer's videos and leaving comments on their YouTube channel (Purnamaningsih & Rizkalla, 2020). Beauty bloggers that are more similar to what their audience is looking for are rated as more influential (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2019). This study examines homophily as an underlying mechanism that influences the credibility of user-generated review videos. Previous studies have proven that if the perceived homophily between the information source and the receiver is high, the credibility of the information will also be high (Chih et al., 2020; Daowd et al., 2020; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Saleem & Ellahi, 2017). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H4: Homophily has a significant and positive impact on information credibility.

Information Quality

An online review's overall quality is measured by its information quality (Jiang et al., 2021). Consumers increasingly rely on the internet and social media as key sources of information about specific products or services. The rapid advancement of information technology and the internet has led to a significant surge in the volume of available online information (Xu et al., 2016). Technology allows consumers to obtain the information they need quickly, as various information sources are available on the internet. Social media users connect, despite not knowing each other, by communicating on social media platforms. The term 'information quality' refers to the users' subjective evaluation of whether or not the features of the information fit their own requirements and are suitable for the purpose for which it was created (Jiang et al., 2021). Product recommendations and reviews, for instance, are evaluated by consumers through the comment sections in social media platforms, where other experienced users share their experiences in using the same recommended product or service. Improving the overall quality of information can be one solution to the problem of having too much information (Zhang et al., 2022). Consumers tend to perceive the quality of review information on social media platforms with scepticism and often harbour doubts regarding the credibility and accuracy of such information. The quality of a piece of information can help consumers determine the credibility of that information, which in turn assists them in deciding whether or not to adopt the information and to purchase the product or service (Jiang et al., 2021). Previous studies have found that information quality affects the credibility of the information shared on social media (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Saima & Khan, 2020). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H5: Information quality has a significant and positive impact on information credibility.

Information Credibility

In today's information-overloaded social media landscape, it may be challenging to determine the credibility of a message (Ali et al., 2022). Marketers recognise that the concept of credibility has always played a critical role in the field of marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2018). When assessing the credibility of information, one critical factor to consider is the source of the information (Aladhadh et al., 2019). In the online environment, individuals possess nearly unrestricted freedom to publish and share their opinions on products or services, often without disclosing their true identity. The availability of the comments section and online discussion forums has provided consumers with space to share their opinions and experiences in using a product or service recommended by influencers. As a result, a great amount of user-generated content is available for viewing by potential consumers, but the credibility of the information might be questionable. 'Credible information' refers to content that is perceived as accurate, reliable, and supported by evidence or expertise from a trustworthy source. Such information is typically consistent, unbiased, and verifiable across multiple channels, which enhances its perceived authenticity among consumers. A message's credibility is influenced by its source (Keshavarz & Esmaeili Givi, 2020). When looking for advice on social media, people often find it more helpful to rely on sources of information that are regarded as more credible (Tien et al., 2018). Information creators' familiarity and physical appearance can be hard to judge in the online world; hence, the credibility of the source is the most common attribute of the information provider looked into by users (Yin et al., 2018). Customers are more likely to adopt the information from a credible source than from an unreliable one. Consumers will immediately turn to other, similar products with positive recommendations if the sources of information are credible. Accordingly, the literature on electronic word of mouth indicates that information credibility is a key element in persuading the adoption of related information (Daowd et al., 2020; Hajli, 2018; Jiang et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2018). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H6: Information credibility has a significant and positive impact on information adoption.

Consumers who have a favourable attitude towards certain social media influencers are more likely to consume the products advocated by those influencers (Lim et al., 2017). It has been found that the credibility of the information shared by an endorser influences consumers' intentions to purchase the endorsed product (Hui, 2017; Pick, 2020; Saima & Khan, 2020). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H7: Information credibility has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention.

Information Adoption

The information adoption process fits well with today's computer-mediated communication environments (Chih et al., 2020). Information adoption is defined as the degree to which recipients of information develop an intention to adopt the opinions conveyed within the information received during its transfer (Luo et al., 2019). With the advancement of the internet, the use of social media allows consumers to adopt information,

mainly via a large number of user-generated reviews, for their purchase decisions. The adoption of the information contained in online reviews involves voluntary use of the said information (Cheung et al., 2008). The information adoption model aims to understand more about how people expect to use knowledge. According to previous studies, information adoption can assist customers in making better judgements by choosing useful information and putting it into action (Hussain et al., 2017). In knowledge transfer, information adoption must occur within the receiver's mind. This process, also described as an internal transmission phase, involves the acceptance of information, which is subsequently converted into awareness (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The decision whether to adopt the information or not depends on the receiver's evaluation of the credibility and importance of that information. User-generated reviews have captured the interest of consumers who are keen to accumulate the positive comments found on social networking sites for their reference (Chih et al., 2020). Customers will seek assistance from within the virtual community when they need more information about a product. Information adoption is an important factor that cannot be overlooked when analysing customers' psychology and their information processing related to user-generated content and consumption goals. Consumers' purchase intentions are influenced by their adoption of the information available on social media platforms (Daowd et al., 2020; Erkan & Evans, 2016). Thus, this study hypothesised that:

H8: Information adoption has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention.

Consumers often turn to online communities for guidance when they have additional enquiries about a product they are considering purchasing. The deliberate decision to obtain a product is referred to as purchase intention, which involves an individual process that integrates both evaluative and normative judgements (Visentin et al., 2019). To assess whether consumers are likely to be driven to purchase, their attitude toward the product can also be examined (Cheah et al., 2015). Prior to finalising a buying decision, individuals may take into account the feedback and perspectives shared by other users. When such information is perceived as useful, it can significantly enhance consumers' intention to buy (Alalwan, 2018). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Information adoption mediates the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention.

Purchase Intention

It is generally accepted that purchase intention is a predictor of purchasing behaviour (Chakraborty, 2019). Purchase intention has proven to be a relevant primary market research component, as it can serve as a basis for consumers' purchasing behaviour (Yang & Mao, 2014). Purchase intention refers to a consumer's deliberate plan to acquire a product, shaped by a personal decision-making process that incorporates both evaluative and normative judgements (Visentin et al., 2019). The intention is to look into the underlying influences that affect this behaviour in order to understand how these factors interact and shape individual responses (Shaari et al., 2022). When users want further information about a product, they will turn to the virtual community for assistance. The possibility

that online members will purchase the items from a certain brand as a result of online reviews is described as the purchase intention of online members (Hsu, 2021). Consumers' attitude towards a product can also be considered in determining whether they would be interested in making a purchase (Cheah et al., 2015). For instance, consumers will study other users' opinions and comments before making any purchase decision. When the content of the information is relevant to the consumer, it will have a favourable impact on their purchase intention (Alalwan, 2018). Marketers are increasingly paying attention to social networking sites as a means of capitalising on the opportunity to influence the purchase intention of consumers (Weismueller et al., 2020). Customers might have different interpretations as to whether the opinions found on networking sites could assist them in making better purchasing decisions.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Building upon the preceding discussion, a conceptual framework was formulated to examine the attributes of influencers that shape the credibility of information shared through product review videos on YouTube. This credibility, in turn, affects consumers' information adoption and purchase intentions. The framework incorporates the three dimensions of the source credibility model – expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990) – as key determinants of influencer attributes. Additionally, homophily and information quality, identified from prior research, were included as supplementary determinants. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions, prompting the development of various technology acceptance theories and models to better understand the process of information adoption by consumers (Fard et al., 2016). However, there remains a need for more robust models to evaluate the impact of social media information on consumers' purchasing behaviour (Tien et al., 2018). The constructs of this framework are grounded in the theoretical foundations of the source credibility model (Ohanian, 1990) and the information adoption model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Figure 1 presents the proposed conceptual model for this study.

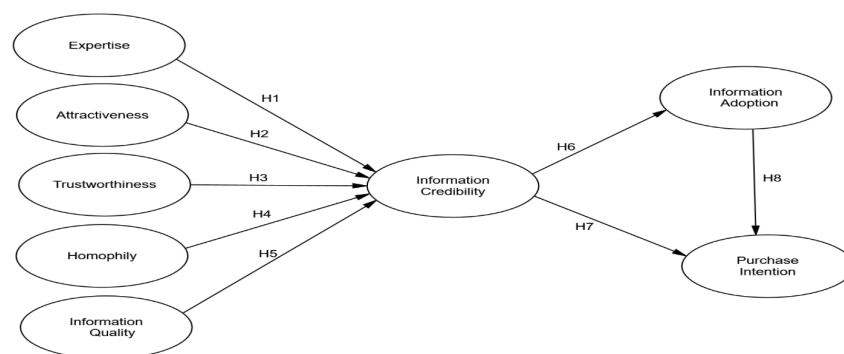


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

METHODS

The target population consisted of women who have experience of watching beauty products reviewed by the beauty influencer on YouTube. Women are generally more likely to

remember advertisement details and process the messages more thoroughly (Tor-Kadioglu & Bozyigit, 2025.) The cosmetics sector in Malaysia has continued to enjoy encouraging growth due to an increase in the number of working women, urbanisation, and rising self-awareness (Nik Mud et al., 2020). Previous studies have also found that the videos created by beauty vloggers and uploaded on YouTube are a new phenomenon that has gained preference among women (Afifah, 2019). Therefore, the subjects identified for this study were women consumers in Malaysia who were internet users and who had experience in using YouTube as a source of information regarding cosmetic products. This decision was made as women generally make greater use of social media and are thus more likely to influence their behaviour (Krasnova et al., 2017). Although the number of users of beauty products is increasing for both genders, women are still the predominant consumers (Krishnan et al., 2017).

This study, therefore, used the sample size calculation recommended by Smith (2013) with a 95% confidence level, a .5 standard deviation, and a margin of error (confidence interval) of $\pm 5\%$. The calculation is shown below:

** The z-scores for 95% confidence level = 1.96

Necessary Sample Size (NSS) = $(Z\text{-score})^2 \times \text{StdDev} \times (1 - \text{StdDev}) / (\text{margin of error})^2$

$NSS = ((1.96)^2 \times .5(.5)) / (.05)^2$

$NSS = (3.8416 \times .25) / .0025$

$NSS = .9604 / .0025$

$NSS = 384.16$

Thus, it was determined that 384 should be considered as the minimum sample size for this study's purposes.

This study utilised a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. While the majority of prior studies have predominantly adopted the purposive sampling method (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Andoy et al., 2022; Astarini & Sumardi, 2022; Hussain et al., 2017; Intansari & Roostika, 2022; Lim et al., 2017), Daowd et al. (2020) employed both purposive and snowball sampling approaches. The precise number of women who have watched beauty influencers' cosmetic product review videos on YouTube remains unknown. Beauty influencer reviews of cosmetic products on YouTube may target a specific niche audience. For purposive sampling, filtering questions were added to ensure the data were collected from the right target respondents. The questions are "Are you a female respondent?" and "How often do you watch product review videos created by beauty influencers on YouTube?". When a respondent answered "No" for the first question or "Never" for the second question, then the questionnaire was excluded. The researchers were unable to exert any control over the people who agreed to participate in this study because the data was collected through the internet. Google Forms was used to develop the questionnaire, and links to the questionnaire were shared on Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram. During the time when recruitment was taking place, a weekly plan for reposting and distributing the postings was developed with the intention of boosting the number of people taking part in the survey. Finally, the posting was worded such that it would encourage the respondents to share the questionnaire's URL: "This study is using a snowball sampling strategy; kindly share this questionnaire with your family and friends who might be interested to take part in this study. Thank you in advance for your participation and assistance". Snowball sampling can be effective in identifying and reaching

individuals within this niche who have actually watched these reviews, as they may not be easily identifiable through traditional sampling methods. Finally, a data set consisting of 393 respondents was obtained from the online questionnaire for further analysis.

RESULTS

Normality Check

The degree of normality can be determined using either graphical or statistical methods. AMOS version 24 was used to perform an analysis to determine the normality of the data. When the sample size is greater than 200, skewness values that fall between -1.5 and $+1.5$ are recommended (Abdul-Rahim et al., 2022; Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). In addition, the SEM that uses the maximum likelihood estimator (MLE) is resistant to kurtosis violations of multivariate normality. However, this scenario is only the case if the sample size is substantial (more than 200) and the value of the critical region (CR) for the kurtosis does not exceed 7.0 (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). When both the skewness and kurtosis values fall within the range, the data are regarded as normally distributed. Table 1 shows the results of the skewness and kurtosis tests performed in this study. The skewness values varied from -1.084 to -0.370 , while the CR values for kurtosis ranged from -1.697 to 6.905, indicating a normal distribution.

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	Min	Max	Skew	c.r.	Kurtosis	c.r.
Expertise1	2	7	-1.059	-8.570	1.178	4.766
Expertise2	1	7	-0.886	-7.168	1.706	6.905
Expertise3	2	7	-0.561	-4.543	0.127	0.512
Expertise4	2	7	-0.785	-6.357	0.977	3.954
Expertise5	1	7	-0.932	-7.544	1.461	5.912
Attractiveness1	3	7	-0.511	-4.132	-0.013	-0.052
Attractiveness2	3	7	-0.704	-5.698	-0.112	-0.455
Attractiveness3	3	7	-0.644	-5.212	-0.173	-0.699
Attractiveness4	3	7	-0.628	-5.079	-0.179	-0.724
Trustworthiness1	3	7	-0.540	-4.368	-0.088	-0.354
Trustworthiness2	3	7	-0.711	-5.755	0.136	0.551
Trustworthiness3	3	7	-0.699	-5.656	0.323	1.306
Trustworthiness4	3	7	-0.662	-5.361	0.010	0.042
Trustworthiness5	3	7	-0.649	-5.254	-0.191	-0.773
Homophily1	2	7	-1.084	-8.776	0.968	3.918
Homophily2	2	7	-0.982	-7.951	0.337	1.365
Homophily3	2	7	-0.750	-6.066	0.093	0.376
Homophily4	2	7	-0.758	-6.131	0.202	0.818
Information Quality1	3	7	-0.648	-5.245	0.195	0.787
Information Quality2	3	7	-0.746	-6.037	0.664	2.688

Information Quality3	3	7	-0.578	-4.681	0.468	1.893
Information Quality4	3	7	-0.603	-4.881	0.104	0.423
Information Quality5	3	7	-0.645	-5.219	0.273	1.105
Credibility1	3	7	-0.619	-5.009	-0.056	-0.228
Credibility2	2	7	-0.814	-6.590	0.391	1.583
Credibility3	3	7	-0.667	-5.395	0.052	0.209
Credibility4	2	7	-0.952	-7.704	0.853	3.452
Adoption1	4	7	-0.526	-4.261	-0.275	-1.114
Adoption2	4	7	-0.370	-2.996	-0.419	-1.697
Adoption3	4	7	-0.441	-3.567	-0.365	-1.479
Adoption4	4	7	-0.496	-4.011	-0.224	-0.907
Purchase1	3	7	-0.858	-6.942	0.465	1.883
Purchase2	3	7	-0.729	-5.901	0.358	1.450
Purchase3	3	7	-0.762	-6.164	0.359	1.454
Multivariate					229.081	45.893

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In this study, the SEM approach using the pool measurement model was employed as the analysis technique to determine the outcomes. The pool measurement model is a structural model that entails examining the connections between many exogenous and endogenous constructs that were generated based on the hypotheses (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2014). The output displayed in Figure 2 indicates that the R² value is 90%, indicating that information credibility could be estimated by using five exogenous constructs, namely expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, homophily, and information quality. At the same time, 65% of information adoption could be measured by information credibility. In addition, 77% of purchase intention could be measured by information credibility and information adoption.

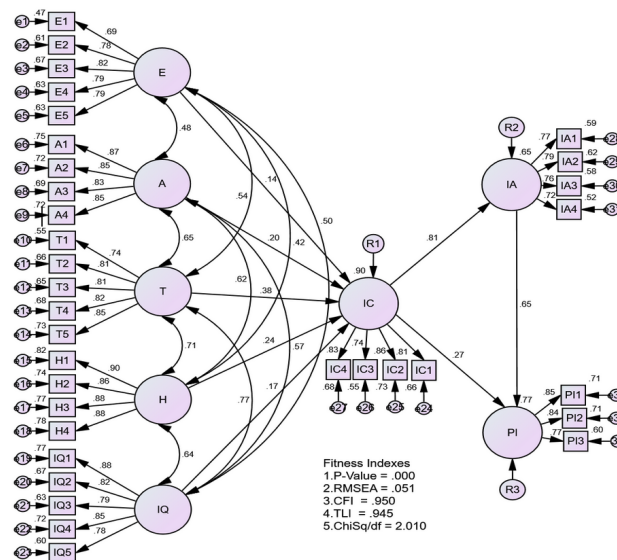


Figure 2. Standardized path coefficients between constructs in the structural model

Furthermore, Figure 2 provides evidence that the model's construct validity was acceptable, as the fitness indices satisfied all three model-fit criteria (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). The results for the model fit are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Fit Indices for Measurement Model

Type	Index	Measurement Model Indexed Value	Remarks
Absolute Fit Measures	Discrepancy Chi-Square	0.000	Supported
	Root.Mean Square.Error.of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.051	Supported
Incremental Fit Measures	Comparative.Fit.Index (CFI)	0.950	Supported
	Tucker-Lewis.Index (TLI)	0.945	Supported
Parsimonious Fit Measures	Chi.Square/Degree.of.Freedom (Chisq/df)	2.010	Supported

As illustrated in Table 3, the correlation value between the two latent exogenous constructs in this model was below 0.85 (Awang, 2015). This demonstrates that discriminant validity for the exogenous constructs was achieved, confirming the absence of multicollinearity concerns in the model.

Table 3. Correlation Value Between Exogenous Construct

Construct			Estimate
Expertise	<-->	Attractiveness	0.476
Expertise	<-->	Trustworthiness	0.544
Expertise	<-->	Homophily	0.417
Expertise	<-->	Information Quality	0.496
Attractiveness	<-->	Trustworthiness	0.648
Attractiveness	<-->	Homophily	0.620
Attractiveness	<-->	Information Quality	0.572
Trustworthiness	<-->	Homophily	0.712
Trustworthiness	<-->	Information Quality	0.767
Homophily	<-->	Information Quality	0.639

DISCUSSION

H1: Expertise has a significant and positive impact on information credibility

Table 4. The Significant Effect of Expertise on Information Credibility

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Credibility <--- Expertise	0.162	0.040	4.056	***	Significant

As hypothesised, expertise was found to be significantly related to information

credibility (beta estimate = 0.162, P-value = .000). This finding indicated that an increase in expertise by 1 was accompanied by an increase in information credibility by 0.162. Hence, this research hypothesis was supported, as shown in Table 4. These findings are in line with those of earlier studies that investigated the effect of expertise on the credibility of information. The study carried out by Andoy et al. (2022) found that the level of expertise possessed by a reviewer was by far the single most critical element in determining the review's credibility. Customers were found to have the impression that the reviewer's expertise could be gleaned from the reviewer's proficiency and capacity to provide appropriate insights. Furthermore, in the study by Ismagilova et al. (2020), the most significant finding pertained to the influence of expertise on the perceived credibility of information. When information comes from a qualified and experienced source, the recipient is more likely to believe it to be credible.

H2: Attractiveness has a significant and positive impact on information credibility

Table 5. The Significant Effect of Attractiveness on Information Credibility

Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Credibility	<--- Attractiveness	0.182	0.035	5.137	***	Significant

Attractiveness was found to be significantly related to information credibility (beta estimate = .182, P-value = .000). This finding indicated that as attractiveness increased by 1, information credibility increased by 0.182. Hence, this research hypothesis was supported, as shown in Table 5. This finding is consistent with the conclusions drawn from previous studies on the effect of attractiveness on information credibility. For instance, the audience was found to be interested in the physical attractiveness of video bloggers, and this physical attractiveness influenced the credibility of the information supplied by the video bloggers. As a result, the audience was more likely to believe that the information provided by the video bloggers about the culinary world was credible information (Pinda et al., 2021). Similarly, Astarini and Sumardi (2022) demonstrated the existence of a significant and positive correlation between an influencer's physical attractiveness and their credibility. Positive qualities, such as being lovely or handsome, as well as an attractive physical appearance, were found to be related to a person's level of physical attractiveness. Furthermore, in the context of beauty and fashion influencers who were active on YouTube and Instagram, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) discovered a positive correlation between their physical attractiveness and their credibility on those respective platforms.

H3: Trustworthiness has a significant and positive impact on information credibility

Table 6. The Significant Effect of Attractiveness on Information Credibility

Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Credibility	<--- Trustworthiness	0.356	0.052	6.183	***	Significant

Based on the findings presented in Table 6, trustworthiness was found to influence information credibility (beta estimate = .356, P-value = .000). This result indicated that, for every one-unit increment in trustworthiness, information credibility increased by 0.356. Hence, trustworthiness had a significant and positive influence on information credibility, indicating that hypothesis 3 was supported. The results of this study provide strong support for the hypothesis that the trustworthiness of a social media influencer plays a crucial and positive role in enhancing the credibility of the information they disseminate. This conclusion aligns with previous research that explored the relationship between trustworthiness and the perceived credibility of information. For instance, Saima and Khan (2020) found that the trustworthiness of social media influencers significantly influenced their credibility, demonstrating a clear link between the two factors. Similarly, Chih et al. (2020) emphasised that individuals' perceptions of a source as trustworthy had a notable and positive effect on the credibility of the information conveyed, particularly in the context of electronic word of mouth. In a similar vein, Ismagilova et al. (2020) revealed that when information was communicated by a trustworthy source, it was perceived as credible, especially if the content exhibited objectivity and sincerity, further reinforcing the importance of trustworthiness in shaping the perceived reliability of information.

H4: Homophily has a Significant and Positive Impact on Information Credibility

Table 7. The Significant Effect of Homophily on Information Credibility

Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Credibility	<--- Homophily	0.198	0.034	5.876	***	Significant

Homophily was found to have a significant impact on information credibility (beta estimate = 0.198, P-value = .000). This finding showed that when homophily increased by 1, information credibility increased by 0.198. Hence, hypothesis 4 was supported, as homophily had a significant and positive impact on information credibility, as presented in Table 7. Homophily plays a critical role in enhancing the credibility of information. This observation is consistent with previous research exploring the relationship between homophily and information credibility. Astarini and Sumardi (2022) found that attitude homophily, in particular, has a strong positive influence on the perceived credibility of information. Consumers exhibiting attitude homophily share similar lifestyles and cognitive patterns with influencers, which strengthens the trust placed in the information they provide. Furthermore, Ismagilova et al. (2020) highlighted a significant link between the homophily of the information source and the credibility of the content shared. Their study demonstrated that a higher degree of homophily between the sender and the receiver positively impacts the trustworthiness of the information conveyed. Similarly, Chih et al. (2020) identified homophily as a key factor influencing the perceived credibility of positive electronic word-of-mouth, emphasising its importance from both interpersonal and informational perspectives. These findings underscore the critical role that homophily plays in shaping how consumers assess the reliability and trustworthiness of information shared within social networks and brand communities.

H5: Information Quality has a Significant and Positive Impact on Information Credibility

Table 8. The Significant Effect of Information Quality on Information Credibility

Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Credibility	<--- Information Quality	0.169	0.046	3.697	***	Significant

Information quality was discovered to have a significant impact on information credibility, as shown in Table 8 (beta estimate = 0.169, P-value = .000). Hence, as information quality increased by 1, information credibility increased by 0.169. Thus, this hypothesis was supported. This aligns with previous research that examined the relationship between information quality and its perceived credibility. Saima and Khan (2020) found that the quality of information shared by influencers played a crucial role in determining the credibility of the information. Their research focused on the impact of various characteristics of social media influencers on their credibility, which ultimately influenced consumers' purchasing intentions in Delhi, India. Similarly, an attrition study by Chakraborty and Bhat (2018) revealed that the quality of online reviews had a statistically significant and positive effect on their perceived credibility. Furthermore, consumers were not just interested in reading reviews but sought detailed analyses that supported the review's conclusions. Additionally, Jiang et al. (2021) developed a model to assess how information quality affects individuals' adoption of information on e-commerce platforms, finding that higher information quality in online reviews enhanced their credibility.

H6: Information Credibility Has a Significant and Positive Impact on Information Adoption

Table 9. The Significant Information Credibility on Information Adoption

Relationship		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Adoption	<--- Information Credibility	0.631	0.045	13.875	***	Significant

Based on the findings in Table 9, information credibility was found to influence information adoption (beta estimate = 0.631, P-value = .000). This finding showed that information adoption increased by 0.631 when information credibility increased by 1. Therefore, information credibility seemed to have a significant and positive influence on information adoption, indicating that hypothesis 6 was supported. This result is consistent with previous research exploring the impact of information credibility on the adoption process. Furthermore, Sardar et al. (2021) identified that the credibility of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) substantially affected consumers' decisions to adopt such information, underscoring the crucial role of credibility in shaping consumer behaviour. This suggests that consumers place considerable importance on the trustworthiness of information. Similarly, Jiang et al. (2021) demonstrated that the credibility of information directly impacted both consumers' ability to accurately interpret information and their willingness to accept it. Likewise, Intansari and Roostika (2022) found that the credibility of eWOM positively influenced its adoption. Consumers who had used a product and

shared their experiences through online reviews contributed to reducing uncertainty and enhancing the product's reputation. Respondents were more likely to trust and accept information provided by other consumers, perceiving it as valuable and relevant to their decision-making process.

H7: Information Credibility Has a Significant and Positive Impact on Purchase Intention

Table 10. The Significant Information Credibility on Purchase Intention

Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Purchase Intention	<---	Information Credibility	0.269	0.075	3.604	***	Significant

Information credibility was found to significantly influence purchase intention (beta estimate = .269, P-value = .000). When attractiveness increased by 1, information credibility increased by .269. Thus, this research hypothesis was supported, as shown in Table 10. This conclusion is consistent with previous research examining the relationship between information credibility and information adoption. Daowd et al. (2020) found that the adoption of electronic word-of-mouth information is closely linked to the credibility of the information. Similarly, Tien et al. (2018) highlighted that the credibility of electronic word-of-mouth plays a crucial role in consumers' decisions to adopt such messages. These findings suggest that those who deliver electronic word-of-mouth should focus on enhancing consumers' perceptions of credibility to improve the adoption of information shared on social media platforms.

H8: Information Adoption Has a Significant and Positive Impact on Purchase Intention

Table 11. The Significant Information Adoption on Purchase Intention

Relationship			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Purchase Intention	<---	Information Adoption	0.827	0.107	7.761	***	Significant

Information adoption was found to have a significant impact on purchase intention (beta estimate = .827, P-value = .000). When information adoption increased by 1, purchase intention went up by .827. Hence, hypothesis 4 was supported, as information adoption had a significant and positive impact on purchase intention, as presented in Table 11. This finding aligns with previous research that explored the relationship between information adoption and purchase intentions. For instance, Abedi et al. (2020) found similar support for the hypothesis, demonstrating that information adoption directly influences purchasing intentions. Similarly, Erkan and Evans (2016) revealed that social media users were frequently exposed to substantial amounts of electronic word-of-mouth information, which, whether intentional or not, shaped their purchase intentions. Furthermore, Khwaja et al. (2020) identified a strong correlation between information adoption and the intention to purchase, particularly in the context of the expanding scope

of online information dissemination in recent years.

H9: Information Adoption Mediates the Relationship between Information Credibility and Purchase Intention

Table 12. The Path Regression Coefficient and its Significance between Information Adoption, Information Credibility, and Purchase Intention

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Information Adoption <--- Information Credibility	0.607	0.047	12.972	***	Significant
Purchase Intention <--- Information Adoption	0.873	0.106	8.26	***	Significant
Purchase Intention <--- Information Credibility	0.241	0.073	3.297	***	Significant

Table 12 and Figure 3 shows that information adoption partially mediated the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention. This was due to the significant relationship between information credibility and purchase intention, even after the inclusion of information adoption in the model as a mediator.

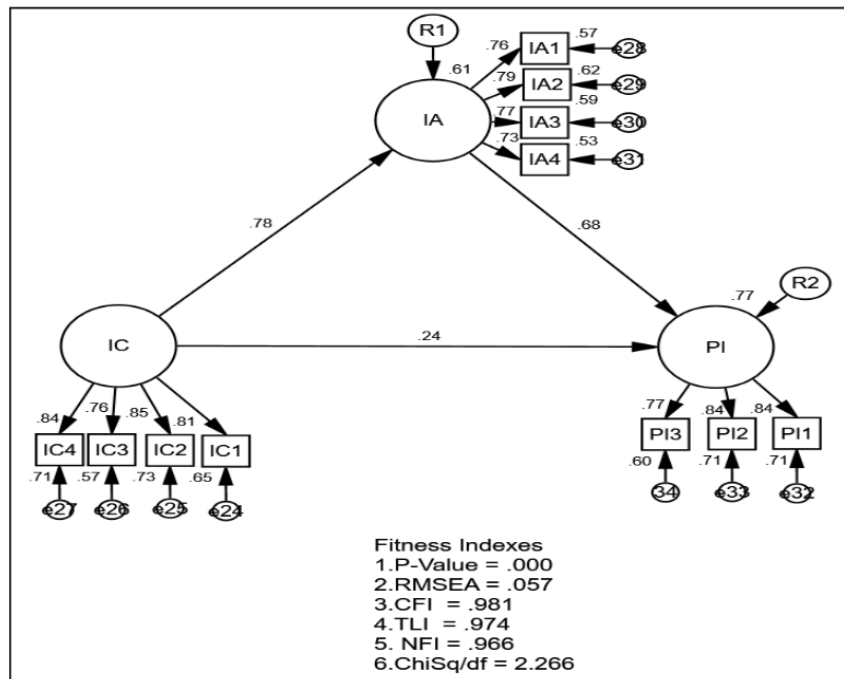


Figure 3. Modelling the Mediating Effect

In ensuring consistency throughout this investigation, the bootstrapping technique was employed to validate the results obtained from the standard mediation analysis, utilising 1,000 bootstrap samples and 95% bias correction (Abdul-Rahim et al., 2022; Awang et al., 2018; Mallinckrodt et al., 2006). The result is reported in Table 13. Kjuioo

Table 13. Direct vs. Indirect Effect Tests Using the Bootstrapping

	Indirect Effect	Direct Effect
Bootstrapping Results	0.241	0.53
Bootstrapping P-Value	0.021	0.004
Test Results	Significant	Significant
Type of Mediation	Partial Mediation	

The bootstrapping procedure result confirmed the existence of a significant direct relationship between information credibility and purchase intention, which also indicated partial mediation. Based on the findings, the link between customers' purchase intention and social media influencer information credibility was partially mediated by information adoption. This showed that there was a high correlation between social media influencers' information credibility and consumers' purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

Beauty influencers are extremely helpful resources when gathering data and information about cosmetic products. The fact that this particular information originates from a third party that is not under the direct control of the product or service manufacturer makes it particularly valuable. This study investigated attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, homophily, and information quality as the determinants of influencer attributes and their influence on information credibility among women who had experience watching beauty product review videos created by beauty influencers on YouTube in Malaysia. The results support the roles of expertise, homophily, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and information quality in influencing information credibility. In other words, customers will believe that the information posted by a social media influencer is credible so long as the customers view that the influencer is someone who is knowledgeable, beautiful, and trustworthy; that the influencer is comparable to the customers; and that the information is of high quality.

Perceptions about the credibility of video content created by YouTube beauty influencers may contribute to the expansion of influencer marketing in the future. The power digital media platforms give to internet users in terms of sharing information allows them to also spread false information. Therefore, genuine information and reliable sources of information are valued by internet users more than anything else, regardless of the conditions in which the information is obtained. When social media influencers understand the determinants of the credibility of the information they provide, consumers will also benefit in terms of receiving reliable and trustworthy information. Therefore, both social media influencers and marketers will benefit from this study by learning the factors influencing consumers' willingness to adopt user-generated product review videos as a credible source of information, which will influence their intention to purchase cosmetic products. On the other hand, social media influencers might lose their credibility if they do not exercise extreme caution when selecting the companies or goods to endorse and promote, ensuring that these are aligned with the subject matter in which they are regarded as experts. Therefore, the findings of this study provide insights into the key factors that social media influencers should consider when engaging with consumers.

By integrating, innovating, and expanding the source credibility model (Ohanian,

1990) and information adoption model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003), this study's ultimate purpose was to contribute to theory building in the literature of digital marketing and social media influencer studies. Furthermore, this study aimed to fill this literature gap and to contribute to the overall body of knowledge by examining the influence of information credibility on consumers' information adoption and purchase intention in addition to analysing the influence of beauty influencers' attributes on information credibility as a factor in the model through a rigorous research design. To begin with, this model was created to demonstrate the relationship between influencer attributes and information credibility, particularly among beauty influencers on YouTube. Second, the model added discoveries. Since previous studies mostly focused separately on the influences of information credibility on information adoption and purchase intention, this model sheds a new insight by combining the influences of information credibility on information adoption and purchase intention in the same model.

Overall, the findings of this study provide strong empirical support for all nine proposed hypotheses, revealing a progressive sequence of influence among key constructs. Specifically, trustworthiness (H3), information credibility (H6), and information adoption (H8) emerged as the three most impactful relationships in the model. Trustworthiness was found to be the strongest determinant of information credibility, highlighting that honesty and authenticity are critical for establishing trust in influencer content. Information credibility, in turn, strongly influenced information adoption, demonstrating that credible content drives consumers to accept and rely on shared information. Finally, information adoption had the largest overall effect on purchase intention, confirming that once audiences internalise influencer content, they are highly likely to translate that trust into actual buying behaviour. Together, these results reveal a sequential process where trust fosters credibility, credibility encourages adoption, and adoption leads to purchase.

This study offers practical contributions by translating theoretical concepts into actionable insights for marketers, influencers, and businesses. It identifies the elements influencing information credibility on social media, emphasising how influencers' attributes, such as expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and homophily, affect consumers' information adoption and purchase intention. The findings highlight that credible and authentic influencer content enhances consumers' trust and willingness to buy, while misleading or irrelevant endorsements may harm influencer credibility. As consumers increasingly rely on social media for product information, marketers must carefully select influencers who align with their brand values and are perceived as reliable sources. Ultimately, this study provides a practical framework for developing effective influencer marketing strategies, particularly within the Malaysian cosmetics industry.

The conceptual framework was primarily validated by testing with consumers in Malaysia. Hence, the findings provide restricted knowledge that is only from the perspective of Malaysian consumers. However, some of the characteristics will likely have a higher or lesser degree of influence depending on the culture or demographic group that is being evaluated. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration. The results will likely vary from one country to another due to differences in the norms of lifestyle and culture. In addition, this study solely focused on women consumers and the cosmetic industry. It would be interesting to investigate how applicable the framework is in other contexts by replicating this framework to examine the influence of social media influencers on the adoption of information and purchase intention in both genders by looking at its influence on men and women.

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