Of Trust and Influence: A Look At Social Media Influencers and Brand Promotion

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Abstract

There has been a clout of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in influencing public perception about organizations lately. From fashion fitness to home décor, these new breeds of celebrities that can either make or break a brand. Organizations are realizing the importance of SMIs to their products and services where they provide a link between organizations and their consumers through brand promotion and enhancement. The reputation a brand gains from its social media influencers through two-way conversations helps build direct relationships with its key consumers and encourages brand loyalty for future sustainability. Thus, social media tools are becoming more valuable and have become a communication strategy for organizations and consumers alike. SMIs are seen as mediator and a valuable source when it comes to product and service reviews as well as recommendation. Social media platforms such as Instagram are popular with SMIs and for the purpose of brand promotion. SMIs are brand story tellers and ambassadors that organizations need to incorporate in their brands conversations. SMIs are found to enhance not only brand reputation but also corporate reputation. This study explores the influence that SMIs have towards brands from the perspective of youth. This study uses the quantitative approach and adopts an online questionnaire strategy which targets youth and young adult from the age of 19-30 years of age in the capital of Malaysia. 120 questionnaires were analysed via the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to examine the role SMIs play in brand promotion and endorsement, and the perception of consumers about them and the role they play. The key results reveals that social media influencer creates trustworthiness, delivers information as well as generates influence in terms of brand reputation. This has led to an increase of sales towards the brand. However, some respondents suggested that their trust on SMI and the brand is reduced with the realisation that the SMI received financial and sponsorhips benefits.. The respondents felt that the paid endorsement is skewed towards advertisement rather than a truthful review. Hence, a sense of genuineness and truthfulness

were missing and does not really exist when it comes to social media Influencers' process of endorsing. Other findings also described the new products and services that SMIs would select to endorse. The practice of using social media influencer effects in the long run is not yet to be determine but from the findings, we can conclude that the use of social media influencer will increase. Future research can explore the implication of this effects to the brand and consumer perception.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Social Media, Influence, Social Media Influencer, Trust, Brand Reputation, Online Public Relations

Introduction

The ever-growing influence of social media such as Instagram with both consumers and companies has opened up opportunities for new business models as well acts as forms of online branding and social commerce. Social media for example, Instagram has a total of worldwide spending on advertising. This has increased by 27% from 2015 to 2016, and social media users should reach 2.95 billion by 2020 (Statista, 2017). Issues arise that brands should use a more human tone of voice on social media (Lund and Sutton, 2014). However, there is still less evidence that this informal style is the optimal way to communicate with all consumers as different brands have different target audience. (Beukeboom, Kerkhof, and de Vries, 2015). Social media influencers represent a new type of independent, third-party endorsers who shape an audience's attitudes. They post their content through blogs, Instagram post, tweets, and other social media channels. Social media influencers create content that promotes certain brands with the goal of obtaining a following and brand recognition. The increasingly high success of social media influencers is crucially important to brand especially new rising brands and services. Therefore, technology has been developed to identify and track influencers' relevance to a brand or organization. This technology or more known as social media analytics tracks the number of hits on a post, times a blog is shared, picture likes and comments, and followers' growth and loss. All of these aspects are vital on determining a social media influencer's success (Fredberg, 2003).

Influencer marketing is the new trend on today's digital era. Influencer marketing on social media opens up a new channel for brands to connect with consumers more directly, organically, and at scale to their everyday lives (Klara, 2014). Social media in influencers promote brands through their personal lives, making them relatable to the average consumer. Although some content are staged but influencer try their best to accommodate to brand goals towards their followers lives and believes. Kim et al (2021) suggest that when an influencer introduces a commercial, message attitudes and perceived corporate reputation were more positive as compared to without a SIM.

According to Ledbetter, "When a party attempts to influence another to take certain actions, a dynamic ensues that can change the course and content of their relationship" (Ledbetter, 2017). Influencers truly serve as the ultimate connection between a brand and a consumer. Through their candidness and openness with consumers as well as engagement, influencers have high social clout and credibility (Buyer, 2016). This eventually makes the phenomenon of social media influencer so successful and it kept on growing over the past years. Traditional marketing such as television and radio advertisements targeted mostly towards mass audiences and general public, on the other hand, influencers have the unique ability to target niche audience.

Brands, no matter big or small, have always had a focus on targeting their consumers' wants and needs. The image a brand gains from its social media influencers helps build direct

relationships with its key consumers and encourages brand loyalty for future sustainability. While a brand does not have total control over its online conversation, the direct voice of an influencer and trust that consumers have for this individual is there in their brand through two-way conversation that is established for the product via social media outlets, for example, Instagram (Booth and Matic, 2011). In addition, social media tools are becoming more valuable and one of the core elements of a communication strategy in an average consumer's life. There are a wide range of factors that cause influencer marketing to become increasingly popular. These factors range from difficult-to-measure criteria, such as "quality of content," to highly measurable factors including video views and search engine rank. With media platforms rapidly improving and evolving, these criteria are bound to change over time. Other criteria for evaluating an influence include their participation level. These includes frequency of activity, and prominence in the market or community. In terms of goals on the influencer's side, social media influencers work to enhance relationships with key audiences by improving the reputation of the business as well as brand, driving customer awareness on their online activities, and engaging in potential customers comments and feedback (Booth and Matic, 2011).

Social media influencer helps create trust and credibility towards brands and organization. It comes in hand with the word of mouth. Word of mouth is known to be one of the most credible and trusted sources of marketing. Social media influencers are experts on electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Social media influencers take on the role of forming consumers opinions on products and services. It is in the interest of the company as well as the influencer to keep online conversations positive and convince other consumers to try products in a way that makes it feel as if the decision to make the purchase was in the interest of the consumer as opposed to the persuasion of the influencer itself (Lee and Young, 2009).

Literature Review and Methods
Social marketing theory can be defined as implementing as well as applying commercial marketing concepts to a wide range of social issues and problems. In explanation, it is also, the idea that social marketers would be able to "influence and makes society think the acceptance of a certain believes". Such ways are done by a few methods which are first, designing, second, implementing and lastly controlling well-crafted social marketing programs. In addition, this marketing program includes product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research (Kotler and Zaltman, 2017). Social Marketing mostly relates to develop and incorporate marketing concepts with other approaches. These efforts are among efforts to influence behaviors that produce positive outcome towards individuals as well as communities for better living. On top of that, social marketing practice is guided by ethical principles as it seeks to integrate research, theory, audience and partnership insight in order to inform the delivery of competition sensitive and segmented social change programs that are effective and sustainable. (McAuley, 2014). There is no deny that in today's globalization era, company uses numerous effort in their marketing strategy. Hence, social marketers essentially became behavior change agents. Social marketers measured success in terms of behavioral outcomes compared in terms of social outcomes. One impact that the focus shifted to influencing "downstream" target audiences and away from influencing "upstream" stakeholders and the broader economic and socio-political structure within which all stakeholders operate (Dann, 2010). This also means that social marketers' practices placed far less emphasis on addressing underlying structural causes that may prevent individuals and communities from behaving in a way that contributes

to the greater social good (Hoek and Jones, 2011). For example, macro environment which in many includes the change in Malaysian culture taste as well as government regulations.

In evaluating the process of social marketing, it shifts the emphasis from measuring social marketing's influence on behaviors towards measuring its influence in achieving the goal of greater social good. Such an approach would, therefore, be very useful to social marketing, as it explicitly recognizes the need to measure the effects and the process of social marketing programs. Therefore, macro marketing can bring a level of scrutiny and investigation to social marketing programs that will ensure congruity with its overall ambitions of being effective and sustainable (Dholakia, 2010). The application of marketing principles occurs through participatory engagement. This is by using methods such as participatory action research (Ozanne and Saatcioglu, 2008) and also community learning and action (Chambers, 2011). Through both methods, social marketer seeks to collectively enable a set of opportunities or substantial freedoms that individuals may choose to act on, which eventually transform society for future benefit.

The ever-growing influence of social media such as Instagram with both consumers and companies has opened up opportunities for new business models as well acts as forms of online branding and social commerce. Social media for example, Instagram has a total of worldwide spending on advertising. This has increased by 27% from 2015 to 2016, and social media users should reach 2.95 billion by 2020 (Statista, 2017). Issue arise that brands should use a more human tone of voice on social media (Lund and Sutton, 2014). However, there is still less evidence that this informal style is the optimal way to communicate with all consumers as different brands have different target audience. (Beukeboom et al., 2015). Social media influencers represent a new type of independent, third-party endorsers who shape an audience's attitudes. They post their content through blogs, Instagram post, tweets, and other social media channels. Social media influencers create content that promotes certain brands with the goal of obtaining a following and brand recognition. Influencer marketing is the new trend on today's digital era. Influencer marketing on social media opens up a new channel for brands to connect with consumers more directly, organically, and at scale to their everyday lives (Klara, 2014). Social media in influencers promote brands through their personal lives, making them relatable to the average consumer. Although some content are staged but influencer try their best to accommodate to brand goals towards their followers lives and believes. According to Ledbetter, "When a party attempts to influence another to take certain actions, a dynamic ensues that can change the course and content of their relationship" (Ledbetter, 2017). Influencers truly serve as the ultimate connection between a brand and a consumer.

Social marketing theory is a theory that mostly focused on people and individuals which includes their wants and needs. It also involves the involvement of aiming for aggregated behavior change as well as focusing on priority segments of the population. It is also note that social marketing theory has the ability to change one lifestyle, belief and can change social (Lefebvre, 2011). The use of social media influencer in endorsement has been a common marketing practice for brands and organization over the past few years. This is in order to support or endorse their brand quality and corporate image. Using social media influencer in endorsement has numerous advantages as social media influencer are the new breed of celebrity as they are able to attract new potential customer. In addition, the power of social media influencer based on their social media presence and engagement occasionally have the power to revive a product that has lost society interest by creating new interest from consumers (Till, 2013). Endorsement can also enhance brand equity while maintain brand

credibility in a short period of time as the internet is just a click away as well as position a brand affect consumers' attitude toward a brand, enhance brand recognition at the same time generate a distinct personality to the endorsed brand. The endorsement, depending on the popularity of the social media influencer, can be extremely expensive ranging from 3 types of social media influencer, namely, micro, macro and mega social media influencer which price starting from three digits to up to six-digit payment figures. Micro social media influencer typically has less than 10, 000 followers while macro are the ones with more than 10, 000 followers and mega social media influencer are the ones typically with more than 1 million followers. Take for example, Kim Kardashian charges about 500,000 USD per posting for endorsement deals. Deciding on which social media influencer to be used by brands and organization is depending on their target audience, budget and the type of service or product provided (Petty and Mullikin, 2016).

There is an increasing amount of social media influencer. With the help of good content and good engagement, everyone can almost be a social media influencer. With this increase, brand ownership is highly being shared among public or social media influencer followers as well as brands themselves. Through social networks, blogs and videos, consumers are attached in the dissemination of information and that is where social media influencer act as a mediator in delivering valuable information towards the public within the cause that they are passionate about. For example, fashion, fitness to home décor. In today's dynamic business industry, social media influencer are now the individuals broadcasting personal or second-hand stories to their social networks for the world to see. In simple words, social media influencer are a brand's storytellers and the new breed of brand ambassadors in delivering valuable source (Radwanick, 2010).

Social media is a form of renewed access to a wide number of real-time information that can be delivered with just a tap of a finger. Social media influencer account enables information transfer to organization with a real time access to wide range of audience. Such information, for example, information posted by customers in their daily life. Comments posted on social media by any of their followers from any every part of the world would eventually become a source of knowledge and action for the organization. Hence, information is available in real time and are assessable for free. However, on the one hand, sometimes, social media influencer strives to get information about their followers as it is to be used for marketing and promotional purposes particularly towards influencer marketing company. For example, GetKraft which is an influencer marketing agency in south east Asia. Therefore, research and development are needed in order to anticipate current trends as well as getting customer insights in order for social media influencer to deliver reliable source towards their followers (Gandomi and Haider, 2015). Marketers rely heavily on social media influencer to deliver information. That is why, more and more of them deliver news or information towards their followers and society as a whole. It is important for marketers to adapt their strategies to reach a wider networked of consumers. Marketers should always place more focus on tactics such as word-of-mouth and storytelling with the help of social media influencer. In addition, social media advertising continues to evolve, and its usage will increase further with stronger results. This is mostly because of its ability to tightly and niche target audiences based on social media activity (Cohen, 2011). The roles of social media influencer is not only limited to promoting as well as creating content and brand awareness. They act as a mediator in delivering news towards their followers and this includes in being as the middle person or mediator. Brands and organization rely on social media influencer in order to get an idea, product or service out towards the public. This will eventually create trust. Mediating

information has levels of social support which are related to emotional closeness in social relationships. From there, the intensity of social media use is related to the degree of closeness and engagement in relationships which the social media influencer has with their followers (Burke & Kraut, 2014). In order to mediate a content, it needs to go through communication which involves individuals such as social media influencer. Individual who are active in receiving as well as delivering ideas from the media, and those who rely on other personal contacts as their guides define opinion leaders as "the individuals who would likely to influence other individual in their very own environment. Social media influencer is characterized as the individuals, with a wide set of personal connections, who play a key influential role in influencer and mediating information (Weimann, 2009). They are also considered as a source and guide that indicate the importance of opinion leaders that not only relies on formal power or prestige, but on their ability to serve as mediator that would eventually allow their followers to obtain information (Filieri & McLeay, 2014).

Social media influencer is able to take on a vital role in providing opportunities in mediating and in some cases altering information towards their followers. Such act should be done correctly so that it does not create chaos. Social media influencer mediate information and news in many ways. For example, in launching a new product or introducing an existing product to a new market, social media influencer would use the new force in the two-step flow of communication (Kumar, Kee, & Charles, 2010). This would mean that social media influencer would use various medium in mediating their content from using social network sites to provide a special promo code in their sponsored content post. In the end, the shared views, experiences and opinions of their followers would be characterized as an electronic form of word-of-mouth (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 2016). In order to create trust, social media influencer is needed as apart from stimulating sales, increasing brand awareness, improving brand image, gain more traffic to online platforms, minimizing marketing costs, and creating user interactivity on various platforms particularly social media by engaging with followers to post as well as sharing it. Social media influencer creates a sense of trustworthiness among their followers as brands and organization nowadays uses social media marketing in a more creative way with more engagement and a sense of personal touch towards a content post. For example, brands and organization have the ability, control and power to monitor as well as at the same time analyze conversations in social media with the help of hashtag and tags. This would enable marketers to understand on how customer, new and current, view a company or organization (Rokka et al., 2014).

The effectiveness of social media marketing may also depend on the trust level of individual to a certain brand or organization. This is where, social media influencer plays an important role in creating a sense of trustworthiness towards potential customer. That is why, brands and organization must continuously manage new obstacles along with organizational and philosophical changes. For example, if there is a crisis that would in turn reflect bad reputation towards brands or organization, specific actions need to be taken immediately as in today's globalization era, an issue could be virial within seconds. In addition, brands and organization tries to minimize the potential of improper social media use among its employees. It is done by deciding and implementing on specific regulations on how social media should and must be used correctly (Arons et al., 2014).

A sense of trustworthiness particularly in the vast and quick online environment has gained wide interest among brands and organization in using social media influencer to deliver news and new products. This is because society can rely more on social media influencer as they are less intimidating and popular as celebrity. Thus, a sense of relatability is there (Kim & Park,

2013). Along with the advancement in online transactions as well as electronic commerce, trust is key in determining a brands and organization future success. If there is a lack of trust, it would eventually become a problematic barrier in the adoption of e-commerce as most internet savvy user these days prefer online transaction and eventually they look up for social media influencer for reference and reviews. This is where social media influencer acts as a medium in creating trust for brands and organization (Chang et al., 2013). However, there are concerns about an online store's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, is the adoption of message as well as incorporating communication technologies such as social media across countries. E-commerce has widely grown and purchasing products online from around the globe has become direct and convenient for potential customer. In return, with the help of social media influencer in creating trustworthiness, this would eventually provide new business opportunities for both domestic and international online store (Kirs & Bagchi, 2012).

In order to conduct this research, quantitative method has been use for the process of collection and gathering the data. A quantitative method is a method where it focuses on statistical as well as objective measurement with numerical analysis. Data are collected using methods such as polls, questionnaires and survey. It can also be gathered by manipulating pre-existing statistical data which are done by using computational techniques such as SPSS statistic software (Waldman and Jensen, 2016). A set of survey questionnaires will be developed throughout this study. There would be 120 sets of survey formulated for 120 respondents. The question will consist of on how the aspect of product, price and promotion of endorsement by social media influencer would affect individual, (the ones who follow social media influencer) on the effect of social media influencer acting as a valuable source of information, as an information mediator and create trustworthy. In order to get a good analysis, I need to know what I want to unveil and discover as an attempt to discover new knowledge as well as finding solutions to certain issues.

Results and Discussion

There are a total of 120 respondents providing feedback to questions that had been distributed. Selection of respondents targets the study focus on youth and young adult in Klang Valley. According to Table 1.0, it shows the distribution of respondents by gender, age, marital status, education level and income level. It shows that 68.3 percent of the 71 respondents were female. Whereas, by 31.7 percent of 49 respondents were male. In this context, the age of the respondent shows that most of them were in the age group of 19 to 22 years old which comes in the total of 47 respondents or equivalent to 45.0 percent. This is follows by the age of 23 until 26 years old which in total of 37 respondent of equivalent to 28.3 percent. And lastly, respondent with the age of 27 years old and above is a total of 36 respondents or equivalent to 26.7 percent. In terms of marital status, single respondent comes in a total of 70 respondent or equivalent to 83.3 percent. Married respondent comes in a total of 27 respondents or equivalent to 11.7 percent while divorce respondent comes in a total of 23 respondents or equivalent to 5.0 percent. Based on education level, respondent with high school education level comes in a total of 2 respondent tor equivalent to 3.3 percent while diploma respondent comes in a total of 26 respondents or equivalent to 10.0 percent. For undergraduate respondent, it is the most number of respondents in this study with a whopping of 57 respondents or equivalent with 61.7 percent meanwhile for postgraduate respondent comes in a total of 32 respondent or equivalent with 2.0 percent. Lastly, for respondent with a PhD education level, it comes in a total of 3 respondent or equivalent to

5.0 percent. Next is respondent income level. Respondent that ranges from youths that are still student are the factor that contributes to them answering they have no income source. Respondent who answered they don't have any income comes in a total of 36 or equivalent to 60.0 percent. Respondent with less than MYR1000 income comes in a total of 22 respondent or equivalent to 3.3 percent. MYR1000 to MYR3000 respondent comes in a total of 27 respondent or equivalent to 11.7 percent. Next is MYR3000 to MYR5000 with a total of 23 respondents or equivalent to 5.0 percent and lastly respondent with income more than mYR5000 is a total of 12 respondent or equivalent to 20.0 percent.

Table 1.0

Variables	Category	Total	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	71	68.3
	Male	49	31.7
Age	19 – 22 years old	47	45.0
	23 – 26 years old	37	28.3
	27 years old and above	36	26.7
Marital Status	Single	70	83.3
	Married	27	11.7
	Divorce	23	5.0
Education Level	High School	2	3.3
	Diploma	26	10.0
	Undergraduate	57	61.7
	Postgraduate	32	2.0
	PhD	3	5.0
Income Level	No income	36	60.0
	Less than MYR1000	22	3.3
	MYR1000 – MYR3000	27	11.7
	MYR3000 – MYR5000	23	5.0
	More than MYR5000	12	20.0
Total (N=120)			

This study measures the impact or social marketing theory which includes three aspects which are price, product and promotion among youths in Klang Valley. Based on statistical analysis when it is compute, the result are shown in Table 2.0 Therefore, the analysis found that the statement ''I look at the price of a product or service before purchasing them'' is the highest mean in the aspect of social marketing theory with a value of standard deviation of 4.916 followed by the statement ''I enjoy it where is a special promotion of a product or services t public spaces (ex: malls)'' which had the second highest mean and standard deviation of .770. Meanwhile, the third highest mean is 4.25 with a standard deviation .894 is with the statement ''I compare price of product or service before straight away making decision to

purchase'' and the fourth highest mean is ''I research a product in depth before I purchase them'' with a mean of 4.16 and with a standard deviation of .959. The fifth highest mean is ''I prefer to buy a product physically rather than online'' with a mean of 4.06 and standard deviation of .971. Accordingly, based on the context in the study of social marketing theory with the aspect of price, product and promotion youths look at the price of a product before purchasing them as they usually have no stable income. Hence, looking at a product price is the most important factor before deciding to purchase in order to manage their financial smartly. However, there is a mean value of the lowest in terms of buying a product based on its design rather than the product functionality. This particular statement has a mean of 2.70 or a standard deviation of 1.067. This great indicates that youths in Klang Valley focus more on product functionality rather than its design. There would be no use if the product is attractive and has great design but is not functional to be used in our daily lives. Statement ''I use special discount codes promoted on social media by social media influencer endorsements'' has the second lowest mean with the value of 3.31 with a standard deviation 1.214. This indicates that youths in Klang Valley does not really used special discount codes promoted by social media influencer in their social media endorsement. Whereas, the third lowest mean is 3.46 with a standard deviation of .929 with the statement ''I only buy a product or services when the price is already discounted''. This is because youths in Klang Valley have the tendency to spend for the things they like as they money is given from a financial source such as parents. Therefore, they don't really buy a particular product when it is already discounted.

Table 2.0

STATEMENT	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean*	Standard Deviation
I tend to buy a product that appeal to my lifestyle	0	3	34	40	43	4.05	0.909
I prefer to buy a product physically rather than online	1	3	31	41	44	4.06	.971
I research a product in depth before I purchase them	0	5	28	39	48	4.16	.959
I buy a product based on its design rather than its functionality	7	19	39	32	23	2.16	1.067
I look at the price of a product or service before purchasing them	0	2	25	39	54	4.96	4.916
I don't mind to spend on a higher price for branded / credible brands	3	3	38	43	33	3.66	1.036
I compare price of product or service before straight away making decision to purchase	0	3	29	38	50	4.25	.894
I only buy a product or services when the price is already discounted	1	5	49	35	30	3.46	.929
I enjoy it when there is a special promotion of a product or services at public spaces (ex: malls)	0	0	30	31	59	4.48	.770
Retailers and social media influencer tend to exaggerate in their promotions effort	0	3	30	48	39	4.05	.832
I click at the product or services promotions online when I see them	4	10	34	34	38	3.53	1.268
I use special discount codes promoted on social media by social media influencer endorsements	4	14	32	39	31	3.31	1.214

Likert Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Agree 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

Table 3.0 shows the overall endorsement by social media influencer ratio. These include the aspect of social media influencer act as a valuable source, a mediator and create trustworthiness. Once the survey was distributed, it is found that youths in Klang Valley they tend to do their own research on a product based on the statement '' I tend to do my own research when I feel social media influencer post skeptical issues or posting'' as it has the

highest mean with the value of 4.35 with a standard deviation of .798. Sometimes, social media influencer may post issues or posting that is less true or less credible. That is why, social media influencer followers among youths in Klang Valley may do their own small research if they feel social media influencer are not posting the correct information or news. Social media influencer is the new breed of ambassador rather than celebrities and they influence public's opinion on a certain issue. The second highest mean with the value of 3.983 with a standard deviation of .947 statement on '' I find out with the help of social media influencer, it is easy for me to know information, issues, products or services promptly as I often go through social media everyday''. This shows that youths in Klang Valley can know new information, issues, product or news with the help of social media influence as they often go through their social media on a day to day basis. It is normal for us to open our social media frequently throughout our entire day. That is why this statement has the second highest mean as yes, it is true that youths are often hooked on their phone as well as social media in order to stay updated. Next, the statement regarding ''I discover new services and products via social media influencer endorsement through their social media page'' has the third highest mean in the aspect of social media influence as a medium of valuable source, mediator and create trustworthiness. For this statement, it has a mean with the value 3.90 and a standard deviation of .969. This indicates that most youths discover new products, services and brands from social media influence. That is why; most new brands and entrepreneurs market their product or services by using social media influencer. Meanwhile, the fourth highest mean with a value of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.032 is the statement ''I believe that endorsement by social media influencer builds brand awareness and increase my personal trust level towards the products or services''. There is no deny that, social media influencer has the power to alter society's perception without us releasing it. It may be intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, with the help of social media influencer, brand awareness can be created and sustained in order to generate trust from new and current customer hence increasing sales on the long run. Lastly or the fifth highest mean is with the statement ''I know current issues, information, product or services from social media influencer rather than from the original source (company, government, organization etc)'' with a mean value of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.279. This shows that youths in Klang Valley get their dose of information, news or current issue from social media influencer that they follow. This may be rising from a factor that youths are more interested in scrolling social media rather than surfing news portal via their smartphones. Hence, information or news are being obtained from social media influencer. Meanwhile, the lowest mean in terms of social media influencer is with the statement ''I trust endorsement endorsed by social media influencer'' with mean value of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.151. This indicates that youths in Klang Valley do follow social media influencer, but they don't necessary trust endorsements by social media influencer. This may come from a factor where there is too much endorsement, endorsed by social media influencer hence leading to this finding. The second lowest mean is with the statement ''I believe in social media influencer posting when they post informative information''. This statement has a mean value of 3.43 and with a standard deviation value of .980. This statement has the second lowest mean as it may come from a factor where youths in Klang Valley does not truly believe social media influencer posting when they post informative information. Undeniably, yes, social media influencer acts as a person who deliver new news and information to youths in Klang Valley, but that does not mean that youths would trust these social media influencer 100 percent. Therefore, news may be bias as it may be endorsed in some sort of way. Next, is the statement ''I look up for social media influencer

reviews on product and services before buying or using them''. This statement has a mean value of 3.61 and a standard deviation with a value of 1.165. The reason why this statement lands in the third lowest mean is because social media influencers are paid to post product and services. That is where reviews might not be genuine as it is paid, and this makes youth in Klang Valley do not look for social media influencer reviews as references before trying new product or services. When social media influencers are paid to say only the positive in products or services, they must deliver a positive message in order to build good relationship with the brand. In addition, this would make social media influencer gets more endorsement opportunity all coming from a good relationship with brands they work with.

Table 3.0

STATEMENT	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Agree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean*	Standard Deviation
I believe in social media influencer posting when they post informative information	1	9	42	39	29	3.43	0.980
I tend to do my own research when I feel social media influencer post skeptical issues or posting	0	2	26	41	51	4.35	.798
I look up for social media influencer reviews on product and services before buying or using them	4	6	34	41	35	3.61	1.165
I discover new services and products via social media influencer endorsement through their social media page	1	3	36	41	39	3.90	.969
I find out with the help of social media influencer, it is easy for me to know information, issues, products or services promptly as I often go through social media everyday	1	2	35	41	41	3.98	.947
I know current issues, information, product or services from social media influencer rather than from the original source (company, government, organization)	4	8	32	34	42	3.70	1.279
I trust endorsement endorsed by social media influencer	2	12	41	31	34	3.38	1.151
I believe that endorsement by social media influencer builds brand awareness and increase my personal trust level towards the products or services	2	3	35	41	39	3.86	1.032
The more influential a social media influencer are, the more I trust his or her endorsement	4	4	39	35	38	3.65	1.176

Likert Scale: 1= Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Slightly Agree 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

The rise of new brands and organization has increased the number of social media influencer. These social media influence plays a crucial role in determining success of a company, their product or services. In the long run, with the correct use of social media influencer, it represents certain views of company. For example, makeup giants, Huda Beauty uses social media influencers who are fashion and beauty savvy to promote their latest product. Therefore, Huda Beauty is somehow synonym with an individual that is trend driven, stylish or makeup lovers. Referring to the findings of youths in Klang Valley, it is found that with the help of social media influencer, youths know information, issues, product or services promptly with the help of social media influencer as youths frequently check their social media networks on a daily basis.

Conclusions

Current and emerging brands can grow their business within a short period of time compared to previous decades with more than just using the traditional advertising method which are expensive. Using social media influencer may help in saving budget compared to traditional advertising. Traditional advertising focuses on mass market while by using social media influencer, brands have the opportunity and privilege to market their product and services particularly to a niche market. This is because some services and product are more suitable in generating growth with the help of social media influencer endorsement particularly when it only caters to a certain niche group. For example, a tobacco product is suitable to be marketed to those who smoke tobacco. Therefore, using social media influencer who smokes tobacco is a great choice as his or her followers could relate towards the product. Hence, awareness and brand recognition could be increase towards the brand (Briones, Kuch, Liu, & Jin, 2011). However, in the findings, it is found that youths do not really trust endorsement by social media influencer. Yes, they do know the latest product, services, issues and happenings from the social media influencer that they follow, but this does not necessarily mean that youths trust them. This could only result in brand awareness but does not generate in good sales for a certain period of time. Eventually, brands and organization would have to step up their game and strategize their marketing efforts in order for people to trust endorsement that is endorsed by social media influencer. Creative ideas as well as brand trust is not an easy thing to do and trust from society requires years and years to be build. Millennials are generations that are tech savvy and they know how to find out information on the internet. This is why; it is found that in this study, youths in Klang Valley tend to do their own research whenever they feel like social media influencer post skeptical information. Sometimes, social media influencer is paid to post in certain or specific way in order as well as in hopes to shift society's mind on a particular issue. There is a fine ethical line where sometimes social media influencer felt like they have to lie in order to build good relationship with brands they work it. For example, a social media influencer that is given an endorsement job on skin care product. That product does not work on his or her skin. But he or she is given a good amount of payment to endorse the product. Eventually, that particular social media influencer would need to not be fully honest to his or her followers and say that the product works greatly but in fact it's not (Banister & Cocker, 2014). Research on social marketing theory with the endorsement of social media influencer is a contribution of a new study, particularly in the field of communications. The rise of social media influencer contributes to the idea of this study and more organization are using social media influencer to promote, create awareness as well as giving hype to current and new products. There is no doubt that each and every year, the number of social media influencer is on the rise.

Literally anyone could be famous in today's digital world in a blink of an eye. It is just a matter of personal choices and how creative an individual executes content in making him or her to be the next viral social media star. However, it is found that youths particular in Klang Valley are sometimes skeptical of social media influencer endorsement. This is because youths know that these social media influencers are being paid to produce such content by saying certain things on a product or services. With the growing number of social media influencer, youths are also less interested in looking on social media influencer reviews on a product or services. Yes, they do get new information or issues from social media influencer but that's just about it and nothing more. There is not much on a call to action. But, on the other hand, brand awareness is definitely there. This would eventually build up brands reputation and gain trust from society. That is why, social media influencer are individual or agents that delivers information, mediator of information and create a sense of trustworthiness as from the findings of my research, youths know new product and services from social media influencer endorsement. The practice of using social media influencer effects in the long run is not yet to be determine but from the findings, we can conclude that social media influencer are here to stay for many more years to come as there is demand from organization in terms of using them to endorsed a certain product or services. Brands and organization needs them as a new way to engage with targeted and current customers because it is belief that social media influencer are more ratable compared to traditional advertising in today's rapidly changing economic, social and political environment.

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