Effects of Social Media Advertisements on Intention to Purchase Health and Beauty Products

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Abstract - **Social media has become a necessity in nearly everyone's life today as it offers them the opportunity to keep in touch with family and friends. Social media is also acting as a medium for consumers to review or get an opinion on certain products before purchasing them. Even though purchasing online is convenient, yet it still creates skeptical opinions towards certain elements. Many companies do not realize the importance of preserving the integrity and truthfulness when it comes to advertising. Not all social media advertisements or posts are real. Therefore, this study aims to examine customers' perceptions of social media advertisements and their intention to purchase health and beauty products. A six-section questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, from 1- strongly disagree to 5 -strongly agree, was created for the study. The snowball sampling was the preferred sampling method to acquire data from 180 respondents, and these data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The analysis results indicated that all variables' items were between the range of 0.728 to 0.859, which denotes the existence of internal consistency. From the regression analysis findings, trust and affective have significant positive effects on purchase intention, whereas credibility and authenticity showed non-significant relationships. The study found trust and affective attitude have significant positive relationships with purchase intention of products on social media. Whereas, credibility and authenticity are found to have no significant relationship with purchase intention. Between trust and affective, trust is found to have strongest influence on consumer purchase intention.**

Keywords - *Affective, Authenticity, Credibility, Health and Beauty, Purchase Intention, Social Media Advertisement, Trust.*

I. Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way society communicates (Patino, Pitta, & Quinones, 2012). These days social media have been a trend where most people would have at least one social media application on their smartphones. The increasing number of information and communication technologies and the internet has

boosted the proliferation of social networking sites ever since the past decade (El-Haddadeh, Weerakkody, & Peng, 2012). Likewise, the growth of communication and technologies has made businesses or retailers these days to change the way they advertise their products. Simply, retailers need to change their advertising platform from traditional advertisements to social media advertisements (Lee & Hong, 2016). Indeed, with the introduction of web 2.0, the changes in the advertising orientation among relevant stakeholders become a lot easier (Stelzner, 2018).

As mentioned in "Mobile transactions: What are Malaysian consumers worried about?" (2016) i.e., a survey by Nielsen Mobile Shopping, Banking, and Payment Report; more than half of the survey's respondents prefer texting to talking. This phenomenon can be capitalized by the online business community to change from traditional advertising to social media advertising as more Malaysians are becoming more comfortable with searching for information online. More importantly, for firms, social media has manifested into a powerful marketing tool for e-commerce websites.

The e-commerce industry has become the fastest-growing market in Southeast Asia, where Malaysia is contributing about 2% of the total sales. Still, there is an expectation that the figure will increase further in the coming years. Nonetheless, the e-commerce market in Malaysia is one of the most attractive in the region due to its maturity. According to Statista (2019), the number of internet users in Malaysia for 2017 was 25.3 million, and this number is estimated to reach 29.4 million by the year 2023. The same statistics also showed the number of social network users in 2017 was 22.7 million, and with the expectation to grow to 26.1 million users in 2023. Hence, it is justifiable to say that the number of internet users positively correlates with the amount of social media users in Malaysia.

Patino et al. (2012) posited social media has changed marketing significantly by altering the ways consumers share experiences, evaluate, and search for information. One exciting aspect of social media platforms is the availability of online consumers' reviews and comments, which can be shared publicly with others (Wallace, Buil, de Chernatony, & Hogan, 2014). Online consumer reviews can be a dual purpose, such as providing product information and making recommendations (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). The online reviews and experiences are a useful cue for readers to evaluate the products before making any purchases (Wei & Lu, 2013). Moreover, consumers' acceptance of the reviews made particularly by well-known bloggers is quite helpful in developing a positive attitude and a higher intention to shop online (Hsu, Lin & Chiang, 2013). It is not surprising when past studies revealed that businesses spent a vast sum of money on social media to guarantee the advertisements reached their target audiences (Duffett, 2015).

With the demands and stressful working conditions, people are always pressed for time, thus preferring to shop online because of the convenience and time-saving nature of online shopping. These days, people, male or female alike, are showing added concern for health and beauty. They would buy health and beauty products to look better and more to attract the opposite gender or being praised among themselves (Lixandru, 2017). Yunus et.al (2018) stated that there has been a rise in interest and trends towards personal care products. Personal care products include a variation of products that are regularly found in the health and beauty sections of drug and department stores (Food and Drug Administration, 2016 as cited in Yunus et.al, 2018). In 2017, beauty was the most purchased category of products, whereas health products were one of the merchandise types that are likely to expand (Aseanup, 2019). As people placing more emphasis on health and beauty nowadays, hence, advertisements that highlighted these primary areas provide excellent value to them. In the existing literature, knowledge about how social media advertisements shaped the online buying behavior of Malaysians, specifically about health and beauty products, is limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effects of social media advertisements on the intention to purchase health and beauty products among Malaysians.

II. Literature Reviews

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention, in general terms, is the customers' willingness to buy a particular product or specific services that attract them (Content, 2018). Mainly, the customers' intention to purchase occurred when the product or brand is in their consideration set (Content, 2018). Whereas from the philosophy perspective, purchase intention is the probability of customers making the decisions to purchase a specific product (Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 1998). Customers need cues or stimuli to prompt them to make a purchase. Therefore, social media can be a medium for them to initiate their purchasing behavior (Harshini, 2015). Notably, social media not only influence the customers' purchase intention but also provide companies with a low advertising cost coupled with a high response rate from both local and international (Yang, Liu, & Zhou, 2012). The recommendation post in social media plays a significant role in generating electronic word of mouth (eWOM) or viral marketing among existing and potential customers. Notably, eWOM is a useful advertising tool in the firms' marketing arsenal since customers' recommendations (i.e., reviewed by customers with experience using

or consuming the product or services) has a significant influence on other customers' purchase intention (Zhu & Tan, 2007).

As well, the recommendation post is a useful marketing communication tool and a source of reference for consumer purchase decision making (Chen & Xie, 2008). E-WOM has brought a new dimension for customers to communicate, search more about a product or service before making the purchase (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Knoll, 2016).), as well as allowing opinion leaders to promote products or brands for the companies. However, since the amount of information that customers are exposed too is enormous, they need to filter and evaluate and information before using it (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Every social media user would know that social media usually have sections for likes (show approval), comment and share (support by publicly sharing the information) with others (Wallace, Buil, de Chernatony & Hogan, 2014). Comments or discussions about the products can create engaging environments and social interactions with customers (Laroche et al., 2013) which, can help trigger their purchase intention. Without any doubt, the influence of social media on purchase intention is significant since it allows for consumers' quick experience sharing, advice, and information search (Patina, Pitta & Quinones, 2012).

Social Media Advertisements

Social media is "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010 as cited in Hamouda, 2017). There are six classes of social media namely collaborative projects (Wikipedia), blogs, content communities (YouTube), social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), virtual game worlds (World of Warcraft) and virtual social worlds (Second Life) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: as cited in Hamouda, 2017). According to Arifin et.al (2018), social media is an important basis for communications because of the advancement and swift changes in technology. El-Haddadeh, Weerakkody and Peng (2012) have mentioned that the increasing growth of communication technologies and the internet in the last decade has prompted a rapid acceptance of social networking sites. In other words, the usage of social media has grown in society.

Tuurosong and Faisal (2014) postulated that 60% of the global population is actively using social media daily. Due to this, businesses have invested a considerable amount of money on social media advertising (Chi, 2011). This fact found support in Duffett (2015) study, where it says that firms have allocated a significant amount of advertising budget to promote their product or services in social media. Many studies have also demonstrated that social media advertising can attract customers as it creates a social connection through emotionally or socially driven experiential elements, such as creating a sense of belonging (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013).

The construction of the study's theoretical framework is via a comprehensive review of the literature in line with the purpose of this research. The literature reviews led to the adoption of credibility, trust, affective, and authenticity from van Esch, Arli, Castner, Talukdar, and Northey (2018) works, as determinants of intention to purchase health and beauty products.

Elements of Social Media Advertisement:

Credibility

Advertising credibility represents an advertising content that is honest, believable, and truthful as perceived by the customers (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989, as cited in Hamouda, 2018). It serves as an expression of the customers' expectations on advertising fairness and factualness (Logan et al., 2012, as cited in Hamouda, 2018). According to Teng et al. (2014), the role of online users' judgments on credibility in the online platform is crucial. Credibility will ultimately decide the level of acceptance and confidence of readers toward the online reviews (Teng et al.,2014). Besides, prior studies have suggested that with a higher-level of content credibility, thus, the higher the purchase intention toward a product (Lu et al., 2014). Credibility had a significant positive impact on purchasing behavior (Mansour & Diab, 2016).

Credibility in a product recommendation posting also plays a part in affecting the purchase intention of customers. Lu et al. (2014) explain that an online product recommendation has credibility when customers believe that the post is genuine. They argued that customers who read the online product posting in a specific time frame and believe it is true; therefore, he or she would perceive the recommendation's credibility favorably (Lu et al., 2014). Interestingly, social media advertising through product recommendation has become a bit of an adventure for the recommender to post owing to the vast audiences that want to know other people's opinions and experiences after using the product (Teng, Khong, Goh & Chong, 2014). The credibility of social media posts (or advertisements) will be the focus of the study. Hence,

H1: There is a significant relationship between credibility and intention to purchase health and beauty products.

Trust

Trust is defined as a belief, feeling, or expectation (Moorman et al.,1992 as cited in Watanabe, Alfinito, Curvelo & Hamza, 2019). Alternatively, trust as a "psychological state comprising the intention to accept the vulnerability that refers to positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). It is a predictor that may influence buying behavior (Nuttavuthisit & Thogersen, 2017; Pivato et al., 2008, as cited in Watanabe et al., 2019). Social media, namely Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, have become a medium that links people who have complete trust in social media to search for products or services (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). On social media, individuals will exchange their opinions about a product or service or brand (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). The exchange of information among current users will attract potential customers to the product or services as these individuals still have a lingering doubt about whether to trust the information or otherwise (Kaur & Quareshi, 2015). Trust toward bloggers is when customers believe that other people's reviews or opinions as relevant, honest, and trustworthy (van Esch et al., 2018).

In traditional brick and mortar stores, customers can analyze the product with their own eyes. But, in this technology era, purchasing has become very different due to the uncertainty, insecurity, and lack of control in social media advertisements (Kaur & Quareshi, 2015). As a result, customers have doubts about whether they will get the product or services comparable to the one as being described on the post (Mcknight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002). Therefore, trust is considered as a critical factor because it can influence the decision to purchase online (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Vitale, 2000). Trust influences purchase intentions (Bilgihan, 2016; Das, 2016; Hsu et al., 2013; Pappas, 2016; van Esch et al., 2018). In the study, trust is about the trustworthiness of social media advertisements. Hence,

H2: There is a significant relationship between trust and intention to purchase health and beauty products.

Affective

Attitude consists of cognitive (what we think and believe) and affective (what we feel and experience) responses (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Affective responses are feelings (or moods) of the message recipient's affective state at the time message is received (Batra & Ray, 1986, as cited in Tran & Nguyen, 2020). According to Coley and Burgess (2003), affective components include an irresistible urge to buy, buying emotions, and mood management. Tran and Nguyen (2020) reiterated that affective responses are non-emotional responses in nature. Emotions are related to specific behavior as it is more intense and attention-getting. In their paper, Tran and Nguyen (2020) have used the terms feelings, moods, and affective responses interchangeably. The degree to which a consumer believes a blog is pleasing is measured by affective (Tran & Nguyen, 2020). They have concluded that there is significant influence between affective attitude and purchase intention.

As suggested by Bian and Forsythe (2012), affective attitude is the emotional rewards and feeling like a sense of pleasure and happiness. They conclude that a positive affective attitude towards a brand can be a strong predictor to purchase intention (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Thus, favorable perceptions and beliefs will determine a more reliable link with consumer emotional attachment to a brand or product Siu, Kwan, and Zeng (2016). The findings of Siu et al. (2016) suggest consumers' affective attitude has a significant influence on purchase behavior. The findings of Ortegon-Cortázar and Royo-Vela (2019) stated that affective state do influence the intention to visit the mall. Similar results by Coley and Burgess (2003) posited that affective components have a significant relationship with impulse buying. Hence,

H3: There is a significant relationship between affective and intention to purchase health and beauty products.

Authenticity

According to Beverland et al. (2008), authenticity refers to values that differentiate the product from others (as cited in van Esch et al., 2018). As well, authenticity is a consumer experience of authentic consumption (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010). Chhabra (2005) has concluded that authenticity is intangible, and it is a value assessment or judgment and consumers' genuineness (as cited in Peng & Ke, 2015). In modern-day society, there has been a widening search for authenticity in the consumption of products and services (Gilmore and Pine, 2007, as cited in Li, DiPietro, and Levitt, 2014). Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) have posited that authenticity via social media posts can promote feelings of engagement, or emotional attachment with consumers. Online consumers are becoming more suspicious of the information given to them (Schuckert,2016, as cited in Kao, Hill, and Troshani, 2020). In their study, Kao et al. (2020) suggested that perceived information authenticity is relevant in considering the influence on purchase decisions because authentic information influences consumers' value judgment.

The authenticity of social media posts is measure through the believability and realism of customers in evaluating the quality of a post (van Esch et al., 2018). Authenticity consists of expressing creativity such as original pictures, text, and the occasional video in which the content is factual, opinion, and also emotion during

the post (Audrezet et al., 2018). Lawrence, Fournier, and Brunel (2013) have posited that it is critical to establish authenticity, credibility, and trustworthiness with customers (as cited in van Esch et al.,2018). Restaurants have used authenticity as a unique selling point (Lu, Gursoy, and Lu, 2015). Moreover, authenticity can help to increase customers' purchase intention (Napoli et al., 2014). Therefore, authenticity is used in this study to identify if the advertisement content can influence purchase intention. Thus,

   H4: There is a significant relationship between authenticity and intention to purchase health and beauty products.

Figure 1: The Study's Conceptual Framework
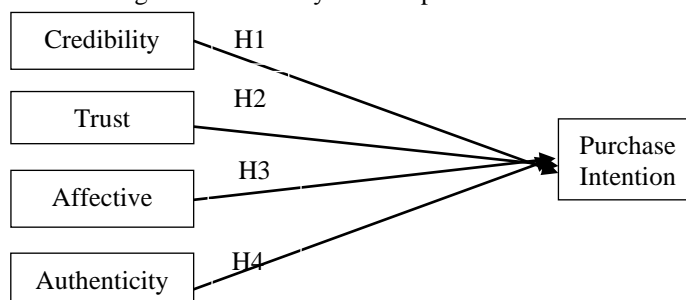
III. Methodology

A self-administered structured online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to measure all variables. The questionnaires used in this study are adapted questions from previous studies (refer Table 1). It consists of six sections, i.e., Section A, Section B, Section C, Section D, Section E, and Section F. Section A consists of questions on demographic profiles. The items on credibility, trust, affective, authenticity, and intention to purchase are listed from Section B to Section F. The sampling technique for the study is snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling, The Statistical Package for Social Science (S.P.S.S.) version 24, was the statistical procedures for the study. The study has also conducted a pilot test on 30 respondents. The reliability analysis is to measure the stability and internal consistency of instruments.

Table 1: List of Questionnaires

Section	Dimension	Items	Sources
B	Credibility	5	van Esch et al., 2018; Mutum et al., 2018
C	Trust	5	Goyal et al., 2013; Hsu et al., 2013
D	Affective	5	Hsu et al., 2013; van Esch et al., 2018
E	Authenticity	5	van Esch et al.,2018; Aliyar & Mutambala, 2015
F	Purchase Intention	5	Alalwan, 2018; Goyal et al., 2013

Table 2: Pilot Test Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of item	Cronbach's Alpha
Credibility	5	0.728
Trust	5	0.859
Affective	5	0.881
Authenticity	5	0.805
Purchase Intention	5	0.730

Table 2 shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the pilot test. The findings have shown that the Cronbach Alpha values are larger than 0.70, which indicated that the measured variables are reliable and denoted the existence of internal consistency. Thus, this result allowed the distribution of the questionnaire to the actual

respondents. Two hundred replies were for the target of the study. However, the study only obtained 194 answers, but only 180 questionnaires were usable. Even so, the usable rate was 90 percent.

IV. Results and discussions

Overall, the results showed that out of 180 respondents, 134 were females (74%), while the other 46 (26%) were males. Most of the respondents were between 21 to 30 years old (68, 37.8%), while 56 (31.1%) were below the age of 20 years old. Respondents between the age of 31 to 40 years old were 15 (8.3%), another 14 (7.8%) were in the age group between 41 to 50 years old. The last category of age bracket was above 51 years old, with 27 (15%). Furthermore, 124 (68.9%) respondents were below the age of 30 years old, and most of them were students 86 (47.8%).

Table 3 shows the Cronbach Alpha values for the study's variables. Notably, constructs for trust, affective, authenticity, and purchase intention were higher than 0.70, thus indicating the reliability of the measured variables. While the construct for credibility was 0.679, meaning it was in the range of moderate reliability. Thus, indicating reliability among the measured variables.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach Alpha
Credibility	5	0.679
Trust	5	0.724
Affective	5	0.758
Authenticity	4	0.722
Purchase Intention	4	0.701

The results in Table 4 below shows the relationships between credibility, trust, affective, and authenticity variables with customers' purchase intention. The relationships between credibility, trust, and affective with customers' purchase intention have shown moderate positive relationships (credibility, r=0.430, trust, r=0.504, affective, r=0.451). However, there is a weak positive relationship between authenticity (r=0.073) and customer purchase intention.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Purchase Intention
Purchase Intention	1
Credibility	0.430**
Trust	0.504**
Affective	0.451**
Authenticity	0.073**

Note:** Correlation is significant at the level 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Standard β	Sig.
Credibility	0.139	0.078
Trust	0.312	0.000
Affective	0.298	0.000
Authenticity	0.018	0.774

Table 5 above presented the outcomes of the variables' theorized relationships. Overall, four hypotheses were tested using the Multiple Regression analysis. The predicted significant relationship of credibility (H1) and authenticity (H4) were not supported as the significant values are 0.078 and 0.774, respectively (p> 0.05). On the other hand, the predicted significant relationships of trust (H2) and affective (H3) were supported by the significant values of 0.00 (p<0.05). It has been empirically proven that trust (H2) is a determinant of purchase intention. The significant positive relationship between trust and purchase intention is consistent with Silva et al. (2019) conclusion that states trust had influenced purchase intentions. This outcome is also supported by Das

(2016), which found customer trust is typical in online shopping because the shopper relies on the internet for information about the purchase that leads them to purchase.

For affective variable (H3), the significant relationship with purchase intention is supported by van Esch et al. (2018). Studies by Boateng and Okoe (2015) and Lu et al. (2014) also posited similar results where affective is influenced by customer purchase intention. Customers have the intention to purchase health and beauty products on social media because of their positive attitude toward the advertisements and believe the posts are trustworthy.

The insignificant relationships between credibility and authenticity (H1 and H4) are similar to the outcomes in van Esh et al. (2018), where they found that these two dimensions (credibility and authenticity) did not influence purchase intention.

Based on the results obtained above, it can be concluded that out of the four independent variables, there are only two variables that are significant or accepted (H2 and H3) towards the study. Therefore, the hypotheses results will be summarized on Table 6 as follow:

Table 6: Hypotheses Results

	Hypotheses	Results
H1	There is a significant relationship between credibility and intention to purchase health and beauty products.	Not Supported
H2	There is a significant relationship between trust and intention to purchase health and beauty products.	Supported
H3	There is a significant relationship between affective and intention to purchase health and beauty products.	Supported
H4	There is a significant relationship between authenticity and intention to purchase health and beauty products.	Not Supported

V. Conclusions

As the number of internet users in this region increased, so does the e-commerce industry, which had been growing by leaps and bounds over the past few years. The growth in the number of internet users has led people to have social media applications on their phones. At the same time, the trend for people to be more conscious of their health and beauty had prompted the sale of health and beauty products. These health and beauty conscious customers are continually looking for advertisements that emphasize on health and beauty products.

The study has revealed that consumers' purchase intention of health and beauty products are affected by trust and affective variables. Therefore, health and beauty products sellers should focus on the causal relationships between trust and affective attitude to boost consumers' intention to purchase health and beauty products. The consistency between consumers' affective and behavioral intentions has been established in consumer behavior literature. A favorable affective attitude on consumers is likely to take actions that reflect their affective attitude. The significant relationship between affective attitude and purchase intention is influenced by brand awareness (Laroche & Brisoux, 1989, as cited in Tran & Nguyen, 2020). Thus, if a consumer's brand awareness is high, their affective attitude towards it will be positive. Since affective attitude towards any sponsored recommendation post will be affected by brand awareness, marketers perhaps should build brand awareness through repetitive advertisements and ensure that their products' brand awareness is high in the consumers' eyes if they want to sponsor any bloggers or influencers.

In online purchases, human contact is lost; thus, customers rely on trust to influence their purchases. From table 6, the $\square$ value for trust is the highest among all variables ($\square$=0.312). This indicated trust as the most influential factor for purchase intention. Thus, marketers should ensure their social media advertisements are trusted by online shoppers. This result is consistent with previous research that has emphasized that online shoppers buying behavior is more likely to be affected by social media advertisement trustworthy contents. In conclusion, all the findings of this research have practical implications where marketers should work to improve the trustworthy content and affective attitude of social media advertising by using more positive language, create content that is easy to understand, and happy to better connect with the online shoppers.

The insignificant relationship between credibility and purchase intention can be attributed to the fact that most respondents are young, where the majority of the respondents are below age 30 years old (69%). Perhaps for them, the social media advertisements that are credible are not necessary to influence them to purchase as long as they trust social media advertisements. For future research, the study can be replicated to older respondents or different markets who are more matured that could give different results on the study.

In this study, the authenticity of social media advertisements does not predict the purchase intention of health and beauty products. This finding is consistent with the results of van Vliet (n.d), where the research had concluded that advertising authenticity does not influence product purchase intention. The product effectiveness

and the effect of products are not uniform among the users, as product effectiveness depends on individuals (van Vliet, n.d.). The finding on authenticity and its relationship with product purchase intention could assist marketers in deciding whether to use or not to use authenticity strategy will depend on the description and category of products. Therefore, marketers need to obtain sufficient information on the influences of social media marketing dimensions that can encourage health and beauty product purchases for the benefits of their marketing and promotional efforts.

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