Public Perception on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual Instafamous Credibility in Promoting Products on Instagram

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Abstract

The increased use of social media among consumers is giving marketers more attention to promoting their products by social media channels. On Instagram, individuals who have many followers are called "Instafamous" and in Malaysia, one of the groups that have many followers on Instagram is the LGBT community. For the marketer, LGBT Instafamous can be used as an opportunity for the branding of their brands or products because they need a marketing that can be carried out in a short time without spend too many expenses. Therefore, the main purpose of this research paper is to understand public perception about the credibility of LGBT Instafamous in promoting products on Instagram. The objectives of the research are (i) to identify level of public perception towards LGBT instafamous on Instagram, (ii) to identify level of credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products and (iii) to determine the relationship between public perception and credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products on Instagram. Quantitative design has been applied to this research with purposive sampling as a research methodology. To conduct this research, an online survey consisted 30 questions with a 5-point Likert Scale Response was distributed only to Instagram user between 28-54 years old. From the result, we can see that the level of perception is in a moderate level but high in a level of credibility and there is a strong relationship between the public perception and the credibility of the LGBT Instafamous in reviewing brand or products on Instagram.

*Keywords***:** *Public perception, LGBT, product review, Instafamous, Credibility*

1.0 Introduction

Digital influencers are people whose renown is achieved by social media networks. The future broad public of social media influencers attracted advertisers to partner paidly with them for marketing purposes and nowadays, businesses have eventually started paying greater attention to this trend as it more effective in promoting products and cut the cost. Businesses have eventually started paying greater attention to a new trend. It has been described as the new type of third-party independent supporter who shapes the view attitudes through blogs, tweets and the use of other social media (McGaughey & Freberg, 2011).

Social media influencers are considered influencers when they have many followers in their social media. On Instagram, individuals who have many followers are called as *"instafamous"* and in Malaysia, which the groups that has many followers and is often talked about is the LGBT group. LGBT is the acronym of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. The words of this acronym are used to describe the non-heterosexual of a person outside the norm of normal people. 'LGB' refers to sexual identities, 'T' refers to the sex identity and 'Q' refers to both (Eliason, 2014).

LGBT people are used as one of the ways in product marketing because in addition to their own gender, they also often attract the attention of social media users especially on Instragram (Sabala, 2020). Shane-Simpson et al., (2018), said influencer choose Instagram because of the simplicity. Instagram are using for shared photos or videos and easy to use by everyone and for individuals with huge followers, they are known as 'instafamous'. LGBT instafamous can be used as an opportunity for the brand itself because they need marketing (Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu, 2019) that can be carried out in a short time without having to spend too much expenses. Promoting products on Instagram can be done in various ways, such as making a video, or just post the picture in our own Instagram space or even in IG stories.

Large followers, they are known as 'instafamous'. LGBT instafamous can be used as an opportunity for the brand itself because they need marketing

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1.2 Statement of Problem

LGBT in Malaysia often become a hot issue in Malaysia because the culture itself violated the culture in Malaysia. Ting, Kwin & Xinyi (2016) stated that Malaysian homosexuals are considered outcasts, whereas lesbians and gays receive little support and isolated from the society. Stigma from community always get a negative perception from the public as they also have no support from the community. We can also ignore the existence of the LGBT influencer in social media as it raises various opinions or perceptions from the public (Waggoner, 2018).

Social media LGBT numbers may not be the larger LGBT population in Malaysia (Jerome et., 2021), but the general public perception on the lives and presence of LGBTs had slightly changed, which cannot be ignored anymore in today's internet-driven culture. A limited study about LGBT in Malaysia made the researcher have difficulties to know more about the public perception of LGBT in Malaysia especially focusing in LGBT influencer in social media. Baba (2001), indicated that the environment in Malaysia does not permit this people to freely identify their sexual identity, resulting in social marginalization of this community.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research objective is to:
1. To identify the level of perception of the LGBT Instafamous on Instagram
2. To identify the level of credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products

3. To determine the relationship between perception and credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products on Instagram

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Promotion on Social Media Platform

Marketing managers communicate with loyal consumers through SM contact, affect the consumer's view of the services and goods, disseminate appreciated information and gain public feedback (Brodie, Juric & Hollebeek, 2013). Brand pages that really are brand communities will allow consumers to engage with the brand they like by posting or commenting about the brands (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002).

Instagram as a marketing tools is an efficient way to promote a product, since an image is known to say a thousand words (The Instgram hastag (#) also assists with the Instagram promotion Silva et al., 2013). Dennis (2014) also stated that it helps users of Instagram to access images or videos that are important to the hashtag by pressing it. As a result, many apparel brands already have an Instagram account to advertise their products. As mentioned by Lim, Sook, Yazdanifard & Rashad (2014), Instagram's popularity increases every day. Instagram has grown in popularity in the business sector, in addition to being well-known among young people who use social media. Many companies nowadays are using the Instagram to sell their services brands or products on their new platform to the user. Instagram's functions not only appeal to the social networkers, they also appeal to advertisers.

In their study, Clark, Ferguson & Douglas (2011) said that commercial and public Twitter is used in a separate manner. Commercial outlets with news breaks and tweets endorsing newscasts are more likely than public stations and Curran, O'Hara, & O'Brien (2011) agreed that Twitter offers new options to reach a worldwide audience at little cost, or even free of charge in some circumstances. It has also exhibited a cautious approach towards establishing a self-sustaining economic model for its customers and third-party developers. The first indicators are that a half of the business model, tweets supported, is a success.

The study on consumer involvement on online social networks by Cheung et al., 2011 described the article as "the physical, cognitive and emotional levels of a consumer presence in relation to a certain social online platform." The conceptual framework created indicate that the commitment of the customer within an online social media network consists of energetic level, mental resilience, absorption which is concentration and enhancement, and commitment to the on-line social platform which is sense of meaning, excitement, encouragement, pride and challenges

2.2 Social Media Influencer

Today, most strategy marketing through social media uses this influencer of social media to promote their product, or we are known as product review (Hunter, 2016); (Kozinets et al., 2010). If influencers write about commercial items, followers feel it is an integrity loss, blaming the influencer of having been sold out and not written for money for the company. That makes the consumer often accuse the influence person of not selling the goods, but rather show themselves and make money while the influencer promotes products on their Instagram.

Buyers are searching for inspiration by Instafamous celebrities and looking for items on Instagram before they actually purchase the product. Instafamous celebrities cultivate a trustworthy relationship with customers, establish a high degree of interaction with followers and direct them in their purchase decisions. These purchasing decisions are often based on direct advice and tagged feedback from the influencer. Research shows that more and more customers are searching for blogs and feedback before they purchase the product. It has been found that the notorious celebrities are known to be more genuine and straightforward than the any celebrity.

Study by Djafarova, & Trofimenko (2019) shows that while users discovered Instafamous accounts for broad followers, the way in which these followers were gained did not always trust them, and some participants suggested that these should be done in dishonest ways, such as purchasing from the followers. Instafamous persons have seldom been influenced by the views of the participants in making their buying decisions, claiming that these media are not good for the marketing of products.

2.3 Credibility

Source credibility can be seen as a situation where the credibility of the message depends on the credibility of the source. The notion in the texts of his work, The Rhetoric, was founded by Aristotle. The book shows that Aristotle divides the means of persuasion into three categories: ethos, logos and pathos. Aristotle says that ethos is most essential for moulding viewers' thoughts and ideas, as this is what makes the speaker. This theory as argued by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1963) said that people nor recipients seem to be more likely to be convinced when the source appear.

Hovland (1963) and Weiss (1974) found that the study reinforced the observation that reputable sources appear to have the desired effect on the audience when they comparing both of the credible nor non-credible source. Cornan, Hess, & Justus (2006) argued that three major aspects of credibility, trusting, integrity, and goodwill, are not the same, but may create, manage, and cultivate expectations. This involves a systemic approach to design, dissemination, and, above all, adjustments to the audience and the present media environment.

2.4 Expertise

In marketing contexts, skills from different kinds of endorsers is examined. A celebrity supporter's expertise has a positive impact on the energy bar brand attitude (Till & Busler, 2000). Martensen et al., (2018) found that specialization enhancing the conviction of the influencer of a fashion brand. The credibility theory of sources (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953) discusses the impact of the know-how and belief in how people interpret knowledge and build attitudes related to the theory of credibility (Hovland et al., 1953). While the trustworthiness of source is the degree to which the communicator feels it is most valid in the communication of assertions. Thus, if the source is considered to be reliable, people are more likely to become interested (Hovland et al., 1953). The expertise, confidentiality, beauty and strength of a communicator reflect the psychological framework linked to credibility of sources.

However, research by Abhishek (2016) found that expertise and confidence play an indispensable role in evaluating a product's reputation rather than beauty. In addition, Shimp (1981) said that the process in the human brain has been studied for persuasion and it has been noted that celebrity knowledge is definitely

relevant to mind (Ohanian, 1991), who has performed a source effect analysis on PSPs, indicated that the source information has a high-rate impact on perceptions and aims, enhancing reputation. In this regard, it has been recommended.

2.5 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness strengthens an endorser's uprightness, honor and acceptability. It depends on the right direction for the perceptions of the target market. Advertisers exploit the reliability fee to settle on endorsers who tend thoroughly to be trustworthy and reliable. McCroskey (1981) argued that consumers consider unreliable film stars as dubious sources of messages regardless of their characteristics. Celebrity support is an ingredient for the reliability that underlies reputation, but it has been shown in the research that it does not lead to better customer intentions and fidelity to brands. The research has shown that customers expect the picture of a famous endorser to fit the brand. However according to Michael & Kamins (1989) the reliability of a celebrity does not now have a clear connection to the wishes of consumers to purchase a sponsored logo. The authors urged marketers to pick personalities that they liked if an honest fame was to be found, since trust is the key driver for supply credibility, after which they attempted to find what source attribute was correlated with acceptation as true to their findings. The established speakers are seen as more assured and expert than influential supporters, while the level of attractiveness of celebrities is greater than the level of a good speaker. These findings may be considered inconsistent with Atkin & Block (1983) study that famous supporters are seen as more credible and expert.

2.6 Attractiveness

Argue that three key believability characteristics the attractiveness of the source as an important element of source efficiency and reputation have been established by several prior research. The source model is founded on social and psychological research and is part of McGuire, Lindzey & Aronson's source value model (1985). Chao, Wuhrer & Werani (2005) found supporting evidence of the value of attraction as a predictor of efficiency in their literature on celebrity support. Past research also shows a higher source of attractiveness, contributing to higher verbal and behavioral conformity. People were able to remember celebrities whom they felt were sexy, funny, and expressive. In the case of an appealing product, a visually attractive celebrity enhances the spokesman's image and a favourable marketing attitude (Kamis, 1990). The attraction was also demonstrated by a research study in which the consumer who was exposed to a popular person loved the product or service more than the person exposed to a non-attractive celebration.

Furman & Flanagan (1997) have shown four aspects of physical attraction in early studies on physical beauty. Firstly, the physical appeal requirements are based on height, figure, symmetry, sexual hormonal indicators and other unique physical features. Second physical attractiveness assessments including the meaning of evolutionary psychology and the outcome of environmental adaptations. Third of all, the looks of physical attraction, which are reasonably healthy, such as the waist-hipped ratio and female weights that substantially predict attraction and health.
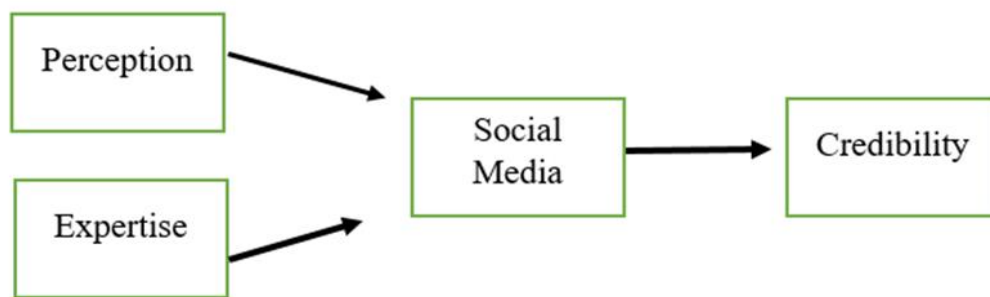
Figure 1: Research Framework

3.0 Methodology

This study employed quantitative methods of data collection. A survey was conducted with a purposive sampling to measure the credibility of the LGBT influencer in promoting products on Instagram. Bernard (2002), Lewis & Sheppard (2006) said that the researchers in the intended sample select what needs to be understood and choose people who can and are willing to offer information based on their experience. The respondent for this study only involved an Instagram user between 28-38 years old. Since the user of Instagram user as of March 2021, were approximately 13.8 million, researcher decided only to distribute the questionnaire to researcher own Instagram follower.

This study needs 103 respondents related to 140 population size (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) and supported by Bernard (2002) mentioned that no cap on how many samples should make up a purposive sample, as long as needed information is obtained. In this situation, 103 samples are enough to represent the whole population for this study.

This statement also supported by Seidler (1974) that studied different sample sizes of informants selected purposively and found that at least five informants were needed for the data to be reliable. The questionnaire will be consisting of 4 sections which is demographic, and questions based on the research questions. Each dimension has five different characteristics and they will they determine how they felt about the statement on a 5-likert scale ([1] Strongly Disagree, [2] Disagree, [3] Neutral [4] Agree and [5] Strongly Agree. The data obtained will be analyze through SPSS and will be presented in the result and discussion section.

4.0 Results and Discussion

In findings and analysis, its summaries the findings of our data analysis based on the responses to the questionnaire. This section will examine the independent **(IV)** and dependent variables **(DV)** of the study through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences **(SPSS)**. This study also examines the independent **(IV)** and dependent variables **(DV)** of the study.

TABLE 1
Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	52	50.5
Female	51	49.5
Total	103	100

Table 1 shows that the gender of the respondent is 50.5% are male and another 49.5% are female.

TABLE 2
Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
28-40	16	15.5
41-53	49	47.6
54 above	38	36.9
Total	103	100

Based on above table, majority of the respondent (47.6%) were 41- 53 years old. Followed by ages between 54 years old and above (36.9%) and another 15.5% percent were from 28-40 years old.

TABLE 3
Followers for Instafamous Instagram

Average	Frequency	Percentage
1	13	12.6
2	36	35
>3	54	52.4
Total	103	100

Table 3 above shows the average on how many Instafamous they follow on Instagram. Table shows that respondent has follow more than three LGBT instafamous on Instagram (52.4%). While 35% has follow two LGBT Instafamous and another 12.6% only follow at least one LGBT Instafamous on Instagram.

TABLE 4
Frequent watch Instafamous Live Promoting Product

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	43	41.7
Twice a week	38	37
Once a week	22	21.3
Total	103	100

Table 4 shows majority of the respondent which is 41.7% watching the LGBT Instafamous live promoting products every day. Another 37% only watch it twice a week and another 21.3% only watch the LGBT Instafamous promoting products only once a week.

TABLE 5
Product Promoted by Instafamous

Brand or Products	Frequency	Percentage
Fashion	22	21.3
Makeup	24	23.3
Food	39	38
Sport	18	17.4
Total	103	100

Based on table above, the LGBT instafamous mostly promoting a food brand or product on their Instagram (38%). Meanwhile, 23.3% is about makeup, while 21.3% is about fashion. Followed by sports at 17.4%.

TABLE 6
Level of Public Perception Towards LGBT Instafamous

Perception	Frequency	Percentage
High	20	19.4
Moderate	68	66
Low	15	14.6
Total	103	100

Table 6 presents that majority (66%) of the respondent have moderate perception on LGBT instafamous on Instagram. While 19.4% have high level of perception and only 14.6% have a low perception on LGBT instafamous on Instagram. From this table, we can see that people's perception of instafamous LGBT on Instagram are moderately accepted by society.

According to the respondent, as appendix 2.1, they only agree (50%) that they have lot of common with the LGBT instafamous that they followed on Instagram. This is maybe related to the fashions, sports or beauty products that can be enjoyed together that are always viewed or content done by LGBT instafamous. This can also be seen through appendix 2.5 which shows that respondents are strongly agree (65%) that they have the same style with the LGBT instafamous. This style similarity may be seen through the content or the way they interact with their followers on Instagram.

Appendix 2.2 shows that the respondent strongly agrees (61%) that they know what kind of the LGBT instafamous is on Instagram. This also can be seen though appendix 2.3 where they see that the LGBT influencer build trust with their followers on Instagram and this has been strongly agreed (74%) by the respondent. The respondent also strongly agrees (71%) that the LGBT instafamous are giving a positive

influence on Instagram to their follower. This positive influence may include giving a good tip to their follower on Instagram and has been strongly agreed (7.1) by the respondent.

Next, 64% are strongly agreed that the LGBT instafamous that they followed on Instagram are have a good reputation. They believe and strongly agreed (63%) that the LGBT knows how to engage with their follower without doing any contents that are not beneficial and only want to be viral. They are engaging with their followers maybe through the content they produce to promote brands or products more creatively. They LGBT instafamous that they follow on Instagram also famous and 62% respondents has been strongly agreed with the statements. Their popularity can easily grab the public attention in the content they produce and increase their viewer in promoting products or to gain new followers.

TABLE 7
Level of Credibility Towards LGBT Instafamous

Credibility	Frequency	Percentage
High	49	47.5
Moderate	43	41.7
Low	11	10.8
Total	103	100

Results from Table 7 shows that majority of the respondent's showing high-level perception (47.5%) on credibility of the LGBT instafamous in promoting products. While 41.7% have moderate level and only 10.8% of the respondents have low level of perception on the credibility of the LGBT instafamous in promoting products. Based on the table above, we can say that the responses have high level perception of the credibility of LGBT instafamous which also shows that they are credible in doing their job.

As can be seen in Appendix 3, most of the respondent are strongly agree in the LGBT instafamous credibility. They are showing high credibility in their attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise while promoting products.

In promoting products, attractiveness such as a physical attractiveness is really important and were strongly agree that the LGBT instafamous are credible by showing their attractiveness as show in appendix 3.7 (80%) and appendix 3.8 (77%). As mentioned by Said & Napi (2015), the appearance is crucial as it can generate a high level of trust among consumers. For example, in a cosmetic brand, sexual attractiveness of a person can influence especially in women's brand such as a cosmetic brand (ApaolazaIbañez et al., 2011). This means that, with a good physical attractiveness, it can arouse or persuade the potential customer to become the customer for the product.

The questionnaire also involves a trustworthiness element such as honest, reliable, dependable and trust which all four question are strongly agree by the respondents as appendix 3.1 (77%), appendix 3.2 (84%), appendix 3.3 (84%) and appendix 3.9 (80%). Trustworthiness is showing whether the person is credible or got any influenced by third parties (Wiedmann et al., 2020). If the viewer thinks a source can be trusted, they will believe that the message is very credible and from the respondent's response, we can see that the LGBT instafamous are credible and can be trusted when they promoting their products.

Besides that, the LGBT credibility in expertise also can be seen as in appendix 3.4 (82%), appendix 3.5 (84%), appendix 3.6 (80%) and appendix 3.10 (77%) where most of the respondent were strongly agree that the LGBT instafamous are credible. Expertise is primarily defined as the level in which the endorser's knowledge, experience or abilities are regarded to support the product (Vander et al., 2009) and the endorser with greater knowledge might be more convincing and improve the involvement with the brand. From the result, we can see that the Instagram user think that the LGBT Instafamous is credible in giving information because they also show their expertise in promoting products.

TABLE 8
Relationship Between Public Perception and Credibility of LGBT Instafamous

Correlations			PPC	LOC
PPC	Pearson Correlation		1	.965[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		100	100
LOC	Pearson Correlation		.965[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Variable	Credibility	
Public Perception	r value	p value
	0.965	.000

Table 8 depicts that there is a strong relationship between public perception and the credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products.

The indicated are significant and relationship between the public perception and the credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products on Instagram where the correlation shows 0.965 between the independent variable which is the public perception and dependent variable, the credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products.

Coefficient of Pearson's correlation proved that the relationship between public perception and the credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products are very strong. Furthermore, p-value of 0.000 is less than alpha value 0.01 (**r=0.965 p<0.01**) which indicated to us that both of the variables has a very strong relationship. From the table above, we can say that the public perception among Instagram user will become high with the credibility of LGBT instafamous in promoting products on Instagram.

5.0 Conclusion

The aim of the study was to examine the public perception of the LGBT instafamous in promoting products on Instagram. The findings of this research revealed that there exists a positive relationship between public perception and the LGBT instafamous credibility. Both of the variable is important because promoting products on Instagram need to attract the Instagram user. Public perception plays an important role because marketers also need to know how they view this community and credibility is also important to attract their attention. Low credibility will result in a negative perception also from the user.

This paper contributes to scholarly research on influencer marketing through the LGBT instafamous. As Lou &Yuan (2018) mentioned that influencer marketing is a rapidly expanding field that is still evolving, the findings can be useful and practical especially to the marketers. The marketer should think about using LGBT instafamous as a person for their campaigns, keeping in mind the significance of establishing a fit between the products to be advertised and the LGBT's profiles. Our findings can also Useful or relevant to the LGBT instafamous who should aware of the importance of credibility to maintain the relationship with their followers in a good way and also with the brands they are promoting.

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