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The Mediating Effect of Information Adoption on The Association between Social Media Influencer Information Credibility and Purchase Intention

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Abstract

As social media continues to gain popularity, people are increasingly turning to various social media websites to engage with one another and exchange information. Consequently, the flow of information has shifted from a one-direction communication process to interactive communication in which people exchange and obtain information from various online platforms. The primary purpose of this study is to examine the mediating effect of information adoption on the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention. An online questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was made available to respondents by sharing a link to a Google Form across several social media sites, including Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp. Responses from 384 respondents were used for further analysis. The results revealed that information credibility significantly influenced information adoption, and information adoption significantly influenced purchase intention. Further, information adoption partially mediated the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention. Results of the study imply that social media influencers must provide credible information to convince customers to adopt the information, thus influencing their purchase intention.

Keywords: Information Adoption, Information Credibility, Purchase Intention, Social Media Influencer

Introduction

As a direct result of the increase in internet usage and development of new technologies, consumers are being flooded with an overwhelming amount of information regarding the goods and services available in the marketplace. Due to the proliferation of online discussions that have been made possible by the internet, consumers can now share information with a vast number of people within a short amount of time. Consumers' feedback is considered to be a part of user-generated content. Consumers publish their experiences on the internet so that others, including prospective purchasers, can read about and gain knowledge from those encounters (Bahtar & Muda, 2016). With the growth of social media, consumers are increasingly turning to social media websites to communicate with one

another and share information (Dimitriu & Guesalaga, 2017). Consequently, the flow of information has transformed from a communication process with only one direction to an interactive one in which people share and obtain information from various online platforms (Dahl et al., 2019). User-generated content refers to the sharing of customers' experiences that is not paid for or controlled by businesses. User-generated content may be distributed online or offline, and it may not necessarily originate from any particular company (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). User-generated content related to brands is popular on social media platforms because users create and share their content to express their ideas and feelings, satisfy themselves, gain new knowledge, or engage in social interaction with other users (Davicik et al., 2022). In this sense, influencer marketing may be regarded as using social media strategy that encourages customers to produce original content (Ghosh, 2021).

However, inaccurate and misleading information affects the amount of information that consumers adopt, and this scenario drives them to evaluate the credibility of the information they receive (Jiang et al., 2021). Consumers' trust in user-generated content, which includes product review videos or online postings, as a source of information to assist them in making purchasing decisions can be strengthened by making information credible (Rahim et al., 2015). From customers' point of view, the information provided by social media influencers is more credible than the information provided by celebrity endorsers (Schouten et al., 2020). However, despite the increased attention given to influencer marketing, relatively few studies have investigated influencers' total impact on consumer behaviour (Pick, 2020). Customers are more open to the recommendations shared by influencers because the influencers are perceived to have first-hand experience with the product or service that consumers are considering purchasing. The credibility of information is a factor that affects a consumer's willingness to adopt information (Daowd et al., 2020; Tien et al., 2018) and their purchase intention (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In addition, information adoption may have a beneficial influence on the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention.

Literature Review

Information Credibility

In today's social media world, that is characterised by an abundance of information, it may not be easy to establish the credibility of a message (Ali et al., 2022). Consumers are able to post and express their opinions regarding certain products or services in the digital context without revealing their genuine identities. The flexibility to publish and express opinions is essentially unrestricted. It is common knowledge among marketers that credibility is an essential factor in marketing (Dwivedi et al., 2018). One of the most important aspects to consider when determining the credibility of information is where that information came from (Aladhadh et al., 2019). Users rely on the information provided by credible sources and anticipate that the sources with the highest credibility will have more compelling arguments regarding the products or services. They believe that the sources with the highest credibility will be more knowledgeable (Yin et al., 2018). The receiver of information is responsible for determining the credibility and significance of the information received before deciding to adopt the information. Customers are more likely to believe the information received from a credible source as opposed to one that is not reliable. Accordingly, research on the topic of electronic word of mouth suggests that the credibility of information is an essential component in convincing consumers to adopt the information (Daowd et al., 2020; Tien et al., 2018). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

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

Information Adoption

The development of the internet and the proliferation of social media platforms have made it possible for consumers to base their purchasing decisions on information obtained mainly from a vast number of reviews written by other users. The adoption of information is voluntary when it comes to the information found in internet reviews (Cheung et al., 2008). The objective of the information adoption model is to understand better people's expectations on how they would use the acquired knowledge. The adoption of information can be described as the extent to which those who receive information create the intention to adopt the ideas expressed in the information they obtained throughout the information transfer process (Luo et al., 2019). The curiosity of consumers who are eager to compile the good comments discovered on social networking sites for their reference is stimulated by the reviews made by other users (Chih et al., 2020). When customers need to obtain further knowledge about a product, they will look for it within the online community that supports that particular product. Information adoption is an important component that cannot be ignored when analysing the psychology of customers and the information processing they undertake in relation to user-generated content and their consumption goals. Consumers' adoption of the information available on social media platforms influences their purchasing intentions (Daowd et al., 2020; Erkan & Evans, 2016). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H2: Information adoption has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention.

Users will seek assistance from the online community whenever they have more questions regarding a product they intend to purchase. A consumer's intentional plan to acquire a product is described as purchasing intention that follows an individual process and incorporates both evaluative and normative evaluations (Visentin et al., 2019). In determining if consumers would be motivated to make a purchase, it is also possible to examine their attitude towards a particular product (Cheah et al., 2015). Before making any purchasing decision, customers might first consider the viewpoints and comments of other users. If the information provided is valuable to the customers, it will positively influence their intention to make a purchase (Alalwan, 2018). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H3: Information adoption mediate the relationship between information credibility and purchase intention

Data Collection

In this study, the researchers used a combination of snowball and purposive sampling techniques. The survey respondents were Malaysian women between the ages of 18 and 56 who had watched the cosmetic product reviews posted by beauty influencers on YouTube. Data were collected through an online questionnaire made available to the respondents via a Google Form. The Google Form link was shared across various social media platforms, including Facebook, Telegram, and WhatsApp. The link to the online survey was open for responses for 3 months in this cross-sectional study. Participants who gave their consent were asked to fill out the self-administered questionnaire. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. Responses from 384 respondents were used for further analysis. IBM-SPSS-AMOS 24 Structural Equation Modelling was used to test the hypotheses of the study.

Findings and Discussion

Normality

This study examined the normality of the data by using the statistical method of skewness and kurtosis, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). An analysis was carried out using AMOS version 24 to evaluate whether the data were normal. For a sample size that is more than 200, it is advisable to use skewness values that fall between -1.5 and +1.5 (Abdul-Rahim et al., 2022; Awang et al., 2018). The kurtosis's crucial region value is lower than 7.0 (Awang, 2015). Data are considered to have a normal distribution when both the skewness and the kurtosis values are within the acceptable range. The findings of this study's skewness and kurtosis analyses are presented in Table 1 below. The values for skewness ranged from -0.949 to -0.347, and the critical region values for kurtosis were from -1.987 to 3.513, indicating that the data followed a normal distribution.

Table 1

Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
IC 1	3	7	-0.636	-5.088	-0.013	-0.053
IC 2	2	7	-0.669	-5.354	-0.127	-0.510
IC 3	3	7	-0.665	-5.321	-0.032	-0.128
IC 4	2	7	-0.949	-7.594	0.878	3.513
IA 1	4	7	-0.495	-3.964	-0.364	-1.454
IA 2	4	7	-0.347	-2.777	-0.497	-1.987
IA 3	4	7	-0.409	-3.269	-0.466	-1.862
IA 4	4	7	-0.514	-4.114	-0.184	-0.736
PI 1	3	7	-0.808	-6.462	0.415	1.658
PI 2	3	7	-0.591	-4.731	0.093	0.374
PI 3	3	7	-0.715	-5.722	0.300	1.199
Multivariate					44.725	25.912

Result of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Procedure

In the current study, convergent validity and discriminant validity were used to examine the measurement model in order to determine the level of validity of the constructs. Convergent validity was investigated by computing the factor loading, which must be more than or equal to .60 (Awang, 2015; Hair et al., 2010). The next step was determining composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE), which must be at least .60 and more than .50, respectively (Abdul-Rahim et al., 2022; Awang, 2015).

Table 2
Convergent Validity

Variable	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Information Credibility	0.822 0.841 0.729 0.844	0.657	0.884
Information Adoption	0.768 0.708 0.776 0.778	0.575	0.844
Purchase Intention	0.833 0.830 0.746	0.646	0.845

The data in Table 2 shows that this investigation effectively met all of the requirements. This is evidenced by the factor loadings that were larger than .60, AVE values that were greater than .50, and CR values that exceeded .60.

Table 3
Discriminant Validity

	Information Credibility	Information Adoption	Purchase Intention
Information Credibility	0.811		
Information Adoption	0.705	0.758	
Purchase Intention	0.721	0.737	0.804

The square of AVE for the relevant construct should be bigger than the correlations between the components in order to establish discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings in Table 3 show that the square root of AVE was not greater than any of the pair-wise construct correlation values, demonstrating that the discriminant validity criterion was satisfied.

Result of SEM Path Analysis

The SEM method was employed to analyse the structural model's parameters in order to validate the proposed hypotheses. The structural model made use of path analysis to investigate whether or not there was a direct influence.

Three criteria of model fit need to be satisfied before the estimated models may be considered valid: absolute fit measures, incremental fit measures, and parsimonious fit measures. According to the three different categories of model fit criteria, the following

indices are the most commonly cited in research that analyses model fit: root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) < .08, comparative fit index (CFI) > .9, and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > .09 and chi-square (df) < 5.0 (Awang, 2015).

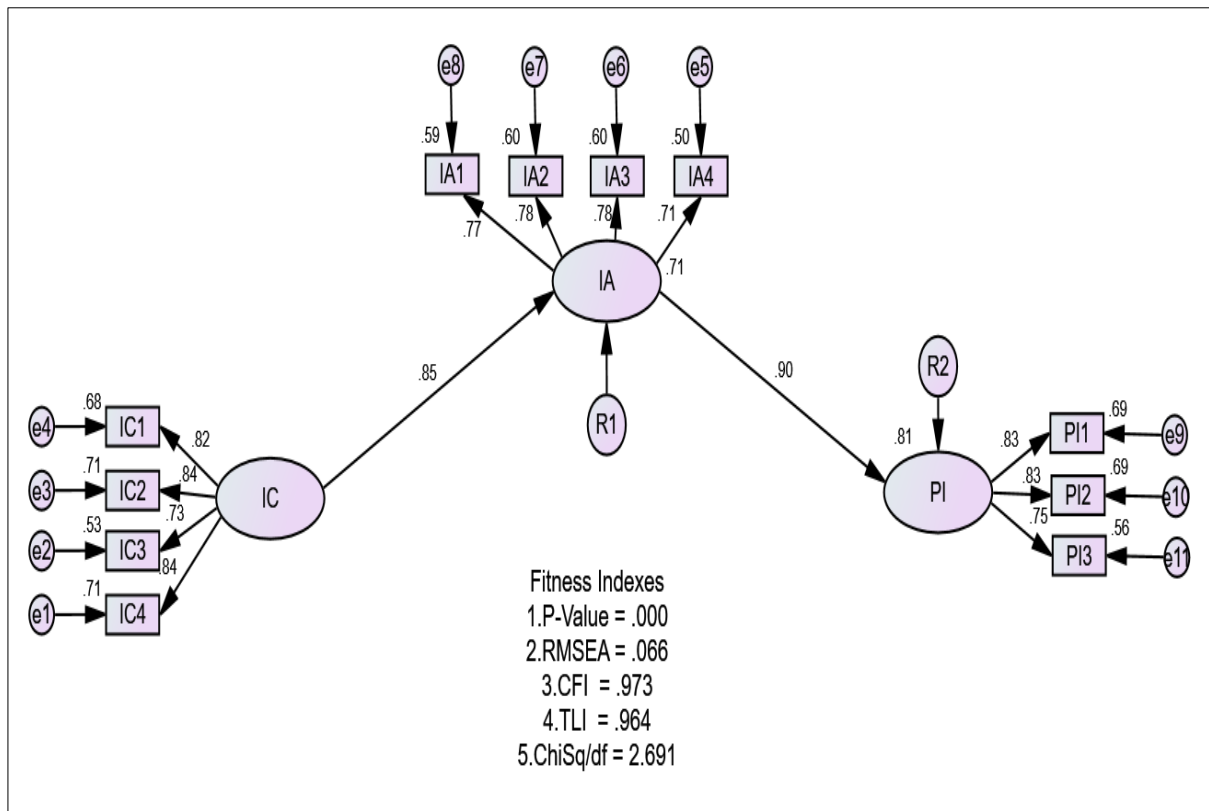


Figure 1. Standardized path coefficient

Figure 1 depicts the findings of this study’s path analysis. All of the fitness indexes were adequate for all three model fit categories, where RMSEA = .066, CFI = .973, TLI = .964, and ChiSq/df = 2.691.

For the relationship between information credibility and information adoption, the R2 value of .71 indicated that 71% of the variability in information credibility was explained by information adoption. For the relationship between information adoption and purchase intention, the R2 value of .81 indicated that 81% of the variability in information adoption was explained by purchase intention. The R2 values for this model provide strong evidence supporting the hypotheses; thus, the regression model is accepted.

Table 4

Path regression coefficient and its significance

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Information Adoption <--- Information Credibility	0.565	0.039	14.547	***	Significant
Purchase Intention <--- Information Adoption	1.094	0.072	15.127	***	Significant

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that hypotheses 1 and hypotheses 2 were accepted. Information credibility had a substantial influence ($p = .000$) on information

adoption, and information adoption had a significant influence ($p = 0.000$) on consumer purchase intention.

Result of SEM Path Analysis on The Mediating Effect of Information Adoption

Within the scope of this study, information adoption was conceptualised as a potential mediator between information credibility and purchase intention. The graphical representation of the findings is presented in Figure 2.

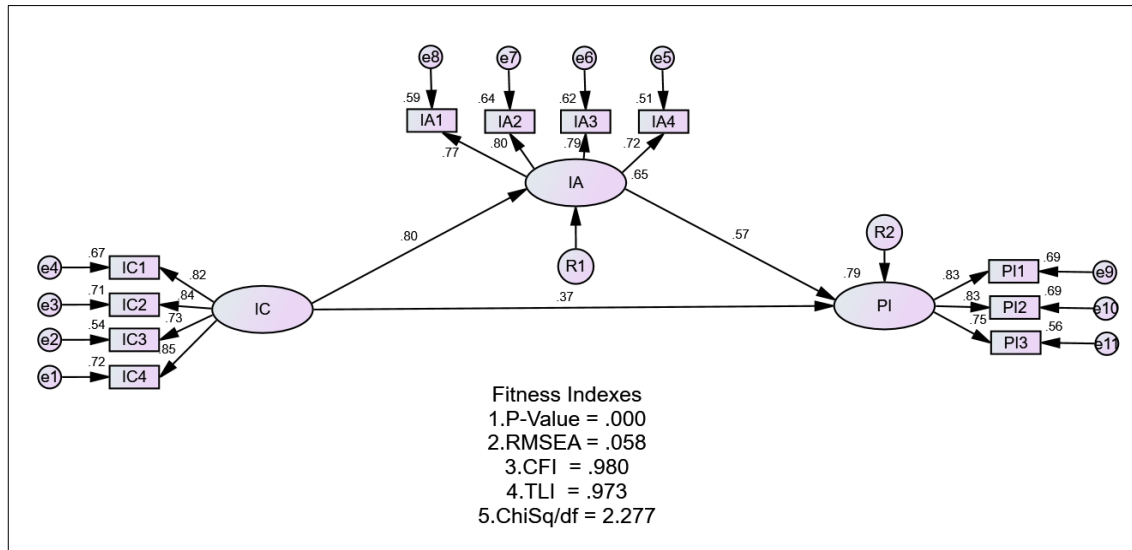


Figure 2. Path coefficients with a mediator

The output, which can be found in table 5, demonstrates the direct influence the constructs have on one another. As the findings show, there was a significant relationship between information credibility and information adoption, information adoption and purchase intention, and information credibility and purchase intention. Therefore, information adoption served as a partial mediator for the indirect relationship between information credibility and purchase intention.

Table 5

Path regression coefficient and its significance for mediation analysis

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Information Adoption <--- Information Credibility	0.538	0.039	13.778	***	Significant
Purchase Intention <--- Information Adoption	0.686	0.099	6.921	***	Significant
Purchase Intention <--- Information Credibility	0.299	0.062	4.793	***	Significant

The results of the conventional mediation test were validated via a resampling method known as bootstrapping technique. This was done to ensure the reliability of the findings.

Table 6
Summary of the bootstrapping analysis

	Indirect Effects	Direct Effects
Bootstrapping Result	0.455	0.368
Bootstrapping P-Value	0.002	0.001
Test Results	Significant	Significant
Type of Mediation	Partial Mediation	

Table 6 presents the results of the bootstrapping technique carried out with a total of 1000 bootstrap samples, with the bias correction set at 95 percent (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). The findings confirmed that the direct influence of information credibility on information adoption, information adoption on purchase intention, and information credibility on purchase intention were all significant. Therefore hypothesis 3 were accepted.

Conclusion

Nowadays, almost anyone can publish and share content on social media. The progress of technology, made possible by the explosive growth of the internet, has led to the creation of user-generated content. User-generated content is the result of users collaborating and sharing their ideas online. User-generated content, such as the reviews provided by social media influencers, is more convincing, and customers view influencers as the source of information with the least amount of bias as compared to other sources such as marketers.

Consumers have developed the perception that communication based on user-generated content is reliable, to the point where they acknowledge the recommendations as being an accurate picture of reality. The communicators of online communication affect the credibility of the messages, which in turn cause changes in customer behaviour. If the information provided can be relied upon, then the receiver will view the source as credible. Information adoption, which affects a customer's propensity to make a purchase, is encouraged by higher levels of information credibility (Tien et al., 2018). However, the influence of social media influencers' information credibility on consumers' purchase intention is partially mediated by consumers' information adoption. Therefore, when customers believe that the information they receive originates from a credible source, they are more likely to be willing to adopt the information provided by the influencer. In addition, customers are more likely to purchase a product or service when they are inclined to take the advice of the influencer and follow their recommendations.

As the endorsement from a social media influencer boosts customers' engagement with a product or service, this type of endorsement is an effective tool for marketers. Therefore, marketing professionals and social media influencers must be mindful of how followers perceive the information in user-generated content as a credible source of information. The results of this study add to the growing body of knowledge on social media marketing by demonstrating the critical connections between female consumers' trust in social media influencers, adoption of information, and intention to make purchases.

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