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### The Credibility of Celebrity Endorser: Its Impact Towards Consumer Purchase Intention On Instagram in Malaysia

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#### ABSTRACT

The practice of advertising has evolved to cope with the rapid technological advancement achieved so far. The current practice takes advantage of the available technological advances particularly online mediums to reach out to a wider audience of consumers. One of the advantages is the delivery of advertising messages through celebrity endorsements in online advertisements. The impact of such advertisements is more apparent using social media platforms such as Instagram as compared to the traditional media means used previously. The extent of the impact, however, remains unclear as ambiguity regarding celebrities as endorsers in online advertising still prevails even among marketers and advertisers. This study adopts the source credibility theory and intends to look at the impact of celebrity endorsement on Instagram in Malaysia in terms of source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness. Results based on empirical data analysis indicated that there is a positive correlation between source credibility and consumer purchase intention. Findings in this study thus provide a better understanding of online advertisements that are endorsed by celebrities to further enhance the local practice of advertising.

#### 1. Introduction

##### *Research Background*

Celebrity endorsement is simply where celebrities are engaged as endorsers to promote the advertised products or services. This act of promotion according to Waldt, Loggereneberg & Wehmeyer (2009) is often used by company businesses as part of their marketing campaign. The current trend in promotional adverts incorporates the use of people to provoke attitudinal or

emotional reactions from consumers (Kanungo & Phang, 1973). Dean & Biswas (2001) and Dean (1999) adds that celebrity endorsement is deemed as a promotional tool due to its ability to influence consumers' purchasing intention, behavior as well as product perception. Besides promotional purposes, celebrities are utilized in commercial advertisements to add more 'value' towards the advertising appeal thus increasing the likelihood of attracting consumer purchasing intent. Such an act on a global scale involves a broad selection of celebrities ranging from athletes, movie stars, and entertainers that are widely recognized by consumers (Pornpitakpan, 2004). A celebrity endorsing a particular product or service in adverts holds weight as Wang, Cheng & Chu (2013) reasoned that celebrity endorsements are imperative for good brand management. This is because celebrity endorsements offer better fiscal gain for the advertised product's company (Erdogan, 1999) through enhanced product branding which subsequently increases product sales for the company business. Endorsements from celebrities are thus advantageous in terms of product branding since consumers might then have a better chance of differentiating the advertised product among the many products available in the market. Sherman (1985) concurs and acknowledge that engaging celebrities for their endorsement would make the endorsed product more recognizable from others. As a result, celebrity endorsements enable better communication with consumers especially the delivery of informative messages regarding the advertised products or services. With advancement achieved throughout the recent technological era, the advertising industry has experienced its fair share of evolution in the way products or services are advertised. The evolved practice of advertising through the use of modern technology was able to broaden their consumer range to reach those that previously were inaccessible. It is hence becoming rarer to find advertised products or services that are not endorsed by celebrities nowadays.

### ***Research Gap***

Considering how new technology has granted digital access to nearly anyone and anywhere, marketers and advertisers' approach towards advertising endorsement also changed accordingly. Chung & Cho (2014) pointed out that endorsements using traditional media has changed following modern times. The current media used for advertising takes advantage of the available accessibility to attract attention from potential consumers through online mediums to avoid exhausting limited resources. This enables adverts to have more appeal particularly for consumers who previously were restricted by country borders (Zhang, Craciun & Shin, 2010). Online advertising further allows advertising messages via endorsements by recognized personalities to have a higher chance of being communicated to consumers. Social media platforms are among the preferred online mediums used to advertise celebrity-endorsed products or services. Guidry, Messner, Jin & Medina-Messner (2015) crowned Instagram of having the fastest engagement rate in online posts compared to all social media platforms. The platform possesses greater advertising potential as celebrity profiles are usually placed at the top-of-the-

list on the most followed on Instagram. Instagram is thus perceived in this study as an effective social media platform for celebrity endorsements despite statistic reports that show Instagram is only the second most used social media in Malaysia (Statcounter, 2019a) and sixth most used social media across the globe (Statcounter, 2019b). Adweek (2016), Colliander & Dahlen (2011), and Mangold & Faulds (2009) concurred that traditional media is intangible and could only offer a one-way communication channel between consumers and advertisers while digital media is two-way and measurable. Most studies on celebrity endorsers, however, have been based on traditional media though the current trend indicates that such endorsement on social media could produce a better outcome. The differing outcomes from traditional media endorsement and social media endorsement could bring about a different outcome in regards to endorser credibility and their impact on consumer purchase intention. This study henceforth intends to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsers on consumer purchase intention on Instagram in Malaysia by focusing on their source credibility (i.e. expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness). Findings from this study might aid in solving unanswered questions pondered by company businesses when choosing a suitable endorser for their brand.

## 2. Literature Review

### *Celebrity Endorsement in Social Media*

The inclusion of famous people inside promotional adverts otherwise known as celebrity endorsement advertising and the people included is recognized as an endorser for the advertised product or service. An endorser aids product promotion in advertisements by provoking an attitudinal or emotional reaction from consumers (Kanungo & Phang, 1973; Ahmad et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2020). Their reaction nonetheless depends on how well the endorser delivers advertising messages. Consumers also can be persuaded by other's perceptions which Kire & RajKumar (2017) emphasized is resultant from cultural influences. This is because purchasing intention relates to consumer behavior and cultural context is capable of influencing their deliberation when the intent to purchase is present. Moreover, local consumers are collectively identified as collectivists (Salleh, 2018) in contrast to Westerners who are more known to be individualistic (Hofstede, 1980; Praet, 2001). Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1980) clarified that although Asian countries are rich in culture, societal acceptance is still prioritized over individual perceived preference. Soviee (1995) adds that the culture exemplified by Asians' saving and hardworking attitude demonstrated how frugality heavily influenced Asian countries. Some endorsements might even advertise without delivering the advertising message directly (Choi, Lee & Kim, 2005). The impact of celebrity endorsements towards consumer purchase intention in Asian countries thus differs compared to other parts of the world. Before this, celebrity endorsement is advertised using traditional media such as radio advertisement and newspaper or billboard ads. Samat, Ramlee, Bakar, Annual, & Rasid (2016) highlighted that companies put emphasis on such advertising to secure their products or services attract consumer's intent to purchase. The achievement of

technological advancement has made it possible to further capitalize on consumer attraction through online advertising. Balakrishnan, Dahnil & Yi (2014) revealed that human interaction has increased via social media connectivity achieved through this era of rapid technology. The younger generation especially those who are tech-savvy like to spend their leisure time online and in response, different social media platforms are made available with each offering their unique features. Thus, the way advertising messages are delivered varies according to a different social media platform.

This study takes into consideration the changing relationship between consumers and celebrity endorsement over the years and has chosen to solely focus on one social media platform; Instagram as it is one of the fastest-growing platforms (Southern, 2018) with more than 1 Billion active users. Southern (2018) also projected that the growth rate of Instagram is at a 5% rate monthly ahead of Facebook; 3.14% and Snapchat; 2.13%. Vizard (2015) estimated that the growth rate would generate an approximate revenue on ads amounting to \$2.81 Billion by the year 2017. Such statistics are an indication that shows the relevancy of Instagram as an advertising medium for local companies in Malaysia. In recent years, endorsement in online advertising has created new forms of endorser that include bloggers, vloggers, influencers, and 'instafamous' personalities (Chalal, 2016). For Instagram users, in particular, Statista (2018) estimated that nearly 50% of the entire social media platform were fan-based. Unlike other social media platforms that are more 'text-based', Instagram differs by emphasizing more on visual content which allows advertisers to optimize their advertising appeal through the use of the endorsers. The credibility of endorsers is studied to investigate its impact on consumer purchase intention on Instagram in Malaysia. Adler & Rodman (2000) define credibility as the listener's perception of belief towards the advertising message delivered by people in advertisements. Endorsers thus should have the capacity to persuade and make consumers believe in their advertising messages. The more believable that they are perceived by consumers, the more willing consumers become to purchase. It also shows that credibility has a significant role in increasing consumer's purchasing intentions (Waldt et al., 2009). In this study, the celebrity's credibility is to look at following the source credibility theory developed by Ohanian (1991). According to Ohanian (1990) and Ahmad et al., (2019), the credibility of the communicator to effectively deliver a message can be measured in terms of source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness. The theory henceforth describes the relationship between the credibility of celebrity endorsement and purchasing intention of consumers.

#### ***Source Credibility of Endorsement (Source Expertise)***

Concerning source credibility, the term 'expertise' refers to the source's level of understanding from the perspective of others. Hovland, Janis & Kelley (1953) clarified that the term is used to indicate how the source is perceived as someone who delivers a valid assertion. Studies such as Ahmad et al., (2019),

Mansour & Diab (2016), and Kruglanski & Thompson (1999) have shown that source expertise is capable of influencing consumer's purchasing deliberation. They found out that some consumers are more likely persuaded by an endorsement from perceived high expertise compared to those with perceived low expertise (Mansour & Diab, 2016) while some are reliant on the expertise of the source to provide the information needed (Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999). Hence, the expertise of an endorser especially celebrities' is considered an attribute towards a successful endorsement. Endorsement particularly those online however may not necessarily guarantee success as skepticism of information from such endorsement is rising. This is because Ismail & Latif (2013) warned that social media platforms such as Instagram are filled with information that may not be accurate. Nevertheless, source expertise is valued by local consumers due to their collectivist societal setting. Pornpitakpan (2004) assessed the impact of source expertise would be greater felt by consumers of collectivist cultures rather than individualistic cultures. Malaysians thus are more sensitive and vulnerable to fall for the persuasion of celebrity endorsers in advertising on Instagram. The following is the first hypothesized relationship between source expertise and consumer purchase intention in this study.

*H<sup>1</sup>: Source expertise is positively related to consumer purchase intention.*

#### ***Source Credibility of Endorsement (Source Trustworthiness)***

Ohanian (1990) defines trustworthiness as the degree of confidence in which consumers have towards the endorser that he/she is delivering valid assertions. In other words, it indicates the celebrity endorser's honesty, believability, and integrity towards the endorsement (Mansour & Diab, 2016; Ahmad et al., 2019). Trustworthiness thus is imperative to gain consumer loyalty (Hakimi, Abedniya & Zaeim, 2011). Consumers tend to be more persuaded with their purchasing intention when the endorser is perceived to be sincere regarding the advertised product or service. Trustworthiness in essence positively affects consumer's perception which in turn positively affects their purchasing deliberation (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Wei & Wu, 2013). Within the context of social media platforms such as Instagram, trustworthiness can be used to avoid unnecessary doubt to cloud consumer's judgment regarding the endorsement. Such doubt derives from the uncertainty surrounding online purchasing as Ba (2001) pointed out that the product quality cannot be judged before the purchase is made. Since this study viewed local consumers as collectivist, trust plays a greater role in consumer purchase intention. Singelis (1994) considers collectivists to tend to put more value in their close relationship with others in contrast to individualists that tend to distance themselves. Malaysians hence become reliant and are likely to be persuaded by trusty celebrity endorsement on Instagram as source trustworthiness to them are more appreciated. The following is the second hypothesized relationship between source trustworthiness and consumer purchase intention in this study.

*H<sup>2</sup>: Source trustworthiness is positively related to consumer purchase intention.*

### ***Source Credibility of Endorsement (Source Attractiveness)***

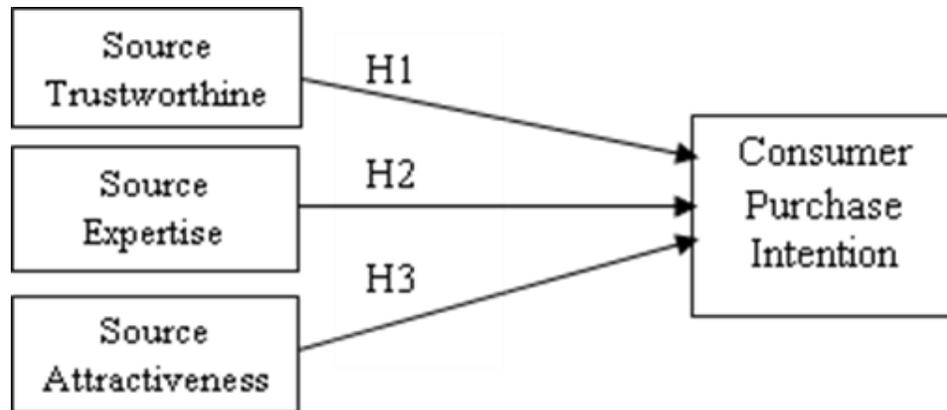
Intent to purchase among consumers can be affected by just the presence of celebrity endorsement (Ahmad et al., 2019). Celebrity endorsers possessed salient features that attract consumers' attention which in turn might influence their purchasing intention. Mansour & Diab (2016) emphasized that consumers are attracted by a

celebrity's physical appearance, personality, or lifestyle. Such attractiveness according to Waldt et al. (2009) is more apparent in celebrities thus they as endorsers have a higher chance of influencing consumers' purchasing intention. Hence, the effectiveness of messages in advertising endorsement is dependent on the endorser's attractiveness. Schlecht (2003) theorized that if the endorser is attractive, effective messages are most likely bound to happen. The attractiveness of endorser aid in differentiating the endorsement from similar advertisements as well (Ahmad et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2020). Adverts particularly those displayed online through social media platforms can reach consumers due to the availability of today's technology. An attractive endorser can appeal and catch consumer's attention amidst the abundance of advertising endorsement from the social media context (Chen & Huddleton, 2009). Instagram especially is at an advantage as the platform offers visual aesthetics that assures its individuality from other social media platforms. In Malaysia, the attractiveness of celebrity endorsement on Instagram seemingly is crucial in reaching and catching consumer purchase intention. The following is the third hypothesized relationship between source attractiveness and consumer purchase intention in this study.

*H<sup>3</sup>: Source attractiveness is positively related to consumer purchase intention.*

### **3. Methodology**

This study involves Malaysian consumers and how the credibility of celebrity endorsers impacts their purchasing intention. The technological advances nowadays, however, have enabled celebrity endorsement to reach local consumers through online advertising via social media platforms. Instagram, for example, is a communication means for social networking that have contributed to paving the way to the rise of different types of endorsers such as social influencers and food bloggers. For this reason, the focus of this study shall be on all types of endorsement found on Instagram. Meanwhile, all of the hypothesized relationships between celebrity endorser's credibility and consumer purchase intention are shown by the proposed framework in Figure 1. The proposed framework is based on the source credibility model developed by Ohanian (1990) who identified three attributes of endorser's credibility: source expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.



**Figure 1 Proposal Framework**

Empirical data in this study is collected through a close-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was pilot tested before the actual questionnaire survey was conducted. Questions posed were measured using an ordinal scale that allows respondents to choose their degree of agreement (Sullivan & Artino, 2013). Hence, a 7-point Likert scale was used in this study as Lavrakas (2008) explained that a larger scale than 7-point would cause respondents to feel fatigued and negatively affect reliability. The survey subsequently used a self-administered questionnaire whereby respondents were able to give feedback without much intervention (Lavrakas, 2008) that resulted in reduced cost, higher feedback rate, and reliability of responses (Sudman, Greely & Pinto, 1965). Data collection involving local consumers who use Instagram for their purchasing intention were selected through convenience sampling. This method of population sample selects respondents based on availability, ease of access, geographical proximity, and willingness of respondents (Dörnyei, 2007). Once the desired amount of data collection is achieved, the survey is completed and all of the feedback compiled. Then, the data were analyzed using SPSS software through statistical analysis.

#### 4. Results

The results in this study are based on feedback collected from 200 respondents aged between 20 to 30 years old. Data based on the feedback were initially analyzed through reliability analysis to determine Cronbach Alpha value for the independent variables (source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness) as well as the dependent variable (consumer purchase intention). According to Ursachi, Horodnic & Zait (2015), the minimum acceptable value of Cronbach Alpha is 0.7. The value of each variable is shown in Table 1. Table 1 shows that all of the variables have an acceptable value with source expertise; 0.938, source trustworthiness; 0.944, source attractiveness; 0.915, and consumer purchase intention; 0.891.

**Table 1 Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Source Expertise	0.938	5
Source Trustworthiness	0.944	5
Source Attractiveness	0.915	5
Consumer Purchase Intention	0.891	4

The possibility of reducing measurable items for each variable in this study was determined through factor analysis (Mashal & Kasirer, 2012). The analysis was carried out and values obtained are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Factor Analysis**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.935
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3495.032
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

The KMO value of 0.935 with a significant value of 0.00 indicated that the size of the sample population was aptly measured. Such value agreed with Field (2005) who recommended that the minimum value of KMO be 0.5 to demonstrate the adequacy of the data collection.

**Table 3a Multi-Linear Regression (ANOVA)**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R square	R square adjusted
Regression	235.264	3	78.421	61.978	.000	0.698	0.487	0.479
Residual	247.998	196	1.265					
Total	483.262	199						

Data then were analysed through Multi-Linear Regression. Table 3a shows the values from ANOVA involving the dependent variable (consumer purchase intention). The R-value is an indication of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Cohen, 1988). Hence, R with values of less than 0.3 indicates a weak correlation, 0.3 until 0.7 indicates an average correlation and more than 0.7 indicates a strong correlation. The R-value shown in Table 3a (0.698) indicated that there is a relationship between both

variables in this study. Reisinger (1997) also implied that R-value is a convenient means of measurement to determine whether the model fits this study. Such fitness is indicated through the R square value whereby the value in this study (0.487) indicates the model's fitness.

**Table 3b Multi-Linear Regression (Coefficients)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	-.453	.337		-1.345	.180	-1.118	.211
H1 (SE)	.277	.082	.268	3.379	.001	.115	.438
H2 (ST)	.291	.082	.284	3.549	.000	.129	.452
H3 (SA)	.342	.071	.281	4.814	.000	.202	.482

Meanwhile, Table 3b shows the coefficients or p-values involving the independent variables (source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness). The p-value is used to determine the significance of each variable whereby less than 0.05 is considered as significant. The p-values shown in Table 3b indicates that there is significance amongst variables. Specifically, the p-value for the relationship between source expertise and consumer purchase intention is 0.001, indicating that the hypothesized relationship is significant thus supporting the first hypothesis. The p-values for the relationship between source trustworthiness and consumer purchase intention as well as the relationship between source attractiveness and consumer purchase intention are both .000, indicating that the hypothesized relationships are also significant thus supporting the second and third hypotheses respectively.

## 5. Discussion

### *Discussion on Source Expertise*

The results in this study support the first hypothesis in which the expertise of celebrity endorsers does affect the purchasing intent on Instagram among Malaysian consumers. Such results complement past literature that indicates the positive relationship between source expertise and consumer purchase intention. Ahmad et al., (2019), Hui (2017), Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) and Pornpitakpan (2004) have all opined that the consumers' intention to purchase is affected by the expertise of product or service endorsers. Therefore, it is possible that as part of the source credibility theory, source expertise in today's digital era might have a similar or even bigger impact compared to when traditional media were used as marketing communication means (Sallam, 2011; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry & Raman, 2004). Such a possibility as evidenced in this study solidify the credibility of celebrity endorsers. Online adverts that use celebrity endorsement as part of their marketing campaigns further take advantage of such possibility via social media platforms such as Instagram. Wiley (2014) clarified that the effectiveness of this sort of digital

communication increases when online celebrities are included in the mix. As someone who is publicly recognized, celebrities are generally perceived to have the knowledge needed concerning the endorsement. Bardia, Abed & Majid (2011) also agreed by acknowledging that celebrities are better suited to persuade consumers' intent to purchase since they are the ones endorsing the advertised product or service. Brown, Broderick & Lee (2007) further emphasized that besides the increased perceived credibility, the impact of source expertise also lessens biases from spreading online. This is because consumers tend to stay loyal to their initial purchasing decisions which are often susceptible to endorser's persuasion. Pornpitakpan & Francis (2000) clarified that source expertise possessed a strong persuasive impact particularly on consumers exposed to collectivist culture. Thus, those residing in a collectivist societal setting such as Malaysia are more so prone to persuasion.

### ***Discussion on Source Trustworthiness***

The results in this study support the second hypothesis in which consumer's trust towards the celebrity endorsers does affect the purchasing intent on Instagram among Malaysian consumers. Such results complement past literature that indicates the positive relationship between source trustworthiness and consumer purchase intention. Hong & Cho (2011) and Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) both opined that source trustworthiness affects consumer's purchasing deliberation as trust is gained from the public perceived expertise of celebrity endorsement. The impact of source trustworthiness also is similar to the other factors of the source credibility theory in which technological advances have enhanced its impact on consumer purchase intention by using digital means as compared previously with traditional media means (Sallam, 2011; Phelps et. al., 2004). Such enhancement according to Wiley (2014) is achieved by increasing the effectiveness in communicating digitally through the available social media platforms such as Instagram. Consumers tend to be more attracted to endorsers with characteristics that exhibit their trustworthiness. This mirrors Hakimi et al. (2011) and Ohanian (1990) who emphasize trust as a salient attribute of boosting consumer's confidence to purchase the endorsed product or service. Past literature (e.g. Chan, Ng & Luk, 2013; Li & Zhan, 2011; McCroskey & Young, 1981) has also proven that the effectiveness of an advertisement is dependent upon how well is the public perception of celebrity endorsers' trustworthiness. The credibility of celebrity endorsers is affected if they are perceived to be less trustworthy thus lessening their influence in the consumer's decision-making process. In contrast, Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus & McCan (2003) added that consumers are inclined to accept advertising messages from endorsers whom they perceived to be very trustworthy. The outcome from such acceptance consequently implied that source trustworthiness is capable of influencing the intent to purchase among consumers. Source trustworthiness also has a strong persuasive impact on consumers with a collectivist culture. Pornpitakpan (2004) reasoned that the desire to exist harmoniously with each other compelled collectivists to establish an initial strong interpersonal trust before

they could be connected. Such a desire in this study is exemplified by local consumers as the collectivist culture in Malaysia exists (Salleh, 2018).

### ***Discussion on Source Attractiveness***

The results in this study support the third hypothesis in which the attraction felt by the consumer towards the celebrity endorsers does affect the purchasing intent on Instagram among Malaysian consumers. Such results complement past literature that indicates the positive relationship between source attractiveness and consumer purchase intention. Freiden (1984) revealed that celebrities especially those that are known to be attractive, are more likely a better spokesperson compared to others. Their attractiveness in turn aid in improving the effects of advertising (Corina, 2010). Hence, source attractiveness affects the intent to purchase among consumers similar to factors of the source credibility theory. The effectiveness of source attractiveness, however, is weaker than other factors as Till & Busler (1998) discovered that there is a noticeably weak logical link between consumer purchase intention and an attractive endorser. It seems that the surety of invoking consumer purchase intention does not necessarily need to be an attractive endorser. This mirrors Ohanian (1991) who opined that the attractiveness of an endorser might not weight influencing consumer purchasing deliberation. The influence of source attractiveness could nevertheless be amplified using current technology. Sallam (2011) and Phelps et. al. (2004) discovered that the attractiveness of endorsers played a role in influencing consumer purchase intention and consumers nowadays seemed to be more attracted to endorsement through online advertising. The influence is more apparent in a digital context such as Instagram among all advertising mediums as technology advancement has made it possible particularly for online celebrities to have increased effectiveness in communicating digitally with their potential consumers (Wiley, 2014). Instagram celebrities, for instance, are often perceived as highly attractive and thus able to capture more followers' attention (Lim, Radzol, Cheah & Wong, 2017). Nisbett & Wilson (1977) further relate attractiveness to indicate the good functionality of the products. Moreover, Malaysia is a society stereotyped with the collectivist cultural setting (Salleh, 2018). Such a setting influences local consumers whereby their intent to purchase can be affected by others possessing similarity with consumers. Wheeler & Kim (1997) revealed the tendency of collectivists of viewing those whom they perceived as attractive with being higher in integrity and compassion compared to individualistic.

## **6. Implications**

Source credibility theory has been studied upon by many including Yoon, Kim, & Kim (1998) who relate the theory to reputation, status, and authority. This study relates the theory parallel to the study done by Anderson & Clevenger (1970) which focuses on categorizing consumer behavior based on their reaction towards high or low credibility. Purchasing intention among consumers nonetheless can be influenced by how well the credibility of

endorsers is perceived by the consumers. Over the years, endorsement through advertising has evolved considering the technological advancement made prompting consumers to also evolve becoming more tech-savvy. The trend nowadays seems to take advantage of such an evolution with the influx of endorsed products and services through online advertising. This type of advertisement is communicated to consumers mostly through social media platforms such as Instagram. In this study, the source credibility of celebrity endorsement in terms of source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness are investigated to gauge its impact on local consumer purchase intention via Instagram.

Outcomes from this study offer an enriching comprehension regarding the intent to purchase from the perspective of online consumers instead of traditional media means of marketing communication (e.g. TV, radio, and newspaper). This includes offering a more insightful comparison of advertising means against the social setting of modern times. The contrasting differences of online advertising especially between consumers' behavior towards endorser credibility might affect consumer purchase intention differently. Such insights are welcomed by top management as they put value in gaining any liable advantage that creates better prospective gains for their endorsing investment. It also benefits companies' businesses by providing leeway to survive the market's competitive environment. This is particularly apparent for businesses that utilize celebrity endorsements (or plan to) as part of their marketing campaign as they would effectively be able to make informed business decisions. In terms of consumer purchasing deliberation, this study sheds a positive light on the ambiguity surrounding the correlation of consumer behavior and the source credibility of Instagram celebrity endorsers in Malaysia. As for advertisers and marketers, this study's outcomes would provide a better basis for an understanding of the perceived credibility of an endorser and what needs to be the focus on in an endorsement advertisement. This allows better judgment in the selection of endorsers for advertised products and services.

## **7. Conclusion**

Online advertising includes endorsement by celebrities as part of the marketing campaign for products or services. A trend nowadays is to communicate such advertising by taking advantage of technological advances that are mainly used by the public i.e. social media platforms. These platforms ease communication means between potential consumers and company businesses of advertised products and services. This study looked at the credibility of celebrity endorsers found in online advertising on Instagram following the source credibility theory; source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source attractiveness. Such credibility is gauged to determine its impact on consumer purchase intention in Malaysia especially those with the intent to purchase based on online advertising of endorsed products or services. Results in this study indicated that there is indeed a positive correlation between celebrity endorser credibility and consumer purchase intention. It also indicated that

endorsement through online advertising on social media means is effective or more so than the traditional media means. Thus, this study is imperative particularly for advertisers and marketers to understand how to choose a suitable celebrity with the right qualities to maximize effectiveness as ultimately the endorsement in adverts are aimed at optimizing sales and exposure. Limitations nonetheless arise in this study due to time and financial constraints. The further study thus should include more diverse consumers from different ethnic groups and ages to avoid such limitations preventing rich data collection. The extension of samples to include other regions in South East Asia such as Indonesia will warrant better insights on the disciplines. Comparative studies to see the similarities and differences between consumers in Malaysia and Indonesia will surely enrich the existing works of literature.

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