



Factors Affecting the Adoption of Social Media Influencer Marketing and Its Impact on Purchase Intention in Beauty Industry Targeting on Young Generation: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

The primary goal of this paper is to integrate the established concept of source credibility with the relatively new field of social media influencers. A key idea is source credibility, which refers to the evaluation of how credible and reliable a source of information is perceived to be by its intended audience. This evaluation is crucial in marketing, as consumers are more likely to be influenced by sources they consider credible. In the context of social media influencers, it is essential to examine how attributes such as perceived authenticity, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness impact the purchasing decisions of their followers, particularly within the beauty industry.

The study aims to introduce a conceptual framework specifically designed to explore the influence of social media influencers on the purchase intentions of young consumers in the beauty sector. Central to this framework is the premise that influencers perceived as credible can significantly affect their followers' buying behavior. The framework considers four factors contributing to an influencer's credibility: their ability to establish a connection with their audience (homophily), their perceived level of authority or expertise within the beauty domain, and the degree of engagement and interest their content evokes. Much existing research focuses on immediate impacts; however, there is limited longitudinal research examining the long-term effects on young customers' brand loyalty and purchase intentions (Shan, Chen, & Lin, 2019). The principal aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of integrating social media influencers into marketing strategies within the beauty industry, with a specific focus on targeting the young generation. By gaining a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of source credibility among social media influencers, businesses can better optimize influencer marketing strategies to resonate with young consumers, who are increasingly influenced by social media platforms.



Keywords: Social Media Influencer, Social Media Adoption, Influencer Marketing, Source Credibility, Beauty Industry, Purchase Intention, Young Generation

Introduction

The prominence of social media influencers (SMIs) has grown substantially in recent years, making influencer marketing (IM) a common component of business plans. Despite the growing interest of scholars and practitioners, the ensuing scholarly work is varied, fragmentary, and fragmented. Given the crucial importance of SMIs in the consumer decision process, and the fact that this study domain is still expanding, a comprehensive and critical review of existing research on this topic is desperately needed.

Social media influencer marketing is similar to traditional celebrity endorsements; however, the interactions are more content-driven (Lou & Kim, 2019). The level of audience participation is slightly higher than traditional celebrity endorsement (Arora, Bansal, Kandpal, Aswani, & Dwivedi, 2019). The traditional technique is centered mostly on one-way broadcasted contact, with followers typically unable to respond to celebrity comments. This continues to be regarded parasocial relationship (PSR) because two-way communication is limited and would not occur as frequently or profoundly in a genuine social interaction. Thus, social media influencers are a unique group (Belanche, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020). Companies now need to take into account new marketing strategies and customer value propositions (like value, brand, and relationship equity) (Kannan & Li, 2017) in addition to their current marketing strategies (like sales, profits, growth rate, customer satisfaction, and loyalty). This is because traditional communication channels are becoming less effective.

In recent years, social media has had a significant impact on beauty trends. An increasing number of people employ social media platforms like Instagram or YouTube to find inspiration for their style, hair, or makeup. Influencers may bridge the gap between themselves and their audiences by creating authentic and relatable content. However, if beauty norms are unrealistic, the continual exposure to well-crafted content about attractive women can have a negative impact on self-confidence and body image. Given the global accessibility of social media, there is also a risk of cultural appropriation.

Social media influencers have a tremendous impact on the beauty business by setting trends and influencing customer behavior. The study underscores the impact of influencers on beauty trends, emphasizing the necessity for responsible content development and supporting healthier beauty standards. Collaborating with beauty influencers allows businesses to broaden their reach, communicate directly with customers, and improve brand visibility. Studies also suggest that influencer credibility, perceived trust, and value significantly influence customer purchasing intentions for skincare products, highlighting the relevance of influencers in boosting sales and developing trust with their audience (Amelia, Kristiyani, Hartini, Ikhsan, Fernando, & Prasarry, 2023). Scholars have characterized social media influencers in a variety of ways.



Social media influencers are a new class of independent third-party endorsers that utilize blogs, tweets, and other social media platforms to sway audience opinions (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). Social media influencers engage in self-presentation on social media as digital opinion leaders. They establish an online persona by crafting a detailed, multimodal account of their daily life and use it to draw in a sizable following (Kay, Mulcahy, & Parkinson, 2020).

The study of Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) demonstrates that young female Instagram users' purchasing decisions are influenced by celebrities. On the other hand, non-traditional celebrities-like bloggers, YouTubers, and "Instafamous" profiles-have greater influence because people can relate to them and find them more credible than more conventional celebrities. Because they are more conscious of these things, female Instagram users choose to follow accounts that purposefully post positive photos and offer uplifting comments. Research that particularly focuses on influencer credibility and its impact on purchase behavior is still rare (Abreu, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Trivedi & Sama, 2020). A few recent studies have focused on how social media influencers' influence on consumer purchase behavior.

The young generation and beauty industry were chosen for the study for a number of reasons. First off, one of the most significant industries using social media for marketing is the beauty business. By 2025, the beauty business is expected to have grown from \$420 billion in 2018 to \$716.3 billion. The Asia Pacific Region holds a 48% market share in the cosmetics sector, while the US comes in second with 24% (Upfluence, n.d.). The marketing and consumption of beauty products have changed as a result of the abundance of beauty-related information on websites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok (Chen & Dermawan, 2020; Piyumi & Demirel, 2021). Influencers on social media, especially in the beauty industry, have become important players in determining customer preferences, product sales, and trends (Freberg et al., 2011). Second, younger generations utilise social media platforms the most, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, and they are quite open to influencer marketing. Since social media has been a constant in their lives, these generations are digital natives and are therefore more inclined to trust online influencers and personalities than traditional advertising (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). As people look for relatability, authenticity, and personal ties with the influencers they follow, their interaction with beauty goods through influencers is becoming more and more crucial (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Research objectives

1. To develop the framework of source credibility regarding social media influencers (SMIs)
2. To present the conceptual framework of source credibility on social media influencers (SMIs) towards purchase intention



Scope of study

This paper examines the impact of social media influencer marketing, focusing on four key independent variables: attractiveness, authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness. These factors, shaped by social media influencers, are analyzed for their influence on purchase intention, which serves as the dependent variable.

Literature Review

Social media marketing

Social media is critical to global marketing strategy because it shapes company image, boosts sales, and cultivates intercultural communication. It is an effective tool for businesses to target certain markets, interact with customers, and tailor information to different audiences (Gomathy & Nithya, 2024; Nazarudin & Handayani, 2024). Integration of social media with traditional marketing channels is critical for multinational corporations to reach a larger audience and improve customer relationship management (Fong & Yazdanifard, 2014). Modern digital technologies have heightened the complexity of the consumer experience. Digital and social media marketing enable businesses to reach their marketing goals at cost-effective rates (Ajina, 2019).

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to the advertising of a product or service via social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (Formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn. It comprises producing and sharing content, interacting with users, and launching advertising campaigns to target a specific demographic. Social media marketing may be an effective way to raise brand awareness, generate leads, and drive sales. It allows businesses to interact with their clients more personally, create connections, and grow a devoted following. Firms should have a defined social media marketing strategy in place, complete with goals, prospective customers, and success measures.

Social media marketing (SMM) has gained significant attention in academic research due to its transformative impact on business strategies and consumer behavior. Research highlights how SMM strategies enhance brand engagement and customer loyalty (Bailey, 2019). Key studies emphasize the role of data analytics in optimizing social media campaigns, with tools enabling targeted advertising and performance measurement (Tuten, 2023). Recent studies also explore the ethical implications and challenges of SMM, such as privacy concerns and misinformation (Hajli, 2018; Saura, Palacios-Marqués, & Iturricha-Fernández, 2021).

Social media marketing improves customer-marketer communication while also facilitating actions that raise brand exposure (Hafez, 2021). If a brand-guide allows users to readily identify with a certain brand community, strong ties between customers and the brand will develop, leading to customer loyalty (Ebrahim, 2020). All in all, social media marketing is a critical component of contemporary digital marketing,



and businesses who disregard such may fall beneath their competition. Social media marketing is monitoring social media platforms for brand or product states and interacting with the audience to address their questions, problems, and comments. Social media marketing may be an efficient method to reach a big audience and raise brand awareness, but it takes a smart strategy and consistent work to be successful.

Social media influencer marketing

The advent of technology has drastically altered the marketplace, with social media emerging as a critical platform for brand engagement (Lim & Rasul, 2022; Ooi, Lee, Hew, Leong, Tan & Lim, 2023; Wahab, Tao, Tandon, Ashfaq, & Dhir, 2022). This evolution has pushed brands to form strategic alliances with social media influencers (SMIs) to increase their exposure and engagement (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2023; Nadroo, Lim, & Naqshbandi, 2024). Notably, the introduction of social media has not only transformed the dissemination and consumption of information (Lim, 2023), but has also changed marketing perspectives (Han & Balabanis, 2024; Shamim, Azam, & Islam, 2024).

Apparently are several strategies for developing brand attitude, with social media marketing being one of the most modern and frequently employed in today's digital age. Social media influencer marketing serves as one of the collaborative endeavors that have emerged from social media marketing. Many social media users have built an online reputation, as indicated by their big following. By developing attractive and distinctive social media accounts. They built a strong online personality by expressing their passions and opinions on social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. These well-known social media users, sometimes called social media influencers (SMIs), are simply referred to as influencers.

Social media influencers (SMIs) with a strong following on their personal accounts can become reviewers to increase brand visibility and customer trust (Andreani, Gunawan, & Haryono, 2021). Influencers may increase customer engagement and insight by encouraging followers to purchase items from joint companies. SMIs have been explored from numerous perspectives. Scholars that have examined SMIs as a marketing technique refer to SMI posts as Electronic Word of Mouth (eWoM) (Li, 2011; Xu & Li, 2013). They should also publish valuable contents on a regular basis, engage with their fans, and employ social media advertising to gain a wider audience.

Social media influencers differ from celebrities to typical individuals who employ new tactics to distribute material on social media platforms. SMIs' output might offer education, entertainment, or even a video log (Vlog). When the influencers' material goes viral, their admirers will start to follow them. These people appear to have a considerable impact on the decisions of their followers. As a result, advertisers routinely contact them to promote products, companies, organizations, and even ideas via their social media channels. De Veirman et al. (2017) refer to this marketing tactic as influencer marketing.



Despite being quite successful in many situations, social media influencer marketing has a number of drawbacks that should be taken into account. One significant flaw is the lack of authenticity, where influencers could market goods that don't fit with their own principles or views just to make money. When viewers learn that an influencer's endorsements are not sincere, they may feel deceived, which might reduce their credibility and trust (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Additionally, when consumers grow numb to sponsored content, the overabundance of influencer marketing might make it difficult for firms to stand out (De Veirman et al., 2017). The influencer's applicability to the target demographic also affects how successful influencer marketing is. The marketing message may not be resonant if the audience does not find the influencer credible or relevant (Freberg et al., 2011).

Additionally, there are worries about moral dilemmas such encouraging unhealthy lifestyles or unattainable beauty standards, which can harm customers' mental health, especially among younger, more susceptible groups (Fardouly, Diedrichs, Vartanian, & Halliwell, 2015). Lastly, it can be challenging to calculate the return on investment (ROI) of influencer marketing, particularly when it comes to long-term brand loyalty and shifts in consumer behaviour (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2019).

Social media influencer marketing in beauty industry

The utilization of social media influencers (SMIs) has had a profound influence on consumer purchase intentions in the beauty sector, a phenomenon fueled by a multitude of factors including credibility, trustworthiness, and the establishment of parasocial relationships. These SMIs, individuals who communicate their personal encounters on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, have assumed a critical role in molding consumer perceptions and actions, thereby facilitating marketers in effectively engaging with their desired demographic audience (Önem & Selvi, 2024). Long-term studies are needed to understand how early exposure to influencer marketing in the beauty industry affects consumer behavior over time. This includes examining the sustainability of purchasing habits and brand loyalty developed during youth (Shan, Chen, & Lin, 2019).

The credibility of social media influencers (SMIs) is of paramount importance in the realm of marketing and consumer behavior, as it has a significant impact on the levels of brand consideration and purchase intention among consumers. This influence is particularly pronounced in the case of Generation Z individuals, who are a key demographic known for their strong engagement with social media platforms and tendency to be influenced by beauty influencers and their content (Rizomyliotis, Konstantoulaki, & Giovanis, 2024). The credibility of a product or service is significantly bolstered through the perception of trustworthiness and value attributed to it by consumers, a phenomenon that plays a crucial role in shaping their intentions to make a purchase (Amelia et al., 2023). The perceived trust and value associated with a product or service are key factors that can sway consumer decisions and influence their behavior in the marketplace. The significance of content quality and influencer perception plays a vital role as mediators



within this association. Various elements including perceived trustworthiness, credibility, expertise, likability, and familiarity impact consumer perspectives towards influencers and ultimately, their intentions to make a purchase (Candra, 2023).

The efficacy of social media influencers may exhibit variability; for example, within the realm of skincare, individuals frequently place greater trust in recommendations rather than endorsements from SMIs owing to the delicate characteristics of the merchandise and the susceptibility to misleading information on various social networking sites (Kayode-Adedeji, Okechukwu, & Oyedepo, 2024). Despite these challenges, the enduring power of influencer marketing is evident, with studies suggesting that the authenticity of influencers and parasocial connections greatly influence purchase decisions (Maharani & Suprayogo, 2024). The function of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and brand equity serves as a partial mediator in the correlation between social media influencer marketing and purchase intentions, thereby emphasizing the diverse influence of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in the cosmetics sector (Nagvanshi, Gupta, & Popli, 2023). Hence, cosmetic companies should strategically utilize the credibility, trustworthiness, and interaction capabilities of SMIs to improve consumer purchase intentions, all while remaining cautious of the possible drawbacks and ensuring the genuineness and excellence of the endorsed products.

Theory of the research

In this paper, the author employs the theory of source credibility to analyze the effectiveness of information sources in adoption of social media influencer towards purchase intention. The source credibility model, developed by Deborah A. McGuire and Wansink in 1998 and built on by O'Hanian in 1990 (Ohanian, 1990), is a theoretical framework for explaining how individuals assess the credibility of information sources. The source credibility model has been widely utilized in advertising and marketing to better understand how consumers perceive the legitimacy of product and celebrity endorsements. The concept proposes that a source's credibility is determined by four key factors: authenticity, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. The concept of source credibility is a complex one that plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and decision-making in various fields such as marketing, tourism, health, and environmental sustainability. Within the realm of CEO endorsers, the credibility of the source is essential in shaping consumer perceptions of product qualities, which then influence purchase intentions. It is worth noting that factors like attractiveness and expertise do not have a notable impact on credibility perceptions in this scenario (Newell & Shemwell, 1995). In the promotion of environmentally friendly products, source credibility plays a key role in improving consumer attitudes and perceived behavioral control, both of which are crucial determinants of purchase intentions. This underscores the importance for marketers to effectively communicate their sustainable practices (Kumar, Kaushal, & Kumar, 2023).

In the realm of the personal care industry, various factors such as homophily, authority, and interestingness play a substantial role in shaping the perceived trustworthiness of sources, thereby



effectively bolstering the credibility of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and ultimately influencing consumers' purchase intentions. This underscores the paramount significance of trustworthiness when it comes to augmenting the overall credibility of online reviews (Vitaloka & Alversia, 2019). Furthermore, these scholarly investigations collectively emphasize the pivotal importance of source credibility in a multitude of consumer decision-making processes, thus shedding light on its profound impact on individuals' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors across diverse situational contexts. Table 1 below is the summary tables of variables mentioned in conceptual mode.

Table 1 Summary Table of Papers Related to Variables in the Framework

Variable	Author(s), Year	Title of the Paper	Key Findings
Attractiveness	De Veirman et al. (2017)	Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude	Influencers' attractiveness and follower count significantly impact consumers' perceptions and purchase behavior.
	Lou & Yuan (2019)	Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media	Attractive influencers foster stronger consumer engagement and trust, leading to higher adoption
	Sokolova & Kefi (2020)	Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions	Physical and visual attractiveness influence consumer perceptions of influencer credibility
	Trivedi & Sama (2020)	The Effect of Influencer Marketing on Consumers' Brand Admiration and Online Purchase Intentions: An Emerging Market Perspective	Consumers are more likely to adopt products promoted by visually appealing influencers
Authenticity	Audrezet, De Kerviler and Moulard (2020)	Authenticity under threat: When social media influencers need to go beyond self-presentation	Authenticity strengthens the emotional connection between influencers and followers, leading to higher adoption
	Hughes, Swaminathan and Brooks (2019)	Driving Brand Engagement Through Online Social Influencers:	Authentic storytelling by influencers enhances



Variable	Author(s), Year	Title of the Paper	Key Findings
		An Empirical Investigation of Sponsored Blogging Campaigns	perceived credibility and adoption
Expertise	Hwang and Jeong (2016)	“This is a sponsored blog post, but all opinions are my own”: The effects of sponsorship disclosure on responses to sponsored blog posts	Expertise contributes to the perception of influencers as reliable sources of information
	Breves, Liebers, Abt and Kunze (2019)	The perceived fit between Instagram influencers and the endorsed brand: How influencer–brand fit affects source credibility and persuasive effectiveness	Higher expertise enhances adoption rates, especially for technical or specialized products
	Mammadli (2021)	The role of brand trust in the impact of social media influencers on purchase intention	The expertise and attractiveness of the influencers creates a mediator effect in the relationship and purchase intention
Trustworthiness	Jin et al. (2019)	Instafamous and social media influencer marketing	Positive attitude toward the endorsed brand, feel stronger social presence and feel more envious of the source than those consumers exposed
	Freberg et al. (2011)	Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality	Trustworthiness is a key determinant of influencer marketing success
	Chetioui, Lebdaoui and Chetioui (2021)	Factors influencing consumer attitudes toward online shopping: the mediating effect of trust	eWOM and trust significantly impact consumer attitudes toward online shopping. Trust is influenced by relative advantage and eWOM
Social Media Influencer Adoption	Tafesse and Wood (2021)	Followers' engagement with Instagram influencers: The role of influencers' content and engagement strategy	Adoption increases with higher engagement rates and perceived influencer congruence with the brand



Variable	Author(s), Year	Title of the Paper	Key Findings
	Xiao, Wang and Chan-Olmsted (2018)	Factors affecting YouTube influencer marketing credibility: A heuristic-systematic model	Adoption is positively related to followers' emotional connection to influencers
Purchase Intention	Mir and Ur Rehman, 2013	Factors affecting consumer attitudes and intentions toward user-generated product content on youtube	Social media influencer marketing fosters stronger purchase intentions among youth
	Godey, Manthiou, Pederzoli, Rokka, Aiello, Donvito and Singh (2016)	Social media marketing efforts of luxury brands: Influence on brand equity and consumer behavior	Positive social media efforts increase purchase intentions.
	Varghese and Agrawal (2021)	Impact of social media on consumer buying behavior	Social media shapes perceptions, drives product recommendations, and influences purchasing decisions across demographics. It boosts brand visibility, enhances customer loyalty, and increases customer lifetime value.

The table summarizes research on how social media influencers impact consumer behavior. It shows that factors like attractiveness, authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness influence how much consumers trust and engage with influencers. Higher engagement with influencer content is linked to increased purchase intentions. Additionally, the study highlights that influencers with expertise in a particular field are seen as more credible sources of information, leading to higher adoption rates for products related to their expertise. Overall, the table emphasizes the importance of various factors in successful influencer marketing campaigns. By understanding these factors, marketers can optimize their strategies to achieve desired outcomes.



Source Credibility

Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a source is an essential dimension of source credibility in social media influencer marketing, particularly impacting consumer behavior and brand engagement. The attractiveness of the communication source is defined as its perceived appeal or likability. This may be determined by several variables, including physical appearance, personality qualities, social standing, and resemblance to the target audience. Attractiveness is the physical or social attraction of a source. A source who is seen as physically attractive or charming is more likely to be considered credible than someone who is not. The significance of attractiveness is evident in the establishment of parasocial connections, serving as a mediator between the credibility of influencers and the level of interest in products. This underscores its critical role within digital marketing approaches (Fatima & Billah, 2023).

Many studies have found that appealing sources are more successful in persuading customers than unappealing sources. This is believed to be because appealing sources are perceived as more trustworthy, reliable, and compelling. Attractive sources may additionally trigger favorable feelings in the target audience, increasing the possibility of their accepting the message and doing the required action (Seiler & Kucza, 2017). As a result, it is important to note that beauty alone does not guarantee message efficacy. The investigation revealed that the credibility of an influencer, encompassing their expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and resemblance to the audience, plays a pivotal role in the development of para-social relationships. Para-social relationships denote unilateral connections in which the audience perceives a personal bond with the influencer, notwithstanding the absence of personal acquaintance. The study showcased that a perceived credibility of an influencer markedly enhances the audience's inclination towards the products they advocate. Hence, the audience's interest in the products promoted by an influencer is positively correlated with the influencer's trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity to their audience (Fatima & Billah, 2023). The investigation revealed that the effectiveness of influencers is enhanced when they portray themselves as ordinary individuals (laypersons) rather than as micro-celebrities. This phenomenon is attributed to the fact that a layperson presentation cultivates higher levels of trust and social appeal among the audience. Influencers who adopt an image of opinion leaders are perceived to possess greater expertise compared to those who opt for a layperson persona. This perceived higher level of expertise significantly impacts the audience's response to the brands endorsed by these opinion leaders. The study illustrated that trust and social appeal play a pivotal role in the efficacy of the layperson presentation approach. These elements contribute to establishing a more profound connection with the audience, thereby amplifying the persuasiveness of brand messages. The research specifically concentrated on female influencers and female participants, thereby restricting the applicability of the results to a broader demographic, including males. Existing studies indicate variations in how men and women react



to influencer marketing, underscoring the necessity for further investigations to validate these outcomes across diverse genders (van Reijmersdal, Walet, & Gudmundsdóttir, 2024).

Physical attractiveness has been a focal point of inquiry within the realm of attitude change research (Berscheid & Walster, 1974). It stands out as a crucial characteristic of vloggers due to the constant visibility they maintain to their followers (Rubin & Perse, 1987; Rubin & Step, 2000). Recent examinations of social media influencers have delved into physical attractiveness as a significant influencing factor, alongside considerations of audience engagement and influencer authenticity (Munnukka, Maity, Reinikainen, & Luoma-aho, 2019; Woodroof, Howie, Syrdal, & VanMeter, 2020). Conventional investigations into physical attractiveness have primarily concentrated on scrutinizing the impact of a model's appearance in advertising contexts (Joseph, 1982).

Authenticity

Research has shown that the degree of authenticity associated with the credibility of information sources plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' intention to make purchases within the beauty industry. This influence is particularly notable within the realm of social media influencer marketing, where the adoption of influencers has a significant impact on consumer behavior. Studies have highlighted the growing importance of social media influencers in shaping consumer preferences and purchase decisions across a wide range of industries, underscoring the pivotal role that credibility and authenticity play in this process (Akand, 2024). In the context of Sri Lanka, recent studies have brought to light the significant role played by trustworthiness as the most influential dimension affecting the purchase intention in relation to influencer credibility. This underscores the crucial significance of authentic and trustworthy influencer endorsements within the beauty industry (Shailza & Sarkar, 2024).

Moreover, it is essential to delve into the intricate dynamics that exist within the correlation between the credibility of a source and the intention to make a purchase, particularly when considering the mediating role played by various factors like the level of engagement online and the overall attitude towards the influencer in question. These factors themselves are subject to external influences, most notably the perceived value of the social media influencer's promotional content as perceived by the target audience (Dauhan & Langi, 2024). The mediating role of information adoption serves to emphasize and highlight the crucial significance of credible information that is disseminated by social media influencers, ultimately leading to the persuasion and adoption of such information by consumers. This process also extends to influencing their purchase intentions, showcasing the intricate and complex interplay between the information provided, the influencers delivering it, and the subsequent actions taken by consumers in response to this information (Mohamed, Jaafar, & Ayupp, 2023)

Furthermore, it has been determined through research that the credibility and approval provided by social media influencers play a crucial role in moderating the connection between brand



recognition and the intention to make a purchase. This suggests that when influencers are perceived as trustworthy, they have the ability to positively influence individuals' perceptions regarding the promotion of products. This was highlighted in a study referenced as Tamsir, Zain, Poniran, Basar, Rahman, Mohan and Ibrahim (2023). In the broader scope, it is evident that the genuineness of the credibility of the source serves as a pivotal factor in shaping consumers' intentions to make purchases within the beauty industry. This is due to the fact that it nurtures a sense of reliance and interaction, consequently steering consumer behavior towards embracing suggestions put forth by influencers on social media platforms.

Expertise

Expertise is the perceived amount of knowledge or ability that a source possesses in a specific subject or issue. A source who is regarded as an expert in their area is more likely to be considered credible than someone who is not. It refers to a person's perceived ability to deliver accurate information to another (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2020), Defining a profession requires expertise and knowledge (Saks, 2012). Expertise, which is yet another critical component in this context, plays a significant role in establishing influencers as individuals who possess a high level of knowledge and skill, ultimately contributing to their perceived competence and authority. This, in turn, leads to a notable boost in their credibility among their audience, consequently increasing the probability of their followers making purchases based on the products they endorse (Prabowo, Kriyantono, & Kasim, 2024). The research revealed that the characteristics of social media influencers, such as trustworthiness and expertise, have a significant impact on users' inclination to make purchases. Consequently, users are more inclined to contemplate purchasing the products endorsed by influencers when they perceive them as reliable and well-informed. The perception of brand credibility plays a crucial role as an intermediary between the influencers' characteristics (e.g., charm and expertise) and the users' purchase intentions. This suggests that if users have faith in the brand's credibility, their favorable view of the influencer's characteristics will exert a more pronounced influence on their decision to buy. Furthermore, the study identified a moderated mediation phenomenon in which brand familiarity boosts the connection between the influencers' reliability and expertise and the users' purchase intention. This implies that when users are acquainted with a brand, the positive impacts of influencers' reliability and expertise on purchase intention become even more robust (Kareem & Venugopal 2023).

Expertise is domain-specific in the sense that it reflects knowledge earned in a certain field. Hoffman (1998) emphasizes the fact that, in some sectors, there are many levels of certification that an individual may get attesting to their ability, comparable to licensure in other professions. Businesses can benefit from knowledge by hiring endorsers or spokespersons with appropriate skills, experience, or credentials in the sector or issue under discussion. They may also promote their own expertise by posting instructive and instructional material, offering case studies or testimonials, and displaying thought leadership through industry publications or speaking engagements. For example, a social media influencer who mostly



produces material about café hopping is considered to have skill or experience in café hopping, rather than personal investment. However, it is vital to highlight that knowledge alone does not guarantee message effectiveness. The source must also be viewed as credible and likeable, and the message must be relevant and appealing to the intended audience. Businesses may generate more successful persuasive communications that resonate with their target audience by integrating expertise with other sources' trustworthiness factors.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness plays a pivotal role in the source credibility model, exerting a significant influence on purchase intention within the beauty industry with regards to the adoption of social media influencers. Numerous research studies consistently emphasize the importance of trustworthiness, along with other dimensions of credibility, in shaping consumer behavior patterns. It has been demonstrated in various studies that the credibility of influencers, especially with respect to trustworthiness, has a positive effect on the perceived level of trust and purchase intention among consumers, thereby establishing itself as a powerful strategic tool in the context of the beauty industry (Amelia et al., 2023; Shailza & Sarkar, 2024).

Trustworthiness is the perceived honesty, integrity, and sincerity of a source. A trustworthy source is more likely to be seen as credible than one that is not. Customers believe influencers are trustworthy when they display honesty and integrity. Self-branding, which, like commercially branded products, may benefit from a unique selling point (USP) or identity that is adaptive to customer needs and interests, is critical to influencer credibility (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2016). According to Brooks, Drenten and Piskorski (2021), devotion and the resulting trustworthiness have steadily evolved as an assumption of influencer Blair Fowler's self-image. Furthermore, Fowler's ability to traverse the influencer landscape in a friendly and engaging manner is remarkable.

Generation Z consumers, known for being born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s, are significantly impacted by various social media platforms, leading to a noteworthy increase in their levels of brand consideration and inclination towards making purchases, particularly when these consumers hold the perception that influencers they follow possess a certain level of credibility. This perception of credibility is largely influenced by the extent to which these influencers are deemed trustworthy, playing a crucial role as a key moderating factor in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of Generation Z consumers towards brands and their associated products or services (Rizomyliotis et al., 2024).

The quality of content and the attitude towards influencers are significantly shaped by individuals' perceptions of the credibility and trustworthiness of the information source. These perceptions, in turn, play a crucial role in mediating consumers' intention to make a purchase, thereby underscoring the intricate indirect pathways through which trustworthiness impacts purchase intention via content quality (Candra, 2023).



Figure 1 Conceptual model

Social media influencer adoption

The process by which individuals or organizations integrate social media influencers into their communication or marketing strategy is known as social media influencer adoption (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). This entails finding and choosing the right influencers, forming cooperative partnerships, and using their influence to accomplish particular marketing goals, like raising sales, fostering customer loyalty, or raising brand awareness (De Veirman et al., 2017; Xiao et al., 2018).

Brand perception and sentiment

Purchase intention is influenced by brand emotion and impression, which are greatly impacted by the use of social media influencers. Social media Influencers improve consumer trust and brand image, two important aspects of brand perception, by virtue of their competence, credibility, and dependability (Khan, Alhathal, Alam, & Minhaj, 2023); Mabkhot, Isa, & Mabkhot, 2022). The relationship between Social media influencer attributes and customer purchase intentions is mediated by the credibility of Social media influencers (Bi & Zhang, 2022; Mabkhot et al., 2022).

Since these qualities are highly connected with customer engagement and buy intention, Social media influencers' capacity to engage customers with entertaining and educational content further solidifies this relationship (Ao, Bansal, Pruthi, & Khaskheli, 2023; Gupta, Mahajan, & Dash, 2023). Social media influencers' persuasive power is further strengthened by their perceived authenticity, which is shown in their consistency and individuality. This influences customer purchase decisions and brand authenticity (Zniva, Weitzl, & Lindmoser, 2023). Furthermore, Social media influencers' perceived competence and beauty add to their credibility, which is necessary for favorable brand perception and consequent purchase intentions (Lin, Crowe, Pierre, & Lee, 2021).



Purchase intention

Purchase intention, which is frequently thought of as a crucial indicator of real purchasing behavior, is the deliberate choice or willingness of a customer to buy a particular good or service. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, it is impacted by a number of elements, such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The possibility or willingness of customers to purchase a good or service is known as purchase intention, and it is frequently impacted by a number of variables, including personal preferences, value perception, as well as external influences like marketing tactics.

Purchase intention in the context of social media influencer marketing is greatly influenced by the traits and perceived authority of influencers. Through their perceived competence, attractiveness, and trustworthiness—all essential elements of source credibility—influencers affect consumers' intentions to make purchases (Koay, Cheung, Soh, & Teoh, 2022; Mabkhot et al., 2022; Weismueller, Harrigan, Wang, & Soutar, 2020). Purchase intention has been demonstrated to be strongly predicted by the credibility of influencers, namely their dependability and knowledge, with trust serving as a mediating component in this relationship (Koay et al., 2022; Mabkhot et al., 2022; Peković, Zdravković, & Pavlović, 2019). Furthermore, because they provide a feeling of relatability and connection, perceived genuineness and homophily—the likeness between the influencer and the follower—also significantly contribute to increased purchase intentions (Shoenberger & Kim, 2022). In addition, social proof, which is established by likes, shares, and favorable comments, further strengthens the perceived worth of the product, which in turn affects the audience's judgments about whether or not to buy it.

Conclusion

This research aims to achieve two primary objectives. Firstly, it seeks to develop a comprehensive framework for assessing the credibility of social media influencers (SMIs). Secondly, it aims to present a conceptual framework that elucidates the influence of source credibility on purchase intention when individuals encounter information disseminated by SMIs.

In conclusion, the source credibility model is integral to assessing the reliability of information sources, encompassing key factors such as attractiveness, authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness. This model is crucial for understanding consumer behavior and decision-making, particularly within the realm of social media influencer marketing. The perceived credibility of influencers is a decisive factor in shaping consumer perceptions and actions towards products or services. Its significance extends beyond the beauty industry, impacting sectors such as marketing, tourism, health, and environmental sustainability, where credible endorsements—whether by CEOs or influencers—play a vital role in consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior. For social media influencers, maintaining authenticity and trustworthiness is essential,



as their influence hinges on their credibility. When influencers are perceived as reliable and trustworthy, their ability to affect consumer decisions becomes profound, especially in industries like beauty. Physical attractiveness, authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness are the cornerstones that shape consumer perceptions and behaviors, solidifying influencers as trusted sources. This dynamic interplay directly impacts consumer confidence, purchase intentions, and brand considerations, highlighting the critical role these factors play in successful influencer marketing strategies.

Discussion

Theoretical contributions

The image's conceptual model indicates a connection between purchase intention, social media influencer adoption, and source credibility. The following are some possible theoretical contributions that this framework could make.

1. Extending the Model of Source Credibility

In the context of social media influencers, the framework expands on the idea of source credibility. It implies that while assessing social media influencers, the conventional criteria of source credibility-attractiveness, authenticity, expertise, and trustworthiness-remain relevant.

2. Connecting Purchase Intention with Social media influencer Adoption

2.1 Mediating Role of Adoption

According to the theory, consumers' adoption of a social media influencer acts as a mediator in the relationship between purchase intention and source credibility. This implies that consumers are more likely to purchase products recommended by social media influencers they admire and have grown to identify with.

2.2 Dynamics of Adoption

The paradigm can be used to investigate the elements-such as perceived risk, social influence, and value-that affect consumers' adoption of social media influencers.

3. Marketing Strategy Implications:

3.1 Choosing social media influencers

The conceptual model gives marketers a way to choose influencers according to their legitimacy and likelihood of being embraced by target customers.

3.2 Establishing Credibility

The framework emphasizes how crucial it is to establish and preserve credibility among social media influencers. Authentic content, regular interaction, and cultivating close bonds with followers are ways to accomplish this.



Managerial contributions

It is vital to remember that an influencer's integrity and reputation are two important aspects that determine whether or not consumers would buy something (Saima & Khan, 2020). Comprehensive interviews with prominent personalities in Thailand's social media scene provide a deep and comprehensive understanding of the methods and techniques used in effective influencer marketing initiatives. These people, who frequently have significant influence on public opinion and consumer behavior, can offer insightful opinions on how to develop campaigns that appeal to a wide range of audiences on different social media platforms. Deciphering their methods for audience identification, content production, and interaction can assist identify the essential components of successful influencer marketing in Thailand.

These insights constitute an essential tool for companies, groups, or individuals looking to start promotional efforts in particular parts of Thailand in order to create customized campaigns that take into account regional trends, tastes, and cultural quirks. Businesses can successfully interact with their target audience by taking inspiration from the strategies and experiences of well-known influencers. This can increase brand recognition and boost conversions in a market that is extremely competitive.

Furthermore, for producers or investors thinking about joining or growing their presence in the Thai market, these in-depth interviews might be a priceless resource. Businesses can position themselves for long-term success by identifying possible collaborations, comprehending customer sentiment, and anticipating market dynamics with a greater awareness of the influencer marketing landscape. The possibilities made possible by utilizing these insights may lead to better strategic planning and decision-making, providing a competitive advantage in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

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