

Self-Presentation and The Use of Microcelebrities (Instafamous) As A Medium of Attraction in Product Endorsement

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Received: 28 April 2023 | Accepted: 1 August 2023 | Published: 1 September 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ijbtm.2023.5.3.19>

Abstract: *In an advanced world, humans need information every second. Everything moves fast beyond boundaries and limits. There are various communication media that can be used by the users either print media or digital media for searching information. Media plays an important role in shaping people's style and behavior. Malaysia has huge number of online shopping usage. On top of that, the most purchased product categories from the online stores in Malaysia such as fashion and accessories, beauty and health care, electronic and sports item. The development of technology brings an impact on consumer behavior. It brings emergence of social media where people can connect each other and give the easiness to find information. The aim of this research is to identify, analyze and assessing the credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities / Instafamous for Product endorsement in Malaysia. This research will provide an understanding on the issue of the micro celebrities and providing better knowledge of what are the factors influencing information adoption and how does the features provide in Instagram facilitates in the process of evaluation. Besides, the finding of this research will also contribute in the marketing field by extending knowledge of the marketers on the users of Instagram. Qualitative method is used by conducting an interview and content analysis to understand the credibility of social media influencers in 'instagram' towards product endorsement in Malaysia. Therefore, the finding of this research can also be the reference or guidelines for future researchers to do their studies in relation to this topic.*

Keywords: Micro-celebrities, Social media Influencer, Product Endorsement, Instagram

1. Introduction

In an advanced world, humans need information every second. Everything moves fast beyond boundaries and limits. There are various communication media that can be used by the users either print media or digital media for searching information. Media plays an important role in shaping people's style and behavior. In the past, people will need to travel out from their house to purchase or shop for the product they want. However, internet or social media has solved the problem, and now we able to shopping what we want through online media. Based on the statistic that has been published by Malaysia's Export (2018), it stated that Malaysia has approximately 25 million active internet user that used daily. Hence, 25 million active internet users equal to 79 percent of the total population of Malaysia, which can further prove that the majority of the Malaysian has adopt internet into their daily life.

As the internet service and the development of mobile grow Malaysia has huge number of online shopping usage. On top of that, the most purchased product categories from the online

stores in Malaysia such as fashion and accessories, beauty and health care, electronic and sports item. The development of technology brings an impact on consumer behavior. It brings emergence of social media where people can connect each other and give the easiness to find information. Electronic of world-of-mouth (E-WOM) has seen as important for people to find review before buy a product.

Nowadays, it arises new celebrities in social media as we know as online celebrities or micro-celebrities. In social media, micro celebrities is used by people to give them confidence in buying decision.

The overwhelming and popularity of social media sites has captivated researcher to research about credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities for product endorsement in Malaysia. Instagram reported more than 700 million monthly users in 2018. As Instagram is fastest-growing social media Platform, this research will focus on Instagram platform media to conduct the research. Since most of the companies out there increasingly use micro-celebrities or instafamous for product endorsement, the aim of this research is to identify, analyze and determine the credibility of micro-celebrities as marketing tools and assess consumer's attitude and behavior.

According to Marwick (2015), The micro-celebrities may not be as great or popular as actor, singer or television presenter because they just popular in media social such as Facebook, tweeter, Instagram, YouTube and etc, but is able to inhabit the celebrity subject position through the use of the social media technologies. Social media enables micro-celebrity to promote and marketing themselves using any kind of strategies. To be famous, individual no longer need to achieve or possess talents in a certain field, they must now gain a wide followership on social media(Byod,2011). The more follower they have the more popular and income they get. Due to the rapid growth in micro-celebrity product endorsement, the competition in social media has increased time to time and most of the people start thinking to be part of them. According to Wilcox, (2011) People are likely to imitate the success of their favourite celebrities and try to obtain a similar degree of positive feedback on their Instagram profiles.

2. Problem Statement

The rise of social media applications in recent times has significantly altered the socioeconomic status of the country and its users. Almost all the services that users need are at their fingertips. As human beings, it's so important for us to be able to communicate and forge personal connections with one another. However, these floods and facilities also have many impacts on society. According to Jessica Brown (2018), With the rise of social media many companies and entrepreneurs are using social media as a marketing tool. Micro celebrities or Influencers are characterized by a large number of loyal and dedicated social media followers. They are perceived as experts in their niches and their recommendations are often highly regarded by their followers (Grin, 2020). Therefore, the use of micro celebrities is very much-needed by marketers for marketing their products. In Malaysia Micro Celebrities will be divided into several categories such as fashion influencers, beauty influencers, food influencers, travel influencers and lifestyle influencers (Nadira, 2020). So, there are a number of issues and one of them is the dumping of micro celebrities out of control. This is because no terms and criteria are defined as micro celebrities. Only based on their popularity and followers and not the knowledge and education they have. Therefore, there are several unethical marketing patterns that they carry out. What is more worrying is, there is no system can be

block their marketing patterns, only be blocked or taken into action when their marketing issues are goes viral. According Grin, (2020) to identifying and targeting the right audience is a crucial part of every marketing strategy. However, it is often a painstaking process and requires a deep understanding of your potential customers. Hence, this research will help entrepreneur to get clear information about credibility and self-presentation of Micro celebrities in Malaysia. In addition, this research is important because of can provided guidelines for those newbies are interested to be micro celebrities.

3. Objectives of the Research

- i. To investigate the self-presentation of promotion used by Instafamous in Malaysia
- ii. To analyze the credibility of Malaysia instafamous in instagram
- iii. To evaluate the impact of communication between instafamous and followers

4. The Purpose of Research

The aim of this research is to identify, analyze and assessing the credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities / Instafamous for Product endorsement in Malaysia. The common use of Instagram Influencer had driven marketing in the industry that movement 3 trillion euro per year worldwide, representing 2% of the global gross domestic product is a sign that it is relevant to study deeply (Renata Abreu 2019). This research will provide an understanding on the issue of the micro celebrities and providing better knowledge of what are the factors influencing information adoption and how does the features provided in Instagram facilitates in the process of evaluation. Besides, the finding of this research will also contributes in the marketing field by extending knowledge of the marketers on the users of Instagram. It is said so because, the result and the finding of the research will be able to help consumers and marketers in recognizing the main problem or factors of users adopting information while utilizing the data as a guideline in structuring a better marketing strategy using Instagram or make improvement on their service and website.

Other than hand, this research also contributes in providing a deeper insight of how to evaluate the importance of micro celebrities and eWOM message. It is vital for the Instagram users as there are a lot of fake review spreading on the web, and those are users who never evaluate the received information or with lower education level might adopt the wrong information and hence lead wrong decision making causing them suffer from cognitive dissonance. Therefore, the finding of this research can also be the reference or guidelines for future researchers to do their studies in relation to this topic.

5. Theoretical Framework

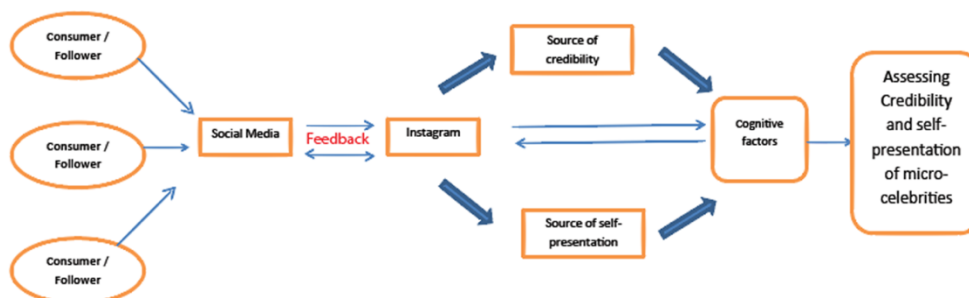


Figure 1: Adaption from Advertising Theory (Michael Solomon 2009), Bandura Theory (1986), Ohanian (1990) and Goffman theory by J. Sleka (2019)

In this research, the researcher combines several theories to achieve the goals of the research conducted. The theory used is advertising theory, Bandura theory, Ohanian and Goffman theory. The use of advertising theory in this research, it is because based on Shelly Rogers (2012), the theory created for scholars not directly in advertising but in related fields such as public relations, marketing, public health, and communication, as well as those who want to deepen their understanding of and ability to support ad functions in their organization. These statements make researcher confident that the theory used is appropriate for the research conducted. Consumers are one of the important points in the advertising theory. Therefore, to strengthen this research the researcher will elaborate more details the important of consumers. Apart from that the bandura theory is also used in this research. Researchers use bandura theory in this research is because this theory is related to behaviorist and cognitive learning towards individuals. Hence, this theory is very closely related to the research conducted which is to study the credibility and self-presentation of micro celebrities in instagram. According to Patrick O'Grady (2012), Bandura's theory presents the fact that human behavior is not created and developed by the environment. Rather that humans personality and behaviors are directly related to what they encounter and come into contact with. Researchers also used Ohanian theory to further strengthen the importance of the research conducted. Researchers use this theory because this theory describes the source of credibility that is related to attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. The points found in this theory are very helpful in facilitating the research. The last theory used in this research is Goffman theory. This theory is also relevant to this research because Goffman theory is related to self-presentation. Goffman'S theory elaborates on expression given which is verbal symbol used to transmit information and trying to make a certain impression and this theory also examines expression given off which is non-verbal involuntary features such as tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and proxemics (Joseph Slerka 2019)

Research Area

The Research area chosen by researcher is Instagram and will focus on Malaysia micro celebrities 'Instafamous'. Some things to consider for conducting the study are:

1. Fulfills the main purpose of the study which is to study credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities for product endorsement.
2. The study focuses on micro celebrities based on instagram
3. Good cooperation is very much needed by the researcher with the relevant parties. This is because it can ensure the smoothness of the research that will be conducted.

6. Research Instruments and Sampling Methods

A research instrument is a tool used to obtain, measure, and analyze data from subjects around the research topic. According to Nayeem Shaukat (2017) Sampling is the method of selecting a representative subset of the population called sample. Sampling makes research more accurate and economical. It's the sampling method which actually determines the generalizability of the research findings. The data collection sources in this research specialize in non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling method mostly involves judgment. Instead of randomization, participants are selected because they are easy to access. According to Nayeem Shaukat (2017), the non-probability sample is used to study existing theoretical insights or developing new ones. This method of sampling is considered less expensive, less complicated and easy to apply as compared to its counterpart. Have a four type of non-probability sampling which is convenience sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. In this research researcher will use purposive sampling to answer objective of the research.

Primary and Secondary Data

The source of data collection in this research also involves two types of data, which is primary data and secondary data. Research using field study activities is one of the techniques for collecting prima data. This primary resource will be obtained from informers through interviews, observations and visual recordings. In this study the researcher will interview some participant consisting of micro celebrities (instafamous) who only focus on 'instagram'.

Observation methods through social media will also be carried out. It is resources that can help researchers know the style and way of marketing used by micro celebrities on instagram. The researcher will conduct the observation on instagram according to the number of followers for each micro celebrity, the categories of micro celebrities, types of products and brands sold by them and feedback from consumers.

Apart from using the primary resources, the researcher also uses secondary resources to complete the study conducted. The source of this study will be obtained from reference materials such as books, journals, social media and information sources from websites.

7. Research Design

The purpose of this research is to assessing credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities for product endorsement in Malaysia. The case study design will be used in the production of this research. It is in line with the aim of the research of understanding and knowing credibility and self-presentation of Micro-Celebrities for product endorsement in Malaysia. Case study is a very important approach to this research. This is because the researcher can understand in more detail and in depth. This qualitative research can be distinguished by the scope of the research which is the research involving individuals, groups, entire programs or activities. It also involves several methods of data collection such as documentation, photo visuals, historical data, interviews, and observations. This data analysis can make the whole study more holistic and detailed. In this study the researcher is focusing on the micro celebrities found on social media which is "instagram"

In qualitative research there are three types of variation in data production which is single instrument case study, collective case study and intrinsic case study (John W. Creswell:2007). To conduct this study the researcher chose to use a single instrument category case study which is research that focuses on one issue and is limited to micro celebrities on instagram that called 'Instafamous'. Case studies will conduct to answer the real question when the data collected will be analyzed.

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