# The Effect of Influencer Marketing on Consumer's Purchase Intention in Malaysia

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## Abstract

*Influencer marketing has emerged as a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior in Malaysia's e-commerce sector. This study investigates the effects of influencer type, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, expertise, and trustworthiness on consumers' purchase intentions, addressing key gaps in the literature. Data were collected from 354 respondents through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS to ensure robust statistical insights. The results revealed that micro-celebrities have a significantly stronger positive influence on purchase intentions compared to traditional celebrities. Among the key factors, trustworthiness, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer type emerged as significant predictors of purchase intentions, highlighting the importance of authenticity, transparency, and relatability in influencer marketing. Conversely, brand familiarity and expertise, while correlated with purchase intention, did not show significant predictive power in the structural model, suggesting their effects are context-dependent. These findings provide valuable insights for marketers in designing influencer strategies, emphasizing the need to prioritize relatable and trustworthy influencers while ensuring transparency in promotional practices. The study concludes with recommendations for future research, including exploring industry-specific contexts, examining longitudinal effects, and incorporating qualitative methods to enrich understanding of influencer marketing's role in consumer decision-making. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital marketing dynamics in Malaysia's evolving marketplace.*

*Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Influencer Type, Brand Familiarity, Sponsorship Disclosure, Expertise, Trustworthiness, Purchase Intentions.*

## Introduction

This research paper will explore the impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchase intentions, focusing on key factors such as the type of influencer, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, the influencer's expertise, and trustworthiness. This chapter will provide an overview of the research background and problem statement, followed by a discussion of the research objectives, research questions, hypothesis development, and the significance of the study. Additionally, it will address how these factors collectively shape consumer behavior in the digital marketplace. This chapter will be covering the research background, and problem

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statement. Next discussing on research objectives, research questions, hypothesis development and the significance of research.

Influencer marketing has rapidly evolved into a powerful tool shaping consumer behavior, with global research illustrating its substantial impact on purchase intentions. For instance, Bu, Parkinson, & Thaichon (2022) showed that influencer marketing encourages positive collaborative behaviors, contributing to enhanced brand equity and higher purchase intentions in the American market. Likewise, Jarrar, Awobamise, & Aderibigbe (2020) found that influencer marketing outperformed social media-sponsored advertising due to its perceived authenticity, particularly in North America and Europe. In Malaysia, a 2020 Rakuten Insight survey revealed that 59% of respondents had made purchases based on influencer recommendations, indicating the wide-reaching influence of influencers in the local market.

Influencer marketing in Malaysia is undergoing significant transformation, driven by several emerging trends that are reshaping the industry. One of the most prominent trends is the increasing emphasis on authenticity and relatability. Malaysian consumers, particularly young adults, tend to view online influencers as more genuine and relatable compared to traditional celebrities. This perception enhances the effectiveness of influencer endorsements, especially for brands aiming to connect with younger demographics and promote low-involvement products (Li & Chan, 2024; Norazman et al., 2023).

Another notable trend is the rise of micro-influencers. These individuals are often seen as more accessible and relatable, fostering a strong connection with their audience. This connection can lead to higher engagement rates and a greater influence on consumers' purchasing decisions (Chen et al., 2024; Tiautrakul & Jindakul, 2019). As brands seek to maximize their impact, the strategic use of micro-influencers is becoming increasingly popular. In addition to these trends, there is a growing recognition of the need for regulatory frameworks surrounding influencer marketing in Malaysia. Clearer regulations are essential, particularly regarding the disclosure of material connections between influencers and brands. Such measures are crucial for maintaining transparency and building trust in influencer marketing practices (Nawi & Faizol, 2021).

The credibility of influencers also plays a vital role in the success of marketing campaigns. Factors such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise significantly influence the effectiveness of influencer endorsements, especially in industries like cosmetics, where credibility can greatly affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. However, the current landscape has become increasingly complex due to rapid shifts in social media platforms, evolving consumer preferences, and growing skepticism toward online endorsements.

The rise of micro-influencers and changing influencer dynamics create uncertainty about the relevance of traditional celebrity vs. micro-celebrity influencers in shaping purchase intentions. With consumers becoming more critical of mass marketing, they now seek authenticity, and brands are left questioning which type of influencer (celebrity or micro-celebrity) truly drives purchase behavior. Next, the importance of brand familiarity in influencing consumer decision-making remains under-researched in the context of influencer marketing. As more consumers interact with brands through influencers, understanding how prior knowledge or familiarity with a brand affects their purchasing decisions is crucial for companies to maximize marketing ROI. Transparency in influencer marketing is increasingly demanded by consumers, with a focus on sponsorship disclosure.

Yet, its true impact on consumer behaviour is not fully understood. Does transparency enhance trust and lead to higher purchase intention, or does it diminish the authenticity of influencer endorsements? Addressing this ambiguity is vital to developing ethical and effective influencer strategies. The role of an influencer's expertise in building consumer trust and encouraging purchases is also worth investigating further. While influencers are often perceived as experts, there is limited understanding of how their actual expertise affects the credibility of their recommendations and, subsequently, consumers' purchase intentions. Trustworthiness remains a critical factor in online transactions, yet there is a gap in understanding how an influencer's perceived trustworthiness translates into purchase intention.

With the rise of social commerce and the blending of social media with e-commerce, identifying how trust impacts the effectiveness of influencer marketing can guide brands to foster deeper, more reliable connections with consumers. Given these challenges, it is imperative to reassess and understand how these key factors, influencer type, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, expertise, and trustworthiness affect consumer purchase intentions today. Failing to address these issues could result in ineffective influencer marketing strategies, leading to wasted resources and missed opportunities for consumer engagement and brand loyalty. As brands continue to invest in influencer marketing, there is a pressing need to re-evaluate how these key aspects influence purchase intentions today. This research aims to fill that gap by providing updated insights, helping brands craft more effective and targeted marketing strategies in the current dynamic landscape.

## Research Objectives

1. To study whether there is a relationship between influencer type and consumers' purchase intention.

2. To study whether there is a relationship between brand familiarity and consumers' purchase intention.

3. To study whether there is a relationship between sponsorship disclosure and consumers' purchase intention.

4. To study whether there is a relationship between influencer's expertise and consumers' purchase intention.

5. To study whether there is a relationship between trustworthiness and consumers' purchase intention.

6. To study whether influencer type, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, influencer's expertise and trustworthiness has a predictive power on consumer's purchase intention.

By examining factors such as the relationship between influencer type and the likelihood of purchase, this study can guide businesses in selecting the most suitable influencers to promote their brands. The practical insights from this research enable businesses to leverage influencer marketing to enhance brand recognition, foster consumer trust, and ultimately drive growth. Incorporating these findings into marketing plans can result in better customer engagement and overall business success.

Through analyzing the relationship between independent variables—such as influencer type, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, trustworthiness, and expertise—and purchase intentions, this research extends existing theories. It explores how these factors might influence

attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, ultimately shaping consumer behaviour. For instance, it examines how different types of influencers, from traditional celebrities to micro-influencers, impact consumer attitudes and subjective norms, which then influence purchase decisions. It also investigates how sponsorship disclosure and trustworthiness affect perceived control over purchasing behaviour.

## Literature Review

Influencer marketing is defined as a marketing strategy that leverages key leaders to communicate a brand's message to a broader audience (Kashif, Rasool, & Khan, 2021). Influencers, who possess a strong personal brand and are akin to opinion leaders, are utilized by brands to enhance product and brand awareness, as they are perceived as trustworthy (Evans, Wojdynski, & Grubbs Hoy, 2019). Furthermore, Lou and Yuan (2019) explore the relationship between message value, credibility, and customer trust in branded social media content. Their findings indicate that a trustworthy source amplifies the impact of message value on trust, highlighting the importance of the influencer's perceived authority. The authors recommend that brands carefully select and manage their relationships with influencers to ensure alignment with the brand's core values and messaging.

### Consumer's Purchase Intention and Influencer Type

Traditional celebrities have been integral to advertising due to their recognition and credibility, which enhance brand awareness and consumer engagement (Guan & Li, 2021). Their endorsements can positively shape consumer perceptions, fostering trust in the promoted products. However, risks such as negative publicity and skepticism about the authenticity of endorsements exist. The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is influenced by the alignment between the celebrity's image and the brand, as well as the celebrity's genuine involvement in the campaign.This research aims to expand on existing literature by comparing traditional celebrities and micro-celebrities in influencer marketing. It will investigate psychological factors like regulatory focus and perceived authenticity that affect consumer purchase intentions. Previous studies (Ren, Lee, & Chun, 2023; Zhang, Wang, & Ariffin, 2024) indicate that while traditional celebrities maintain broad appeal, micro-celebrities may provide more authentic engagement for niche markets. The decision to use either type of influencer should align with campaign goals, target audience, and desired engagement levels. Ultimately, this research seeks to enhance understanding of influencer marketing by analyzing the unique roles and effectiveness of traditional celebrities versus micro-celebrities, guiding marketers in optimizing their strategies to influence consumer behavior.

### Consumer's Purchase Intention vs Brand Familiarity

Loebnitz and Grunert (2022) investigate the interplay between perceived brand authenticity and advertising imagery on consumer purchase intentions, particularly within the food sector. They assert that while brand authenticity is essential, its effect is amplified when combined with authentic advertising images. The authors differentiate between perceived brand authenticity and brand familiarity, noting that a brand can be familiar without being perceived as authentic. Their study employs the Selective Accessibility Model (SAM) to demonstrate that the perceived similarity between a consumer's situation and the advertisement mediates the relationship between authenticity and purchase intentions. Furthermore, they identify role overload as a moderating factor, indicating that the influence of authenticity is contingent on overall brand evaluation and consumer context, providing insights for food brand marketers on the effective

use of authentic imagery (Loebnitz & Grunert, 2022). Rhee and Jung (2019) support the notion that brand familiarity significantly affects consumer behavior, particularly in how consumers respond to advertising. They argue that brand familiarity enhances consumer attitudes toward both the advertisement and the brand, while also moderating the relationship between these attitudes. Their findings suggest that consumers' previous experiences with a brand allow them to process advertisements with less cognitive effort, making familiar brands more engaging. However, they caution that for familiar brands, the emotional response to an advertisement may have a diminished effect on brand attitude due to pre-existing strong beliefs about the brand. This highlights the necessity for advertisers to cultivate brand awareness and consider the implications of brand familiarity on advertising effectiveness (Rhee & Jung, 2019).

## Consumer's Purchase Intention vs Sponsorship Disclosure

De Cicco, Iacobucci, and Pagliaro (2021) investigated the effects of influencer-product fit and sponsorship disclosure prominence in Instagram advertising through a 2x2 experimental design. Their findings indicated that higher congruence between influencers and products positively influenced users' attitudes, credibility perceptions, and intentions to follow the influencer. However, they also noted that high congruence could lead to decreased ad recognition, complicating users' ability to differentiate between genuine endorsements and sponsored content. The study emphasized that prominent disclosures enhance sponsorship transparency, particularly when high congruence obscures ad recognition, and highlighted the mediating roles of ad recognition and sponsorship transparency in shaping user reactions to influencers.

In contrast, De Veirman and Hudders (2020) explored the impact of sponsorship disclosures in Instagram posts using a 4x2 experimental design with 414 participants. Their research examined how various material connections between influencers and brands, along with different message-sidedness, influenced consumer responses to sponsored posts. They found that sponsorship disclosures improved ad recognition but also led to increased ad skepticism, negatively affecting the influencer's credibility and brand attitudes. Interestingly, non-sponsorship disclosures, which clarify that a post is not sponsored, resulted in more favorable brand responses by reducing ad recognition and skepticism. The authors utilized established theories, such as the persuasion knowledge model and reactance theory, to interpret their results, concluding that while sponsorship disclosures aim to enhance transparency, they may inadvertently decrease advertisement effectiveness by fostering skepticism and diminishing trust in both the influencer and the brand.

## Consumer's Purchase Intention vs Influencer's Expertise

Zniva et al. (2023) highlight the significance of uniqueness and consistency in establishing influencer authenticity, which is crucial for influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Uniqueness, defined as an influencer's distinct personality and content, enhances perceived genuineness (Farivar & Wang, 2022), while consistency involves maintaining a reliable self-image and opinions that reinforce authenticity. Influencers who embody these traits are more likely to be viewed as authentic, positively impacting brand-related variables such as brand authenticity and consumer attitudes. The authors assert that influencer authenticity indirectly influences purchase intentions by enhancing brand authenticity and consumer perceptions (Zniva et al., 2023). This aligns with previous findings that authentic influencers can bolster brand credibility and consumer engagement (Lou & Yuan, 2019). As consumer skepticism towards sponsored content rises, Zniva et al. (2023) argue that the effectiveness of

influencers hinges on their perceived authenticity, suggesting that marketers should prioritize the promotion and maintenance of influencer authenticity to optimize marketing outcomes.

Huang et al. (2019) provide a framework for understanding influencer expertise, emphasizing the need to evaluate it through various dimensions such as content quality, follower engagement, perceived credibility, and overall impact. This comprehensive approach allows brands and marketers to better assess an influencer's authority and effectiveness, facilitating more strategic collaborations that enhance marketing efforts.

## Consumer's Purchase Intention vs Trustworthiness

The study investigates the relationship between consumer trust and the bandwagon effect in social commerce platforms, filling gaps in existing literature. It focuses on how social bonding and trusting beliefs—specifically benevolence, competence, and integrity—affect sellers' trustworthiness and consumers' purchase intentions. Gender differences in this relationship are also examined. Using structural equation modeling on a sample of 204 online consumers in India, the research finds that constructs of social presence, such as web interaction and the presence of others, significantly enhance trust. Additionally, the bandwagon effect is shown to be crucial in shaping purchase intentions, with social bonding further enhancing trustworthiness. This model offers insights for social commerce managers aiming to improve buyer-seller relationships and marketing strategies, thereby contributing to the understanding of trust in social commerce (Gefen, 2002).

Gefen (2002) emphasizes that trust is a multi-dimensional construct, comprising integrity, benevolence, and ability, each influencing consumer behavior differently. The study reveals that integrity and overall trust affect purchase intentions, while ability influences window-shopping behaviors. This nuanced approach to trust highlights the importance of evaluating the distinct effects of each trustworthiness dimension, enhancing our understanding of consumer trust in online environments.

## Consumer's Purchase Intention

Zhao, Li, and Gao (2024) examine how consumers' sense of presence affects their purchase intentions in the context of live marketing for fresh produce. Utilizing fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis, the study identifies four dimensions of sense of presence and eight influencing factors that together create seven pathways to enhance purchase intention. Similarly, Zhang and Hu (2024) investigate the role of user-generated content (UGC) in shaping consumer purchase intentions within live e-commerce environments. They introduce psychological ownership and communicative presence as mediators and find that the emotional quality of UGC and its interactions significantly boost purchase intentions. Lastly, Ali and Ahmed (2023) focus on consumer behavior towards global fast-food brands in Pakistan, analyzing how glocalization strategies impact purchase intentions through perceived brand globalness, authenticity, cultural capital, and materialism. Their findings suggest that these factors positively influence purchase intention, with cosmopolitanism acting as a moderator and global brand attitude and credibility serving as mediators in these relationships.

## Underlying Theory

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, offers a comprehensive model for understanding human behavior and decision-making processes. TPB posits that a person's attitudes toward a specific behavior are shaped by their beliefs about the

outcomes associated with that behavior. Additionally, subjective norms play a crucial role by reflecting the individual's perception of social pressure to either engage or abstain from the behavior. Moreover, perceived behavioral control, which considers both internal and external factors, involves the belief in one's ability to successfully carry out the behavior. By integrating cognitive factors, TPB provides a robust framework that enhances our understanding of the complexities of human behavior across various contexts and situations.
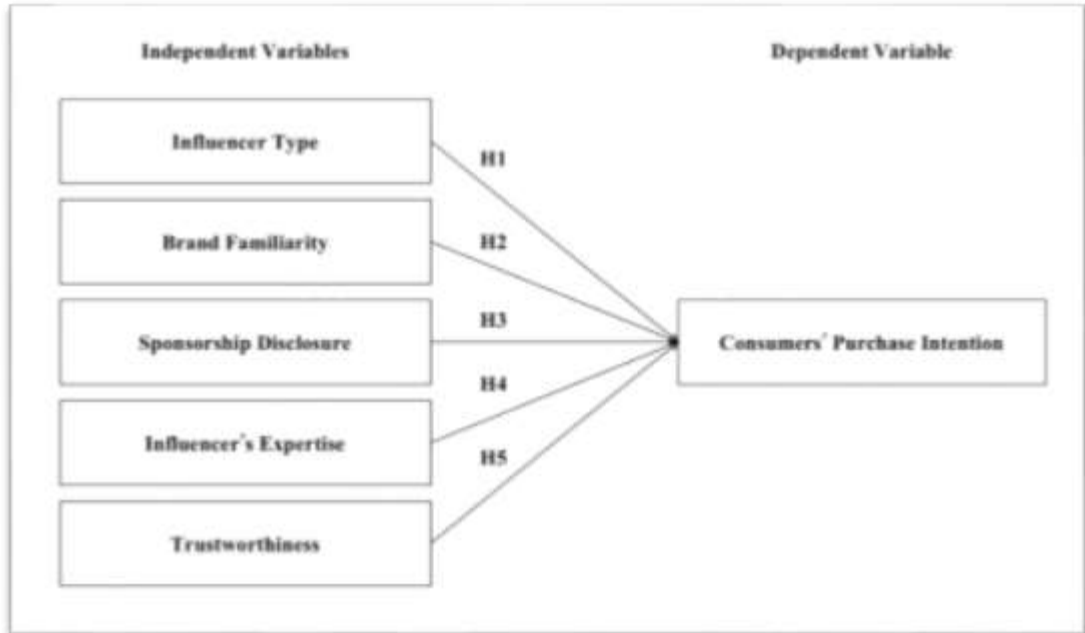
**Conceptual Framework**



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed for research

**Hypothesis Development**

Research by Choi et al. (2020) reveals that micro-celebrities have a particularly strong impact on consumers' purchase intentions when it comes to niche products. Consumers view micro-celebrities as experts in their specialized fields, valuing their advice highly, which in turn positively influences their intention to purchase. The authority and expertise associated with micro-celebrities make them particularly effective in driving consumer behavior within niche markets, where their recommendations carry significant weight and credibility. Consequently, businesses can strategically leverage the influence of micro-celebrities to target specific, passionate consumer segments, fostering stronger connections and driving higher conversion rates for niche products. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Micro-celebrities will have a significant relationship on consumers' purchase intentions compared to traditional celebrities.

Additionally, Jabeen & Akhtar (2022) research highlights the substantial impact of brand familiarity on consumers' perceptions of value, which in turn significantly influences their purchase intentions. The study demonstrates that consumers are more likely to make purchases from well-known companies due to the confidence and sense of security instilled by familiar brands. The perceived value associated with established brands creates a favorable environment for consumers, motivating them to engage in purchase behavior with the belief that they are investing in a reliable and reputable product or service. This positive association with brand familiarity fosters a strong sense of trust and assurance, leading consumers to make purchase decisions with greater confidence, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of these brands in the marketplace. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a significant relationship between brand familiarity and consumers' purchase intention.

According to Jung and Heo (2019) research, sponsorship disclosure has the potential to increase customers' purchase intentions; nevertheless, its efficacy is contingent upon its lucidity and succinctness. According to the study, customers were more inclined to believe an influencer's endorsement as genuine when it was made obvious and readily available, which increased the possibility that they would make a purchase. Conversely, customers lost faith in the endorsement and were less likely to make a purchase if the disclaimer was unclear or hard to find. For influencer marketing to continue to be beneficial and to retain consumer trust, it is imperative that sponsorship disclosure be clear and prominent. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and consumers' purchase intention.

Additionally, Duan and Zhang study from 2021 provided insightful information about the beneficial affect that consumers' perceptions of influencers' competence have on their intentions to make purchases, particularly for those who have little prior product knowledge. The findings of the study indicate that when it comes to making judgments about what to buy, customers frequently turn to knowledgeable influencers for insightful guidance and suggestions. It is especially important for consumers who have little prior information about the items or services in question to rely on the experience of influencers. In these situations, the advice of knowledgeable influencers is more weighted and favorably affects customers' sentiments and purchasing intentions. Brands may help less-informed consumers by working with educated influencers to close the information gap. This builds credibility and trust, which increases the possibility that consumers will interact with the recommended goods and services and, eventually, make wise purchasing decisions. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a significant relationship between influencer's expertise and consumers' purchase intention.

A thorough analysis of the literature was done by Hussain, Al Nasser, and Hussain (2017) to look into how trustworthiness plays a part in e-commerce consumption. After looking at a number of research studies, the study concluded that there was a significant relationship between customer purchase intention and trustworthiness. Customers are more likely to buy products from brands they believe to be reliable. The survey also emphasized important elements including website design, security, privacy, and customer support that affect how trustworthy e-

commerce is. A key component of e-commerce success has been building consumer trust, suggesting that firms should give increasing priority to enhancing trustworthiness in order to boost sales and survive in the cutthroat online marketplace. Businesses may strengthen their relationships with clients and foster more loyalty and long-term growth in the digital space by addressing these trust-related elements. Based on this understanding, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: There is a significant relationship between trustworthiness and consumers' purchase intention.

## Research Methodology

The current study employs a quantitative research design to systematically investigate the impact of influencer marketing on consumers' purchase intentions, utilizing a structured questionnaire for data collection. The research philosophy is grounded in positivism, emphasizing empirical data and objective analysis. A deductive approach is adopted to test hypotheses derived from existing literature, while a correlational research strategy is used to explore relationships between variables without direct manipulation. The target population consists of Malaysian consumers who frequently use social media for online shopping, with convenience sampling employed to select participants. A sample size of 384 is determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method to ensure statistical representativeness.

Data collection focuses on primary data through a questionnaire divided into demographic information and 30 questions assessing independent and dependent variables related to purchase intentions, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale for responses. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS software, incorporating descriptive analysis, reliability testing (using Cronbach's Alpha), and inferential analytics, including Pearson's correlation and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. This comprehensive methodology allows for a robust examination of how various factors, such as influencer type and trustworthiness, influence consumer behavior in the context of influencer marketing.

## Findings

This section will analyze the data collected from respondents regarding different demographic aspects, including their exposure to influencer marketing, gender, age, ethnicity, educational attainment, monthly income, and marital status.

| Variable | Category | Total number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 215 | 60.73% |
| | Male | 138 | 38.98% |
| | Prefer not to specify | 1 | 0.28% |
| | Total | 354 | 100.00% |
| **Age** | Below 20 | 33 | 9.32% |
| | 21-25 years old | 110 | 31.07% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 26-30 years old | 121 | 34.18% |
| | 31-35 years old | 59 | 16.67% |
| | 36-40 years old | 14 | 3.95% |
| | > 40 years old | 17 | 4.80% |
| | Total | 354 | 100.00% |
| **Race** | Chinese | 83 | 23.45% |
| | India | 131 | 37.01% |
| | Malay | 134 | 37.85% |
| | Others | 6 | 1.69% |
| | Total | 354 | 100.00% |
| **Education Level** | No Formal Education | 2 | 0.56% |
| | Primary Education | 6 | 1.69% |
| | Secondary Education | 20 | 5.65% |
| | Cert | 1 | 0.28% |
| | Vocational or Technical Education | 9 | 2.54% |
| | Pre university | 1 | 0.28% |
| | Professional Studies | 1 | 0.28% |
| | Diploma | 74 | 20.90% |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 190 | 53.67% |
| | Master's Degree | 44 | 12.43% |
| | Doctoral Degree | 6 | 1.69% |
| | Total | 354 | 100.00% |
| **Monthly Income** | Less than RM 1,000 | 68 | 19.21% |
| | RM 1,001 to RM 3,000 | 54 | 15.25% |
| | RM 3,001 to RM 5,000 | 119 | 33.62% |
| | RM 5,001 to RM 7,000 | 72 | 20.34% |
| | RM 7,001 to RM 9,000 | 16 | 4.52% |
| | More than RM 9,000 | 25 | 7.06% |

|  | Total | 354 | 100.00% |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Marital Status** | Single (Never Married) | 252 | 71.19% |
|  | In a relationship | 1 | 0.28% |
|  | Married | 97 | 27.40% |
|  | Divorced | 3 | 0.85% |
|  | Widowed | 1 | 0.28% |
|  | Total | 354 | 100.00% |

Table 1: Statistics of the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Source: Own Development

From table 1, the survey comprised a total of 354 respondents, with a higher representation of females which is 215 respondents (60.73%) compared to males 138 respondents (38.98%). A small minority of 0.28 preferred not to specify their gender. This skew towards female participants may indicate a gender-related trend in the study's area of interest, or it might suggest a bias in survey accessibility or engagement.

Respondents were distributed across a wide age spectrum, with the majority aged 26-30 years old by 121 respondents (34.18%), followed by those aged 21-25 years old which is 110 respondents (31.07%). Older age groups had smaller representations, which is 17 respondents (4.80%) for aged above 40 and 14 respondents (3.95%) for aged between 36-40 years old. The youngest age group, below 20 years, made up of 33 respondents (9.32%). The data indicates a strong presence of younger adults in the sample, particularly those in their mid-20s to early 30s. This demographic may influence the results, especially if preferences or behaviors are age-sensitive.

The majority of respondents were identified as Malay which are 134 respondents (37.85%), followed closely by Indian with 131 respondents (37.01%), while Chinese with 83 respondents (23.45%) formed a smaller proportion. 6 respondents were categorized as "Others". The relatively even representation of Malays and Indians reflects a diverse participant pool, although the lower representation of Chinese respondents and other ethnicities might limit broader cultural generalizability.

A significant proportion of respondents hold a Bachelor's Degree which is 190 respondents (53.67%,), followed by Diploma holders which is 74 respondents (20.90%). Postgraduate qualifications were also notable, with Master's Degree holders accounting for 12.43% (44 respondents) and a Doctoral Degreeholders making up 1.69% (6 respondents). Minimal representation was seen for participants with no formal education (0.56%) or primary education (1.69%). The high educational qualifications of the respondents suggest a well-educated participant pool, which could impact the insights, especially if the study relates to knowledge-intensive topics.

Respondents displayed a varied income range, with the largest group earning RM 3,001 to RM 5,000 which is 119 respondents (33.62%), followed by RM 5,001 to RM 7,000 (20.34%, 72 respondents). Notably, 19.21% (68 respondents) earned less than RM 1,000, while 7.06% (25

respondents) earned more than RM 9,000. The data suggests a majority of middle-income earners, which could influence financial behaviors or preferences depending on the study context. The majority of respondents were single which is 252 respondents 71.19%, with 27.40% (97 respondents) identifying as married. The other categories such as in a relationship (0.28%), divorced (0.85%), and widowed (0.28%) had minimal representation. The dominance of single respondents aligns with the age distribution, as younger adults (21-30) typically have lower marriage rates.

**Reliability Test**

Reliability analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was conducted to assess the consistency and dependability of the independent and dependent variables in the research project. The analysis involved a total of 354 respondents.

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items | Range | Internal Consistency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Influencer Type** | 0.871 | 5 | $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ | Good |
| **Brand Familiarity** | 0.885 | 5 | $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ | Good |
| **Sponsorship Disclosure** | 0.834 | 5 | $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ | Good |
| **Influencer's Expertise** | 0.919 | 5 | $\alpha \geq 0.9$ | Excellent |
| **Trustworthiness** | 0.937 | 5 | $\alpha \geq 0.9$ | Excellent |
| **Consumer's Purchase Intention** | 0.854 | 5 | $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ | Good |

Table 2: Results of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Source: Own Development

As presented in Table 2, all five independent variables demonstrated a high level of reliability, each achieving a Cronbach's alpha value exceeding 0.80. Additionally, the dependent variable demonstrated strong reliability, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.854. These results confirm that all the variables are dependable and exhibit a satisfactory level of internal consistency.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that all the independent variables were measured using five items each. The calculated Cronbach's alpha values for influencer type, brand familiarity, sponsorship disclosure, influencer's expertise, and trustworthiness were 0.871, 0.885, 0.834,

0.919, and 0.937, respectively, signifying a very good level of reliability for each

variable.

| | | IV1 | IV2 | IV3 | IV4 | IV5 | DV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IV1** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .585** | .620** | .538** | .538** | .579** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | | 354 | 354 | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| **IV2** | Pearson Correlation | | 1 | .664** | .438** | .438** | .450** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | | | 354 | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| **IV3** | Pearson Correlation | | | 1 | .428** | .428** | .541** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | | | | 354 | 354 | 354 |
| **IV4** | Pearson Correlation | | | | 1 | 1.000** | .571** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | | | | | 354 | 354 |
| **IV5** | Pearson Correlation | | | | | | .571** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | 0.000 |
| | N | | | | | | 354 |

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Own development

In reference on Table 3., influencer type (IV1) demonstrates a positive correlation of 0.579 with consumers' purchase intention, indicating that as the influencer type becomes more prominent or relevant, there is a corresponding increase in consumers' likelihood to purchase. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.579 suggests a moderate relationship between these variables. Furthermore, the p-value, which is less than 0.001, is below the alpha threshold of 0.01, confirming that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Brand familiarity exhibits a positive correlation of 0.450 with consumers' purchase intention, suggesting that greater brand familiarity is associated with an increased likelihood of purchase. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.450 indicates a weak to moderate relationship. The p-value of less than 0.001 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Sponsorship disclosure shows a positive correlation of 0.541 with consumers' purchase intention, indicating that higher levels of disclosure are linked to increased purchase intentions. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.541 suggests a moderate relationship, with a p-value below 0.001, which signifies statistical significance at the 0.01 level.

Influencer expertise displays a positive correlation of 0.571 with consumers' purchase intention, meaning that greater expertise is associated with higher purchase intention. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.571 falls within the moderate range, and the p-value, less than 0.001, confirms this relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. Finally, trustworthiness also shows a positive correlation of 0.571 with consumers' purchase intention, indicating that increased trustworthiness is linked to greater purchase intention. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.571, this relationship is moderate, and the p-value below 0.001 signifies statistical significance at the 0.01 level.

## Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) is a statistical technique that assesses the relationship between a single dependent variable and multiple independent variables, enabling researchers to evaluate how each predictor contributes to the outcome. In this study, MRA is utilized to examine the impact of various aspects of influencer marketing which is Influencer Type, Brand Familiarity, Sponsorship Disclosure, Influencer Expertise, and Trustworthiness on consumers' purchase intentions.

To conduct this analysis, SmartPLS software, which specializes in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), was employed. SmartPLS not only enables the modeling of complex relationships but also accommodates latent variables (constructs that are measured indirectly through multiple indicators) and estimates the significance of each predictor using bootstrapping techniques. This approach allows for robust estimation of path coefficients, providing insights into the significance and strength of each independent variable's effect on consumer purchase intention in the context of influencer marketing(Figure 2).

Figure 2: PLS-SEM Path Model

Source: Own development

| Independent Variable (IV) | Dependent Variable (DV) | Path Coefficient | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Influencer Type** | | 0.176 | 0.007 |
| **Brand Familiarity** | Consumer's Purchase Intention | 0.032 | 0.557 |
| **Sponsorship Disclosure** | | 0.267 | 0.000 |
| **Influencer Expertise** | | 0.048 | 0.516 |
| **Trustworthiness** | | 0.327 | 0.000 |

Table 4: PLS-SEM Path Model Summarise Results

Source: Own development

From table 4, Trustworthiness, Sponsorship Disclosure, and Influencer Type significantly impact Consumer's Purchase Intention, with Trustworthiness having the largest effect, followed by Sponsorship Disclosure. Brand Familiarity and Influencer Expertise do not significantly impact Consumer's Purchase Intention in this model, suggesting that familiarity with the brand or the perceived expertise of the influencer are less relevant in driving consumer purchases within your sample.

**Discussions, Conclusions and Implications**

| Hypothesis | Statement | Result |
|---|---|---|
| **H1** | Micro-celebrities will have a significant relationship on consumers' purchase intention compared to traditional celebrities. | Accept |
| **H2** | There is a significant relationship between brand familiarity and consumers' purchase intention. | Accept |
| **H3** | There is a significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and consumers' purchase intention. | Accept |
| **H4** | There is a significant relationship between influencer's expertise and consumers' purchase intention. | Accept |
| **H5** | There is a significant relationship between trustworthiness and consumers' purchase intention. | Accept |

Table 5: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Source: Own development

### RO 1: Influencer Type

Based on the literature review and analysis of the research findings, the hypothesis that micro-celebrities have a significant relationship with consumers' purchase intention, compared to traditional celebrities, is supported. The reviewed studies provide evidence that, while both traditional celebrities and micro-celebrities impact purchase intentions, micro-celebrities are increasingly influential due to their perceived authenticity and relatability.

Earlier research, such as Erdogan (1999), emphasized the benefits of traditional celebrity endorsements, citing increased brand recognition, credibility, and positive consumer attitudes as outcomes that drive purchase intentions. Traditional celebrities, with their widespread popularity and familiarity, have long been effective in creating consumer trust and promoting brands.

### RO 2: Brand Familiarity

Based on the literature review and analysis of research findings, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between brand familiarity and consumers' purchase intention is supported. Previous studies provide strong evidence that brand familiarity positively influences purchase intentions, as familiarity often enhances consumers' trust, reduces perceived risk, and makes the brand more appealing. This established relationship highlights the role of brand familiarity in shaping consumers' confidence in their purchasing choices.

Research by Hsu and Chang (2018) shows that familiar brands lower perceived risk and increase belief in product quality, especially for high-involvement products. This aligns with the notion

that familiarity builds trust, which is essential for consumers when they are making significant purchase decisions.

### RO 3: Sponsorship Disclosure

Based on the literature review and analysis of research findings, the hypothesis that sponsorship disclosure has a significant relationship with consumers' purchase intention is well-supported. Recent studies emphasize that transparent sponsorship disclosure can enhance trust in both the influencer and the brand, which positively impacts consumer attitudes and, ultimately, their intention to buy.

Research by Bu, Parkinson, and Thaichon (2022) highlights that clear sponsorship disclosure fosters a sense of authenticity, increasing consumers' trust in both the influencer and the sponsoring brand. Their study suggests that when consumers are aware of the sponsorship arrangement, they tend to view the influencer's endorsement as more genuine, which strengthens their engagement and boosts purchase intentions. This aligns with the idea that transparency in influencer marketing builds credibility, making consumers feel that they can make more informed choices.

### RO 4: Influencer's Expertise

Based on the literature review and the analysis of research findings, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between influencers' expertise and consumers' purchase intention is strongly supported. Recent studies emphasize that influencers perceived as experts in their fields are more effective in positively shaping consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions. Jin and Phua (2018) explored the impact of influencers' perceived expertise on consumer attitudes and buying intentions. They found that consumers respond favorably to influencers they view as knowledgeable, resulting in higher purchase intentions. This implies that consumers place greater trust in influencers who display competence and expertise, as it strengthens the influencer's credibility. When consumers perceive influencers as authorities, they value their recommendations as reliable, making them more likely to follow their advice in purchase decisions.

### RO 5: Trustworthiness

Based on the literature review and analysis of research findings, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between trustworthiness and consumers' purchase intention is supported. Trustworthiness has consistently been identified as a fundamental factor in consumer behavior, with many studies demonstrating that a brand's trustworthiness significantly impacts a consumer's willingness to make a purchase. Park, Kim, and Chung's (2019) study in online brand communities found that trust in a brand, alongside perceived risk reduction, strongly influenced consumers' purchase intentions. Their results indicated that consumers are more likely to make purchases from brands they deem trustworthy and low-risk. This is because trust reduces uncertainty, making consumers feel more secure in their decisions. Similarly, Xu, Liu, and Wang (2021) highlighted the importance of trust in the sharing economy, demonstrating that brand trust positively affects purchase intentions by alleviating perceived risk. In this context, trust acts as a vital mechanism that builds consumer confidence, even in transactions involving unfamiliar brands or products.

**Significant**

In summary, the Pls-sem analysis demonstrated that influencer type, sponsorship disclosure, and trustworthiness are critical drivers of purchase intention, while brand familiarity and influencer expertise, though important, lack sufficient standalone predictive strength. These findings offer practical insights for marketers, suggesting that campaigns should focus on fostering trust and authenticity while carefully selecting influencers whose characteristics align with consumer preferences.

## Implications

The findings of this study provide valuable practical implications for marketers and professionals in the field of influencer marketing. While the PLS-SEM Path Model revealed that influencer type, sponsorship disclosure and trustworthiness are significant predictors of consumers' purchase intentions, the other variables, brand familiarity and influencer expertise, though not predictive, should not be dismissed. These factors still play a role in shaping consumer perceptions and can enhance the overall impact of influencer marketing strategies when considered holistically.

The significant influence of influencer type underscores the importance of selecting the right kind of influencer for marketing campaigns. Micro-celebrities, in particular, resonate more with consumers due to their perceived authenticity, relatability, and niche appeal. Marketers should prioritize collaborating with micro-celebrities when targeting specific consumer segments, as this approach can foster stronger connections and drive purchase intentions effectively. In summary, this study highlights the significant roles of influencer type, sponsorship disclosure, and trustworthiness in predicting consumers' purchase intentions. however, brand familiarity and influencer expertise remain relevant considerations. by adopting a comprehensive approach that incorporates all these factors, marketers can design more impactful influencer marketing strategies, build stronger consumer connections, and drive purchase intentions more effectively.

## Theoretical Implication

This study offers valuable theoretical implications through the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), providing a deeper understanding of how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence consumers' purchase intentions in the context of influencer marketing. The TPB posits that individuals' intentions to engage in a behavior are shaped by these three components, and the findings of this study align well with this framework, shedding light on the nuanced roles of different influencer marketing factors.

## Limitations

During the research process, several limitations and constraints were encountered, which may influence the interpretation and generalizability of the findings. One of the primary limitations of this study was the time constraint imposed on the research process. Conducting a cross-sectional study within a limited timeframe restricted the depth of the investigation. This limitation may have affected the comprehensiveness of the data collection and analysis, potentially influencing the reliability of the findings. Additionally, convenience sampling, which was employed due to time limitations, may have introduced selection bias, limiting the representativeness of the sample. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the diverse range of consumer behaviors and attitudes toward influencer marketing.

**Recommendations**

This study provides valuable insights into the impact of influencer marketing on consumers' purchase intentions, but it also highlights several areas where future research can build on these findings to deepen understanding and improve the applicability of the results. Future research should aim to expand the geographic and cultural scope of the study to enhance the generalizability of the findings. This study was conducted exclusively in Malaysia, and while it offers insights specific to the region, consumer behavior is often influenced by cultural norms and market dynamics that vary across different countries. Comparative studies across diverse cultural and geographic contexts could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how influencer marketing strategies affect purchase intentions worldwide. This would enable marketers to design culturally sensitive campaigns tailored to different consumer preferences and behaviors.

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