THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON THE YOUTH IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

According to studies, millennial consumers' shopping decisions are influenced by celebrities, social media influencers, and individuals they know in real life. This study looks into how celebrities, influencers, and individual consumers know personally influence how millennials use social media information to influence the youth. Because of the ease of access and extensive usage of social media has become the ideal medium for businesses seeking to disseminate product information, generate public opinion, and acquire followers. To that aim, social media influencers serve as a dynamic third-party endorser, spreading a brand's message to a global audience. To that end, the study involves a systematic review to evaluate the various tactics used by these influencers to influence clients. According to the study's findings, these influencers significantly affect client impressions and attitudes since they are more adept at speaking to a particular sector. Compared to traditional advertising techniques, this new technology means of influencers provide the agencies with new competitive power in engaging customers and establishing brand recognition.

Keywords: *social media, influencer, followers, business, networking, communication*

INTRODUCTION

The era of 21st century is often considered as an era of technology. Technology in today's life plays an important role to everyone, as technology can be used for so many aspects in our daily activities. For instance, people might use technology.to search for jobs, gather and share information, complete business transactions, for entertainment, socializing with people without having to meet them face to face and so on. Almost everything uses technology. Caliskan (2015) claimed that technology has also been seen as a basis for economic growth. According to Raja et al. (2018), an economic sector that is poor in technology, will not develop in today's scheme. Technology is less time consuming and helps ease our work. Technology has made a huge impact in many aspects especially in the educational process at all levels.

As the pandemic spreads, entrepreneurs face challenges such as staff layoffs, financial constraints, employee health difficulties, a drop in sales and turnover, and customer expectations (Kumar & Ayedee, 2021). However, given prospective clients' availability on the internet, entrepreneurs must take real action in leveraging social media as a marketing tool. Even Effendi, Sugandini, and Istanto (2020) discovered that SMEs affected by the pandemic problem had a positive impression of social media usage and a strong desire to use it to sell their goods and connect with their clients. In other words, the development of the epidemic has pushed entrepreneurs to adopt e-commerce and social media usage to ensure the survival of their businesses.

Social media influencer (SMI) is a phrase that does not require any semantic explanation for today's millennials or digital natives. Ask any adolescent or young adult today about internet-important individuals, and they will quickly name several local and worldwide figures that they adore. On the other hand, academics may confine the definition of prominent persons to renowned world leaders, politicians, scientists, and individuals who have adorned the pages of history with discoveries and successes. According to (Zamari, Alang, Vytialingam & Idris, 2022), the skill of persuasion lies at the heart of social media influencers' fame. Persuasion is the use of spoken words, written communication, and imagery to affect people's views and, in some instances, behaviour.

Previously, persuasive public communication may have been limited to written pieces and various advertisement materials on mainstream media. As social media becomes more commonplace, effective communications are essential for reaching out to the global digital citizen, which has enormous social and economic implications. Malaysian digital residents are likewise affected by this trend. According to Digital Business Lab (2021), "as of January 2021, 86 percent of Malaysians utilize social media." It was a 24% increase over 2016 when social media users accounted for only 62% of Malaysia's total population." There is no question that young adults, particularly university students, have their own social media profiles and follow at least one influencer on any social networking platform. Social media usage is critical and draws a lot of attention since it has an economic cost for the entrepreneur and their firm. Performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and conducive circumstances are all elements that impact actual usage. Furthermore, additional features like attitude and belief

(propensity to share information, viral marketing anticipation, and fear of pandemic) might affect entrepreneur system utilization acceptance.

Besides, according to (Khan & Phung, 2021), this study is needed to determine whether consumers are aware of social media influencers because approximately 88 percent of advertisers use social media as part of their promoting media mix, allowing influencers to grow in Malaysia and giving Facebook the commanding lead in the digital era, allowing numerous multinational organisations to capture market share. Also, to determine if social media influencers significantly affect purchasing decisions since social media in Malaysia has grown generic to the straightforwardness of Internet connection, particularly in Malaysia's metropolitan regions. Consumers prefer to trust their friends and family over branded advertising when it comes to purchasing things. The benefits of exhibiting influencers are numerous. Collaboration with an influencer may be a clever glowing material that works in dispersion. It is measurable and may be used in specialized crowd gatherings to generate excellent leads and engagement.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Cooley & Yancy (2019), certain businesses cannot meet consumer demand for their corporate website and social media content. The corporation has employed a social media influencer to promote their company's products or services. Personal relationships' reputation will directly translate to the credibility of social media influencers' thoughts about the advertised product or service, which might affect customer purchasing choices. Social media influencers are also seen to have more clout than traditional advertising efforts since some target groups, particularly the young, are becoming increasingly difficult to reach through traditional media.

It was also shown that women spend more time on social media than males. Only 11% of males spend more than 9 hours every day, whereas 21% of women do (Ho, 2019). According to these figures and studies, more Malaysians than ever before examine information on family members, friends, co-workers, and clients and engage with them. Furthermore, the number of social media users in Malaysia is predicted to grow further. Young Malaysians use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on a daily basis to connect with individuals they have never met, contact friends and family members, and stay up to current on the newest news. Furthermore, social media sites such as YouTube and TikTok allow children to view publicly posted videos, create their own, and even engage with others by leaving comments.

However, while it has been demonstrated that endorsements may raise customer awareness of a product or service, it is unclear whether celebrities or social media influencers have a more substantial impact on consumer purchasing choices. Instagram personalities who are widely followed are more popular, even though they cannot conclusively determine that their number of followers has a good influence on product or brand appraisal. Furthermore, consumers who

acquire product information from social networking sites are perplexed. Consumers may be unsure which sites are more credible and relevant to the sort of goods.

According to (Shi & Ismail, 2021), many merchants or businesses market and sell their products and services using online, network, or social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others in today's competitive world. The corporation may promote, market, and sell its products and services to individuals of all ages in Malaysia and throughout the world through social media channels. People nowadays use social media platforms more than they use television or other conventional entertainment outlets. Consumers have grown more aware of the motivations underlying marketers' persuasive efforts in today's marketplace, which is swamped with commercials and influencer endorsements. Prior business literature has demonstrated the relevance of motive inference, with authors of existing research indicating that promotions by enterprises considered to be public-serving rather than self-serving are more likely to elicit purchase intent. When social media influencers collaborate with businesses for endorsement, consumers' perceptions and motives are frequently jeopardized.

According to (Gundecha & Liu, 2012), because of the ease of access and extensive usage of social media has become the ideal medium for businesses seeking to disseminate product information, generate public opinion, and acquire followers. To that aim, social media influencers serve as dynamic third-party endorsers, spreading a brand's message to a global audience. Social media advertising attracts consumers that have a favourable view regarding the trustworthiness of social media. The current study investigates agencies' perspectives of social media influencers and their significance in consumer engagement and brand exposure. Moreover, when customers see social media influencers' brand endorsements as PR stunts driven by financial gain, the endorsement efficacy falls (e.g., purchase intention lowers), posing a danger to the endorsing brand and the influencer. As a result, we believe that consumers' attribution of motives is the foundation for developing a successful influencer marketing approach.

Lastly, one of the difficulties with influencer marketing in the internet era is defining it. At various levels, influencer marketing is diverse: social media influencers have similar characteristics, such as their reliance on social media networks, the creation of regular media content, and peer-to-peer connection with the public on supposedly non-commercial grounds (e.g., sharing workouts on YouTube to inspire users rather than to offer services). However, because social media influencers interact with diverse audiences and focus on different material, these broad characteristics are insufficient to comprehend their nature fully.

METHODOLOGY

A Systematic Review was conducted in this study taking into account potential articles published from June 2021 to May 2022. The collection of electronic data through Google Scholar (32,300 journals) were to identify studies related to 'the impact of social media influencers on the youth'. Variations in the terms used in this research are social media, influencers, and followers. An author's keyword is a term that the author considers reflecting the content of a journal that conforms to the desired essence. After screening, based on the title and abstract, a total of 48 studies were selected. The next step, the full-text article is evaluated more carefully. Only 7 articles are related to the research question and met the criteria. The main research question that guided the study was, "What are the impact of social media influencers on the youth?"

FINDINGS

Author/Year	Title	Method	Country	Finding
Ahmad Mijar & A. Manaf (2021)	Eco-Activist Social Media Influencers (SMI) on Twitter: Does Credibility Matter?	Qualitative analysis	Malaysia	According to this study, trustworthiness and competence are two crucial characteristics for eco-activists to raise awareness about environmental issues on Twitter. The frequency with which a person tweets about what they are doing also plays a part and enhances the piece of personality that a SMI possesses. This also implies that an SMI must be the first to tweet about an issue and have an active internet presence.
Abu Bakar & Ahmad Zaini (2022)	Factors Influencing the Usage of social media among Entrepreneurs in Malaysia	Concept paper	Malaysia	Based on early research on social media adoption and entrepreneurs, the idea is that there was little research on Malaysian entrepreneurs' social media adoption and use in Malaysia. A previous study found that Malaysian entrepreneurs are persuaded to adopt internet marketing based on performance expectations and supportive conditions. Furthermore, Malaysian entrepreneurs' knowledge and decision-making on social media acceptability is based on the unique understanding of the business holder,

				both as a social media user and administrator.
Isa & Nordin (2018)	Social Media Advertising in Malaysia: The Power of Viral Marketing	Concept paper	Malaysia	Previous research on viral marketing by Isa & Nordin (2018), looked at how social media advertising employs viral marketing to promote companies and products. The researcher investigated various famous social media sites in Malaysia and discovered that viral marketing is well received by both businesses and consumers. However, the effect of viral marketing anticipation factors on the actual use of social media as a marketing tool has never been explored.
Khan & Phung (2021)	Social Media Influencers and its Impact on Customer Behaviour	Snowball sampling method	Malaysia	The findings of this study indicated that customers are influenced by electronic speech advertisements while purchasing an item before or after they see it. In terms of consumer expenditure, internet content, as well as social exchanges, all have an impact on how customers decide what to buy. The researched topic of study is quite active and has presented several chances for more future research.
Matzen, P. L. (2020)	The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Male Body Image	Qualitative Analysis	Spain (Barcelona)	Social media has transformed cultural identity and the pressure on young men to achieve an idealized masculine body image. Because research has failed to study the impact of male influencers on male body image, it presents an incomplete picture of social media exposure and male body image. It appears that variety in body forms is desired on Instagram. Although research has yet to yield meaningful results, it is critical to comprehend the procedures and patterns that the influencer gives on his Instagram account.

Gautam, O. (2021)	Impact of Social Media Influencers on Customer Engagement and Brand Perception	Systematic Review	India	According to the study's literature study, customer engagement is driven by commitments that allow consumers to be influenced by influencers. The breadth of connections enabled by social media as an open and cost-effective tool for exchanging ideas and quickly influencing customers is one of the variables influencing consumer involvement. The influence of social media influencers on consumer involvement includes mentoring customers and expanding on product usage.
Al-Shehri, M. (2021)	Choosing the Best Social Media Influencer: The role of gender, age, and product type in influencer marketing.	Qualitative and Quantitative Review.	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	According to this research, male influencers have a more significant impact on male customers than female influencers, whereas female influencers have a greater impact on female consumers than male consumers. The age of the customer does not affect the gender-based impact outcomes. Furthermore, the data show that just a few influencers have a greater impact on a given product type, implying that influencer impact dependent on product type is uncommon.

CONCLUSION

Finally, data is extracted from each independently reviewed article, based on the date and year of publication, authors, types of studies, the evaluation methods used and the finding of the impact of social media influencers on the youth. Articles that meet the criteria have been used in this study as set out in the table below. From these 7 studies, there were six qualitative analysis, one quantitative analysis. All of studies were conducted in different countries.

However, the average influencer comes from a relatable background. It is more likely to be a common person renowned on social media platforms for their creativity, postings, and understanding of a topic. Influencers' success is driven by specific knowledge and skill. The main contribution of the current study was to identify the impact of social media influencers

on the youth in Malaysia. Although this influencer pyramid highlights the many sorts of influencers, there are other aspects involved in influencing, such as trust, which all influencers must obtain and retain. As a result, authenticity is a critical component to highlight. An influencer who is seen as a reliable source may interact with customers more effectively, converting them into prospective purchasers. Influencers, unlike advertisers, cannot be prohibited since they create their material on social media networks. Fans are more inclined to click on sponsored material than on standard adverts.

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