



***INFLUENCE OF ENDORSER CREDIBILITY ON ATTITUDE AND
PURCHASE INTENTION AMONG SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNSs)
USERS***

MUHAMMAD FAIZAL BIN SAMAT

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MUHAMMAD FAIZAL BIN SAMAT

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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2015



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**Thesis Submitted to Graduate School of Management, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

March 2015

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving mother, Harijah Kamin who words of continous support and encouragement along the progress to finish my research. Their unconditional love gives me the strength to endure obstacles while completing my study.

My deepest and thanks go to my beloved brothers and sisters as well, Mr. Hamizan, Mrs. Rasidah, Mrs. Haslida, Mrs. Mauliah, Mr. Nazri, Mrs. Salina, Mr. Rafizan and Mr. Hairul Azmi for never left my side and always give a brilliant advice to keep me strong throughout this research journey. I will always appreciate for all they have done.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

INFLUENCE OF ENDORSER CREDIBILITY ON ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION AMONG SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (SNSs) USERS

By

Muhammad Faizal Bin Samat
March 2015

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Advertising has always been an important marketing tool for companies to promote their products to potential customers. The rapid evolution of technology has encouraged many companies to shift from traditional advertising medium to the new medium such as the Internet as their advertising channel. In this context, social networking site (SNS) advertising has become one of the most popular online advertising platforms on the Internet due to the large number of users or potential consumers in Malaysia present in the SNS. Marketers have so long devised various advertising strategies in order to penetrate the advertisement clutter and get consumers to notice them. Past studies have proven that using endorser in an advertisement effectively influenced the formation of a positive attitude among consumers and led to purchase intention in traditional medium. However, these studies tend to examine on the effectiveness of endorser on the traditional advertising medium. The focused of these studies was also on the interactivity and effectiveness of the new media as the new medium of advertising. Studies on effectiveness of the endorser and its influence on purchase intention and attitudes on online advertisements is very limited. Hence, this study attempts to address this gap by examining the influence of endorser credibility on attitude and purchase intention among social networking sites (SNSs) users. In addition, it also sought to determine the role of attitude towards SNS advertising and attitude towards the brand as mediator on the relationship between endorser credibility and online purchase intention. The role of gender as moderator was also examined. The theoretical

framework of this study has been supported by two different theories which are Endorser Credibility Model and Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH). A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed in the Klang Valley, West Malaysia, but only 274 questionnaires were useable for further analysis. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 (Reliability, Validity, Descriptive, Normality, Multiple Regression, and Hierarchical Regression). Findings showed that a credible endorser leads the consumers to have an online purchase intention. In terms of attitude towards SNS advertising, consumers that perceive the endorser as credible develop a positive attitude towards the brand. In addition it was found that the higher the attitude towards the brand advertised, the higher their intention to purchase online. In terms of demographic factors, in Malaysia, gender does not play a moderating role. It signifies that, the effect of attitude towards brand and online purchase intention is not affected by gender of the online consumers. Men or women have the same interest in online shopping when they like the brand they are exposed to. However, to get a better understanding, further study can be done that covers the rural and urban area as the sample size. This study offered several implications for both academia and industry.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PENGARUH KREDIBILITI JURUCAKAP TERHADAP SIKAP DAN NIAT PEMBELIAN ANTARA PENGGUNA RANGKAIAN LAMAN SOSIAL

Oleh

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Pengiklanan sentiasa menjadi alat pemasaran yang penting untuk syarikat-syarikat bagi mempromosikan produk mereka kepada pelanggan yang berpotensi. Evolusi pesat didalam bidang teknologi telah menggalakkan banyak syarikat beralih daripada medium pengiklanan tradisional kepada medium baru seperti Internet sebagai saluran pengiklanan mereka. Dalam konteks ini, laman rangkaian sosial (SNS) pengiklanan telah menjadi salah satu platform pengiklanan yang paling popular dalam talian di Internet oleh kerana jumlah pengguna yang besar atau pengguna yang berpotensi di Malaysia hadir dalam SNS. Pemasar telah lama merangka pelbagai strategi pengiklanan untuk menembusi kekusutan iklan dan mendapatkan kesedaran pengguna untuk. Kajian lepas telah membuktikan bahawa penggunaan jurucakap dalam pengiklanan amat berkesan bagi mempengaruhi pembentukan sikap positif di kalangan pengguna dan membawa kepada niat pembelian dalam medium tradisional. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ini cenderung untuk mengkaji mengenai keberkesanan jurucakap kepada medium pengiklanan tradisional. Tumpuan kajian lalu terhadap media baru adalah mengenai interaktiviti dan keberkesanan media baru sebagai medium baru pengiklanan. Kajian ke atas keberkesanan jurucakap dan pengaruhnya terhadap niat dan sikap pembelian pada iklan dalam talian adalah sangat terhad. Oleh itu, kajian ini cuba untuk menangani jurang ini dengan mengkaji pengaruh kredibiliti jurucakap terhadap niat pembelian dalam talian pengguna SNS. Rangka teori untuk kajian ini telah disokong oleh dua teori yang berlainan iaitu *Endorser Credibility Model* dan *Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH)*.

Selain itu, ia juga bertujuan untuk menentukan peranan sikap terhadap pengiklanan SNS dan sikap terhadap jenama sebagai penghubung kepada hubungan antara kredibiliti jurucakap dan niat pembelian dalam talian. Peranan faktor-faktor demografi seperti jantina sebagai moderator juga dikaji. Sebanyak 300 soal selidik telah diedarkan di Lembah Klang, Malaysia Barat, tetapi hanya 274 soal selidik yang boleh digunakan untuk analisis lanjut. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 20.0 (Kebolehpercayaan, Kesahihan, deskriptif, Regresi Berganda dan Regresi Hierarki). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa jurucakap yang boleh dipercayai membawa pengguna untuk mempunyai niat pembelian dalam talian. Dari segi sikap terhadap pengiklanan SNS, pengguna yang melihat jurucakap yang boleh dipercayai mewujudkan sikap yang positif terhadap jenama. Selain itu didapati juga semakin tinggi sikap terhadap jenama yang diiklankan, semakin tinggi tujuan mereka

untuk membeli dalam talian. Dari segi faktor demografi, di Malaysia, jantina tidak memainkan peranan yang penting. Hasil kajian menunjukkan, kesan sikap terhadap jenama dan niat pembelian dalam talian tidak dipengaruhi oleh jantina pengguna dalam talian. Lelaki atau wanita mempunyai minat yang sama dalam membeli-belah dalam talian apabila mereka suka terhadap jenama yang mereka lihat. Walau bagaimanapun, untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih baik, kajian lanjut boleh dilakukan yang merangkumi kawasan bandar dan luar bandar sebagai saiz sampel. Kajian ini menawarkan beberapa implikasi untuk kedua-dua akademik dan industri.



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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 17 March 2015 to conduct the final examination of Muhammad Faizal Samat on his Master of Science thesis entitled **“Influence of Endorser Credibility on Attitude and Purchase Intention Among Social Networking Sites (SNSs) Users”** in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1988. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science degree.

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DECLARATION

I hereby confirm that:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SNS	Social Networking Site
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ATH	Affect Transfer Hypothesis
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
IAB	Interactive Advertising Bureau
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
KMO	Kaiese-Meyer-Olkin of Measure of Sampling Adequacy
b-regression	Bivariate regression
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the study. Attention is first focused on the outset of the study which covers discussion on advertising as a crucial communication tool, progress and developments of advertising, traditional advertising as well as the emergence of online advertising. Next, it covers a discussion on the problem statement of the study as well as the objectives and research questions. Finally, the significance of the study as well as the scope and the organisation of the thesis are presented.

1.2 Overview of Advertising in Malaysia

The promotional function is one of the pertinent tools which aid companies in understanding, educating and influencing consumers about their products. Five types of promotional tools that have been long recognised by scholars include advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public marketing, and also direct marketing (Belch and Belch, 2012; Kotler, 2008) In this digital era, interactive marketing or online

media advertising has been included as an addition to the five traditional promotional tools.

Advertising is one of the tools in marketing communication that have been used in many businesses to encourage, persuade, or manipulate the viewers to take further action. The ideological and political basis of advertising is to influence consumer behaviour towards a commercial offering. Advertising is usually paid for by the sponsor and viewed via traditional and new media such as newspaper, television, radio, outdoor advertising, blogs, or websites.

The first advertising agency, Volney B. Palmer, was established in Philadelphia in 1841. The introduction of television (TV), as a full audio-visual advertising platform changed everything. Following its introduction in the 1920s, TV had become a powerful mass commercial medium by the 1950s, especially when prices of TV sets became affordable. Against such competition print media and the solely audio radio had to take a back seat because for the first time advertising was being broadcast with sight, sound, and motion.

Advertising started in Malaysia and Singapore sometime in the 19th century, when foreign traders came to Malaya (the current West Malaysia). The medium used for advertising then was very limited and techniques used for the production of advertisements were not very sophisticated. The basic function of advertising at that

time was to inform and to sell products or services to traders. Most of the media used for advertising then were printed posters, brochures, newspapers, and wooden forms like signboards and billboards. During the mid-1950s, print media, radio, and Rediffusion were the main advertising media.

After Malaya gained independence on 31st August 1957, the Malayan Government formulated programmes to attract foreign investors to Malaya that led to marketing activities being carried out, which in turn led to an increase in advertising activities. Following that, advertisements became more prominent in Malaya with newspapers and magazines becoming the most popular media among advertisers. Cinemas started to become a strong medium for advertising commercials, while radio and Rediffusion started using jingles as a popular form of advertising. Traditional media brought the outside world into homes and served as a companion as well as an important source of information for the audience.

1.3 Background of the Study

It is crucial for marketers to understand consumers' activities when searching, choosing, evaluating, buying, consuming, and disposing of products and services to fulfil their needs, wants and desires. This understanding helps marketers to determine the stimuli and decide what action they can take to persuade consumers to form a positive attitude and intention to buy products.

Nowadays, there is an overload of advertisements available to consumers in traditional media. A consumer is exposed to more than 3000 advertisements in a typical week (Moriarty, 1991; Shahid and Imran, 2010). The introduction of the Internet and growth of digital technology have changed consumer preferences and forced traditional media to evolve to address and capture the attention of consumers who are present in the virtual space. Hence online advertising too has continued to grow dramatically. The rise of new media has effectively been an alternative platform for traditional media. According to zdnet.com, the IDC analyst said two factors have contributed to this phenomenon: eyeballs and relevance. "Advertisers will always go where the eyeballs are - where people will see advertisements," he explained. "As people spend more time online and less on traditional media, it makes sense to move online because the Internet is a much better (and vastly bigger) platform for getting your advertisements to reach relevant eyeballs." (zdnet.com, 2014).

In new media, there are many types of advertising available such as banner advertising, online game advertising, blogs, video advertising, and many more. The most popular online advertising nowadays is through Social Networking Sites (SNSs) advertising. SNSs were established to allow people to interact and communicate with each other in virtual space (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004). It has exploded into an extremely popular and frequently visited site where people meet without having to meet for example *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram* and etc. In Malaysia, there are about 15.9 million users of SNSs (Malaysian Communications

and Multimedia Commission, 2012). This clearly shows that SNSs are a lucrative platform for businesses to engage potential customers. A Nielsen report (2012) reinforced this, whereby they found consumption experiences about products are shared through online media; “Brand experience sharing through social networking sites, online product reviews, and opportunities to buy online are changing the game. Consumers’ exposure to marketing messages delivered via new and emerging media such as the Internet, rich media (for example, online video), and smartphones have resulted in an expanded number of touch-points where brands can engage,”. Thus SNSs can be one of the important online advertising platforms that marketers need to address.

Various creative advertising ideas are used to make advertising interesting such as use of audio, colours, funny video and many more. The number of advertisements in the new media has also been increasing rapidly (Nagar, 2009). However, the increasing number of advertisements in new media is becoming a concern since potential consumers can easily skip over the advertisements. Moreover, potential consumers can easily close the advertising while it is being played in the new media. Not surprisingly, advertising avoidance has been revealed to be a major obstacle to effective advertising (Nagar, 2009). Hence potential consumers are able to avoid advertisement by cognitive, behavioural and mechanical means. They constantly have choices to evaluate their alternatives. This situation makes it critical for marketers and advertisers to come out with the best ideas to capture the attention of online viewers who might be their potential consumers.

In ensuring that advertising is effective and reaches the target audiences, there are two types of strategies available which are media strategy and creative strategy. Media strategies focus on when the advertising will be advertised and where to advertise. While, creative strategies are concerned with what to advertise and how to deliver the message. Endorser is one of the most frequent creative strategies used in advertisements by marketers (White, 2004). It has been used for ages especially in traditional media. Researchers have found that endorsers help increase product sales when they hold value added qualities as well as good reputation (Wang, Cheng and Chu, 2013; Bahram, Zahra and Zahra, 2010). Thus using an endorser to communicate their products is one way for marketers to penetrate the clutter of advertisements.

Advertising agencies should have the interests of their clients in mind and ensure that whoever they select to be the celebrity endorser will help add value to the product they endorse; companies invest substantial advertising budgets for this purpose and they deserve to have their money's worth.

The criteria for the selection of an endorser should be: the suitability of the endorser in relation to the product and product features and benefits being promoted; the acceptability of the endorser to the targeted consumer segment; the competency of the endorser as a presenter so that the product is demonstrated and promoted effectively, creating interest, and purchase intention. It is also important that the endorser has credibility which will rub off on the product being endorsed.

This is crucial in endorser advertisements because an unsuitable/unacceptable endorser or an incompetent one can turn something that should be positive into negative and thus seriously impact the attraction of the product in the eyes of the consumers who can consequently view both product and the company marketing it in a negative light and cause significant loss of sales despite the huge investment in the advertising effort.

Bruce et al. (2004) make a very pertinent point when they warn of the dangers of a celebrity endorser, saying that such celebrities can be difficult to control compared to non-celebrities. Taking such a risk with celebrity endorsers therefore could result in substantial loss in terms of A&P investment.

The organizations, when deciding on the use of endorsers must therefore work closely with their advertising agencies to carefully select the most appropriate endorsers for their products based on their knowledge of their consumers, market trends and competitors' advertising and promotional activities (Low and Lim, 2012).

In addition, production of the celebrity advertisement in Malaysia is very restricted and is faced with a lot of obstacles because Malaysia is still considered a conservative country and under surveillance of an Islamic control system even though it is a multicultural society. Malaysian society is unable to adopt those celebrities to exhibit daring, sexy and sensitive elements in the advertisement. Hence, these become a concern for marketers when entering the market due to the legal restrictions and limitations imposed by a conservative society (Shao & Waller,

1993). However to ensure that the endorser strategy is effective, marketers need to ensure that their endorsers are credible.

Many researchers have been done on the effectiveness of using endorsers or endorser credibility in traditional media (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2000; Till, Stanley and Priluck, 2008). However, very limited studies have been done on the effectiveness of using endorsers in the new media on attitudes and purchase intention of consumers (Bahram et. al., 2010; Ferle and Choi, 2005). Past studies on the new media mainly focused on the interactivity (Chiagouris and Lala, 2009) and effectiveness of the Internet as medium of advertising (Nagar, 2009). Thus, this study moves forward this phase by investigating the effectiveness of endorsers in social networking sites (SNSs) advertisements and how it influences consumers' attitude and purchase intentions.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Marketers have for long been making efforts to devise strategies which will produce advertisements which are attractive and credible (Goldsmith et. al, 2000; Ferle and Choi, 2005). The creativity of advertising agencies coupled with the foresight of progressive marketers has therefore not been blind to the immense potential of the Internet as a whole and SNSs in particular to achieve greater competitiveness over their rivals in the market place.

While the use of SNSs as a novel advertising platform is in relative infancy, there is already ample evidence of very encouraging success in this direction, particularly in the use of endorsers for greater credibility. It has been seen as one of the most important stimuli used by marketers to build consumer' attitude towards advertisements and brand, leading to purchase intention. Research by Wang, Cheng and Chu (2013) showed that using an endorser in advertising increases the product sales of the company especially when the endorser is a celebrity with a reputation in a specific field. Typically, there are four types of endorsers: celebrity, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), experts, and typical consumer. Each speaks to a different segment of the market.

According to White (2004), the most popular advertising strategies used in the global marketplace today is celebrity endorsers. Shimp (2000) stated that about a quarter of advertising in the United States used celebrity endorsers. Previous studies have shown that using of celebrity endorsers leads to a positive attitude of consumers towards the brand (Till et al., 2008).

Studies conducted by previous researchers have demonstrated that celebrity endorsers materially improve financial returns for the companies (Farrell, Karels, Monfort and McClatchey, 2000; Erdogan, Baker and Tagg, 2001). These findings show how celebrity endorsers have helped companies to promote the product and provide return on investment.

The year 1995 is considered the beginning of the Internet age in Malaysia and since then everything has been history. A decline in Malaysia's economic growth in 2012 was reflected in the advertising market whereby advertising expenditure on traditional media such as newspapers and television declined as well (Nielsen, 2012). In contrast, online advertising expenditure showed an increase of 12.1% in 2012. This shows that spending on advertising by companies was not very much affected by the economic slowdown. Furthermore, it can be said that marketers or companies are prepared to risk high budgets on Internet advertising because of the high number of Internet users who may be their potential consumers (Internet World Stats, 2012). This also reflected that online advertising was a bright spot for the advertising industry, with growth reflected universally. The evolution of technology has made consumers choose the Internet as their main medium of communication and marketers have been quick to seize this lucrative online market segment.

With the emergence of various innovative interactive communications platforms applied in business to deal with groups of more educated consumers and the young adult generation, advertising agencies and marketers must contend with the fact that today's educated consumers and the young adult generation particularly are more equipped with the latest technology and handy gadgets such as mobile phones that can be linked to the Internet. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2012) revealed that about 63.6% of Malaysia's population use the Internet and about 64.7% of these Internet users are aged 15 years and older (*comScore*, 2011).

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are among the most popular Internet sites and these include *Facebook* and *Twitter* among many others, which offer users the opportunity to stay in touch with loved ones, friends or people with the same interest (Gwenn and Kathleen, 2011). Surveys done by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (2012) showed that 85.7% of all Internet users in Malaysia use the Internet to socialise with their friends via SNSs. A report also found that 13 million Malaysians have become active users of SNSs with 65.5% of SNSs users logging in to their social networking accounts at least once a day (Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission, 2012). The statistics also showed that SNSs are the most popular platform where users get connected with each other to share their activities of common interest. SNSs have also become the medium for businesses to advertise their products and services since it plays a big role in Malaysia's advertising market with the large number of active users. A survey done by Regas (2014) showed 68% of businesses in Malaysia use social media to engage, connect with and inform existing customers about their products or services. Regas also found that 52% of Malaysian companies devote up to 20% of their marketing budget to advertising in SNSs. This situation clearly explains why more than half of all Malaysian businesses use SNSs as one of their marketing strategies. According to *The Sun* (2013), Malaysian companies are fairly active on SNSs but they do not recognise its impacts on their businesses. In addition, 30% of Malaysian businesses do not have a clear strategy or formal performance measurement initiatives in place to track the return on investment of SNSs usage. Furthermore, many Malaysian businesses do not have a robust strategy to guide their SNSs activities and quantify their benefits.

The problem is that although social networking sites provide a lucrative opportunity for businesses to advertise their products, many Malaysian businesses are still not clear to what extent their marketing strategies via SNSs are effective and clarifying this uncertainty remains a problem for academic research which must be thoroughly addressed.

Many studies have focused on the effectiveness of using celebrity endorsers in traditional advertising such as television but this appears to have been gradually but steadily overtaken by a shift to the SNS domain in recent years. This domain involves the adoption of interactive new media technology (Chiagouris and Lala, 2009). According to Nagar (2009), Internet advertising differs from traditional advertising in many aspects because the former can extend the function of advertising far beyond what traditional advertising can offer such as interactivity. Consumers can be very selective in the kind of advertising that attracts and interests them; such a situation proves challenging to advertisers. Consumers' selectivity means that advertisers have to come out with the best advertising strategies to capture the undivided attention of consumers, establish top of the mind awareness so that they remember the brand and eventually purchase the product. More importantly for the marketers, such expected impacted must be able to fully exploit the massive numbers of the Internet and SNS based consumer base to achieve the best returns on what could prove to be extensive A&P budgets.

Advertisers use creativity to develop advertisements in all media to make the advertisements attractive. Typically, advertisements on TV use sound, colours, moving images and pictures, and the average duration of a typical TV advertisement ranges from five seconds to 30 seconds (Nagar, 2009). For the Internet, Nagar (2009) states that several different formats have been used including online advergames, interstitials or in-your-face advertisements, keyword advertisements, button advertisements, pop ups and pop unders, and banner advertisements. The different formats used in Internet advertising lead to questions on the effectiveness of using endorsers as companies' spokespersons especially in SNSs advertisements.

Bahram et. al. (2010) mention that using celebrities in advertising is mainly to form a positive relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention of consumers. They add that there are many studies done regarding the effectiveness of using endorsers in advertisements that lead to purchase intention, but almost all of these studies were done on traditional media. In addition, there are researches focusing on the relationship between the effectiveness of using celebrities as endorsers and consumer attitudes.

Past studies have shown conflicting results on the relationship between attitudes and purchase intention. Kamins (1990) found that positive attitude towards celebrities' leads to purchase intention. This finding is also supported by research done by Ohanian (1991) and Lina, Liwei, and Dongsong (2007). However, results from studies by O'Mahony and Meenaghan (1997) show that positive attitudes towards

celebrities do not necessarily translate into purchase intention and this was also found to be core in a study carried out by Bahram et al. (2010).

There is also the added concern of the relationship between the online consumers' demographics – particularly gender - and in this area, Akhter (2003) indicated the importance of understanding the relation between demographic characteristics and the use of the Internet since the dot-com business-to-consumer sector continues to show steady growth. This clearly illustrates the adoption of online shopping and the tendency of buying are influenced by gender. To the best knowledge of this researcher, studies of gender differences in online shopping are scarce and findings are inconsistent (Hasan, 2010). This study intends to determine whether the relationship between endorser credibility, attitude and purchase intention is moderated by gender.

The history of product and service advertising is littered with many examples of how various successful advertising strategies over the decades have been formulated, developed and fine-tuned until they became strategic classics; how landmark inventions like the telegraph, radio, film and television have revolutionised life in general and marketing promotion in particular. The emergence of the Internet has proven to be another landmark game-changing invention and even as advertising agencies and marketers now focus on Internet advertising in general and SNS advertising in particular the research problem remains the many variables and possibilities that need to be researched and understood about this new huge

generation of online consumers in order to fully benefit from the use of endorsers or any other advertising strategies.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of endorser credibility and its influence on consumer attitude toward SNSs advertisements, towards the brand advertised, and online purchase intention based on gender.

The specific objectives of this study are outlined below:

1. To investigate the relationship between endorser credibility and online purchase intention.
2. To investigate the mediating role of attitude towards SNSs advertising between endorser credibility and attitude towards brand.
3. To investigate the mediating role of attitude towards brand between attitude towards SNSs advertising and online purchase intention.
4. To investigate the moderating role of gender between attitude towards brand and online purchase intention.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions are constructed:

1. What is the relationship between endorser credibility and online purchase intention?
2. Does attitude towards SNSs advertising and attitude towards brand mediate the relationship between endorser credibility and online purchase intention?
3. Does gender play a moderating role between attitude towards brand and online purchase intention?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in how the findings of this study will contribute to the various interest groups of the study.

Firstly, for companies, the study will be able to contribute additional information on the effectiveness of using endorsers in SNSs advertising so that companies may reduce the advertising budget where appropriate since the use of endorsers incurs high cost for the advertiser. The findings will also help companies to further understand the consumers' online needs and preferences including their acceptance of SNSs advertising. According to *The Sun* (2013), 75% of Malaysians feel that Malaysian businesses are not doing enough to embrace SNSs as a business tool and 35% think that businesses do not seek any feedback from their customers about the level of acceptance of SNSs advertisements. The statistics explained that although

many Malaysian businesses use SNSs as a strategic marketing platform, in actual fact they are not doing it right.

Secondly, for the marketers especially those involved in the advertising industry, the findings of this study will help them to understand what factors stimulate consumers to buy an online product while surfing the SNSs. Other than that, marketers will be able to better define their target market for online advertising in SNSs more precisely and effectively.

Lastly, for academic purposes, this study will help in investigating the effectiveness of using endorsers in a different advertising medium since previous research focused more on the traditional medium. Other than that, this study is trying to investigate the moderating role of gender in online purchase intention. According to Morris, Venkatesh, and Ackerman (2005), there is a difference in the way male and female consumers handle digital technology. It is known that there is a perceived risk involved when consumers are making a decision to purchase a product but there is debate on how male and female consumers view such risks in online shopping situations (Carr and Steele, 2010; Daruvala, 2007). Various researches have confirmed the finding that gender is a factor in online purchasing decisions and that men generally are more inclined to take risks online than women (Ball, Eckel, and Heracleous, 2010). Another significant factor is social media which can lead to significant influence on the online consumer by family, friends, media and others (Featherman and Fuller, 2003; Griffin and Viehland, 2010). On the other hand, there

are conflicting findings by various researchers regarding the specific demographic components that impacted by social pressures. There is also little evidence to indicate whether there is indeed a difference in the way men and women respond to social factors when shopping online and making purchase decisions.

Theoretically, the main contribution of this study is the integration of two models that are, Affect Transfer Hypothesis (ATH) and Endorser Credibility Models, in terms of the SNSs context. Therefore, the findings from this study will be useful addition to the current limited research in this area.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the credibility of endorsers in determining the consumer's attitude towards SNSs advertisements and attitude towards brand in determining the purchase intention and how gender will influence the decision process.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The definitions of certain terms used in this study are given below in order to avoid any misconception and to have a better understanding of this study as a whole.

1. Endorser Credibility

Endorser credibility refers to the spokespersons in the advertising or the individual who represent in the advertising to deliver the message to potential consumers and hold some characteristics that people will trust or believe on what they say.

2. Attitudes

The term refers to consumers' feeling that they show whether they like something or not. Attitudes can be change accordingly based on individual's preferences.

3. Online Purchase Intention

Online purchase intention refers to the situation where the consumers have the tendency to buying something when they saw anything that they like in Internet.

4. Social Networking Sites

In this study, social networking sites refers to the online medium or virtual space that allow people to share and exchange an ideas, also communicate each other without having to meet.

1.10 Organisation of the thesis

This study is organised in six chapters. The organisation of the thesis is as follows:.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background.

This chapter provides an overview of the study that covers the study background, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and the scope of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

The literature review for this study comprises a critical survey of the various advertising strategies in the literature, especially the variables involved and relevant definitions of attitudes and online purchase intention. Past research findings, opinions and theoretical models are expressed in this chapter too.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will explain the conceptual framework and the methodology used in this study including the sampling process, questionnaire design, and data gathering methods. Statistical techniques are used and the test statistics to test the hypotheses of the study will be explained clearly in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

This chapter will discuss the results and analysis of this study. This chapter will be divided into two parts; descriptive analysis and inferential analysis.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of Results and Discussion

This chapter will interpret and discuss the results and include the researcher's critical interpretation. .

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will present and discuss the conclusions of the findings and make recommendations for further study, including suggestions to improve the advertising activities in social networking sites based on consumer's attitude.

1.11 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter justifies why it is worthwhile to carry out this study. The study findings that have been highlighted would be very significant to advertisers, especially the body of knowledge related to the SNSs advertising. The last part of this chapter explains the organization of the thesis, which is in six chapters.

research also were discussed in this chapter and recommendations for future research were made.



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During his academic career, together with his supervisors, Dr. Haslinda Hashim and Dr. Raja Nerina Raja Yusof, he presented "Endorser Credibility Towards Social Media Advertisements: A Review" at the 2013 Global Conference on Business and Economics Research, Kuala Lumpur. He made another presentation, "Endorser Credibility and Its Influence on the Attitude Towards Social Media Advertisements In Malaysia" at the SIBR Hong Kong 2014 Conference on Interdisciplinary Business and Economics Research, Hong Kong.