



Social Media Influencer's Content Credibility on Information Adoption and Purchase Intention of Beauty Product Among Generation Z in Malaysia

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Abstract. The present study seeks to investigate the impact of influencer credibility characteristics (attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and homophily) on beauty product purchase decisions using information adoption as a moderator. The information was gathered online from 136 university students in the Klang Valley and east Malaysia. The data of this study were analysed using partial least squares structural modelling (PLS-SEM). Except for attractiveness, the results showed that expertise, homophily, and trustworthiness have a significant indirect positive effect on information adoption and purchase decision. The findings contributed to a better understanding of the credibility of influencers, which can have practical implications for marketers developing effective marketing strategies via digital platforms. Furthermore, the study's findings revealed that consumers prefer influencers who are highly trusted due to their significant competence in the industry in which they work rather than relying solely on their physical appeal. According to the findings of this study, beauty brands targeting Generation Z should consider collaborating with credible social media influencers to increase their credibility and purchase intention among the target audience. This study is able to add value to the current understanding of the primary antecedents of younger consumer engagement by examining these dimensions of perceived credibility as well as information adoption behaviour.

Keywords: Attractiveness, Expertise, Generation Z, Homophily, Information Adoption, Social Media Influencers, Trustworthiness.

1 Introduction

In the last decade, the rapid growth of online social media platforms has radically altered the way consumers interact with brands, products, and services [1]. Social media has become a powerful tool for individuals and businesses to connect with their audiences and promote their products or services [2]. The influencers, in particular, have emerged as a key player in this space, with their ability to sway consumer behaviour

and shape popular opinion. A study by [3] indicated that in many business backgrounds, social media influencers have emerged as an important marketing tool for businesses, with the ability to reach millions of followers and influence their purchasing decisions. Social media has now become a way for people to socialize and stay connected to a specific community and is a form of electronic word of mouth; hence, it has a major impact on customer purchasing behaviour. Social media influencers as brand endorsers have grown more sought-after, especially among new and small online businesses. Approximately 80% of online marketers claimed that social media influencers are potential endorsers who boost their online businesses to a higher level [4]. This statement supports the effectiveness of social media influences in increasing consumer purchase intent. Consumers are likely to be more receptive to information from influencers who are seen as trustworthy and knowledgeable and are more likely to purchase products or services recommended by them [5]. Concerns have been raised, nevertheless, about the credibility of information provided by social media influencers, igniting an increased interest in how consumers perceive and use such information. The impact of social media influencers on consumer behaviour has been thoroughly researched in the past, with research suggesting that the content of influencers can significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions. While previous research has looked into the impact of social media influencers on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions, there has not been much research into the credibility of social media influencer content and its impact on Generation Z consumers' information adoption and purchase intention in the context of beauty products in Malaysia. If influencers are viewed as untrustworthy or lacking in expertise, their endorsements may have little to no impact on consumer behaviour [6]. With regard to Malaysia's beauty industry that has grown significantly in recent years, the younger generation has stronger interest in beauty products and a strong presence on social media platforms [7]. Consequently, when it comes to beauty products, social media influencers have become a critical source of information for Generation Z consumers. The purpose of this study is to fill a research gap by investigating the relationship between social media influencer content credibility, information adoption, and purchase intention of beauty products among Malaysian Generation Z consumers.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Generation Z and Digital Marketing

Gen Z is the first generation to have cultivated digital media, and they clearly have different characteristics that set them apart from other generations. As discussed by [8], Gen Z is a group of youngsters that have more concern on the information received before they decide to buy. This is where digital media influencers come into play as they have become a vital source of information for Gen Z when it comes to buying products [9]. In addition, Gen Z consumers are more likely to purchase products online if they perceive the products carry high quality and value. This finding supports the

previous research by [8] and [10] who found that quality is perceived to be an important factor that influences Gen Z's purchase intention of online products. Besides product quality, another important indicator is the online media influencers, particularly the influencers that review tangible items such as beauty products. The role of an influencer is to develop content and to publicize the products they review on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. The viewers of the online content who could be the followers among the Gen Z will normally view the influencers as experts and often rely on their recommendations when making a decision [11]. In the context of beauty industry, the use of influencers to help brands in creating online content has become a trend to meet the needs of the clients. As Gen Z is dominating the online market, it is essential for brands to continue to work with influencers to reach their target audience effectively. As a matter of fact, influencer marketing has gained prominence in the beauty industry, with many brands collaborating with influencers to reach their target audience [12], [13]. This confirmed that the influence of social media on Gen Z merely happens due to the online reviews. Past studies shared that the role of social media influencers plays a significant impact on the product choices of the younger consumers [14], [15]. Social media influencers, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping Gen Z consumers' perception of beauty products, leading to increased sales for the products they promote. Brands that can effectively engage with Gen Z consumers through digital media platforms, including by collaborating with consumers and influencers, are likely to have a competitive advantage in the beauty product market.

2.2 Source Credible Theory (SCT)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is an established theory that emphasizes how the persuasiveness of a communication is influenced, as part of perceived credibility of the communication source. Past scholars attention has highlighted SCT within the context of communication literature [16], [17] which has been applied on online contexts [18], [19]. Moreover, SCT has been utilized to assess perceived source credibility in various domains, including organizational settings, marketing, and online environments. In light of the present study, it is important to note that the concept of credibility extends beyond mere trustworthiness or believability of information obtained from the internet. Instead, our investigation focuses on making informed judgments regarding the influencer's credibility in disseminating the shared information.

2.3 Social Media Influencers' Content Credible

Social media influencers are now a big part of marketing plans for companies that want to reach younger people, especially Generation Z (Gen Z). There has been a lot of talk about how important it is for the credibility of social media influencers' posts to be able to sell products to their followers [20]. The goal of this literature review is to look at recent studies on the credibility of social media influencers' content and how it affects consumer behaviour, especially among Gen Z. Several studies have looked into what makes the content of social media influencers trustworthy. The study found that how

credible something is would make people more likely to buy it. The study also showed that the link between perceived credibility and purchase intention is mediated by perceived social influence and perceived value [21]. In another study, [18] looked at how consumers' purchase intentions are affected by how credible they think influencers are and how credible they think a brand is. The study found that both the credibility of influencers and the credibility of brands have a strong positive effect on the intention to buy, but the effect of perceived credibility of influencers is stronger than that of brand credibility [19]. The study also showed that consumers are more likely to buy when perceived credibility of influencers and perceived credibility of the brand work together.

On the other hand, [17] looked at how Gen Z bought things when they think social media influencers are lying. The study found that consumers are less likely to buy when they think the content of an influencer is dishonest, but they are more likely to buy when they think the content is credible. The study suggested that social media influencers should work to keep their followers' trust, so they do not lose their credibility. In conclusion, the credibility of the content that social media influencers post is a key factor in how Gen Z buys things. The studies we have looked at so far suggested that perceived credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness of social media influencers make people more likely to buy from them. Also, social media influencers must keep up their credibility if they do not want to lose the trust of their followers.

2.4 Influencers' Attractiveness on Information Adoption

Past study has suggested that the attractiveness of an influencer can influence consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards a product or brand [22]. This refers to the physical attractiveness of an influencer in which promoting the product may increase the possibility of consumers to adopt the information shared. Research by [23] has explored the impact of social media influencers' attractiveness on consumers' attitudes and confirmed that attractiveness has a positive impact on attitude towards the product, as well as intention to purchase. A similar study by [24] found that influencer attractiveness has positively influenced consumers' attitudes towards products that are advertised via Instagram. However, there are other studies that discovered a non-significant relationship between influencer attractiveness and consumers' attitudes towards products, such as a study by [25] which found that influencer attractiveness does not significantly impact consumers' attitudes towards brands or products. Another study by [26] found that perceived authenticity of an influencer has a greater impact than influencer attractiveness. The hypothesis of the study is proposed as follows:

H1: Social media influencers' attractiveness has a significant positive effect on information adoption of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.5 Influencers' Expertise on Information Adoption

In the world of digital market that we are living in now, it may perceive that social media is the easiest way of gathering information. The social media influencers are seen as experts in their own way and have a big impact on how consumers act. According to a study by [27], the influencers' knowledge has directly made consumers or viewers to be likely to adopt the information. The study indicates that when the influencers know a lot about the product, they are also the users of the brand they are trying to sell; hence, consumers are more likely to trust the information. Another study by [21] explored that the expertise of social media influencers in a certain product category makes the viewers feel like they would also want to experience it. The following is the proposed hypothesis for the study:

H2: Social media influencers' expertise has a significant positive effect on information adoption of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.6 Influencers' Homophily and Information Adoption

Social media influencers have become increasingly influential in shaping consumer behaviour in recent years, particularly among Generation Z. Homophily, or the degree to which the influencer and their followers share similar characteristics such as values, interests, and lifestyle, has been identified as having an impact on the effectiveness of influencer marketing. A study by [28] examined the influence of homophily on the effectiveness of influencer marketing in the beauty industry among consumers. The findings of the study showed that homophily significantly influences the attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, with higher homophily leading to a more favourable attitude toward the brand and higher purchase intention. The study also found that perceived similarity between the influencer and the consumer plays a mediating role in the relationship between homophily and purchase intention. Furthermore, a study by [29] investigated the role of content quality as a source of homophily in hedonic and utilitarian products. When the product is highly functional, the source of homophily has a stronger effect on attitude and purchase intention. This suggests that the role of source homophily may vary depending on the nature of the product under consideration. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Social media influencers' homophily has a significant positive effect on information adoption of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.7 Influencers' Trustworthiness and Information Adoption

Several studies have investigated the impact of influencers' trustworthiness on information adoption in the context of the social media platform. The study justified that influencers' characteristics have affected the consumer adoption through trustworthiness and attractiveness [30]. Similarly, another study by [24] discovered that the trust-

worthiness of influencers positively affects purchase intention, while perceived expertise and attractiveness positively influence their attitude towards the promoted products. The research also discovered that homophily or perceived similarity between the influencer and the viewer has a major influence on consumers' behaviours towards the promoted products. However, in accordance with a study by [31], even though influencers' trustworthiness has a positive impact on promoted products, it does not significantly influence their purchase intention. The study also found that perceived expertise and attractiveness have positive impact on people's attitude toward the promoted products, while homophily does not have a significant effect.

H4: Social media influencers' trustworthiness has a significant positive effect on information adoption of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.8 Relationship between Information Adoption and Purchase Decision

According to a study by [32], information adoption has a significant positive effect on the purchase decision and thus the consumers obtain information about the products from online reviews, social media influencers, and brand websites. The information obtained from these sources influences their purchase decision and, ultimately, their intent to purchase. Similarly, [33] discovered that information adoption significantly influences online communities' industry purchasing decisions. The study found that consumers obtain information about the product usefulness evaluation from the information gathered in the online communities; thus, the information influences their perception of the product and their purchasing decision. In addition, [27] found that the credibility of information obtained through digital media influences the purchase decisions of eco-friendly products where consumers are skeptical of digital media-obtained information and rely on their own knowledge and experience to evaluate the information's credibility. The credibility of the digital media obtained information influences their perception of the product and, ultimately, their purchasing choice. According to the study, due to concerns about product quality, delivery, and payment security, consumers perceive greater risk when purchasing goods online. Digital media, such as social media influencers and user-generated content, plays a vital role in the adoption of information among consumers. The credibility and perceived utility of the information obtained through digital media, as well as the perceived risk associated with online purchases, influence the purchase intention. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Information adoption of beauty products significantly influences purchase decision of Gen Z consumers.

2.9 Influencers' Homophily on Information Adoption and Purchase Decision

Homophily refers to the ability and interest a person has to connect with others who they perceive are similar to them in terms of matters such as values, attitudes, and ways of life. It is important in social media influencer marketing since the influencers carry

similar values and interests as to the followers that lead to greater connection between them. This statement can be supported by [34] who found that the similarity of influencers leads the consumers in the beauty industry to adopt new information. The study also found that the similarity between influencers and consumers makes them more likely to buy online.

Furthermore, studies by [28] and [35] found that the similarity of social media influencers has a positive effect on adopted information and online purchases. The study also found that consumers are more likely to follow and trust influencers whose interests and lifestyles are similar to their own. However, not all studies have found that homophily among influencers has a big effect on how younger generation uses information and buys things online. For example, a study by [33] found that the homophily of influencers does not have much effect on consumers' plans to buy skincare online. The study also showed that other things like price and quality of the product may have a bigger effect on the decisions about what to buy online.

Overall, the research shows that the similarity of social media influencers can affect how consumers uses information and what they buy online. Nevertheless, the strength of this effect may depend on things like industry and the way the influencer and the product are designed. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Social media influencers' homophily has a significant positive effect on information adoption and purchase decision of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.10 Influencers' Expertise on Information Adoption and Purchase Decision

The expertise of influencers has been found to be a key factor in how consumers decide what to buy. A study in Vietnam on Generation Z purchase intention indicated that the young consumers are influenced by the expertise of influencers in a big way [36]. A study by [26] found that the users of Instagram in Germany are more likely to refer to the influencer's expertise before trusting and buying the product. In a similar way, a study by [27] found that the expertise of influencers increases the purchase decision among consumers in China on eco-friendly products.

It is important to note that not all types of expertise affect the consumers' buying decisions in the same way. A study by [31] highlighted two sources of credibility that comprise of expertise and trustworthiness on consumer choice of travelling decisions. Positive results on expertise and traveling decision showed that followers of the travelling influencers need to have trust and belief before making the decision as advised by the influencers. The type of expertise and the situation in which it is given are also very important to how well it works. The hypothesis is then presented as follows.

H7: Social media influencers' expertise has a significant positive effect on information adoption and purchase decision of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.11 Influencers' Trustworthiness on Information Adoption and Purchase Decision

The level of trustworthiness that Gen Z perceives in social media influencers is one of the key factors influencing their adoption of information from the influencer. The degree to which a communicator is perceived to be honest, fair, and knowledgeable about the message topic is referred to as trustworthiness [37]. According to research, trustworthiness is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing among consumers. For instance, a study by [38] found that perceived trustworthiness positively affects consumer decision among college students in China that was based on the blogger's knowledge sharing. Another study by [39] examined the adoption of apps by consumers which reveals the impact of trust on how much customers believe the information they experience and how they decide what to adopt the service or not. However, some scholars reported contradicting results that could be influenced by cultural differences or differentiated from a different marketing campaign. [40] unearthed in their study that influencers on social media can be compared to celebrities in terms of their status and profile, despite the fact that celebrities are said to have a higher social status due to their profession. Overall, these studies suggest that trustworthiness of influencers is important in influencing information adoption and purchase decisions among young consumers. As a result, brands must carefully choose influencers who are trusted by their target audience and ensure that their messages are authentic and relevant to their followers. Thus, the influence by social media influencers' may be less reliable. Hence, the study proposes the following hypothesis as below:

H8: Social media influencers' trustworthiness has a significant positive effect on information adoption and purchase decision of beauty products among Gen Z.

2.12 Influencers' Attractiveness on Information Adoption and Purchase Decision

Influencers' physical attractiveness is one of the key factors that influence information adoption and purchase intention among consumers. Studies have shown that individuals tend to be more influenced by attractive individuals, as they are perceived as more trustworthy and credible [22], [41]. In the context of the beauty industry, the influencers who often promote and endorse beauty products are representing the brand; thus, they are able to attract the viewers. Recent studies have shown that younger consumers tend to rely on social media influencers for product recommendations and are more likely to purchase products that have been endorsed by influencers [24]. This supports the inclination that physical attractiveness of influencers is positively associated with consumers' intention to purchase products that have been recommended by them [23].

H9: Social media influencers' attractiveness has a significant positive effect on information adoption and purchase decision of beauty products among Gen Z.

3 Methodology

Data were obtained using a questionnaire which was distributed to 400 students between the age of 20 to 29 in which they were selected based on convenient sampling method. The questionnaire was then completed by 140 respondents, which means that the study achieved 35% response rate. For data analysis, it involved 136 complete questionnaires because four of the questionnaires had to be excluded as they were incomplete. The survey was designed and adapted from [1], [19], [21] to assess constructs related to the research questions of the study which included attractiveness, expertise, homophily, information adoption, purchase decision, and trustworthiness. The questionnaire was made available to potential respondents via online approach. Some of the questions on attractiveness are "I think the beauty influencer who appears in a product review is an expert who represent a particular product category", "I think the beauty influencer who appears in a product review is qualified to represent the product category". Regarding attractiveness, the questions asked were "I think the beauty influencer who appears in the product review is attractive", "I think the beauty influencer who appears in product review is elegant". For trustworthiness, several questions were asked regarding the influencers trustworthiness such as "the beauty influencer who appears in a product review is someone who is dependable in the product category" and "the beauty influencer who appears in product review video is someone who is sincere to represent the product category". Meanwhile, four questions were asked on homophily which included "I rely on product review by beauty influencer who is in the same group as me" and "I rely on product review by beauty influencers who have the same interest as me". The items were all measured using six-Likert scale. Furthermore, to test the study's hypotheses, the collected data were analysed using SmartPLS which is a structural equation modelling software.

4 Data Analysis

Based on Table 1, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a measure of collinearity or multicollinearity of the data. A VIF value of 1 indicates no collinearity, while a value greater than 1 indicates some level of collinearity [42]. Generally, a VIF value greater than 5 or 10 indicates high collinearity and may affect the reliability of the regression analysis.

Table 1. Full Collinearity Testing.

Con- struct	Attractive- ness	Exper- tise	Homoph- ily	Infor- mation Adoption	Pur- chase Deci- sion	Trustworthi- ness
VIF	2.350	2.493	1.646	2.754	2.590	2.628

In this case, the VIF values range from 1.646 to 2.754, which indicates that there is no significant multicollinearity issue in the data. All the VIF values are below the threshold of 5 or 10, which means that there is no severe problem of collinearity among the constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of the regression analysis are reliable and can be used to make inferences and predictions about the relationship between the constructs in the model.

Table 2. Measurement Model.

Construct	Item	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Attractiveness	Attract1	0.835	0.866	0.909	0.713
	Attract2	0.852			
	Attract3	0.810			
	Attract4	0.880			
Expertise	Exp1	0.824	0.910	0.933	0.735
	Exp2	0.884			
	Exp3	0.848			
	Exp4	0.855			
	Exp5	0.873			
Homophily	Homo1	0.747	0.788	0.863	0.612
	Homo2	0.727			
	Homo3	0.862			
	Homo4	0.787			
Information Adoption	In-foAdopt1	0.853	0.896	0.928	0.764
	In-foAdopt2	0.945			
	In-foAdopt3	0.866			
	In-foAdopt4	0.828			
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.906	0.834	0.900	0.750
	PD2	0.904			
	PD3	0.783			
Trustworthiness	Trust1	0.810	0.923	0.942	0.765
	Trust2	0.883			
	Trust3	0.907			
	Trust4	0.874			
	Trust5	0.895			

According to the measurement model analysis in Table 2, all items have significant loadings on their respective constructs. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs are greater than 0.7, indicating that the items have good internal consistency [43]. The composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs are greater than 0.9, indicating that the constructs are reliable. All constructs have average variance extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.5, indicating good convergent validity. Overall, the measurement model appears to be reliable and valid for assessing the constructs of attractiveness, expertise, homophily, information adoption, purchase decision, and trustworthiness in the study.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT).

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Attractiveness						
2 Expertise	0.742					
3 Homophily	0.475	0.481				
4 Information Adoption	0.625	0.704	0.666			
5 Purchase Decision	0.617	0.708	0.72	0.835		
6 Trustworthiness	0.789	0.732	0.547	0.678	0.631	

The results of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) analysis, which is used to test discriminant validity, are shown in Table 3. The correlation between two constructs in relation to the correlations of these constructs with other constructs is measured by HTMT. The table's diagonal values represent the square root of the extracted average variance (AVE) for each construct. The values of the diagonal represent the HTMT values between each pair of constructs. The HTMT values in the table are all below the recommended threshold of 0.9, indicating good discriminant validity among the constructs. This means that each construct is measuring a unique and distinct aspect of the overall concept being studied, and that there is no significant overlap or redundancy between the constructs. Therefore, we can be confident that the measures used in this study are reliable and valid.

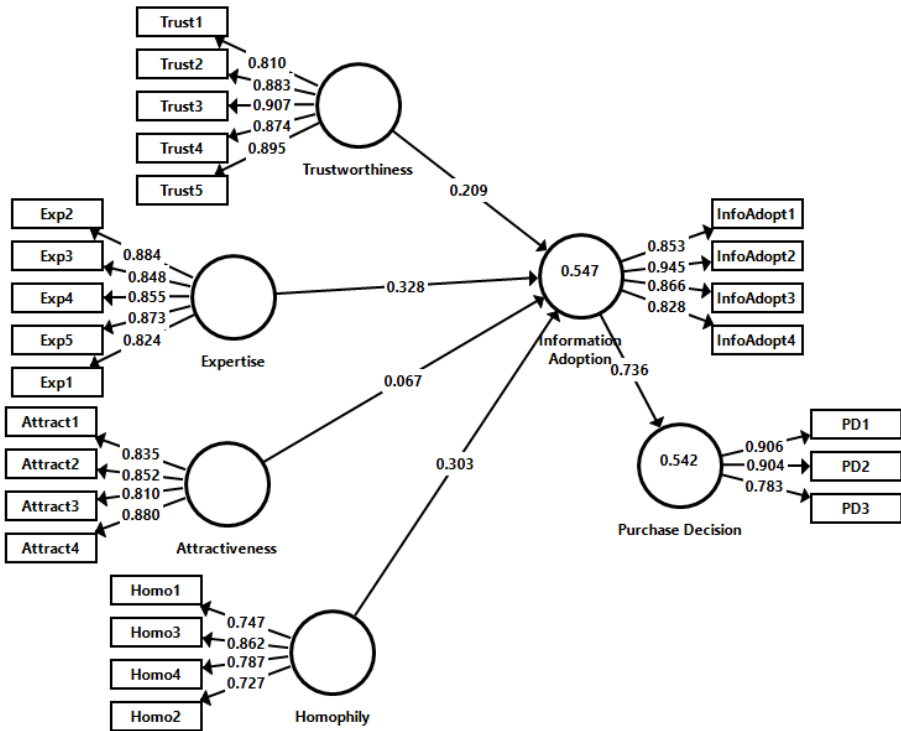


Fig 1. Measurement model.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing direct effects.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-values	p-values	Decision	R ²	f ²	BCI LL	BCI UL	VIF
H1	Attractiveness -> Information Adoption	0.067	0.092	0.720	0.236	Not Supported	0.547	0.004	-0.091	0.214	2.331
H2	Expertise -> Information Adoption	0.328	0.095	3.450	0.000	Supported		0.111	0.178	0.490	2.137
H3	Homophily -> Information Adoption	0.303	0.069	4.395	0.000	Supported		0.154	0.182	0.410	1.317
H4	Trustworthiness -> Information Adoption	0.209	0.107	1.942	0.026	Supported		0.038	0.032	0.385	2.529
H5	Information Adoption -> Purchase Decision	0.736	0.036	20.595	0.000	Supported	0.542	1.182	0.665	0.785	1.000

Table 5. Hypothesis testing indirect effects.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Indirect Effect Beta	Std. Error	t-values	p-values	Decision	BCI LL	BCI UL
H6	Homophily -> Information Adoption -> Purchase Decision	0.223	0.053	4.212	0.000	Supported	0.117	0.323
H7	Expertise -> Information Adoption -> Purchase Decision	0.241	0.072	3.335	0.001	Supported	0.102	0.387
H8	Trustworthiness -> Information Adoption -> Purchase Decision	0.154	0.078	1.980	0.048	Supported	0.001	0.307
H9	Attractiveness -> Information Adoption -> Purchase Decision	0.049	0.068	0.723	0.470	Not Supported	-0.095	0.175

Table 6. PLS-predict.

Item	PLS		LM		PLS-LM		Q ² _predict
	RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE	
PD2	0.84	0.64	0.933	0.724	-0.093	-0.084	0.197
PD3	1.039	0.822	1.078	0.827	-0.039	-0.005	0.293
PD1	0.877	0.68	0.993	0.776	-0.116	-0.096	0.158

Result from Table 4 indicates that the analysis was conducted using Smart PLS and five hypotheses were tested in relation to the variables of attractiveness, expertise, homophily, trustworthiness, information adoption, and purchase decision. The results indicate that H1, which stated that attractiveness would have a positive relationship with information adoption, was not supported as the standardized beta coefficient was only 0.067 and the p-value was 0.236. However, H2, H3, H4 and H5 on the direct effect of information adoption showed significant results of (b= 0.328, p-value = 0.000), (b=0.303, p-value = 0.000), (b=0.209, p-value = 0.026) and (b=0.736, p-value =0.000), respectively. This suggests that information adoption is a key driver of purchase decisions. The R2 values showed that the research model accounts for 54.7% of the variance in information adoption and 54.2% of the variance in purchase decision whereas the f2 values suggest that the effect size of the independent variables on the dependent variables is moderate to large. The VIF values for all variables are below the threshold of 3, showing that multicollinearity is not a significant issue in the model. Entirely, the statistical results suggest that expertise, homophily, and trustworthiness are important factors that influence information adoption, and that information adoption carries an important role in driving purchase decisions.

For further analysis, Table 5 shows that there are 4 indirect effects being tested with H6, H7 and H8 hypothesizing a positive relationship between each independent variable and purchase decision through information adoption, while H9 hypothesizes that attractiveness would not have a significant indirect effect on purchase decision through information adoption. Overall, the beta and p-value showed the results for H6 with b=0.223 and p-value of 0.000, H7 with b= 0.241 and p-value=0.001 and finally H8 with b=0.154, p-value=0.048. Clearly, H9 was not significant in the indirect effect on purchase decision through information adoption, with an indirect effect beta of only 0.049, a standard error of 0.068, a t-value of 0.723, and a p-value of 0.470. This highlights the importance of building strong customer relationships based on factors such as similarity, expertise, and trustworthiness, in order to influence customer behaviour and drive purchase decisions.

5 Discussion and Recommendation

The study confirmed the hypotheses that homophily, expertise, and trustworthiness have significant indirect effects on purchase decisions via information adoption but insignificant result between product's attractiveness and indirect effect on purchase decisions. This finding suggests that consumers' trust of the information source's expertise is more influential in driving purchase decisions than the product's attractiveness. Past studies have noted that perceived authenticity of an influencer may be more important than their physical attractiveness as reported in a study by [26]. Studies have also highlighted the potential negative effect of influencers' attractiveness on consumers' trustworthiness perceptions. For instance, individuals may perceive attractive influencers as more interested in self-promotion and less focused on providing honest opinions and reviews about the products they promote [44]. It is also important to remember that the knowledge of social media influencers may not be the only thing that makes consumers more likely to use information. An influencers that is trusted and likeable may have a bigger effect on how people use information [31].

Hence, it is recommended that marketers and practitioners priorities establish trust and credibility with their consumers via authoritative and reliable information sources. Companies should consider investing in partnerships with influencers and experts in their respective fields in order to provide consumers with accurate information. In addition, they should prioritise information adoption as a key driver of purchase decisions, as it acts as a mediator between consumers' perceptions of the information source and their purchase decisions. In addition, future research could expand the model by incorporating additional constructs that could influence purchase decisions, such as perceived quality, perceived risk, and perceived value. To ensure the generalizability of the results, additional research could examine the effect of these constructs in different cultural or demographic contexts. High factor loadings and composite reliability values indicate that all constructs have good convergent validity, as indicated by the measurement model analysis. In addition, the discriminant validity analysis utilizing HTMT demonstrates that all constructs have good discriminant validity, indicating that they measure distinct constructs and not the same underlying construct. Second, the results of the test of hypotheses for indirect effects indicate that all hypotheses are supported, with the exception of hypothesis 9, which is not supported. This indicates that attractiveness, expertise, homophily, and trust have significant indirect effects on purchase decisions via information adoption. Following attractiveness and reliability, expertise and homophily have the strongest indirect effects on purchase decisions.

The findings can be related to the establishment of a rapport with the target audience. This objective can be achieved by offering authoritative information and content that aligns with the interests and preferences of the target audience. As per the results, it is highly recommended for the business to create co-branding together with the influencers who possess expertise in their respective field and share demographic or interest similarities with the target audience. It is not easy to establish trust among the intended target audience hence the businesses should emphasize transparency, provide high-quality products or services, and promptly and effectively respond to customer feedback. When customers have confidence in a business, they are more inclined to adopt

the information provided by that business and base their purchase decisions on it. Consequently, businesses should focus on enhancing the appeal and reliability of their brand through strategic branding efforts and by delivering positive customer experiences. By comprehending the factors that influence purchase decisions through information adoption, as revealed by the research findings, businesses can gain valuable insights and improve their prospects for achieving success in the market.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to examine the effect of social influence factors, namely homophily, expertise, dependability, and attractiveness, on purchase decisions via the mediating effect of information adoption. SmartPLS was used to perform data analysis. The results indicated that homophily, expertise, and trustworthiness have a significant positive effect on information adoption, which in turn influence purchase decisions positively. Nonetheless, attractiveness has no significant indirect effect on purchase decisions.

This research has significant implications for marketers and businesses. Marketers should focus on creating an environment that fosters homophily, expertise, and trustworthiness, as this can lead to increased information adoption and ultimately influence purchase decisions positively. In addition, companies should prioritise the use of social influence factors as a marketing strategy to increase the impact of their products on potential customers.

Despite the study's contributions, it has limitations that must be addressed in future investigation. In the first place, the study relied on self-reported data, which may not be entirely accurate. Complementing self-reported data in future research should be other methods, such as behavioural measures. Second, the study centred on a particular product category and a particular geographic region. To determine the generalizability of the findings, future research should examine the impact of social influence factors on purchase decisions across product categories and regions. In conclusion, this study offers insights into the social influence factors that influence purchase decisions, as well as implications for marketers and businesses.

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