

FACTORS INFLUENCING COSMETICS PURCHASE INTENTION IN THAILAND: A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF CREDIBILITY AND REPUTATION WITH THE PERSUASIVE CAPABILITIES OF BEAUTY BLOGGERS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to examine the factors affecting beauty bloggers' credibility and how credibility itself influences cosmetic purchase intentions of Thai people. As identified by Ohanian (1990), three variables impacting one's decision-making process (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) are considered along with two additional variables determined by this researcher through focus group interviews to fit with and complement them. These are reputation and persuasive capabilities. Demographic factors of the respondents (age, gender, etc) were investigated as part as understanding differences, if any, in the cosmetic purchase intentions of Thai people. The Pearson Correlation analysis indicates that all independent variables have a positive relationship with purchase intention. Moreover, the results from the one-way ANOVA analysis show that the demographic factors variously affect the purchase intention of cosmetics of respondents.*

Keywords: *Beauty blogger, cosmetics, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, reputation, persuasive capabilities.*

1. Introduction

There has been a significant increase in the number of internet users over the last decade. From 6 percent of the world's population in 2000 and 12 percent in 2012, the number has since jumped up to about 30 percent and is likely to keep rising in the years to come (Union, 2011). This growing trend is not just limited to the developed world but is global although the rise is faster in industrialized countries. At the end of 2010, 16 percent of the total households in the developing countries had internet access versus 66 percent in developed countries, a significant gap. In Europe alone, the rate of penetration frequently goes beyond 80 percent and more than 80 percent of all internet subscribers had a broadband connection.

Having broadband access is particularly telling as many of the most effective services and applications are only available with a high-speed internet connection (Union, 2011). Judging by the increasing number of internet users, it is safe to say that in the future more and more people will start posting their opinions online, including in developing countries.

Many of the opinions posted online pertain to brands. Unsurprisingly given the growing number of internet users, online comments –

and information - about a brand have been on the rise and will continue to spread. They will also be available more quickly (Technorati, 2010). One of the various tools available to express one's thoughts and criticize brands online is blogs (Technorati, 2010).

Broadly speaking, a blog (the term comes from the words 'web' and 'log') can be described as "a type of web page that contains chronologically arranged and brief information" (Hsu & Lin, 2008). It can be a diary, a series of books, a journal review, a news service or even a list of web pages which are linked to other web sites. In any case, it provides users with a simple way to create and publish their information and other materials online.

One significant feature of a blog, one that largely accounts for its widespread use, is that it can be operated very easily. This user-friendly characteristic of the blog means that more and more internet users are turning to blogs since they can easily circulate information and interact with other internet and blog users (the relative anonymity of users is also contributing to its popularity). Bloggers can share their stories, write blog posts, share likes and dislikes, express their opinions, provide suggestions, and report similar interests with their virtual communities without necessarily having to divulge their identity, which prompts them to express themselves more freely.

Activities taking place in the blogosphere obviously affect the external world as bloggers

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