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To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i7/17461 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i7/17461

Received: *15* May 2023, ***Revised:*** *17* June 2023, ***Accepted:*** *27* June 2023

Published Online: *18* July 2023

In-Text Citation: (Mohamed & Jaafar, 2023)

To Cite this Article: Mohamed, N. N., & Jaafar, N. (2023). Developing and Validating the Measurement Model for Social Media Influencer Attributes Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *13*(7), 1887 – 1902.

Vol. 13, No. 7, 2023, Pg. 1887 – 1902

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Developing and Validating the Measurement Model for Social Media Influencer Attributes Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis

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Abstract
Consumers tend to pay attention to the information shared by influencers due to the influencers' first-hand knowledge of products or services. In Malaysia, consumers prefer to seek information from social media influencers since they rely more on the recommendations made by those influencers. The purpose of this study is to develop and validate the instruments for measuring the social media influencer attribute construct. Each of the respondents for this study must be a female between the ages of 18 and 56 and must have viewed a video on YouTube in which a beauty influencer gave her opinion on a cosmetic product. Hence, this study was divided into two parts. First, for the pilot study, this study used convenience and purposive sampling methods to select 100 respondents for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS. Next, this study used purposive and snowball sampling for the actual study to select 393 respondents for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) via IBM-SPSS-AMOS version 24. The findings showed that the social media influencer attribute construct measurement model fulfilled the requirements for construct validity and reliability, suggesting that it can be used in future research.
Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Social Media Influencer, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Introduction

The use of influencers in marketing has increased rapidly in recent years. The influencer marketing sector had a worth of $6.5 billion in 2019, with more than 100,000 influencers worldwide (Yıldırım, 2021). About 80% of all marketers across the world use social media influencers to promote their products and services to their target audiences (Dinh & Lee, 2021). Social media influencers are internet users who have gained a large number of followers as a result of their content development and distribution efforts across various social media platforms (Yuan & Lou, 2020). The significance of maintaining open lines of communication with customers has expanded dramatically due to the explosion of social media usage in recent years (Dinh & Lee, 2021). Social networking platforms have revolutionised users' ability to communicate with one another and share information over the internet. The internet and various social media platforms are the most often used

resources by customers looking for information regarding certain brands of goods or types of services (Dedeoglu, 2019).

Influencers on social media have positioned themselves as approachable experts in their fields, changing the way consumers engage with brands. In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of social media influencers, a trend that has been shown to have a substantial impact on the behaviour of consumers (Dinh & Lee, 2021). A growing number of young women are becoming well-known on social media, and this phenomenon has contributed to the exponential growth and immense profitability of the influencer industry in recent years (Hassan et al., 2021). The expenditures of organisations on online promotional operations are consistently and dynamically growing in unison with the ever-increasing extent of digital media consumption. In light of the changing market environment, where it is now more difficult than ever to advertise goods and services, businesses have started looking into alternative methods of persuading customers to make purchases. The idea of influencer marketing is steadily rising in popularity, elevating its status to that of the most important trends in the industry at the moment.

Influencers are individuals who have built up a considerable number of followers; their followers are able to have a glimpse into their personal and daily lives, as well as their experiences and thoughts, through various techniques of brief content creation such as blogging, video blogging, and other similar platforms (De Veirman et al., 2017). The content produced by social media influencers is noticeably more successful than the content created in a studio (Ki & Kim, 2019). When consumers have a favourable attitude towards user-generated material, they are more likely to purchase the products that have been evaluated (Muda & Hamzah, 2021). Social media influencers share their opinions on goods, services, and businesses with their followers. They may be regarded as opinion leaders in their respective industries due to their ability to communicate with a substantial number of followers via social media (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The use of social media influencers in marketing is a relatively new tactic that is becoming an common marketing trend in Malaysia (Lokithasan et al., 2019). While the influence of electronic word of mouth has been discussed in a substantial number of studies, trustworthiness has rarely been the focus of academic investigation (Lis, 2013). For this reason, it is essential for marketers to identify the information credibility variable, as doing so can assist them in presenting information in a manner that gives the impression that the companies they represent can be trusted (Ghaisani et al., 2018). However, despite the significance of the topic, little research has been carried out to investigate the factors influencing the trustworthiness of the information shared on social media (Li & Suh, 2015; Lis, 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). In addition, very few research projects have been carried out on Malaysian beauty influencers or video bloggers (Chin, 2019).

Influencer marketing is a type of advertising that has emerged recently as a result of the presence of social media. Marketers are increasingly focusing their attention on influencer marketing, which is one of the marketing industry's subfields with the highest rate of expansion and an important area of study in marketing research (Boerman, 2020; Ki & Kim, 2019). In recent years, the growing popularity of influencer marketing has prompted academic researchers to focus on finding the characteristics of social media influencers that allow them to have greater or lesser influence over their followers (Arora et al., 2019). Discussions on the importance of expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness in the context of social media influencers have been increasing in recent years (Weismueller et al., 2020). The research done by Song et al (2021) suggests that information credibility is mainly

concerned with customers' perceptions of the quality of the information found on social media websites, as well as the degree of trust that can be derived from a reputational point of view. Additionally, homophily seems to be another crucial aspect in determining credibility (Daowd et al., 2020). The credibility of internet recommendations is higher when there is a high degree of homophily between the information provider and the reader (Pentina et al., 2018). Consequently, customers may regard suggestions from sources that are similar to them as more credible (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Since influencers have become such influential figures in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions, marketers need to understand the characteristics of social media influencers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the attributes of social media influencers.

Literature Review

Expertise

The term expertise refers to the extent to which an influencer is regarded to have the appropriate knowledge, experience, or skills to advocate a specific product (Ki et al., 2020; Van Der Waldt & Wehmeyer, 2009). Further, Wiedmann and von Mettenheim, (2020) defined expertise as possessing a high level of knowledge, experience, and ability to solve problems in a specific field. Sharing information on social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook about their day-to-day life enables social media influencers to have a significant and meaningful effect on the people who follow them. In addition, customers who follow the product recommendations of lifestyle vloggers are more likely to buy the products advised by such influencers because they view the influencers as reputable sources of information. This is because customers feel that they are similar to the vloggers, and it is also because they have formed a relationship bond with the vloggers. Also, influencers have a propensity to engage directly with the people who follow them by permitting their fans to comment on their postings. It is possible that the engagement between an influencer and their followers can increase the impression that the influencer is similar to the followers. In this context, the capacity of the influencer to provide trustworthy and credible information from the first point of contact with customers in order to establish a relationship bond with those customers is frequently referred to as expertise (Nejad et al., 2014).

Attractiveness

Attractiveness refers to the external physical appearance of a person whereby the person is considered classy, sexy, or elegant (Amos et al., 2008; Ohanian, 1990). The focus of the source attractiveness is on the physical traits or characteristics of an endorser (Erdogan, 1999). Physical attractiveness is crucial for brand representatives because customers prefer to choose products that are promoted by attractive people. The extent to which an endorser's looks is important, however, depends on the product category or brand. For example, a consumer's intention to purchase a beauty product or item linked to sports can be significantly influenced by the endorser's physical appearance. Consumers are more likely to follow the advice given by influencers who are visually appealing. One's physical look from the outside determines how attractive they are. Customers' opinions of the attractiveness of an influencer are strongly influenced by both their psychographic features and physical traits, such as knowledge, beauty, and health (Onu et al., 2019).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the extent to which those who receive information consider the source of information to be credible and trustworthy (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). The credibility of the information source or the information source's trustworthiness depends on how people view the source and how useful they believe it to be (Yin et al., 2018). Social media influencers are regarded as trustworthy sources of information. This is mostly because consumers and influencers are perceived to share a level of resemblance with one another, as well as the trust that exists between them. In the context of social media influencers, trustworthiness refers to the degree to which a follower has faith in the dependability of a social media influencer when they notice the social media influencer's sincerity, reliability, and trustworthiness (Lou & Kim, 2019). Most of the content provided by influencers is viewed as an honest viewpoint rather than shared for commercial goals. The most important issue in the beauty industry is the trustworthiness of public figures, which today also include social media influencers—representing the beauty brands (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017).

Homophily

Consumers have a strong preference for engaging in conversation with other people who share their values or passions (Ismagilova et al., 2020). One of the factors contributing to the trustworthiness of a communication is its level of homophily (Lis, 2013). Homophily is the phenomenon that occurs when people in a network of relationships share characteristics such as age, gender, education level, and wealth that are comparable to one another. It has a strong connection to the significance that people place on the roles that they play in their relationships and the conversations that they have (Saleem & Ellahi, 2017). Consumers who share similar passions are more likely to self-identify as members of a particular group and engage in information sharing about brands within the brand communities hosted on social networking sites (Chih et al., 2020). Customers might find it easier to comprehend their reactions to the material provided by other users or influencers if this is implemented. When there is a higher degree of perceived similarity between the user's opinions and those of the media personality, the likelihood that the relationship will continue to exist increases. Due to the proliferation of social media and the wide diversity of social contexts, such as blogging, social commerce, and social services, there is an increasing interest in homophily in the marketing literature (Mainolfi & Vergura, 2021).

Information Quality

An online review's overall quality is measured by its information quality (Jiang et al., 2021). The quality of information is defined as the strength of the meaning contained in the message (Yeap et al., 2014). Previous researchers have investigated the quality of information in the electronic word of mouth context (Cheung et al., 2008; Cheung & Thadani, 2012) and found that it affected customers (Lee & Shin, 2014). The internet and social media, which are among the largest sources of information, have been experiencing growing importance. Consumers use the internet and social media to gain information about a particular product or service. The amount of online information has increased exponentially due to the rapid growth of information technology and the internet (Xu et al., 2016). Technology allows consumers to obtain the information they need quickly due to the availability of various information sources on the internet. Despite not knowing each other, social media users connect by communicating on social media platforms. However, there is a risk in relying on the user-generated content available on social media as a source of information, as it is

difficult to monitor the information shared and there are typically no universal standards for posting online content. As such, digital content can be easily altered (Suh & Chang, 2006), which raises concerns regarding the quality of the information shared on the internet (Fan et al., 2014; Matheus et al., 2014). Improving the overall quality of information can be one solution to the problem of having too much information (Zhang et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

The instruments for this study were adapted from previous studies in order to ensure the reliability and validity of the instruments. The instruments were evaluated by one expert in the field and three academicians. The instruments were rewritten following the comments and suggestions made by the expert. Due to the requirement to maintain social distancing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic period, the researcher carried out the cognitive interview via Google Meet for video conferencing and created the questionnaire on Google Form for distribution to a total of 12 respondents. For pre-testing, it is sufficient to conduct a survey with 12 to 25 completed questionnaires to identify problems in the questionnaire (Babonea & Voicu, 2011).

Data collection took place in two stages: first, a pilot study, and then, a field study. For the pilot study, the researcher used convenience and purposive sampling methods to select 100 respondents to answer the questionnaire. Each respondent must be a female between the ages of 18 and 56 and must have viewed a video on YouTube in which a beauty influencer gave her opinion on a cosmetic product. The questionnaire was distributed using social media. Furthermore, this study employed purposive and snowball sampling methods for the actual study. A total of 393 responses were gathered for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Findings of The Pilot Study

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

IBM-SPSS version 25.0 was used to conduct the EFA on the pilot study data. As Table 1 shows, the study obtained a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .890 for the EFA. The KMO value, which indicates whether or not the sampling is adequate, needs to be higher than .6 (Hoque et al., 2017). Table 1 shows the results, including the value obtained from Bartlett's test of sphericity. The p-value was less than .05, indicating statistical significance.

Table 1.
KMO and Bartlett's Test result

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.890
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2631.542
	df	276
	Sig.	0.000

The results of principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation are shown in Table 2 for the 24 items of the social media influencer construct. The findings showed that the PCA procedure was successful in extracting five components, all of which had eigenvalues that were greater than 1.0. The total variance explained by all five components was 80.153 per cent, which is higher than the minimum threshold of 60 per cent for a construct to be considered valid. Evidently, the five components were responsible for explaining 80.153 per

cent of the total variance, with Component 1 contributing 20.619 per cent, Component 2 contributing 19.241 per cent, Component 3 contributing 16.984 per cent, Component 4 contributing 14.928 per cent, and Component 5 contributing 8.381 per cent.

Table 2.
Total Variance Explained for every component

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12.511	52.129	52.129	12.511	52.129	52.129	4.948	20.619	20.619
2	2.521	10.502	62.631	2.521	10.502	62.631	4.618	19.241	39.859
3	1.770	7.376	70.008	1.770	7.376	70.008	4.076	16.984	56.844
4	1.394	5.807	75.815	1.394	5.807	75.815	3.583	14.928	71.771
5	1.041	4.338	80.153	1.041	4.338	80.153	2.012	8.381	80.153
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

Figure 1 shows that the scree plot for the social media influencer construct had grouped the 24 items neatly into five components.

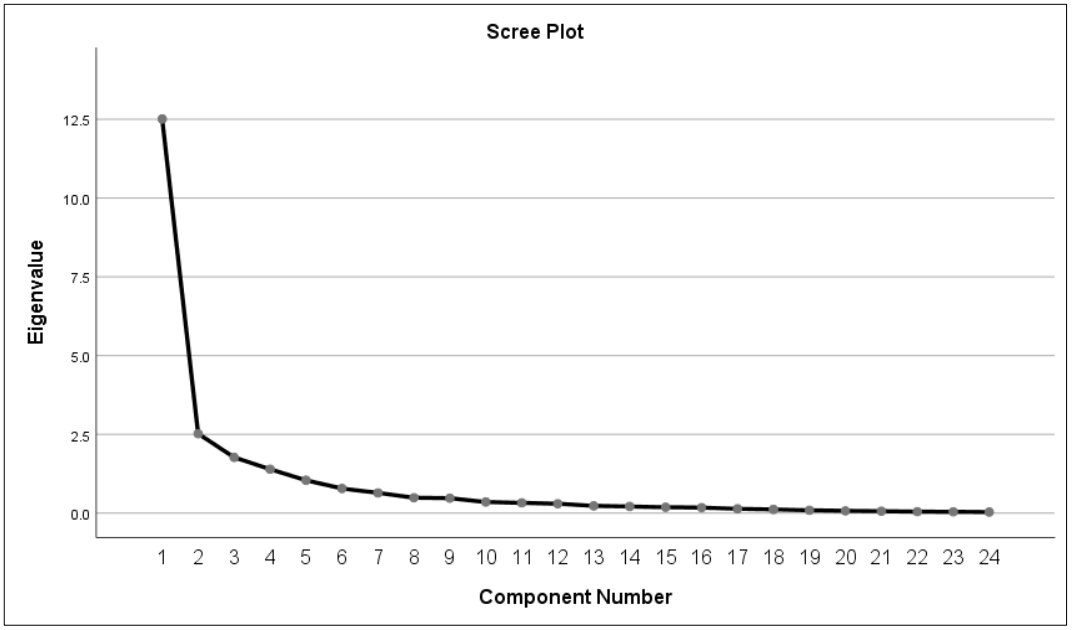

Figure 1. The Scree plot for Social Media Influencer Attributes construct

Table 3
The Rotated Component Matrix for Social Media Influencer Attributes construct

Rotated Component Matrix[a]					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
E1		0.807			
E2		0.703			
E3		0.919			
E4		0.921			
E5		0.879			
A1					0.650
A2					0.651
A3					0.705
A4					0.601
A5					
T1	0.776				
T2	0.756				
T3	0.851				
T4	0.801				
T5	0.778				
H1				0.765	
H2				0.831	
H3				0.837	
H4				0.771	
IQ1			0.669		
IQ2			0.726		
IQ3			0.763		
IQ4			0.725		
IQ5			0.679		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a] a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

As can be seen in Table 3, the findings of the rotational component matrix applied to the social media influencer attributes construct indicated five components. Accordingly, one item with a factor loading of less than .60 was deleted. Therefore, only 23 items remained for the social media influencer attributes construct. Furthermore, there were no cross-loading items between the five components. Therefore, the study could keep the five constructs in the same order in which they appear in the social media influencer attributes literature. The full EFA results for the social media influencer attributes construct, consisting of 24 items, as well as the factor loadings, are presented in Table 3.

Internal Reliability

Cronbach's alpha, which reflects the reliability of the retained items in measuring this construct, needed to be computed for the study before it could be considered complete. The degree to which items are able to be held together in the measurement of particular

constructs may be indicated by internal consistency or reliability. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .60 is considered to indicate average reliability, and a coefficient of .70 or above indicates that the instrument has high reliability (Hoque et al., 2017; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Table 4 presents the five constructs that can be used to measure the social media influencer attributes construct and their respective Cronbach's alpha values.

Table 4
Reliability Analysis

Construct	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Trustworthiness	5	.941
Expertise	5	.914
Information Quality	5	.918
Homophily	4	.905
Attractiveness	4	.891

Findings of The Field Study

Assessment of Normality of Items

In order to evaluate the normality of the data, this study used AMOS version 24 to conduct an analysis of the skewness of the distribution within the maximum likelihood estimator (MLE). For a sample size of more than 200, it is advisable to use skewness values that fall between 1.5 and +1.5. (Abdul-Rahim et al., 2022; Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). As shown in Table 5, the results for skewness ranged from −1.084 to −0.370, indicating the presence of a normal distribution.

Table 5
The Assessment of normality of the Items

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
Trustworthiness1	3	7	-0.540	-4.368	-0.088	-0.354
Trustworthiness2	3	7	-0.711	-5.755	0.136	0.551
Trustworthiness3	3	7	-0.699	-5.656	0.323	1.306
Trustworthiness4	3	7	-0.662	-5.361	0.01	0.042
Trustworthiness5	3	7	-0.649	-5.254	-0.191	-0.773
Expertise1	3	7	-0.762	-6.164	0.359	1.454
Expertise2	4	7	-0.526	-4.261	-0.275	-1.114
Expertise3	4	7	-0.370	-2.996	-0.419	-1.697
Expertise4	4	7	-0.441	-3.567	-0.365	-1.479
Expertise5	4	7	-0.496	-4.011	-0.224	-0.907
Quality1	3	7	-0.648	-5.245	0.195	0.787
Quality2	3	7	-0.746	-6.037	0.664	2.688
Quality3	3	7	-0.578	-4.681	0.468	1.893
Quality4	3	7	-0.603	-4.881	0.104	0.423
Quality5	3	7	-0.645	-5.219	0.273	1.105
Homophily1	2	7	-1.084	-8.776	0.968	3.918
Homophily2	2	7	-0.982	-7.951	0.337	1.365
Homophily3	2	7	-0.750	-6.066	0.093	0.376
Homophily4	2	7	-0.758	-6.131	0.202	0.818

Attractiveness1	3	7	-0.511	-4.132	-0.013	-0.052
Attractiveness2	3	7	-0.704	-5.698	-0.112	-0.455
Attractiveness3	3	7	-0.628	-5.079	-0.179	-0.724
Attractiveness4	3	7	-0.644	-5.212	-0.173	-0.699
Multivariate					124.139	36.285

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

In structural equation modelling (SEM), a number of fitness indices are used to assess how well a model fits the data that are being investigated. The validation is accepted once all of the fitness indices for the various constructs reach the required level (Razali et al., 2018). There is no consensus among researchers regarding the fitness indicators that should be used (Awang, 2015). Nevertheless, when evaluating a model, at least one of the fitting indices should be considered from each category (Hair et al., 2010). According to Awang (2015) and Awang et al. (2018), the indices that are most frequently reported in the literature for analysing the model fit are absolute fit measures (RMSEA <.08), incremental fit measures (chisq/df <3.0), and parsimonious fit measures (CFI >.90 and TLI >.90).

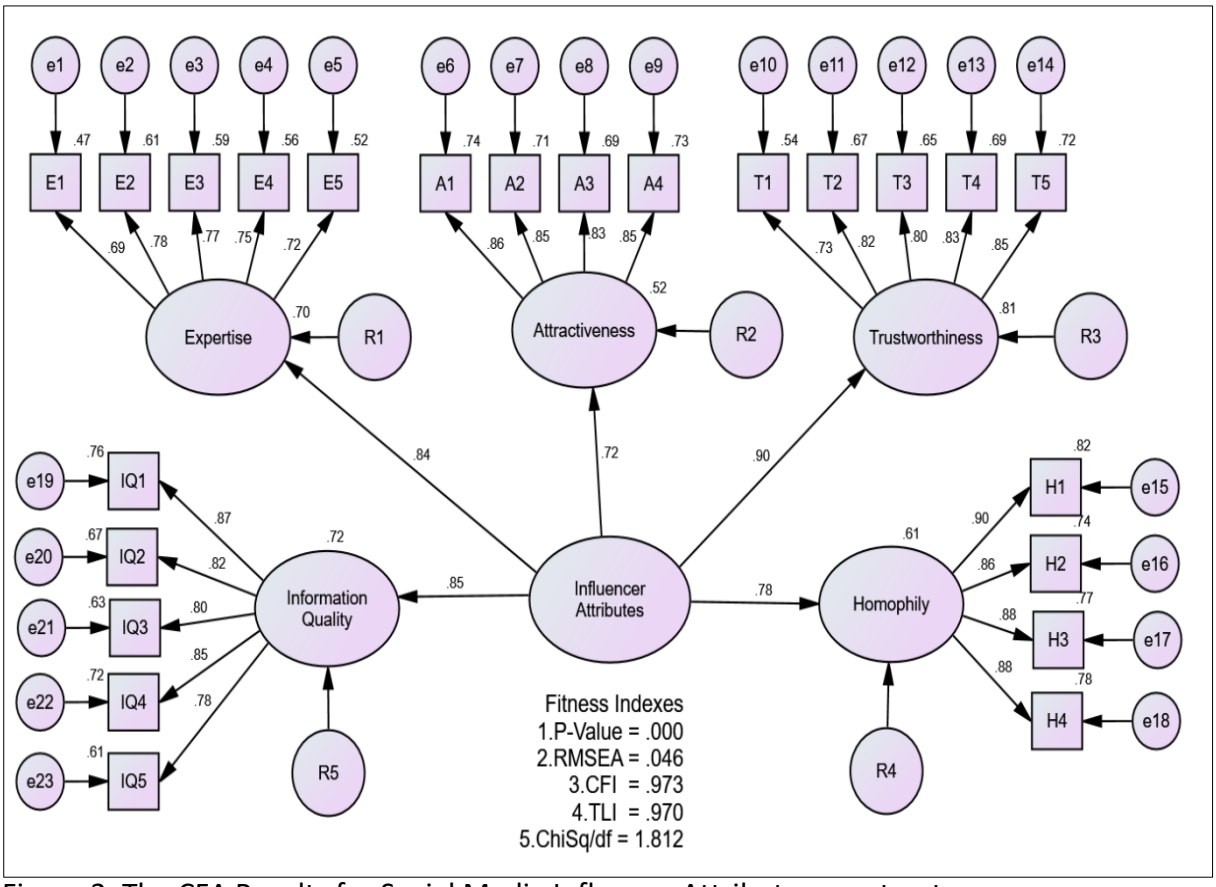

Figure 2. The CFA Results for Social Media Influence Attributes construct

Figure 2 shows the findings of the CFA for the social media influencer attributes construct. The results showed that all of the fitness indexes met the ideal threshold values with RMSEA = .046, CFI = .973, TLI = .970, and chisq/df = 1.812.

As per the findings presented in Table 6, this study's results successfully met all of the requirements, as indicated by factor loadings of greater than .60, AVE values of greater than .50, and CR values of greater than .60 (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018). Therefore, the

composite reliability and convergent validity for the social media influencer attributes construct were achieved.

Table 6
The Composite Reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity

Construct	**Factor Loading**	**AVE**	**CR**	**Convergent Validity CR > 0.6 AVE > 0.5**
Social Media Influencer Attributes	0.84 0.72 0.90 0.85 0.78	0.673	0.911	Yes
Trustworthiness	0.73 0.82 0.80 0.83 0.85	0.651	0.903	Yes
Expertise	0.69 0.78 0.82 0.75 0.72	0.568	0.867	Yes
Information Quality	0.87 0.82 0.80 0.85 0.78	0.680	0.914	Yes
Homophily	0.90 0.86 0.88 0.88	0.775	0.932	Yes
Attractiveness	0.86 0.85 0.83 0.85	0.718	0.911	Yes

Another validity requirement is discriminant validity. Since the social media influencer attributes construct is a second-order construct with five components, the study needed to assess the strength of the correlations among these five components. The discriminant validity for a construct is achieved if the coefficients of correlation among the components do not exceed .85 (Awang, 2015; Awang et al., 2018).

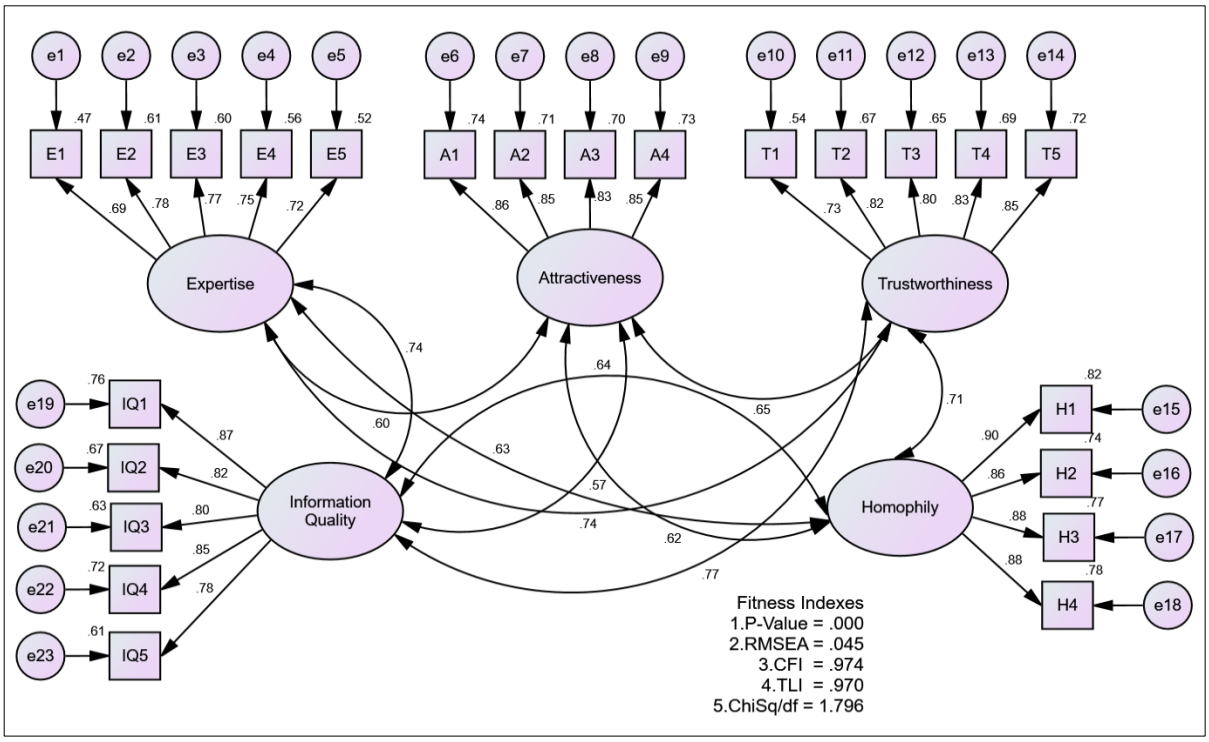

Figure 3. The Assessment of Convergent Validity for Social Media Influencer Attributes construct

As shown in Table 7, the correlation values among the constructs in this model were less than .85, indicating that discriminant validity was reached. Thus, the model did not face any multicollinearity issues.

Table 7
Correlation value between construct

Components			**Estimate**
Expertise	<-->	Information Quality	0.745
Attractiveness	<-->	Expertise	0.603
Attractiveness	<-->	Trustworthiness	0.647
Expertise	<-->	Trustworthiness	0.743
Attractiveness	<-->	Information Quality	0.572
Attractiveness	<-->	Homophily	0.620
Trustworthiness	<-->	Homophily	0.711
Trustworthiness	<-->	Information Quality	0.768
Information Quality	<-->	Homophily	0.639
Expertise	<-->	Homophily	0.634

Conclusion

A high number of items for evaluating the social media influencer attributes construct were investigated throughout the study process. In this study, the requirements for content validity, face validity, and criterion validity for the instruments were fulfilled through pre-testing. The EFA process was carried out to assess the requirements for the KMO measure of sample adequacy, Bartlett's test for sphericity, and Cronbach's alpha for internal reliability, and all of the requirements for EFA were met. Through CFA, all of the necessary criteria for construct validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, as well as composite reliability and normality of item distribution, were satisfied. As a result, this study successfully established and validated the essential instruments for measuring the social media influencer attributes construct for practical use.

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