An exploration of the role of bloggers and blogger characteristics, in the consumer buying process for cosmetics in the Thai market

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Abstract

Consumers often use online information to help them make better buying decisions (Cheung, 2014; Lu et al., 2014). Blogs and bloggers' opinion can be one of the most important sources of information for consumers evaluating products and services, reducing a consumer's cognitive effort and uncertainty before making a purchase (Mrazek, 2010). Employing bloggers to spread information on products has become one of the most powerful word-of-mouth strategies for marketers (Kempe, 2003; Sussman, Siegal et al., 2003; Scoble, 2006). This thesis aims to understand how bloggers and social media influence consumers' decision-making processes and to explore the characteristics of blogs and bloggers in term of trustworthiness and credibility in the environment of the marketing practices for beauty products in the Thai market. Qualitative research methods were used, including online observations and interviews. The interviewees covered 38 Thai women who have experience in using online beauty reviews.

This thesis develops the Theory of Planned Behaviour Model (TPB) to understand how beauty bloggers have influenced the consumer's decision-making process. Moreover, the characteristics of blogs and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility are explored and explained in relation to the dual processes (central route and peripheral route) from the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The thesis contributes new knowledge in relation to the content-based factors existing in the central route and their relationship to the peripheral route (sincerity, actual use, expertise, and experience). Therefore, bloggers can show their ability and potential to use a product and criticize its quality through writing, photography, and videos. Furthermore, the analysis found that factors from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) could be adapted and applied to explain further the consumer perception of bloggers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Before the advent of the internet, people shared their opinions and experiences via word of mouth (WOM). However, messages can change as they diffuse through society. Traditional marketing practices did not generally focus on WOM in their campaigns due to the limited power of WOM to spread messages.

The internet supports the diffusion of WOM communication through various technology platforms, which has led to the development of electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Enabled by digital features that support social interactions, eWOM allows a much faster spread of information to individuals, society, and the global population. (Park and Lee, 2009). Marketing practices are now being adapted and applied to consumer behaviour, and this process entails integrating the internet into marketing strategies. Internet-based marketing practices have been expanded to reach target markets (Buhalis, 2000; Dickinger, 2011) especially in the global market. Moreover, the internet has been adopted as a vehicle to connect massive numbers of people from various places (Huang, 2012). This advanced technology has supported functions that have allowed marketers to narrow their target markets (Lee and Koo, 2012). Marketers can narrow down their target markets with information technology techniques such as filtering customers based on particular demographics, sex, lifestyles, and preferences, for example. Such narrowing is beneficial for marketing campaigns in reducing the cost of reaching potential customers.

The development and growth of social media have allowed users to create online social networks (Kane et al., 2014). These online communities have engaged people who

have the same interests and want to share their opinions and experiences (Dessart et al., 2015). This content sharing is considered as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Huang, 2012). The spread of the internet has also given users the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences about products and services via online reviews. Online reviews are another type of e-WOM (Lee and Koo, 2012). Online reviews have emerged from internet-mediated communities where consumers can exchange their opinions and judgments about products and services based on personal experiences (Dellarocas at al., 2007). Compared to offline WOM, eWOM has wider message diffusion, is publicly recorded, and can be easily accessed (Lee and Koo, 2012). However, verifying the reliability of e-WOM is more challenging as the identity of review contributors is often unknown or uncertain. De Vany and Walls (1996) mentioned the importance of eliciting WOM from consumers, as WOM affects the emotions and experiences of other consumers in the long term. Because e-WOM affects emotions and experiences, the internet is a key platform for communication (Lee and Koo, 2012).

The development of the internet and the popularity of network technology work together to change the source of delivered information. Electronic Word of mouth (eWOM) from consumers who have purchased and experienced products has become a useful form of seller-centric marketing communication (Lee and Koo, 2012; Lu et al., 2014). Consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication is strong and has a credible influence on consumer behaviour (Gupta and Harris, 2010), as consumers tend to place more trust in this information than in that which originates from company sources (Lee and Lee, 2009 ; Lee and Koo, 2012; Lu et al., 2014). Consumers employ internet tools to diffuse their purchasing experiences throughout various platforms, and personal blogs are examples of one of these platforms (Hennig et al., 2004; Lee and Youn, 2009).

1.2 Blogs and bloggers

It has been claimed that blogs impact on consumer behaviour in information seeking before making purchases, engaging prospective customers at a deeper level of involvement than other electronic media through which individuals and organizations present opinions or information about specific topics (Cox et al., 2008). Consumers can share their opinions about products online on their blog. This evaluation of a product is known as an online consumer review which others can take into consideration before making purchasing decisions (Lu et al., 2014).

A blog is a web log through which people can share text, images, and links to other third parties' web pages. Blogs have boomed since 2005 and are growing in popularity (Pan et al.,2007; Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2008; Cobanoglu and Berezina, 2011). New technology now provides users with the ability to distribute content and connect with blogs. Many blogger websites offer integrated features, like picture, music, and video sharing, and can alert followers or users about updates via email or mobile devices. These functions allow blogs to connect to other blogs and social media platforms, which in turn allow bloggers to build up their connections in three ways: from blogger to blogger, blogger to readers, and readers to readers.

Moreover, blogs play an influential and active role in online media and impact readers' attitudes about products and services (Hsu et al., 2013). Blogs are an influential medium and have shown massive marketing power (Hsu and Tsou, 2011). To take advantage of the rich communication power of blogs, companies can use them to engage with consumers, taking on a different role (compared with their offline channels) in building their brands and thereby developing a sustainable relationship with their customers (Singh et al., 2008) . Hence, blogs are an influential medium for delivering product information. They have a distinct advantage in that the consumer typically believes that information posted on blogs

is more credible than information presented through traditional marketing methods (Agarwal et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2014).

According to the characteristics of blogs as mentioned above, blogging is considered a new type of electronic word of mouth from the marketing perspective (Osman et al., 2013), and blogs have a perceived credibility that leads to consumer acceptance of their content (Cheung et al., 2009). A blogger's opinion is seen as more trustworthy (Dellarocas, 2003), more valuable (Goldsmith and Horowitz, 2006), and more credible (Park and Lee, 2009) than company advertising. So, in recent years, marketing has become more challenging and perhaps more interesting due to the abundance of media channels, massive amounts of information, and changes in consumer behaviour. A revolution in marketing communication has ushered in a shift in consumer behaviour from passive to active consumption, especially in online activities, and consumers now diffuse marketing information that can influence the decisions of others (Park and Lee, 2009; Shankar and Malthouse, 2007).

The important players who have diffused e-WOM in the blogosphere are bloggers. Bloggers tend to develop from being consumers themselves. They can be technically defined as writers who interact with their readers by expressing feelings, sharing opinions, discussing ideas, and proposing advice based on their own personal experiences, attitudes, and interests in various brands (Agarwal et al., 2008). In an uncertain marketplace environment, bloggers function as opinion leaders in online communities. They provide information to potential customers (such as product reviews and new product launches) and advertise products alongside providing feedback and purchasing advice (Li et al., 2011; Loeper et al., 2014).

Consumers are then able to use that source of information to evaluate a product before they make a decision to purchase it; 81% of consumers search for advice from others before making a purchase through a social site and 74% of those who received such advice found it to be influential in making a purchase (Wegert, 2010). Bloggers' opinions can reduce a consumer's cognitive effort and uncertainty before making a purchase (Mrazek, 2010). These

opinions can be one of the most important sources of information for consumers evaluating products and services in the decision-making process. When making purchase decisions, many consumers obtain the information they need from the blogosphere, where bloggers function as product experts who provide useful reviews (Cox et al., 2008).

Sponsoring bloggers allows marketers to access the right target market based on bloggers' followers on social media. However, not all bloggers have equal potential to influence the consumer decision-making process (Agarwal et al., 2008). Thus, to be most effective, marketers should have criteria to select influencers in the blogosphere (Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014).

1.3 Current knowledge about the role of bloggers

Discovering bloggers with the potential to be influential is challenging. However, when brands accept certain bloggers as online influencers and then incorporate those bloggers into marketing campaigns, consumers' awareness of marketing practices such as sponsorship can damage the credibility of the bloggers and the bloggers' online reviews. If consumers notice that a blogger is sponsored by a brand how will this affect the blogger's credibility and reputation? Therefore, while the influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers can support marketing strategies in general, sustaining consumer trust for a blogger supporting a brand can challenge that blogger's credibility.

Existing studies on online reviews have explored the influence of bloggers in the blogosphere from various perspectives. Prior studies have often focused on how bloggers affect trust and purchase intention in general terms. Ko (2011) proposed referring to such bloggers as A-list bloggers, while Agarwal et al., (2008) identified the characteristics of an influential blogger. Moreover, in the context of bloggers being used in marketing practices, previous studies have suggested the effective factors and characteristics of blogs and bloggers

that can best benefit brands. Li et al., (2009; 2011) proposed the MIV model (marketing influential value) for evaluating influential bloggers for marketing brands. Uzunoğlu and Kip (2014) also explored brand perspectives on the characteristics of bloggers that are beneficial for public relations.

Scholars have discussed and proposed the key factors and characteristics of influential blogs and bloggers that are beneficial to brands and marketing campaigns, allowing said brands to make effective decisions about which bloggers to work with. However, modern consumers are now aware of the brands and marketing practices that are prevalent in bloggers' reviews, especially among influential bloggers. Bloggers with a high credibility are said to have more influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour than traditional forms of marketing (e.g. print and broadcast) (Jain and Posavac, 2001) especially the reviews from bloggers with high level of reputation (Hus et al., 2013). An open question that will be explored is 'How do bloggers behave in order to maintain their own credibility and readers' trust?'

Marketing tools may impact blogs and bloggers' characteristics, particularly in terms of trust and credibility. Therefore, this thesis challenges existing knowledge to explore which characteristics of influential bloggers allows those bloggers to sustain their trustworthiness and credibility. One noteworthy dimension of eWOM is trustworthiness (Cheung, 2014). Trustworthiness refers to the blogger's reputation and credibility, as well as the readers' beliefs about the reliability and accuracy of information (McKnight et al., 1973; Cheung et al., 2009). For word-of-mouth communication to be effective, the source must be trustworthy and have credibility, and the message itself should have value. Therefore, the credibility and trustworthiness of the information source are other factors affecting the information adoption that influences online behaviour (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). Bloggers gain credibility from consumers because bloggers are perceived as customers who have actually used the product instead of as models or celebrities promoting it. For this reason, a number of scholars have

explored the impact of bloggers and online reviews in consumers' purchasing decision-making (Hus et al., 2013).

Research on online reviews has proposed using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991) to explain how online reviews affect consumers' attitudes towards purchasing behaviours (Hsu et al., 2013; Wang, 2015). The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (Petty et al., 1983) has also been used to study consumers' attitudes towards online reviews. For example, using ELM, Wang (2015) aimed to explore the influence of e-WOM on intention and Gupta and Harris (2010) studied the effect of e-WOM on choice during product consideration.

However, this thesis develops the existing models, namely TPB and ELM, by using both models in its study. TPB is used to explain consumers' decision-making process; specifically, TPB is used to understand recent situations in which online reviews, especially from bloggers, have affected the consumer decision-making process. TPB thereby illuminates the influential role of bloggers on the consumer decision-making process. Then the study uses ELM to identify the influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers based on the previously established understanding of consumers' attitudes towards online reviews.

By using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model to discuss consumers' purchasing attitudes, this thesis explores not only the ability of online reviews to influence consumers' purchasing intentions but also each dimension (attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) of the TPB model based on three stages (before intending to purchase, intention to purchase, and purchasing behaviour). The thesis discusses how each dimension has an effect on cosmetics products purchasing, the influential role of bloggers, cosmetics products reviews, etc. The results of the study, which are based on the TPB model, may be used to analyse consumers' perceptions of the role of beauty bloggers and their influencing power. This thesis aims not only to explain the characteristics of social media

platforms and bloggers using the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) but also to situate this new knowledge in existing theory.

Many businesses cultivate influencers or opinion leaders in order to influence their customers to purchase their products using a variety of strategies based on the business's characteristics. In this thesis, we will assume that fashion and cosmetic businesses have the similar characteristics. Fashion and cosmetic businesses are quickly transformed, since trends of products come and go rapidly (Seock et al., 2007). Consequently, these companies require fast marketing; the marketing managers need to employ the right influencers to introduce and promote products to their target customers quickly. Influencers already have a relationship with customers, however; in order to be more effectively influential, they should have some attributes (interests, beliefs, and attitudes) similar to those of their readers. This allows bloggers to build a strong relationship (or, type of intimacy, as noted by Cho et al., 2012).

Within the cosmetic market, bloggers have become powerful influencers in peoples' decision-making about consumption, as can be observed from the many brands that advertise products by using bloggers as spokespersons on their web pages. Blogging has become one of the most popular channels for providing information; numerous bloggers share product reviews on their blogs after using products (Baker and Moore, 2008; Hsu et al., 2013). There are many factors that motivate cosmetic company marketing managers to engage with bloggers as they develop their marketing strategies. For example, technology development (e.g. providing a readily available blog platform on websites with virtual media and improving accessible blog apps on mobile phones) may lead to increases in the number of bloggers, as well as changes in consumer behaviour. However, the development of social media platforms and advanced technology may affect the perceived usefulness of blogs. Therefore, this thesis not only studies blogs but also other social media platforms that may also affect consumers' attitudes towards online reviews. As a result, this thesis proposes the effective platforms for online beauty reviews based on consumers' perspectives. Facebook

and YouTube are selected, but some other social media platforms will be mentioned based on the interview results.

Existing research related to the study of the characteristics of online reviews and bloggers has, for the most part, been conducted using quantitative methods. Hsu et al. (2012) use the TAM model and illustrate significant perceived usefulness of bloggers' recommendations and reputations in an online field survey. Lee and Youn (2009) propose another model to determine influential bloggers. Their model is based on Li et al.'s (2009; 2011) model, which focuses on marketing, and on Agarwal et al.'s (2012) model, which is used to identify influential bloggers. However, this thesis aims to understand the influential role of bloggers in consumers' decision-making and determine which characteristics of other social media platforms and bloggers affect credibility using qualitative methods, namely interviews and online observation. The observation are used to recruit interviewees and determine the nature of bloggers and their followers, which can be used to create semi-structured interview question sand analysis..

When online reviews are used in marketing practices, the bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility can be affected. Thus the characteristics of blogs and bloggers will be analysed in relation to the bloggers' involvement in marketing practices and how this impacts on the bloggers' credibility. After developing the qualitative methods (interviews and online observations), the findings of this thesis identify which characteristics of social media platforms and, bloggers can influence consumers' decision-making and sustain bloggers' credibility in the long term.

So, this thesis will address a number of questions, including the following: What are the particular characteristics of influential beauty bloggers? What criteria do marketers use to choose an effective blogger as a marketing tool? Consequently, this thesis investigates what characteristics of beauty bloggers impact reader trust. 'How do bloggers behave in order to maintain their own credibility and readers' trust?' is an open question that will be explored.

In addition, this thesis will consider the managerial implications of the findings for brands and marketers seeking to effectively integrate beauty bloggers into marketing practices.

Table 1 illustrates the existing knowledge gap, the aims of this thesis, and the thesis's expected contribution.

Table1: The existing knowledge gap and the thesis's aims and expected contributions

Existing knowledge	This thesis' aims and expected contribution
Discussion and proposal of models and factors to evaluate influential bloggers and successful weblogs	Explore influential roles and determine the characteristics of social media and bloggers in consumers' decision-making in cosmetics product purchasing.
Use of particular model to study consumers' attitudes towards intention and purchasing behaviour in online reviews, such as the technology acceptance model (TAM), theory of planned behaviour (TPB), and elaboration likelihood model (ELM)	Apply the TPB model to study the influential role of social media and bloggers on consumers' decision-making in terms of cosmetics product purchasing in Thailand. Also, use the ELM to explain the influential characteristics of social media and bloggers in term of trustworthiness and credibility.
The use of blogs to study the influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers	Blogs and other social media platforms (Facebook and YouTube) are focused on, though other effective social media platforms may be discussed based on interview results.
Mostly use of qualitative methods to study the characteristics of influential blogs and bloggers	Qualitative methods are used in this research. Interviewing is the main tool used to explore consumers' perceptions of the influential role of social platforms and bloggers in decision-making and their characteristics in terms of credibility. Online observation has been adapted to investigate bloggers' behaviour, activity, and followers, which are used to create semi-structured interview questions and recruiting.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

The overall aim is to explore how bloggers influence the consumer decision-making process in the Thai beauty market and particularly propose the characteristics that are most important in terms of bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility.

- To understand the influential role of bloggers on the consumer decision-making

process.

- To understand consumer perceptions towards the trustworthiness and credibility of the blogger.

- To investigate and study the blogger characteristics thatsustain bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility.

- To develop the TPB and ELM models to further explain the characteristics of bloggers in building and sustaining their credibility, which in turn affects the consumer purchasing intention based on the consumer decision-making process.

1.5 The context and practitioner relevance

According to research, the cosmetic market in Thailand has grown approximately 18% per year for the last five years and is now worth 2.1 hundred billion baht (Sanoachitt, 2015). Sixty percent of the market (1.2 hundred billion baht) is domestic, while the remaining 40% (9 billion baht) is international (Sanoachitt, 2015). After the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, the cosmetic market was considered a competitive market. Its growth in Thailand is expected to double by 2021 as a result of imported products from many countries, such as China and the Philippines (Sanoachitt, 2015). In response, marketers often use bloggers as 'middle men' who can communicate with customers.

Product reviews by bloggers can be created on a number of different review platforms (Chen et al., 2012) such as Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Twitter, and WordPress. However, this thesis will focus on the three most popular beauty social media channels in Thailand, which are blogs, Facebook, and YouTube. Beauty blogs are the main study of this thesis. Since Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media channels in Thailand (from online observation), bloggers mostly employ these channels to promote

themselves and their blogs. In Thailand, there are 30 million Facebook users out of the 33 million people who use the internet (the total population is 69.7 million) (Vichienwanitchkul, 2017). YouTube is a popular channel for beauty bloggers because it allows them to demonstrate a product's colour, texture, and use, since a text-based explanation is not always sufficient. This thesis will examine only these three channels with blogs as the main focus.

It is important for marketing professionals to identify influential bloggers. The positive feedback from an influential blogger may influence consumer decisions to purchase products (Yao et al., 2009); in contrast, negative feedback (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014) may have an adverse effect on brand reputation. This thesis will help marketers to better understand a blogger's influential role in their future marketing strategies. As online information from bloggers increases, it is necessary for companies to understand how consumers perceive the information from those reviews as important and useful, and why this information influences their purchasing behaviour (Lee and Ma, 2012). Beauty bloggers, now coveted by many beauty companies, have a voice and express their thoughts and opinions through their own space. Beauty bloggers are now moving into advertising as well. Eucerin, Thailand, a beauty brand, has presented three bloggers –Saypan , Mayyr and Ammie – in television advertising for DermoPURIFYER Acne and Make-Up Cleansing Water 2 and L'Oreal. For these reasons, marketers may want to consider employing bloggers as an additional marketing tool, since bloggers experience the product and brand and provide online information to other consumers or target markets.

1.5.1 Beauty bloggers and social media platforms in Thailand

This thesis analyses beauty bloggers' usage of social media platforms in Thailand. Beauty bloggers have an influential role amongst Thai consumers. This section discusses how beauty bloggers use social media to influence Thai consumers.

Statistics on internet usage rank Thailand in the top tier globally. In 2018, it was estimated that people in Thailand spent on average, 9.38 hours per day on the internet, especially on mobile social media (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018). With regards to social media penetration, Thailand ranked eighth globally; specifically, 67% of the Thai population is on social media (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018). Thailand also leads in social media usage among countries in Southeast Asia (Statista.com, 2019). The most popular social media platform in Thailand is Facebook, which accounted for about 80% of social media usage with 47 million users in 2016 (gs.statcounter, 2019; Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018). This number of Facebook users represents about 70% of the Thai population, which is estimated at 68 million people (worldometers, 2019). In 2018, Twitter ranked second in social media usage, at about 10%, followed by YouTube (2.05%), Pinterest (1.45%), and Instagram (0.09%). However, in 2017, Instagram was reported to be popular globally, with 13 million users (gs.statcounter, 2019; Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018), and in 2018, Instagram reached 19% penetration globally, compared to the worldwide average of other social media being 11% (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018).

From 2015 to 2018, blogs did not feature among the most popular social media platforms in Thailand. Thais mostly use mobile social media, which rank at 39% penetration globally based on active accounts in top social media networks in each country (Leesa-Nguansuk, 2018). Unlike blogs, social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter incorporate features that support high interactivity amongst users. Users on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube can access the platforms using mobile devices, but blogs are mainly limited to web pages. This difference could explain why blogs are not as popular among Thais. In addition, social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube help users to easily build a social network online. By adding friends and following other users, one can track and monitor the activities of others, using social media alerts and notifications. Hence, social media platforms create opportunities for increased interaction among users.

Part of the popular social media penetration in Thailand is due to Thai social media users' behaviour. Namely, Thai social media users tend to access social media as part of their daily routine. Moreover, the attributes and functions of social media platforms support user activities, allowing users to give feedback and share perspectives on social media postings. This interaction creates an opportunity for users to not only consume information from social media but also share their experiences and opinions. These attributes of social media explain why online reviews have shifted from blogging sites to other social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Additionally, this justifies the selection of Facebook, YouTube, and blogs as the objects for study in this thesis. Beauty bloggers in Thailand have mainly used these three platforms for sharing their reviews; the bloggers' selections depend on the bloggers' objectives, which must align with the functions of the social media chosen. Based on online observation, beauty bloggers mainly use YouTube for sharing make-up and beauty demonstrations; they then tend to re-repost content on Facebook with more details. Facebook features allow users to connect with other users, creating opportunities for bloggers to share and circulate their posts on the platform. However, blogs are highly focused, as the original platforms for bloggers, and some beauty bloggers in Thailand still maintain a blog as one of their tools.

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are not only popular for online reviews but also attractive to users who engage in online shopping. Thus, social media platforms provide one-stop services for users that include online shopping and review of products and services. With regards to the Thai population, 51% of online shoppers in 2017 purchased goods directly via social media, and Facebook, YouTube, LINE, and Instagram are the leading social networks in Thailand (eshopworld, 2018). In emerging markets such as Thailand, this trend is notable; namely, more and more users of social networking sites such as Instagram and Facebook are purchasing products from other users who are selling products without a mediating agent or return policy. Shopping policies in Thailand do not support

return of goods purchased or refunds of money spent on purchasing goods and services (Funk, 2018). This trend may further explain why blogs are not as popular among Thai people; specifically, blogs are not as popular because of limited supportive functions and lesser networking availability.

It is relevant to highlight the magnitude of the beauty business in Thailand. Among The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, Thailand is the main hub for manufactured goods and exports to the rest of Asian and Europe. The total market size is estimated at US$ 4,400 million (export.gov, 2019). In addition, among Southeast Asia countries, Thailand is the largest importer of cosmetic chemicals from the US (export.gov, 2019). Beauty and personal care significantly contribute to Thailand's GDP, at 6.6% per year between 2015 and 2018, a trend projected to increase in 2019 (warutB.com, 2019). Additionally, the beauty market has increased significantly, from 3.39 to 5.2 billion US dollars between 2014 and 2018 (statista.com, 2018). Thailand is a not only major manufacturing site for beauty products but also, there is high demand for beauty products in Thailand that is reflected by high spending and spending on beauty products, there are many local beauty brands, local and international multi brands beauty store (offering variety of brands, including mass, drugstore, and high-end brands, such as Sephora, Beautrium, and EVEANDBOY). Due to high demand amongst consumers for beauty products in Thailand, the Thai beauty and personal care market is highly competitive. Hence, marketers of beauty brands must be increasingly innovative in the way they develop their marketing strategies. In order to achieve their goals, marketers employ beauty bloggers as a marketing tool to help them penetrate the right target markets. Those target market is referred to the followers on their social media channels.

In Thailand, beauty bloggers are coveted by beauty companies as bloggers use their own space to express their thoughts on beauty brands, thus serve as a marketing tool.

Influential Thai beauty bloggers are frequently invited to participate in beauty events and fashion shows. For example, Pearypie, a popular beauty blogger, was invited by Maybelline to be a backstage make-up artist during Fashion Week in New York, in 2016. Thai bloggers also often receive free beauty products and are invited to collaborate with major beauty brands. For example, Archita, a beauty blogger, has worked with Pond's (international beauty product brand) by launching the product line under her own collection in 2019. Some bloggers use their reputation to extend brands, while others use their expertise to launch their own product line. For example, beauty blogger, Icepadie, launched the brand *Happysunday* in 2018, which sells cosmetics. Additionally, Thai beauty blogger Eyeta launched a false eyelashes brand in 2018.

Beauty bloggers also give online reviews on specific brands beauty products to help in promotion, because some posts have been sponsored by brands. Because beauty bloggers are perceived as credible by consumers, marketers find them useful in seeking to gain consumer trust. Sometimes bloggers mention the products sponsored by brands in posts. For example, Momay Paplern, a popular Thai beauty blogger, mentioned that she received products from brands before reviewing them then shared her opinion and experience about the product. However, in some posts, she and other bloggers did not mention brand sponsorship. From online observation, one could tell that this post was sponsored, due to the focus on a particular product in the review. Hence, followers and consumers were quick to note that brands employed bloggers to promote products.

Moreover, some Thai beauty bloggers have developed themselves as full time beauty bloggers, so they regularly work with brands then turned themselves into celebrity bloggers. These celebrity bloggers are selected by brands because of their popularity, based on number of followers on various social media platforms. Brands tap into the popularity of celebrity bloggers to become more influential in the market.

As information circulates through social media, it becomes necessary for brands to understand why this information influences purchasing behaviour and how consumers perceive online reviews, as well as consumer awareness of sponsors and marketing practices (Lee & Ma, 2012). For this reason, this thesis explores the influential role of beauty bloggers and the role of social media on the decision-making process of consumers together with proposing the characteristics of beauty bloggers to sustain their credibility in long term, especially when marketing practices involved.

Moreover, beauty bloggers in Thailand are also considered as social media users, hence have preferences just like other social media users or their followers. They regularly use Facebook and YouTube for posting online reviews. However, some beauty bloggers also use blogs as one of their interactive channels. All these selected platforms are considered based on the objective of posting. According to a short period online observation, bloggers selected social media platforms to match their interest. Facebook is appropriate for all types of online reviews. Because the function of Facebook supports the activities with their followers by comment, reply and emoji functions. In addition, Facebook allows sharing information with third parties. For example, Sonunui, a popular Thai beauty blogger, always shares and promotes her updated blog on her Facebook page. YouTube is popular for demonstrating content, such as how to apply make-up, or show product demonstrations. Nobluck, a popular beauty blogger in Thailand, is well known for her make-up demonstrations on YouTube. However, some Thai beauty bloggers still use blogs for posting reviews which mostly relate to their experience in using certain products. For instance, Feonalita, a popular Thai beauty blogger, always posts reviews on blogs of various lipstick swatches that show results after using the product.

Therefore, this thesis uses Facebook, YouTube, and blogs as the main social media platforms that Thai bloggers use for online reviews. However, other social media platforms will be proposed, following data analysis.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

This chapter discusses how blogs and bloggers influence consumers' purchase intentions. Marketing and brands value the influential role and effect of bloggers, and they therefore use bloggers as marketing tools. Existing knowledge is challenged when consumers are aware of sponsorship in online reviews. It becomes a challenge for bloggers to sustain their trust and credibility, and it influences consumers' decision-making process. Moreover, this chapter has outlined the importance of the context of this thesis, which is specifically beauty products in the Thai market, where beauty bloggers have been spotlighted for marketing and brands.

Chapter 2 undertakes a review of existing studies. This thesis aims to understand the role of blogs and bloggers in influencing consumers' decision-making process, based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). Thereafter, the chapter discusses the attitude of consumers towards bloggers and online reviews to identify blog and blogger characteristics in terms of trustworthiness and credibility, based on the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). The review of existing studies is classified under two main parts, which are knowledge about of internet and consumers purchase intention related to credibility of online reviews based on previous scholars (Section 2.1 – 2.2) and next part will be discussed the theories used in this thesis (Section 2.3 – 2.8).

Chapter 3 comprises the methodology, which presents the research question and objectives of the study. This thesis explores how bloggers influence consumers' decision-making process in the Thai beauty market and proposes important characteristics in terms of bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility. Hence, this chapter discusses qualitative methodology strategies and identifies the sample and data analysis methods.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and data analysis. After data collection, NVivo 10.1 was used to analyse data, and results were presented in five main sections as follows: (4.1)

Consumers' decision-making in purchasing beauty product explained using the TPB model, (4.2) Bloggers and blogger characteristics, (4.3) Influencers and factors affecting trustworthiness, (4.4) Consumer online behaviour on social media channels towards online reviews.

Chapter 5 comprises a discussion of study findings and also highlights contributions of the study. The chapter is first structured in parallel with the five main sections highlighted in Chapter 4: (5.1) How bloggers and social media influence consumers' decision-making, as explained by the TPB model, (5.2) Blogger and blogger characteristics (explained by ELM), (5.3) Influence and trustworthiness of bloggers compared to contributors in online beauty forums, friends, and family members, and (5.4) Effective bloggers and online review channels from a consumer perspective. However, the contribution of this thesis cannot be discussed based only on the TPB model and ELM; TAM also needs to be applied to explain the findings on consumer attitude towards bloggers' characteristics, as well as the findings on consumer attitude towards effective online review platforms. TAM is therefore applied to these findings in Section (5.5). The conceptual framework presents a summary and analysis of TAM, based on the perceived usefulness of online reviews and perceived ease of use of social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram).

Finally, Chapter 6, which comprises the conclusion, summarizes the thesis findings. Under the section on managerial implications, the chapter suggests measures for the beauty business, if bloggers are to be used as a marketing tool. Moreover, this thesis also presents new theoretical frameworks and knowledge. The thesis ends with a section on limitations and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2
Literature review

This chapter comprises two main sections. The first section focuses on knowledge of the internet and examines how the purchase intention of consumers relates to credibility of online reviews, while the second section discusses theories referred to in this thesis.

Section 2.1 begins with an exploration of how the internet influences consumer behaviour and decision-making process, and discusses the impact of eWOM and online reviews. Section 2.2 discusses the credibility and trustworthiness of online reviews.

The following section begins by discussing the theoretical foundations of consumer behaviour and links to the TPB model (Theory of Planned Behaviour model) in Section 2.3, then extended TPB in online review studies in Section 2.4.

Next, Section 2.5 explores Consumer behaviour theories (TAM and TPB) are discussed in relation to consumers' decision-making processes and online reviews leads to limitation of TAM. Moreover, online review sources are identified and explicated; this thesis specifically studies bloggers as online review providers, as well as blogs and social media serving as online review platforms.

This thesis examines how consumer decision-making processes affect bloggers' reviews, based on the assumption of sponsorship and marketing practices. Consequently, the trustworthiness and credibility of blogs and bloggers are challenges to be discussed in this thesis in Section 2.5- 2.7 Theories used in existing online review studies, which explain why TPB model, and ELM model are selected for this thesis.

This thesis explores the influential role of social media and bloggers, which affect consumers' attitudes towards purchasing behaviour and consumers' attitudes towards online reviews. The aim of this thesis is to explain how this operates based on the selected two models. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model is selected to explain the influential

role of bloggers and how this affect consumers' attitudes towards purchasing, while ELM helps in understanding blog and blogger characteristics. Section 2.8, which is the theoretical framework, incorporates both TPB and ELM. The section also makes reference to previous scholars in defining the terms involved when proposing the characteristics necessary for successful blogs and bloggers.

Knowledge from previous scholars about how online reviews and blogger credibility affect consumers' decision making

2.1 The internet and the consumers' decision-making process

Before making a decision, consumers generally search for information on a particular product or service in order to reduce purchase risk (Bettman, 1973; Srinivasan, and Ratchford, 1991). Research on consumer information search behaviour before purchasing has been extensively studied. The consumer information search can be divided into an internal and external information search. Whereas the internal information search refers to memory, the external information search refers to everything else, which is affected by the consumer's available time and product knowledge (Punj and Staelin, 1983; DeSarbo and Choi, 1999; Hauser et al, 1993; Murray, 1991; Peterson and Merino, 2003). Most research has been focused on the consumer acquiring information from an external search before purchasing, such as the sources of information used and how much time the consumer spends on each source (Urbany et al., 1996; Kennedy and Fetter, 1999).

Beatty and Smith (1987) categorised the sources of information into media (television, newspaper etc.), individuals (friends, salespeople etc.), seller and personal experience (product trials). Different types of information were also studied in order to compare and contrast the outcomes from those information sources such as positive versus negative information (Lussier and Olshavsky, 1979), information from brands versus information from third parties (Hennig, 2003; Hsu, et al., 2013). In addition, search

antecedents have also been observed and studied, for example, ability to search, costs and benefits (Ratchford and Srinivasan, 1993). Consumers who engage in information searches tend to make decisions more efficiently and have higher satisfaction with their purchase (Shaver, 2007).

2.1.1 Consumer behaviour on websites

This thesis aimed to explore how bloggers and social media influence consumers' decision-making process. However, to develop an understanding of consumers' decision-making process, the knowledge from previous scholars should start from the decision-making process on websites shopping. Therefore, knowledge from previous scholars will be extended to determine if online reviews affect consumers' decision-making process in section 2.3.

The beginning of internet trading is traced to 1994 (Hong and Yi, 2012). Previous studies highlight internet relevant online activities before the year 2000, by discussing consumer activities through the internet. Regarding online adoption by consumers, previous scholars have emphasised two main behaviours. The first relates to consumers' adoption of the worldwide web when seeking pre-purchase information (Alba et al., 1997; Chen et al., 2018) as well as for online commercial (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Keeney, 1999; Oliveira et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). The second relates to online shopping, making use of the internet as a channel for commercial transactions for purchasing products and services (Keeney, 1999; Swaminathan et al., 1999).

Nowadays, the internet is used globally for online shopping which has fast become an alternative way of purchasing. However, the rapid growth of electronic commerce and increasing popularity of online media leads to positive impact on the consumers' online searching information and shopping (Häubl & Trifts, 2000). Internet shopping is described in various ways such as e-shopping, online shopping, and web based shopping (Clemes et al., 2014).

Comparing between online shopping (internet market place) and offline shopping (physical marketplace), the benefit of offline shopping is that it allows consumers to see physical products and they have an opportunity to receive product information from salespeople. However, internet shopping allows shoppers to access several offerings with higher product range (Gao and Bai, 2014). In addition, online shopping allows the delivery of products to a specified place and offers more privacy for consumers (Swinyard & Smith, 2003). It is also timesaving, convenient, and provides immediate information to the consumer (Hong & Yi, 2012).

However, the number of alternative products and services in the online environment creates a challenge for consumers in deciding what to purchase (Clemes et al., 2014). This has stimulated interest amongst researchers to study how the decision-making process of consumers works in online shopping. Häubl and Trifts (2000) considered online shopping as a complex decision-making process and classified consumers' decision-making in two stages. Firstly, consumers screen overall available products to categorise the selected alternatives. Secondly, consumers carefully evaluate product choices by comparing the quality of products/services, functions, and attributes, then make a decision to purchase or not to purchase. However, with regard to the digital age, scholars argue that consumer behaviour when seeking information should combine the two recognised stages of decision-making process (Chen et al., 2018). This is because company websites have already provided the required product information for consumers, since online purchasing does not allow consumers to physically see products (Chen et al., 2018). Although product information is provided, pre-purchase product information is insufficient, but post- purchasing is required. The post-purchase is referred as the online reviews products/services result from others user who experienced, and opinions using products.

Previous scholars argue that seeking information is essential for consumers' decision-making process. Many prior studies proposed models to explore the process of decision-

making amongst online consumers (Chen and Chang, 2003; Darley et al., 2010; Laohapensang, 2013; Oliveira et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2018). Chen et al. (2018) used the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell Consumer Purchase Behaviour Mode [EKB Model] (Tuan-Pham and Higgins, 2005) to investigate the effects of information seeking behaviour in the digital age for fashion apparel online buying. The EKB Model was used to explain different stages of the purchasing process amongst consumers, mostly applied to explain the continually process, which happened when consumers' making decision (Chen et al., 2018). They also confirmed that information searching behaviour affected decision-making process in online purchasing, and identified these behaviours in terms of fame, visual, comparison and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) information. Notably, this comparative information seeking behaviour relied on the experience of others or/and evaluations of those who had actually purchased products, rather than relying on brands or/and retailers. Moreover, the visual information was classified as available online pictures, virtual forums, and blogs.

In addition, some scholars also employed existing models to explore the online decision-making process, based on factors that influence online purchasing intention (Chen and Chang, 2003; Darley et al., 2010). Laohapensang (2013) developed the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explain factors influencing internet shopping behaviour in Thailand based on quantitative methods. These factors include attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control which all affect online shopping behaviour, especially perceived behavioural control factors. This is because of the perception of difficulties involved in online shopping amongst Thai consumers, especially due to limited ability in using the internet.

This thesis also aims to develop the TPB model to explore consumers' decision-making process, but conducted based on qualitative methods. Moreover, online reviews from bloggers and social media will be assigned as subjective norms in TPB model. Laohapensang (2013) makes the point that many Thai consumers still have limited experience of online

shopping. That is the reason why this thesis will be conducted based on only people who sufficient experience of using internet and online shopping. So the confirmations from previous scholars that developed Theory of Acceptance model to explain consumers' ability of using internet and actual experience using online reviews (more discussed in section 2.3) will be applied in this thesis to select only sample who are experienced in relation to online reviews and online shopping.

Some studies that have explored factors affecting online shopping, examined behavioural variation and identified factors affecting online shopping adoption (Laohapensang, 2013; Clemes et al., 2014; Karami et al., 2015; Paspas, 2016). Previous scholars examined factors influencing online purchasing, with website factor and/or website skills being most relevant to this study (Ranganathan & Ganapathy, 2002; Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2003; Clemes et al., 2014; Gao & Bai, 2014; Clemes et al., 2014; Karimi, 2015; Paspas, 2016). However, in consumers' online shopping decision-making process, perceived risk factor is considered a key component (Liebermann & Stashevsky, 2002).

As a website or webpage has been considered as similar to a physical store, so website factors are fundamental. Previous studies confirm that website factor influences consumers' attitudes in online shopping such as poor website design that may lead to a decision not to purchase (Elliott and Speck, 2005; Shergill & Chen, 2005). Most previous studies clarified elements of website factor as relating to information content, design, security, and entertainment (Ranganathan and Ganapathy, 2002; Elliott and Speck, 2005) Consumers perceive the important factors based on their activities, hence might refer to the security of transactions, efficiency of information and platforms, and ease of use (Ranganathan and Ganapathy, 2002; Clemes et al., 2014). This thesis considers website factor in terms of content-based factor, because of the similarity terms and definitions which are discussed in detail in Section 2.5.2

Since consumers perceive online shopping as an activity involving risk, they develop trust in connection with certain website attributes (Laohapensang, 2013). Therefore, scholars have focused on perceived risk factors in studying online purchasing and how does this relate to increasing confidence in online shopping (Karimi et al., 2015; Pappas, 2016). Pappas (2016) also used the TPB model to construct a conceptual framework to study the impact of perceived risk, marketing strategies, and consumers trust in online buying. Moreover the study focused on perceived risk factors and clarified causes of risk into product price, product and web vendor quality, and web vendor security. Hong and Yi (2012) also identified two main causes of perceived risk based on the imperfect basic system (credit system, system of bank credit and card payment, and security system of the network) and risk caused by the actual and virtual interface of the network (unclear commodity information, risk of unavailable products and service, risks of fake or stolen goods, and lack of immediate sense of accomplishment). In terms of the causes of risk, it can be claimed that consumers perceive risk based on website factors and those risks that can mostly be controlled by vendors. Hence, these two factors should be considered when studying factors affecting the online decision-making process. As a result, each particular factor is related and affects the decision-making process because perceived risk is the effect of basic website factors.

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, risk affects consumers' trust in online purchasing. Previous studies found that consumer trust in online shopping was influenced by factors such as website infrastructure, interactions with consumers, and online purchase intention (Pappas 2016; Oliveira et al., 2017). Thus, vendors should reduce the perception of risk in consumers by creating sound websites and merchandise systems to build consumer confidence in security of online transactions. If consumers perceive reduced risk they feel more confident, leading to higher trust, which influences online purchase intentions.

In order to reduce risk, consumers will seek further information apart from product information provided by vendor such as product/services using experiences from real users,

or online reviews by bloggers and other opinion leaders in blogosphere (Hsu et al., 2012). Hence, when product information, such as product price, size, colour, and function are sufficient, then the consumer might not need to search products/services from other sources. This is why online reviews are an important source of information for consumers in their decision-making process (Shaver, 2007; Chen et al., 2018). This is an opportunity for marketers to shift from traditional marketing to new marketing strategies, due to consumers making decisions based on experience, brand loyalty, word of mouth, or other factors, instead of relying on brand advertising (Shaver, 2007). Similar to previous scholars, Pappas (2016) found a positive relationship between online risk, marketing strategies, and purchase intention, thus concluded that online risks can arise from marketing strategies and influence online purchasing intentions, especially for high risk products and extensive advertising. Therefore, in order to reduce online risk, attention should not only focus on website factors but also perceived risks from marketing strategies.

Consequently, marketers try to build consumer confidence in marketing strategies and gain more trust in brand message by developing online reviews as a marketing tool. Since online reviews are mostly provided by real users, they influence consumers more effectively than marketing claims from brands (Hsu et al., 2012).

However, when marketers for several brands frequently apply their marketing strategies for online reviews in the same way, consumers become aware of these strategies. Hence, the challenge for marketers is how they can develop online reviews for their marketing tools as well as sustain consumer trust in the long run. Therefore, this thesis examines how online reviews influence consumers' decision-making process based on the assumption of brand sponsorship, and proposes characteristics of bloggers as a way of sustaining consumer trust in reviews.

This section discussed findings by previous scholars on the decision-making process in online shopping. The next section refers to prior studies in analysing how online reviews influence consumers' decision-making process.

2.1.2 Social media and online review platforms

In recent years the behaviour of Internet users has shifted from experiencing content: reading, watching and purchasing products and services to sharing blogging, social networking and discussing internet content. This represents the social media phenomenon which now can have a major impact on a business's reputation and sales (Kietzmann, et al., 2011). Social Media was developed by Usenet (Truscott and Ellis, 1979) a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages. In 1997, the social network site "Sixdegrees" allowed users to create profiles, list their friends, and add friends-of-friends to their own lists (Boyd and Ellison, 2008). In the late 1990s, Bruce and Susan Abelson introduced "Open Diary" or "weblog". A year later, bloggers turned the "web log" to "we blog" which was the beginning of word "blog" in Web 2.0. Blogs have become very popular, because they are easy to create and to maintain. The table (Table 2) below shows the advance technologies, Internet, and popular social media

Table 2: Advanced social media platforms, functions, and attributes

Social media platform/Year	Functions and attributes
MySpace (2003), YouTube (2005), Flickr (2004),	The media sharing sites which concentrate on shared videos and photos
Facebook (2004)	The social network service, which allows users to connect with other users, also provides support functions for users to interact with one another. Facebook now supports social networking similar offered by other social media platforms, such as videos and images, which are offered by YouTube and Instagram.
Twitter (2006)	For the short status update what users are doing, where they are, how they are feeling, or links to other sites

Foursquare (2009)	For the real-time updates into location specific information by rewarding users for 'checking in' to real sites at any location worldwide, and for leaving their comments for others to view.
Instagram (2010)	The online application mainly for photo and short video sharing

Source: Agarwal et al., (2012)

There are many definitions of Social Media. Social media has overcome the one-way broadcasting nature of straight media into twoway media, where users are creating and consuming the content (Laine and Frühwirth, 2010). Kane et al., (2014) also mentioned that Social Media supports interpersonal communication and collaboration using Internet-based platforms. Social media is defined as a category of online discourse where people can create, share, bookmark content and network (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Kapland and Haenlein (2010), consider Social Media to be a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. In short, Social Media uses the Internet as a platform to allow users to communicate and to share and consume Internet contents.

According to Hansen et al. (2011), Social Media technologies represent a new way of interacting. There are literally hundreds of different Social Media platforms, for example, social networking, text messaging, shared photos, podcasts, streaming videos, blogs and communities. Notably, advance technology allows mobile devices to access the aforementioned platforms (Harris, 2009; Anderson and Wolff, 2010). So mobile phones also support consumers in easily finding out product information for making decision before purchasing and in getting advice and reviews from influencers through social network channels. Blogs represent one of the earliest forms of Social Media and are special types of websites that usually display date-stamped entries

Web blogs in general are among the more popular forms of online consumer-opinion

platforms, also a huge source of building word-of-mouth, that are powerful in Social Media (Wenger et al., 2008; Enoch and Grossman, 2010; Li et al., 2011). Blogs are proving to be a useful method of generating sales leads (Hu et al., 2011); for example companies can use smartphones to facilitate two- way interactions with customers with a contextual, location-based richness unheard. Blogs also drive sales by launching promotion and ads on their own YouTube videos (Crittenden et al., 2010). However, other social medias platforms have become more popular than blogs, Alexa ranking company (a web information company that provides website traffic rankings) set the top 10 global late 2016 websites which showed that Facebook is the second rank popular website and next is YouTube. However, wordpress.com blogspot.com and blogger.com fell from tenth (2015) to top fifty (2015). With regard to the popular websites of Facebook and YouTube, people prefer to access those social media platforms than blogs (word press). That can be the reason why blogger or influencers need to expand the channels to connect with their readers. So this research will explore how bloggers develop not only their own blogs but also use Social Media to communicate, deliver product information, and also interact with their readers.

Social Media, as a means of communications is a significant concern for many businesses in trying to gain competitive advantage in making profitable use of applications (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Companies employ Social Media to communicate internally and, especially, externally. Companies use Social Media mostly to communicate with external parties as part of a multipronged strategy that crosses various platforms (Piskorski, 2011). Due to the competitive business environment, companies are required to minimizing risk by employ a large set of communication channels (Coelho and Easingwood, 2005). Businesses attempt to achieve sustainable competitive advantage by using electronic-service quality as being beneficial for customers in making a decision before purchasing and also in enhancing customer relationships (Tsang et al., 2010). According to the marketing

perspective, marketers are now more concerned with effective promotional messages than product design, so they need to reach their targets by taking advantage of Social Media channels (Buhalis, 2000; Berthon et al., 2007; Dickinger, 2011). Social Media takes a major role in marketing and public relations by individuals and communities which can create, share, and consume blogs, tweets, Facebook entries, movies, pictures, and so forth (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social Media platforms are said to have created a revolution for marketing, advertising, and promotions (Hanna et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Consumers' decision-making processes and online reviews

There is much in the literature about the increasing of using digital media by consumer, its use for searching product and service information, interaction. Users seek feedback and previous experiences from users that have already used those particular products or be served those particular services, and also interact and engage with the companies that are selling those particular products (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Hart and Blackshaw, 2006; Garretson, 2008).

The rapid growth of the internet gives users a broad range and depth of available information, varying both in quantity and quality, with minimal effort and cost (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Peterson and Merino, 2003; Jepsen, 2007; Park et al., 2009). The internet has a powerful capacity for searching, organizing and sharing information which can facilitate searches (Peterson and Merino, 2003). It can also provide a wide range of interactivity including human-to-human, human-to-machine, machine-to-human and machine-to-machine interaction (Peterson et al., 1997). Consumers can search for information online any time and any where they want; they can then use online information to help make better buying decisions (Widing and Talarzyk, 1993; Alba et al., 1997; Peterson et al., 1997). Thus, we cannot ignore that the internet has a huge effect on consumer information search behaviour and the consumer decision-making process. It is worth noting that the consumer who engages

in online research tends to rely less on traditional mass media (Shaver, 2007). Traditional mediated product information from the mass media is controlled by the marketer or seller; the internet, however, gives the customer the opportunity to acquire information from a third party such as consumer reviews and blogs. These types of information can then improve the consumer's ability to make a better purchase decision (Airely, 2000). In addition, consumers can share that information with each other. This kind of information sharing was developed from the traditional word-of-mouth and placed in an internet environment (Shaver, 2007). It is worth noting that the lack of physical contact with sales staff is one of the important characteristics in online information searching which can be either positive or negative depending on the individual's consumer preference.

Jepsen (2007) categorised the topic of online information research into two groups. The first group focuses on the characteristics of online information research, such as a large number of available information sources, entertainment while searching, and the lack of pressure and interruption from salespeople (Hoffman and Novak, 1996; Alba et al., 1997; Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001). The second group focused on consumer information search behaviour based on search cost and available time (Bakos, 1997; Hoque and Lohse, 1999; Bellman et al., 2006).

However, the limitation of online information research is the consumer's ability to access the internet and not everyone who can access the internet will use online sources of information for buying decisions. For example, in the past 30 years, the majority of people using the internet were young and educated males (Peterson and Merino, 2003). Although, the internet is widely used nowadays, the ability and preference for online use, along with frequency, objective, motivation for using the internet and the lifestyle of internet users must be considered in the thesis.

2.2 Credibility and trustworthiness in online reviews

There are a number of antecedent influences that affect the consumer behavioural process, and these are defined differently according to the area of research. However, trust is a common potential influence, acknowledged in many areas, as a mechanism to reduce social complexity and increase the expectation of a positive outcome (Luhmann, 1979; Grabner-Kraeuter, 2002; Gefen, 2004). It has also been considered to be a major emotional factor that affects consumer behaviour (Schurr and Ozanne, 1985; Perrini et al., 2010). Five types of trust antecedents have been classified, including knowledge-based trust (built on familiarity with others), cognition-based trust (developed from first impression), calculative-based trust (rational assessment), institution-based trust (perception of institutional context), and personality-based trust (tendency to believe in others) (Zucker, 1986; Luhmann, 1979; Gefen et al., 2003; Wu et al., 2005). Cognitive-based and personality-based trust is considered to be related to the initial trust that occurs in the beginning of a relationship. Subsequently, trust will be based on experience and familiarity (McKnight et al., 1998; Laohapensang, 2009).

According to defined trust and credibility theory, credibility originates in trust and is interchangeable (Hong, 2005; Hargittai et al., 2010). Moreover, existing research considers trustworthiness as one factor in source credibility (Lis, 2013; Wang, 2015). Credibility in this thesis relates to Wathen and Burkell's (2002) definition, which describes it as believability, a characteristic that causes people to trust and believe someone. Rowley and Johnson (2013) distinguished between trust and credibility by stating that trust is necessary to effectively achieve adoption and interaction in the online space, but credibility relates to the reader's evaluation, based on actual online information.

To reduce the uncertainty in product purchasing, consumers search online for product information and for details about new product launches (Hennig and Walsh, 2003; Amblee and Bui, 2008; Lee et al., 2008). Online searches involve targeted searches and/or product related searches (Ward and Ostrom, 2003). Consumers tend to trust other people's

experiences in particular (Senecal and Nantel, 2001), especially if those people are peers in the online community (Kozinets, 1999). This trust is a main reason why bloggers who are perceived as end-users have become online influencers. Brands often lead consumers to constantly search for related product information (Rowley, 2000); consumers' constant searching then encouraged the development of bloggers, as product knowledge providers. Some bloggers are highly trusted, and as credible people, bloggers can impact the behaviour of others (Henry, 2005; Chu and Kamel, 2008; Zhang and Watts, 2008). Credibility of eWOM is therefore highlighted because it allows certain speakers to influence others to trust in them and then to influence other's intention, especially in buying intention via the speakers' own attitudes, belief and purchase decision (Hening and Walsh, 2003). The higher the credibility of an online recommendation, the more likely receivers are to follow the message diffusers (Wathen and Burkell 2002). Prior scholars have discussed credibility with regard to online recommendations, or eWOM, as a tool that allows the person generating the recommendations to influence other's behaviour (Reichelt et al., 2013; Fang, 2014; Wang, 2015).

Moreover, previous research has confirmed that high credibility positively motivates a user's information adoption; however, it is difficult to judge the credibility of online reviews due to the number of online users allowed to share their experience and opinion (Cheung et al., 2009; 2012). 'Credibility' in this thesis will be defined as believability, a characteristic that causes people to trust and believe someone (Wathen and Burkell, 2002). This thesis aims to discover the characteristics of bloggers who can sustain their credibility with their audience over the long term. In addition, the credibility of online reviews in this thesis refers to characteristics of reviews accepted by online receivers and affecting their subsequent behaviour (Chow et al., 1995; Smith and Vogt, 1995; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Existing researches have also identified several dimensions of credibility (Wathen and Burkell, 2002; Lis, 2013; Reichelt et al., 2013). However, this thesis applies the credibility dimensions from

previous studies to characteristics of social media and bloggers based on their influence on consumers' decision making in beauty product purchasing.

Lis (2013) used quantitative methods to study how certain sources of eWOM credibility affect adoption of eWOM recommendations. In this study, the sources of credibility (information determinants) included source expertise, source trustworthiness and source homophily. The relationship of these determinants with online recommendations was tested using structural equation modelling. The data collection employed an online survey of 643 users of a leading online discussion forum. The results showed that the trustworthiness and expertise of senders, but not similarity, significantly affect the perceived credibility of online recommendations. Moreover, this study confirmed the positive relation of credibility with eWOM and with eWOM adoption, which connected to purchase intention.

Reichelt et al., (2013) also studied the impact of credibility on eWOM based on three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness and similarity. They developed a TRA model to make predictions within their conceptual framework. The model reflected the authors' belief that credibility dimensions affect usage functions (the value of information factors were utilitarian function and social function) and then affects attitude, intention and behaviour (reading). After estimating the strength of the relationships, the covariance-based structural equation model LISREL was developed. Then structural equation modelling was used to analyse the data, which was gathered from 839 German readers of online car brand community content. The results showed that trustworthiness had a positive impact on both the utilitarian and social function of eWOM. However, expertise of eWOM had a slightly positive impact on the utilitarian function but not on the social function. People tended to search for eWOM with credibility originating from strong ties (high similarity).

Lis (2013) and Reichelt et al. (2013) confirmed the relationship between source credibility (based on expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity) and e-WOM adoption using

quantitative methods. However, slightly different results were found for each credibility dimension. Thus, this thesis uses qualitative methods to explore each credibility dimension in depth as to how each affects consumers' trust towards bloggers' online reviews and impacts purchase intentions.

Theories of consumer behaviour and theories used in existing online review studies

2.3 Consumer behaviour theory

Consumer behaviour is defined by Solomon (2006) as "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy need and desire". Similarly, Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) detail consumer behaviour as "the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their need".

The first research on consumer decision-making was conducted by Nicholas Bernullli, John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, a group of economists (Richarme, 2007). Since then, research based on this topic has been developed into 5 approaches to represent consumers, and then those approaches were used to construct models (Bray, 2008). These approaches include economic man (Persky, 1995), psychodynamic models (Stewart, 1994), behaviourist models (Watson and Rayner, 1920; Stewart, 1994), cognitive models (Sternberg, 1996) and humanistic models (Natarrjan and Bagozzi, 1999).

The simplest model, utility theory, was built based on the approach of economic man, meaning that consumers decide rationally and purchase according to self-interest. This model is focused only on the act of purchase, and stresses that customers desire to get the highest benefit from products with minimum expenditure. However, in order to make a decision

perfectly, consumers have to consider all possible options, which cannot realistically be done. In addition, there are always other less rational forces that influence consumer satisfaction and decision-making. The psychodynamic approach focuses only on the biological influence of customer unconsciousness or instinctive forces (Robertson et al., 1991), and the behaviourist approach emphasises the effect of external stimuli on consumer choices (Watson an Rayner, 1920). However, behaviourism is limited in that it does not explain why similar or same stimuli produce different responses between consumers. Hence, the cognitive approach was introduced, which values the impact of intrapersonal cognition including perception, learning, memory, thinking, emotion and motivation (Sternberg, 1996). Through the cognitive approach, consumers are viewed as "information processors" (Ribeaux and Poppleton, 1978). The cognitive approach is incorporated into four main models, including the theory of buyer behaviour, consumer decision model, theory of reasoned action (TRA) and theory of planned behaviour (TPB).

Howard and Sheth developed a theory of buyer behaviour in 1969. This theory places value on the influence of society, psychology and the market on consumer decision-making (Foxall, 1990). There are three main types of input that can stimulate consumer behaviour, including significant stimuli, symbolic stimuli and social stimuli. Significant stimuli refers to actual product characteristics, while symbolic stimuli is the product's symbolic meaning, created by marketers through advertising in order to indirectly influence consumers (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1993; Foxall, 1990; Howard and Sheth, 1969). Finally, social stimuli provoke a response relevant to interpersonal relationships with family, friends and reference groups. There are also exogenous variables mentioned in the theory that can affect consumer decisions, including importance of purchase, personality variables, social class, culture, organisation, time pressure and financial status.

Kollat and Blackwell developed the consumer decision model in 1968. Although the elements presented in the model are similar to those within the theory of buyer behaviour, the

consumer decision model has a distinct structure. According to the consumer decision model, there are two main stimuli that influenced consumer decisions: (i) previous experiences or post-consumption evaluations and (ii) external variables, including environmental influences (culture, social class, personal influence, family and situation), and individual differences (consumer resources, motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values and lifestyle) (Blackwell et al., 2001). This model tends to be limited, in that it is too restrictive to apply to the wide variation in consumer decision scenarios (Erasmus et al., 2001; London and Della, 1993). Due to the restrictive and very detailed diagram of the model, it is not flexible enough to explain the wide variation in consumer decision scenarios (Bray, 2008).

The theory of buyer behaviour and consumer decision model are both criticised in relation to their assumption of the rationality of consumer action, as some studies show that consumers often make their decisions unconsciously. Hence, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) was developed in 1980 by Ajzen and Fishbein in order to focus more on the influence of beliefs and attitudes on consumer behaviour.
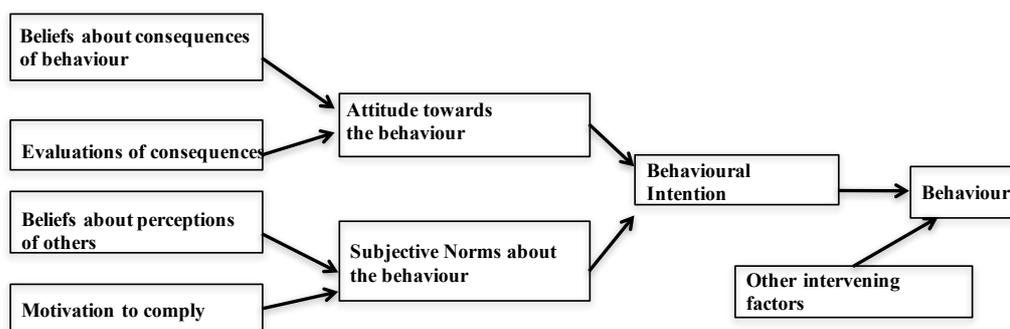
Figure 1: Theory of Reasoned Action

Adapted from: Ajzen and Fishbein (1980)

The intention of behaviour prior to becoming the actual behaviour of the consumer can be formed out of a combination of subjective norms and the consumer's personal attitude toward the behaviour (Werner 2004). It is noteworthy that this theory focuses on the attitude toward behaviour rather than the object. Subjective norms can refer to social influence or the

power of others' thoughts toward the behaviour (Solomon et al., 2006). Consumer attitudes and subjective norms do not have to contribute equally in behavioural intention, but contribute depending on the individual consumer in question, the situation and the product type (Schultz, 2006). However, some scholars question whether it is feasible that in the process between behavioural intention and behaviour, the thought process is not completely controlled by the consumer (Oliver and Berger, 1979; Sheppard et al., 1988; Warshaw, 1980). Thus, Ajzen developed another theory in 1985 based on TRA called the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), which includes the variable mediating between behavioural intention and behaviour.
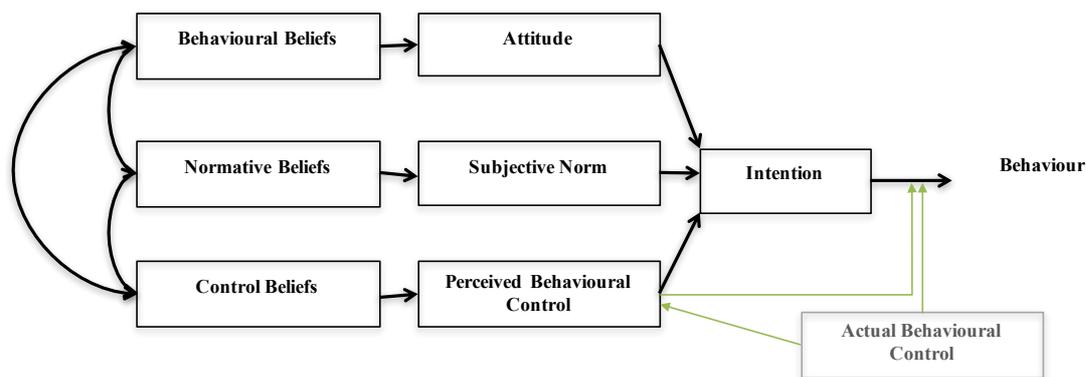
Figure 2: Theory of Planned Behaviour
Adapted from Ajzen (1991)

According to the TPB, intention is controlled by three factors, including attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The term 'perceived behavioural control' was first constructed in this theory and it expresses the perception of indirect influence on the behaviour either facilitating or impeding the action (Ajzen, 1991). Actual behaviour control is another factor at play, and its power depends on the individual's skill, resources and other prerequisites needed to produce behaviour. This factor is also mediated by perceived behavioural control. However, there are several limitations to TRA and TPB. One obvious limitation is that the factors that can influence consumers may not be limited

only to attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Werner, 2004). These models seem to ignore other influences, such as emotion, spontaneity and habit (Hale, 2002; Natarrjan and Bagozzi, 1999). In addition, these predictions were constructed based on specific situations and criteria (Werner, 2004). One challenge to TPB is that it has only been applied to the research of Western cultures. How well this assumption can be suited to other cultures has not been fully researched.

Due to the limitations in the cognitive approach involving its ignoring the role of emotions, the humanistic approach was employed to further understand consumer behaviour. This approach considers the additional roles of emotion, volition (understanding the stage between intention and actual behaviour) and egoism (Natarrjan and Bagozzi, 1999). One outstanding model from this approach is the model of goal-directed behaviour (MGB), which was developed directly based on TPB (Bagozzi, 2001).
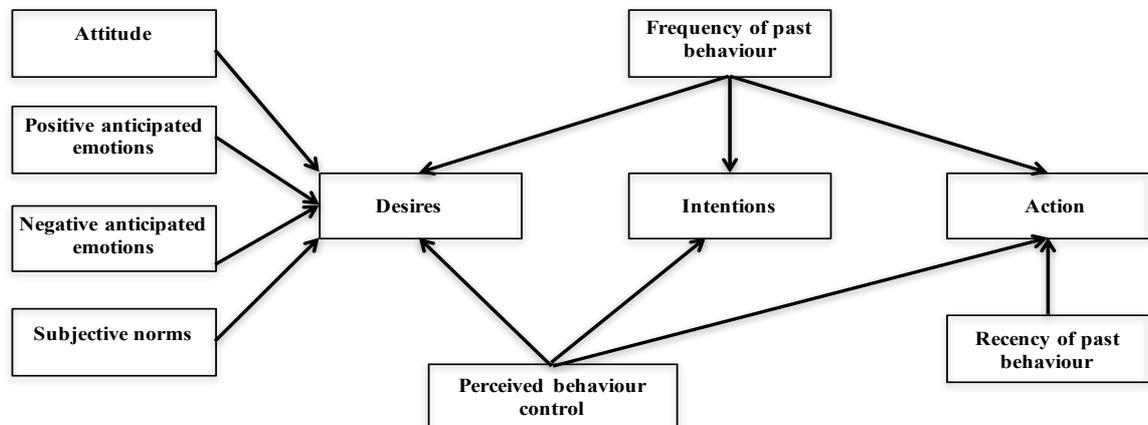
Figure 3: Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour

In addition to TPB, the terms 'frequency' and 'recency' of past behaviour were introduced. Emotional factors, along with attitude and subjective norms, can positively and negatively influence consumer 'desires'. According to the exiting research, 'desires' are perceived to be a stronger predictor than attitudes, subjective norms or perceived behavioural control in TPB. Thus, it is suggested that marketers focus on satisfying their consumers'

desires (Sutton, 1998; Erasmus, 2001). However, this model is more complex than TPB, and thus it requires more sophisticated data and techniques (Leone et al., 2014).

2.4 Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in online review studies

Trust has been examined in relation to the model of consumer behaviour, especially in the TPB model (Pavlou, 2002; Wu and Chen, 2005; Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013; Al-Swidi et al., 2014). A number of scholars have used TPB to study trust in online behaviour (Wu and Chen, 2005). According to the TPB model, trust is considered an important factor that affects attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms (Wu and Chen, 2005).

Trust is considered to be an important factor that affects attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms (Wu and Chen, 2005). Trust is a direct influence in determining attitude towards behaviour relating to the expectation of an outcome (Bandura, 1986; Davis et al., 1989). In the aspect of perceived behavioural control, trust can increase self-confidence and facilitate favourable conditions and mutual trust in the relationship. For example, trust between consumer and brand can result in increased perceived behavioural control (Matsushima and Shiomi, 2003). For subjective norm construction, trust in reference groups such as spouses, children, parents, and friends have played an important role in determining subjective norms. If the consumer trusts the reference group, their opinion will positively affect the consumer's behavioural intention and actual behaviour. The subjective norm has a direct, significant influence on consumer behaviour through internalization mechanisms, namely, the consumer integrating a referent's belief with their own belief (Kelman, 1958; Warshaw, 1980; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000; Liao et al., 2006). Accordingly, the subjective norm can significantly moderate and shape the consumer's attitude, perceived behaviour control and consumer behavioural intention (Al-Swidi et al., 2014). This assumption was thoroughly observed in the food business. For example, Tarkiainen et al.

(2005) and Al-Swidi et al. (2014) quantitatively measured the direct effect of subjective norms and the moderate influence toward attitude, perceived behavioural control and buying intention in organic food consumption.

Moreover, as mentioned in Chapter 1, consumers are now aware of bloggers' reviews and the involvement of brands and their sponsorships. Much existing research has highlighted the importance of sponsored content in online reviews. Zanette et al. (2013) focus on how bloggers use their influential role to support commercial interventions, the results of which highlight the factors that make bloggers valuable in marketing campaigns. Lu et al. (2014) studied the attitude of the consumer towards sponsored blog posts in a survey of 613 Taiwanese. They found that there are positive attitudes towards sponsored recommendations when recommended in blog posts allowing users to search "product types". Also, consumers with high brand awareness have highly positive attitudes towards sponsored recommendation posts which improves buying intention. The TPB model is used in this thesis to draw up a conceptual framework based on the assumption that consumer attitudes affect behavioural intentions and influence purchase behaviour. Lu et al. (2014) assume that, when consumers believe in a sponsored blog post (content of a sponsored recommendation post), they are more likely to purchase an item based on the recommendation of bloggers.

However, this thesis argues that, to explore consumers' attitude changes due to bloggers' reviews and trust, the model should be extended using another model because the TPB model is unable to fully explain consumers' attitudes towards purchasing intentions. As a result, the ELM is used in this thesis to study consumer attitudes towards bloggers reviews and discuss the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers in sustaining bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility based on the assumption of brand involvement.

This thesis aims to understand not only consumer attitude towards purchasing behaviour, but also explores consumer attitude towards online reviews and how this relates to the characteristics of blogs and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility. Thus, this

thesis will develop a consumer behaviour model (TPB) to explain the consumer decision-making process. However, the TPB model cannot explain the attitudes of consumers that affect their trust of online reviews. It also cannot indicate what available information is most effective at influencing individual behaviour. This is because TPB only illustrates the relationship between attitudes and intention, which highlights the importance of use perceptions and attitudes in predicting intention and behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Online review must be discussed before the point of attitude formation, so the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is used to enhance TPB in the influence process before an initial attitude change (Wang, 2015). Prior studies applied ELM to explore the relationship between factors affecting the credibility of eWOM (Cheung et al., 2012; Wang, 2015).

2.5 Limitations of using the technology acceptance model (TAM) in online reviews studies

Research in the area of information and management that have studied how online reviews affect the consumer decision-making process have mostly been conducted based on quantitative research employing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Hsu and Lin, 2008; Park and Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013). The main constructs and determinants of TAM are *perceived usefulness* and *ease of use* (Wang, 2012). Most research that has employed TAM has aimed to define the relationship between the perceived usefulness of online reviews and consumers' attitudes. Because TAM was created from an information and technology perspective, which aimed to explain user behaviour, it has become popular in existing online reviews research. Previous research confirmed that perceived usefulness of online reviews had significant effects on attitude and intention by using TAM (Yu et al., 2005; Park and Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013).

Hsu et al. (2013) developed TAM in their study to determine the blog reader's degree of trust in the blogger related to the perceived usefulness of the blogger's recommendations

and how the blog reader's perceptions influence his/her attitude and purchasing behaviour online. The analysis was based on the partial least square analysis (PLS graph software), which is normally use for pilot studies that provides the general model for predictive analyses. The researchers found that the informant and recommender roles were both positively related to the consumer's purchasing intention. In addition, bloggers' recommendations influenced several stages of the buying process (need recognition, problem awareness, information search, evaluation of alternatives and purchase). Their research also showed that of the 327 Taiwanese blog readers participating in the research, 48% read blogs about cosmetic products, the third highest percentage of readers for any topic. The researchers found that trust in bloggers with a perceived high reputation significantly affected consumers' attitude and intention.

Park and Lee, (2009) also developed TAM to study how online consumer reviews influence decision to purchase by examining the national culture of the U.S. and Korea, then comparing purchasing behaviour in both countries. This research employed quantitative methods by developing a conceptual model based on a consumer characteristics-attitude-outcome theoretical framework. Then, TAM was employed to generate the online review-related outcome variables, which were *purchase influence* and *usage frequency*. The final qualified sample was 877 completed surveys, which consisted of 452 Korean samples and 425 U.S. samples. After the SPSS data analysis, the results showed that Koreans used online reviews with more frequency in general (not only before purchasing) than American consumers, but in contrast, the Koreans did not shop online as often. Korean consumers were more likely to use online reviews to inform their purchase decision than American consumers. In summary, the Americans do use online reviews specifically for online purchasing, but they also perceive the online review usefulness as based on a factual/logical/data-oriented perspective. In contrast, the Korean consumers more frequently browse and use online reviews, which they consider useful, and they rely on

evaluative/subjective/less data oriented criteria (Hsu et al., 2013). Park and Lee (2009) also mentioned that in high context cultures like Korea, attitude (perceived usefulness) was significantly related to the purchase influence of online reviews.

Hsu et al. (2013), who focus on beauty products, concluded that reputation is an important factor in considering bloggers for marketing campaigns. Consumers perceive that online reviews are useful when bloggers with a positive reputation write them. However, this thesis is conducted based on the assumption that consumers are now aware of sponsorship, meaning that is important that this thesis determine characteristics that make bloggers credible and trustworthy.

Park and Lee (2009) suggest that Korean consumers often use online reviews to inform their purchase decisions and evaluate online reviews using evaluative/subjective/less data-oriented criteria. Therefore, this thesis argues that Thai culture also collectivist and similar to that of Korea. Mattila et al. (2004) and Buriyameathagul (2013) also confirm that online reviews are popular in Asian countries.

The two aforementioned studies are examples of existing scholars that have used TAM (perceived usefulness and ease of use) to explore when technology supports consumers' access to and perceived usefulness of online. Therefore, the use of TAM in existing studies is discussed again in Chapter 5 to analyse users' technology acceptance and knowledge towards platforms leads to discuss effective social media platforms for online reviews in terms of beauty products. However, as mentioned in Section 2.3, TAM was developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) but removes subjective norms and suggests internal beliefs as antecedents of the attitude-intention-behaviour connection for external variables, though subjective norms are the focus of the present thesis.

Although existing scholars have confirmed that TAM can be used to explain e-WOM or online review adoption and how online reviews affect behaviour, other social factors (such as subjective norms) that affect consumers' behaviour cannot be explained using the TAM.

The TPB model is considered to be more appropriate in explaining the influential roles of blogs and bloggers. This study utilises the TPB model, because TPB is appropriate to explain how reference groups (subjective norms) affect the attitudes, intentions, and purchasing behaviour of Thai consumers. The reference group in this thesis is bloggers who diffuse eWOM through blogs and social media (Facebook and YouTube).

In conclusion, research on online reviews based on TAM contributes to this thesis because it confirms that online review (e-WOM) adoption affects behaviour in terms of the perceived usefulness of online reviews and ease of use of technology and social media platforms (Hsu and Lin, 2008; Park and Lee, 2009; Wang, 2012; Hsu et al., 2013). This thesis expands on existing studies by determining the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers' that influence consumers to perceive online reviews as useful. The thesis also aims to determine the social media platforms that influence consumers to perceive technology as easy to use. When consumers believe that online reviews are useful and that technology is easy to use, the consumers are more likely to use reviews in their decision-making.

In view of the aim of this thesis being to explore the influential role and characteristics of bloggers, TAM is not considered necessary as part of the thesis's theoretical framework, though it is addressed in Chapter 4. Also as already mentioned in section 2.3 that TAM is specifically developed from TRA to explain IT adoption (Chin and Marcolin, 2001; Legris et al., 2003; Hsu and Lin, 2008; Park and Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013). However, this thesis aims to explain the social factors (online reviews) affect consumers' decision-making process. So TAM is not appropriate. Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is also developed from TRA, which included the social factors. So TPB comparable and can still be used for similar purposes (Hung et al., 2003; Riemenschneider et al., 2003) but more considered in subjective norms.

Existing scholars have, for the most part, used the TPB model to study trust in online reviews and how it affects consumer behaviour, as is discussed in the following section.

2.6 Extended Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) in online reviews studies

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) originates from social psychology. The model indicates that motivation for information is essentially determined by involvement or/and individual perception of consequence of an object, based on needs, values, interests, and the extent to which an individual is willing to engage in elaboration of the persuasive issue (Zaichkowsky 1985; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Lis, 2013; Wang 2013). The ELM illustrates that attitude changes take place over two distinct routes: central and peripheral (Petty et al., 1983).

The dual process, central route and peripheral route are different based on cognitive (central route) and affective (peripheral route) considerations. The central route is more focused on issue-related arguments in an informational message and analyses both pros and cons related to those arguments that later affect behaviour (Bhattacherjee and Sanford, 2006). The peripheral route of attitude change is less cognitive and requires more affective effort (Wang, 2013)

In terms of online reviews, ELM can be described as the likelihood that the degree of personal relevance of the information will prompt individuals to emotionally adapt and modify their attitudes towards the issue (Priester and Petty, 2003). In addition, ELM offers individuals a chance to adjust their perception during communication processes (Petty et al., 1983; Bhattacherjee and Sanford, 2006). According to the dual process theory of ELM, the central route, is message-related and argument-oriented, while the peripheral route is cue-oriented and is related to an individual's experience and credibility (Wang, 2013).

In relation to the study of online reviews, ELM has been adapted to understand the dual process of attitude changes towards in various contexts. Sussman and Siegal (2003) and Tam and Ho (2005) used ELM to understand the impact of influential and persuasive communication. Lee et al. (2008) investigated the impact of negative online reviews by using

ELM to understand consumer attitudes to products. Moreover, ELM is commonly used to explore online reviews in terms of trust and credibility.

Cheung et al. (2012) studied factors affecting the credibility of online consumer reviews based on ELM by examining four information cues to evaluate the credibility of online reviews. These cues are based on message-related variables: *argument quality (central route)* and source-related variables; *source credibility; review consistency; and review sidedness (peripheral route)*. The data collected was from users of Epinions.com, a well-known online consumer review website. 792 users were randomly selected to do an online survey. After the multiple regression test, the findings showed that AQ was the most influential factor in the evaluation of online consumer reviews, however it did not vary significantly across different levels of expertise and recipient involvement. This contradicts the ELM theoretical framework, which states that AQ will be lower when recipients are not involved and have low expertise. Moreover, based on the message, people will rely on both the central and peripheral route. On the peripheral route, expertise and involvement impact the degree of recipient reliance. Regarding the peripheral route, the findings suggest that consumers tend to rely on the source and review the consistency of online review when the degree of expertise is low and involvement level is high. However, if both expertise and involvement level is high, they will impact the review sidedness; (both positive and negative sides of review).

Cheung et al. (2012) confirm that consumers rely on both the central and peripheral routes by discussing the relationships between factors that affect the source credibility of online reviews. This thesis studies how consumers use the central and peripheral routes in order to evaluate and trust particular online reviews, as well as determining more factors on the central and peripheral routes. Cheung et al. (2012) used expertise and involvement, but this thesis proposes other factors established in other studies (Li et al., 2009; 2011), such as expertise and similarity, both of which were discussed further in Section 2.2. The thesis

explores social media and bloggers' characteristics and how they influence consumers' decision making and sustained credibility when brand sponsor a review. Cheung et al. (2012) discuss the relationship between argument quality and factors in source credibility using quantitative methods. Using qualitative methods, this thesis aims to determine the connection between the central and peripheral routes in the context of online beauty product reviews.

However, some scholars who have focused on online reviews combined other theories with ELM, such as TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), to understand the attitude change process that affects individual intention and behaviour, as well as to explore the influence of online reviews in various contexts.

Wang (2015) studied the influence of eWOM on outbound tourists' intention to visit a destination through a dual-process perspective by developing ELM and TPB. In this research, ELM was useful in understanding the influence of eWOM on tourists' visit intentions and their WOM intention later. The result was expected to indicate that tourists' attitudes toward travel destination are influenced by eWOM via the argument quality (AQ) of eWOM. Tourists' visit intentions are influenced by eWOM via the central route while recommendation behaviour is influenced via the peripheral route of the source credibility (SC) of eWOM. This study incorporated the central route of AQ and the peripheral route of SC to TPB. The data was collected through an online survey of 195 Chinese people who travelled to Finland. The conclusion was that tourists' attitude and intention towards travel destination are formed via central route positively influenced by AQ of destination-related eWOM. However, the SC is not significant. In contrast, tourist's recommendation behaviour is influenced by SC but not AQ.

Cheung et al. (2012) confirm that consumers perceive online reviews by evaluating them in terms of both the central and peripheral routes. However, Wang (2015) concludes that AQ (content route) and SC (peripheral route) influence differently particular behaviour. Tourists' intentions in terms of visits were influenced by argument quality (AQ), a central

route factor, but recommendation behaviour was influenced by source credibility (SC), a peripheral route factor. Moreover, both Cheung et al. (2012) and Wang (2015) only examine the central and peripheral routes using quantitative methods, whereas this thesis uses qualitative methods not only to determine the central and peripheral routes, but also explore each route (central and peripheral routes) in detail by understanding social media's functions and attributes, activity, characteristics, etc.

Although Wang (2015) also uses both the ELM and TPB, the study did not mention theoretical contributions such as the relationship between the central and peripheral routes. Therefore, this thesis expects that, after using ELM to explore consumers' attitude towards bloggers' reviews and/or TPB to explain consumers' attitudes towards purchasing intention, it can make a theoretical contribution.

Moreover, there are some interesting quantitative studies of what factors affect the usefulness of online review based on ELM. Cheng and Ho (2015) developed ELM to discover what factor affects the readers' perception towards online reviews and whether the social factors of online review websites influence reader's judgement of the reviews they host. In this research, the central route refers to AQ (argument quality) including the image count and word count variables, and the peripheral route refers to the review's number of followers and the reviewer's level of expertise. Data collection was from 983 reviews from a Taiwanese restaurant website, wwww.ipeen.com.tw. After the hierarchical regression analysis, findings showed that based on consumers' perception, the peripheral route factor (source credibility) is more effective than the central route factor (argument quality). Researchers believed the reason to be that the Taiwanese were more concerned about the interpersonal relationship and trust between people than the message. This research confirmed previous research that a high number of followers perceived a high level of expertise and was an important indicator of source credibility. This supported findings that showed a significant and positive correlation between reviewers' level of expertise and

usefulness of review, meaning that if reviewers would like to improve their expertise level in consumer perception they should increase their number of followers. For AQ, both number of images and words affect the perceived usefulness of online review.

In conclusion, this thesis aims to discuss consumers' decision making, which is influenced by bloggers' online reviews based on the TPB. Consumers' attitude towards bloggers' reviews are explained in terms of ELM. Table 3 offers a summary of why TPB, and ELM, but not TAM was used in the conceptual framework for this thesis.

Table 3: Why TPB and ELM are used in this thesis

Theory/Model	How model has been used by online review scholars	Use of models in this thesis
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis et al., 1989)	-TAM was created based on the information and technology perspective. The factors of TAM are *perceived usefulness* and *ease of use, which aim to* explain IT users' behaviour.	-TAM was created based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) but removes subjective norms and suggests internal beliefs as antecedents of the attitude-intention-behaviour connection for external variables. However, subjective norms are the focus of this thesis.
	-Previous research has confirmed that the perceived usefulness of online reviews has a significant effects on attitude and intentions towards particular behaviour (Hsu et al., 2013; Park and Lee, 2009; Yu, Ha, Choi, and Rho, 2005).	-This thesis does not focus TAM as the main theory, and instead uses data from research that has studied the model in discussing the findings from the research for this thesis in Chapters 4 and 5.
Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991)	-TPB was developed from TRA, which also includes social factors.

-TPB discusses the relationship between attitudes and intentions, which highlights the importance of perceptions and attitudes in predicting intentions and | -TPB is similar to TAM in terms of explaining attitude and intention. The model is also based on TRA but includes subjective norms as one of the factor to explain consumers' attitudes and intentions. |

	behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). -Online reviews must be discussed before the point of attitude formation, meaning that another model is required to explain attitudes towards online reviews.	-This thesis adapts and applies TPB to explain how bloggers' reviews affect consumers' decision-making in cosmetics purchasing.
Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty et al., 1983).	-The ELM is used to enhance TPB in the influence process before an initial attitude change. -ELM posits that motivation for information is determined by involvement or/and individual perception, as well as the extent to which an individual is willing to engage in elaboration of the persuasive issue. -The ELM illustrates that attitude change takes place over two distinct routes, namely central and peripheral.	-The ELM is applied in this thesis to understand consumers' attitudes towards online reviews and determine characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility based on the central and peripheral routes.

2.7 Characteristics of social media and bloggers in terms of credibility and trustworthiness based on extended Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

As mentioned in section 2.4.3, a key limitation of TPB is that it does not effectively explain how individual attitude influences intention and behaviour (Wang, 2013). This thesis examines and classifies the characteristics of blogs and bloggers from the perspective of consumers, based on the dual process of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

Many scholars have confirmed that trustworthiness is a significant factor influencing information adoption behaviours (Hsu, et al., 2013; Cheung, 2014) and that the credibility or trustworthiness of the information source influences the perceived usefulness of information

(Sussman and Siegal, 2003). So to be an effective source of information, and accordingly influence the consumer decision-making process, bloggers should consider credibility and trustworthiness as key factors. However, the challenge for bloggers is how to build and maintain their trustworthiness in the eyes of consumers, especially when they are employed to communicate brand messages on their personal blogs (reviewing and promoting products).

Bloggers are a benefit for companies in public relations (Porter et al., 2009; Xifra and Huertas, 2008). Companies are also trying to reach target audiences in faster and a more effective manner using new media capable of directly delivering messages and engaging both customers and brands in a long-term relationship (Singh et al., 2008). Using blogging to spread information about products or services is known to be one of the most powerful electronic word-of-mouth strategies (Kempe, 2003; Scoble, 2006). Hence, developing bloggers, as moderators, are said to be beneficial for both brands and customers because customers can receive product and service information via blogger experiences.

Uzunoğlu and Kip (2014) discovered that not all bloggers are equally effective for brand communication. The researchers conducted depth-interviews with 17 companies in PR and digital agencies/corporations in Turkey. After the interviewing, they used NVivo for coding and categorized based on this following themes in their literature review: definition of bloggers, selection of bloggers, and power of bloggers. Based on their findings, the researchers proposed the following criteria to select bloggers capable of effective communication: blogger and brand match must exist (i.e., the content of the blog should be relevant to the brand); the tone or voice of the writing must align with the brand (i.e., the blogger's online personality should be in line with the brand); the number of followers should be high, as maximizing the number of followers maximizes the target audiences reached; the content should be beneficial to the brands and relevant audiences; and the blogger should have reliability, which generates trust (from a followers' point of view, a reliable blogger has high potential or is perceived as good).

Agarwal et al. (2008) identified several characteristics of an influential blogger apart from the blogger's activeness, namely recognition, activity generation and novelty. Influential blogs are recognized by many readers and have a large number of comments, shares and citations. More importantly, the novel ideas from the blogger's personal opinions or experiences help to attract more readers, which in turn generates many comments and heightens the blog's influence. In addition, the blog should have been influential over the long term (i.e., it should have been influential for a long time), as this factor relates to its trustworthiness, which is another of the influential characteristics of blogs.

Li et al., (2009; 2011) has developed the model even further to explain the characteristics of influential bloggers, albeit specifically in terms of food and restaurant blogs. Li coined the key term marketing influential value (MIV). Three factors are considered in Li's model: *network-based, content-based and activeness-based factors*. *Network-based factors* include "social connection" and "social interaction" (Golder, 2007; Kiss, 2008). Whereas social connection relates to popularity, social interaction refers to the trustworthiness and reliability as indicated by the amount of feedback on the post, for example, by comments, citation and blogroll. A blogger who has gained more attention and trustworthiness is considered to have a powerful influence (Kale, 2007; Bonhoeffer, 2008; Lin 2009;). *Content-based factors* concern the subjectivity, length and lifetime of the blogs. Blog content from influential bloggers is a main tool with high impact on readers, i.e. potential customers. Such content can provide general information about products, e.g. price and quality, as well as positive (e.g. recommendations or compliments) or negative (e.g. criticisms, warnings or complaints) comments (Li and Du, 2011). Readers tend to demonstrate more trust toward opinion leaders' subjective recommendations when the blogger has high writing skill, the posts are longer and the lifetime of the blog is longer (Agarwal et al., 2008; Li and Chen, 2009). A longer post can attract more readers, which results in more comments. A longer lifetime of the blog time can also increase the social

interaction, and thus it can increase the blog's reliability. Moreover, the specific profession and the experience and knowledge expertise of the bloggers also affects the influential role of blogger (Bansal and Voyal; 2000; Li and Du, 2011). *Activeness-based factors* refer to the willingness of bloggers to connect with their readers through regular posts, replies and answers to questions. If these factors are present, people tend to feel encouraged to revisit the blog, and this kind of conversation, which can be so-called as promotional chat, can effectively influence people to buy the products under discussion (Mayzlin, 2006).

Cho et al., (2012) have proposed the best types of opinion leader, in terms of diffusion speed and maximum cumulative number in each marketing choice, based on diffusion of innovation theory by using the concepts of network, intimacy, sociality and centrality. The researchers identified a network as a group of entities that, though distributed in terms of physical space, nonetheless share similar attributes and thus come together to communicate. Intimacy involves the relationship between the entities in the social network. A strong relationship is defined based on the similar attributes of the network and on the relational strength of people such as the relationship between parents and children. In addition, having homogeneity among members can also increase the strength of the ties in a network, such as the ties among people of a similar age and/or education level. However, it is noteworthy that, with diffusion of innovation, heterogeneous connections among people who have different beliefs and attitudes are also important, because these people are seeking new information from the network. The total sum of the intimacy of each entity in the social network is defined as sociality. The entity in the social network that attracts public attention and prompts a high degree of connection within the group is considered the centre of the network (centrality).

Du and Wagner (2006) proposed the techno-social success model for weblogs' success based on a quantitative research which scored blogs using a ranking applied from the 'rank aggregation' technique developed in social theory literature (Arrow, 1963). The 126 A-

list weblogs were measured based on popularity rank (statistic) and growth (dynamic) levels over a 3-month evaluation period. The values used in the techno-social success model to blog popularity are *content, technology,* and *social value*, wherein technology plays an important role in reinforcing weblogs' content and social value.

Moreover, they mentioned that the success and popularity of blogs can be positively affected not only by technology characteristics (the presentation and organization of the blog content) but also by social interaction between bloggers. However, this research was conducted by considering only the techno-social perspective of IT-related factors. Several other non IT factors are also related to improving weblog success, such as brand name or celebrity effect.

Wang (2012) conducted quantitative research to examine the moderating effects of product familiarity and brand attitudes on blog characteristics, blog attitudes and purchase intention by collecting data from Taiwanese consumers of beauty products. Wang identified three blog characteristics – *information, playfulness* and *interactivity* – of successful blogs based on Du and Wagner's (2006) model. Wang's (2012) characteristics correspond with *content, technology,* and *social value* respectively. After SPSS14.0 and AMOS 17.0 analysis, the result showed that blog attitudes had an intermediation effect between a blog's characteristics and purchase intention. In addition, both blog characteristics (*information, playfulness* and *interactivity*) and blog attitudes influence consumers' purchase intention. Moreover, all the blog characteristics (*information, playfulness* and *interactivity*) have significant positive relationships with consumers' blog attitudes and purchase intention. Product familiarity had a moderating effect on the blogs' characteristics and on blog attitudes relationships. Brand attitudes had a moderated effect on the consumer blog attitudes and on purchase intention relationships.
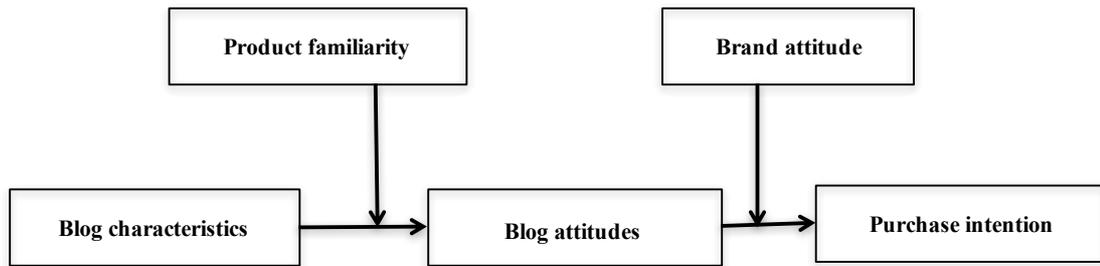
Figure 4: Wang's (2012) research model proposing the moderating effect of product familiarity on blogs' characteristics and attitudes towards blog relationships and the moderating effect of brand attitudes on attitudes towards blog and purchase intention relationships.

Both previous scholars; Wang (2012) and Du and Wagner (2006) agreed that social value, or interactivity, is one of the important characteristics of a blog. Bloggers are the main players in online communities. Moreover, the characteristic of a blog (i.e. interactivity, content value-based) is a factor that can lead to the success of a blog and affects the attitude of consumers towards their intention of purchasing. This leads to the research question for this thesis on the specific characteristics of successful bloggers as individuals. Namely, this thesis is interested in which blogger characteristics can affect the reader's behavioural intention. This research concerns not only the dimension of IT systems but also the dimension of online social and human behaviour by arguing that the assumptions of individuals' behavioural intentions are determinants of their actual behaviour. This research is therefore developed based on the TPB instead of on TAM by positioning bloggers as the subjective norms.

Table 4: Lists of main existing literature review about characteristics of blogs and bloggers

Authors	Objective of study	Methods
Li et al. (2009, 2011)	Proposed 3 factors; *network-based, content-based and activeness-based factors* further to explain the characteristics of influential bloggers	Quantitative
Cho, Wang and Lee (2012)	Using the concepts of network, intimacy, sociality and centrality to propose the beat type of opinion leaders	Quantitative
Du and Wagner (2006)	Proposed the techno-social success model for weblogs' success	Quantitative

Uzunoğlu and Kip (2014)	Finding criteria to select effective bloggers to match with brand communication based on marketing perspective.	Qualitative
Agarwal (2008)	Identifying the characteristics of an influential blogger	Quantitative
Wang (2012)	Examining the moderating effects of product familiarity and brand attitudes on blog characteristics, blog attitudes and purchase intention	Quantitative

2.8 The proposed theoretical framework based on incorporating ELM with TPB

Figure 5 shows this thesis's conceptual framework. It incorporates the TPB model ELM, which is explained in the following paragraphs.
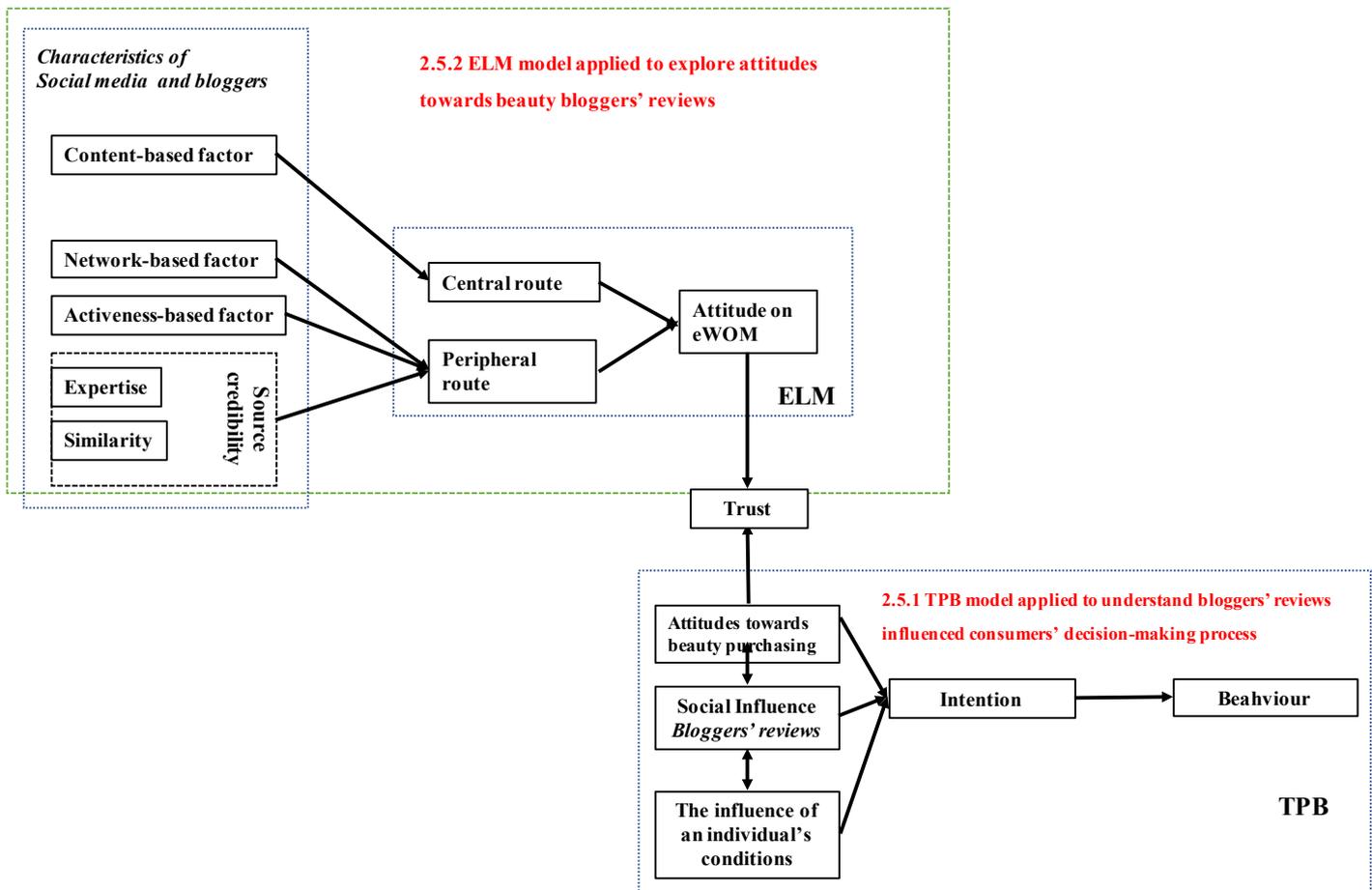
Figure 5: Proposed conceptual framework based on ELM and TPB model

2.8.1 TPB model applied to understand bloggers' reviews influenced consumers' decision-making process

The TPB model was selected for this thesis to examine trustworthiness and credibility of online reviews, because it helps in understanding how blogs and bloggers influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

This thesis will develop the findings of previous literature that suggests that the perceived usefulness of online reviews or blogs influences consumers' intentions in their decision-making process (Hsu and Lin, 2008; Park and Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013). Previous scholars have conducted research based on information system management perspective. This generally quantitative research led to the development of the technology acceptance model (TAM) to explain the relationship between the perceived usefulness of online review and consumers' attitude and intention. Since TAM and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) were both developed from the theory of reasoned action (TRA), they both aim to explain the relationship towards consumers' attitudes and intentions, albeit from different perspectives (Hung et al., 2003; Riemenschneider et al., 2003). This thesis will be focused on subjective norms, so the TPB will be employed and developed further. Ajzen (1991) used TPB to explain that different kinds of behaviour could be predicted from attitude. The TPB model will be used in this thesis to help in understanding the process of decision-making involved in the purchase of beauty products by consumers in Thailand, as well as the influence of bloggers' online reviews. Bloggers will be the subjects, as the goal is to study how bloggers sustain their trustworthiness in influencing readers' intention in the decision-making process.

The TPB model was proposed by Ajzen (1991) and entails three concepts: attitude, perceived behavioural control, and subjective norms. Bloggers and online reviews (social influence) are positioned as subjective norms; these two norms are the prime focus for this thesis to study influential role effect consumer-decision making process for beauty products.

According to the TPB model, individual attitudes influenced consumers' intention to behave in certain ways. This thesis considers attitudes towards cosmetics purchasing, which are influenced by bloggers' reviews. Perceived behavioural control refers to individual perceptions of behaviour being controlled by the consumer, such as when consumers try and evaluate products themselves.

2.8.2 Application of ELM model to attitudes towards beauty bloggers' reviews

In relation to the study of the characteristics of blogs and bloggers, this thesis will also develop the argument of previous studies that effective influencers have identifiable characteristics. Previous research has put forward different perspectives on this idea. Most of the research proposing a relationship between specific characteristics and blogger influence has been based on quantitative methods. For example, Li (2009; 2011) proposed the MIV model to rank influential bloggers in the food and restaurant sector. The model is based on network-based, content-based and activeness-based factors. Cho et al. (2012) identified the best types of opinion leaders in terms of diffusion speed and maximum cumulative number in each marketing area. This approach is based on diffusion of innovation theory by using the concepts of network, intimacy, sociality and centrality. However, there is little research employing qualitative methods to look in depth to explain the characteristics of effective bloggers from a marketing company's perspective (Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014).

Recently, bloggers, as end users themselves, have been employed to promote brands. However, how can bloggers maintain their trustworthiness and credibility in the view of readers or followers when the bloggers are being contacted and even sponsored by brands? Lu et al. (2014) studied the attitude of Taiwan consumers towards sponsored blog posts in Taiwan. The researchers concluded that consumers with high brand awareness had highly positive attitudes towards sponsored recommendation posts and that the positive attitudes

improved buying intention. However, little research has been done on the attitude of consumers towards the trustworthiness of bloggers after sponsored posting.

Past studies on the influential role of bloggers has indicated that trust is a mechanism to exert influence in many areas (Luhmann, 1979; Grabner, 2002; Gefen, 2004). Moreover, trust has been studied based on the TPB as a significant factor that affects attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms (Wu and Chen, 2005). Agarwal et al. (2008) identified the characteristics of an influential blogger based on quantitative methods and specifically mentioned trustworthiness as an important factor in order to be an influential blogger over a long-term period. Hsu et al. (2013) conducted quantitative research aiming to examine whether the blog reader's trust in the blogger is significant to the perceived usefulness of the blogger's recommendations towards online purchasing based on the consumer's perspective. The study showed that bloggers' trustworthiness is an important factor. Another factor besides bloggers' reputation, which has been found to influence the consumers' decision-making process, is source credibility (Hsu et al., 2013). High credibility can persuade and elicit more trust from consumers (Jain and Posavac, 2001; Park and Lee, 2009). But there is a knowledge gap in understanding what characteristics of bloggers help maintain the reputation of bloggers in the long term and build trust and credibility and this thesis will explore this area.

With regard to exploring the characteristics of blogs and bloggers, based on understanding consumer attitudes towards online reviews, this thesis uses ELM (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986) to understand the process by which individuals are influenced by online reviews which affect their attitude towards blogs and bloggers, in terms of trustworthiness and credibility. According to ELM, the extent to which an individual cognitively elaborates varies between individuals; in other words, different messages lead to different elaboration likelihood for different individuals (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). Consequently, each message received requires a different level of cognitive effort. Some

receivers elaborate on fewer messages than others do, whereby a high level of elaboration is defined as a central route and a low level is defined as a peripheral route (Lis, 2013). The high and low levels of elaboration are determined by evaluation of the message.

In order to apply ELM in online reviews, an individual's ability and willingness to cognitively elaborate on credible communication, as well as the quality of the arguments are considered (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In contrast, if an individual is unable or unwilling to process arguments or information, the influence process will considered as peripheral cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

Regards to previous scholars about online reviews by using ELM assigned the components of studies based on content-based value as argument quality. Based on ELM, social-based value refers to source credibility, network-based factor and activeness-based factor (Du and Wagner, 2006; Agarwal et al., 2008; Li et al., 2009; 2011; Wang, 2012; Lis, 2013).

Therefore, in this thesis, the selected characteristics of blogs and bloggers from existing studies will be analysed, based on considering the central route (considered as content-based value) and the peripheral route (considered as social-based value).

Central route

As already mentioned, the central route is based on the message and information (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Lis, 2013; Wang, 2015). Previous studies (Cheung et al., 2012; Wang, 2015) on online reviews found that the central route represented factors related to how convincing the review was. In this thesis, the characteristics and/or factors from previous scholars that considered how convincing the review was are applied in the theoretical framework. *Content-based factors* (Li, 2009; 2011) are selected, because this study proposed the marketing influential value (MIV) model which is able to identify influential bloggers for marketing practices. The reason for focusing on this particular factor is because the

objectives of research by Li et al. (2009; 2011) are similar to the objectives of the current study, which aims to determine influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers, based on marketing practices. Moreover, previous studies on factors and characteristics of blogs and bloggers also highlight the influence of content-based factors. For instance, Agarwal et al. (2008) found that the length of a blog post is relevant, whereby number of comments influences ability to attract a reader's attention. Uzunoğlu and Kip (2014) found that the content of the blog should be relevant to the brand, and tone of voice in writing is important for effective brand communication. This confirms that the content-based factor is a basic characteristic for blogs. However, this thesis questions whether the content-based factor is an essential characteristic of blogs, in order to effect trust and credibility in terms of the marketing perspective.

Li et al. (2009; 2011) argued that 'a blog is formed by text-based articles' and is 'content-oriented'. Li et al. (2009; 2011) also stated that a blog is the platform for bloggers who are considered as opinion leaders, hence express their opinion, which influences followers to purchase products and services. Therefore, the opinions of bloggers, both positive and negative, count as the 'subjective word set' which can be calculated from the proposed equation in the marketing influential value (MIV) model. In order to develop this equation to discover influential bloggers, Li et al. (2009; 2011) considered the length and living time in the blogosphere (how long from the first blog post untill the latest blog post).

Agarwal et al. (2008) and Uzunoğlu and Kip (2014) found that strong writing skills also influenced readers' trust in blog posts. Moreover, novel ideas from the blogger, personal opinions, or experiences related to products and brands also influenced readers.

The content feature has been highlighted by previous scholars as relating to positive effects, trust, and credibility formation (Sbaffi and Rowley, 2017). Thus, content-based factors are important in this thesis, based on its influence on trust and credibility.

This thesis used the terminology 'content-based factor', which is borrowed from Li et al. (2009; 2011), because this relates to various aspects of content-based value such as novelty of writing, writing skill, length of post, lifetime of blog post, and content related. Moreover, this thesis will also explore others elements of content-based factors relating to consumers' opinions that may emerge from the primary research from interviews, hence it will provide an opportunity to invite consumers to define their own content-based factors. Especially in the context of beauty online reviews, there are many relevant content-based factors other than word and information quality such as photo quality, content in Video clip, and VDO clip quality.

Peripheral route

When elaboration likelihood reduces for an individual, less cognitive effort is required and peripheral cues often will play a more crucial role in the influence process, thus influencing the recipient's attitude and beliefs (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Petty and Cacioppo (1986) found that individuals who often use their affecting cues on the message' sources spend less effort to elaborate on the content of the message.

Studies on online reviews have considered source of credibility in the peripheral route based on ELM (Cheung et al., 2012; Lis, 2013; Wang, 2015).

This thesis also identified source of credibility in the peripheral route and will employ some source credibility determinants from previous scholars, then propose characteristics of blogs and bloggers assigned as factors in peripheral route, based on ELM.

Previous studies have examined source credibility in many contexts. However, this thesis will focus on source credibility in ELM and according to online reviews which mostly determine source of credibility in terms of source expertise, source trustworthiness, and source homophily (Lis, 2013; Reichelt et al., 2013; Wang 2015).

However, this thesis aims to explore the characteristics of blogs and bloggers in terms of credibility. Only two determinants of source credibility have previously been identified in research as essential characteristics for bloggers, namely expertise and homophily (similarity) ((Agarwal 2008; Cho et al., 2012; Lis, 2013; Reichelt et al., 2013; Wang 2015). This thesis questions whether credibility can be explained by expertise and homophily.

Source credibility

Many scholars who have focused on online reviews have examined credibility, especially with regard to how online reviews influence information (Sussman and Siegal, 2003) and information adoption (Cheung et al., 2009). However, this thesis will investigate the characteristics of blogs and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility.

This thesis will employ source credibility, as one of the proposed characteristics of blogs and bloggers, because it has been identified as an essential cue for the information influencing process, and is primarily focused on online activities (Sussman and Siegal, 2003; Brown et al., 2007; Cheung et al., 2009). Moreover, the use of source credibility in online reviews has been challenged (considered as e-WOM) by scholars, because source credibility is not established as WOM (Kelman and Hovland, 1953; Cheung et al., 2009). Additionally, scholars have confirmed that source credibility relates to message credibility, whereby positive source credibility has a greater positive effect on credibility of message. Source credibility indicates credibility perceptions of messages recipients, and is concerned not only with the message itself, but also message source (Chaiken, 1980). Regarding online reviews, research mostly highlights source credibility in two areas, namely expertise, and homophily (Schindler and Bickart, 2005; Smith et al., 2005; Wang, 2005; Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009; Lis, 2013; Reichelt et al., 2013). Additionally, studies on online reviews based on the explanation of ELM have assigned source credibility to the peripheral route.

With regard to the definition of trust and credibility (2.3), this thesis asserts that trust and credibility are interchangeable (Hong, 2005; Hargittai et al., 2010) and credibility is a characteristic that must be based on the consumers' judgment (Rowley and Johnson; 2013) towards bloggers. Hence, trustworthiness and credibility might be difficult to separate in terms of determining consumers' attitudes towards bloggers. Therefore, source of trustworthiness is excluded in factor of source credibility, to avoid duplication.

Previous studies have also mentioned that expertise and homophily (similarity) are influential factors for bloggers (Yu et al., 2010; Cho et al., 2012; Zanette et al., 2013; Lee 2016). Consequently, these two components (expertise and homophily) are included in the theoretical framework as source credibility factors.

However, trustworthiness is not emphasised, because it is an objective for this study, hence is not considered as a determinant in order to explore the characteristics of blogs and bloggers.

Expertise

Bansal and Voyer (2000) confirmed that the expertise of source of the message can be a factor in determining credibility in online recommendations. Expertise is always mentioned as one component in source credibility, especially in the area of e-WOM or online reviews (Lis, 2013; Reichelt, et al., 2013). Readers expect information from high expertise content contributors which implies high quality information (McCraken, 1989). Online reviews from bloggers based on experience of products used promote higher credibility amongst readers, hence have a greater impact (Sussman and Siegal, 2003; Lis, 2013).

This thesis will look at perceptions of source expertise, when bloggers present their knowledge, skills, and experience on a given topic, which will affect their credibility (Ohanian, 1990; Lis 2013; Reichelt, et al., 2013). Therefore, this thesis will consider consumer perceptions of blogger activities that can represent their greater experience and

knowledge as perceived expertise. Moreover, other factors that influence the perceived expertise of bloggers will also be considered, such as high number of followers which can indicate high level of expertise of bloggers (Cheng and Ho, 2015). However, the expertise factor alone cannot serve the social function (Reichelt at al., 2013); homophily is also proposed in the theoretical framework of this thesis as a source of credibility.

Similarity or social homophily

Similarity or social homophily has been mentioned, as it influences trust between bloggers and followers, which is an important component in source credibility (Lis, 2013; Reichelt et al., 2013). Moreover, similarity is mentioned as a factor in influential blogs, as it promotes strong ties and fosters intimacy amongst people (Cho et al., 2012).

This thesis prefers to use 'similarity', as it is more general in terms of consumer perceptions. Greater social homophily occurs when readers or message receivers sense similar values and share the same preferences (Blanton, 2001). In addition, social homophily can be differentiated according to demographic and/or perceived attributes (values, preferences) (Lazarsfeld and Merton 1964; Gilly et al., 1998).

However, the research for this thesis will be conducted within the beauty context, where demographics such as age, gender, and income play a role in purchase decisions of beauty products. The thesis will also examine similar preferences amongst consumers (such as drugstore brand products or/and high-end brand products). Therefore, this thesis will emphasised 'similar' in any particular terms used.

Moreover, the other two factors identified by Li et al. (2009; 2011), namely network-based factors and activeness-based factors, were assigned to the peripheral route factors, as these require less cognitive effort and are less information-based. The reason that activeness-based factors and network-based factors will be selected is because these factors are considered as key factors in terms of marketing for blogs and bloggers (Li et al., 2009; 2011).

Moreover, network-based factors are considered as social value by Du and Wagner (2006), who also stressed that these factors help to connect to readers (consumers), thus maximizing the number of followers, which allows a larger audience to be reached (Cho et al., 2012; Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014) and also increases the opportunity to distribute the brand message to many followers. Agarwal et al. (2008) mentioned that the activeness-based factors, such as large number of comments, shares, and citations, as well as the interactions between bloggers and readers (Du and Wagner, 2006; Wang, 2012), affect the readers' perception and influences readers in a particular way.

Activeness-based factor

The activeness-based factor has been proposed as a factor in the MIV model to identify influential bloggers in terms of marketing perspective (Li et al., 2009; 2011). Li et al. (2009; 2011) described the activeness-based factor as activities based on word of mouth that lead to build-up of social conversation such as comments and responses. The activeness-based factor will be evaluated based on posts and comments. The posts and comments are activities that allow bloggers to build social conversation, hence attract readers to revisit a site. Moreover, comments reveal the attitudes of both bloggers and readers towards particular blog posts, and can later influence other readers and followers (Li et al., 2009; 2011).

Previous studies have mentioned the activeness-based factor in various contexts. Agarwal et al. (2008) differentiated blogger characteristics, based on influence role and activeness. However, one of the influential characteristics of bloggers also related to the activeness-based factor, which is activity generation-evaluated capability from the number of comments and number of discussions. A greater number of comments implied a more influential blogger.

The activeness-based factor has been highlighted in previous studies with regard to

essential characteristics of bloggers, which mostly relate to interactivity between bloggers and readers (Du and Wagner, 2006; Wang, 2012).

This thesis will develop the term the activeness-based factor from Li et al. (2009; 2011), using this term to extend and widely evaluate activeness of various types based on the consumers' perception towards the activities of bloggers, such as the frequency of posting, agenda posting, comment and response behaviour of bloggers.

Network-based factor

The network-based factor was also adapted from Li et al., (2009, 2011) and is based on the MIV model which aims to identify influential bloggers. It is often referred to in online review studies as social value (Du and Wagner, 2006; Wang, 2012) or social connection, and social interaction (Golder, 2007; Agarwal et al., 2008; Kiss, 2008; Li and Chen, 2009).

The social connection refers to the number of friend which can reflect that social interaction is related to comments and citations (Li et al., 2011). The social connection refers to number of friends, followers, visitors, and readers, which can reflect a blogger's reputation (Li et al., 2011). Social interactions can imply the popularity of bloggers and blogs (Li et al., 2011; Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014). Popularity refers to the ability to engage with followers and readers, which reflects the perceived expertise of bloggers (Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014).

Agarwal et al. (2008) proposed the recognition factor to evaluate influential bloggers, which can apply as a network-based factor. An influential blog is easily recognised through many posts, number of likes, number of comments, shares, and citations (Agarwal et al., 2008; Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014).

The network-based factor can reflect expertise, popularity, and reputation, hence in order to explore the influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers, in terms of trustworthiness and credibility, the network-based factor will be highlighted in this thesis.

Moreover, this thesis will adapt the term of network-based factor from Li et al. (2009; 2011), because the word covers various definitions from previous scholars, based on social value consideration. Social value is included in the social connection (number of followers, visitors, subscribers or anyone who reaches blogger reviews) and social interactions (number of shares, citations, comments, and any online consumers' social activities on a blogger's posts) which can reflect the reputation and popularity of the blogger.

In conclusion, this thesis will put forward a theoretical framework, based on the ELM and TPB models to understand the influential role of blogs and bloggers in the consumer decision-making process. Bloggers (social influence) are applied as subjective norms in the TPB model, while changes in consumer attitudes result from blogger reviews. Perceived behavioural control is influenced by consumers themselves.

Moreover, ELM will be employed to explore blogs and blogger characteristics in terms of credibility, based on the explanation offered by the central route and the peripheral route. The content-based factors are assigned to the central route, while the network-based factor, activeness-based factor, and source of credibility (expertise and similarity) are assigned to the peripheral route.

Chapter 3
Methodology

This chapter presents the study's methodology. The chapter first highlights the research gap and emphasises the research questions and objectives.

Though existing studies have confirmed the relationship that exists between online reviews and consumer intention to purchase, the results have largely been based on quantitative methods (Park and Lee, 2009; Hsu et al., 2013; Cheung, 2014). The factors and characteristics of blogs and bloggers and/or online reviews have been identified based on quantitative methods, such as modeling to evaluate influential bloggers in Agarwal et al. (2008; 2012) and the marketing influential value model used in Li et al. (2009; 2011). These quantitative studies have limitations in understanding consumer decision making in all its subtilies. The thesis uses qualitative methods to explore the influence of social media platforms and bloggers in terms of the characteristics that affect credibility. The thesis also aims to understand the influential role not only of blogs but also of other social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube in order to understand how bloggers affect consumers' decision making.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been used frequently in quantitative research in order to build a conceptual framework to study the factors that affect trust and attitude changes towards behaviour intentions (especially in online behaviour), particularly in online e-commerce (Pavlou and Chai, 2002), online tax adoption (Wu and Chen 2005), and e-service (Liao et al., 2007). This thesis employs TPB to study how bloggers' reviews affect consumers' decision making in terms of both online and offline purchasing.

Though TPB has been used to study trust in online reviews (Lu et al., 2014), TPB was developed to confirm attitude changes towards behavior, but TPB is not sufficient to explore attitude changes where trust is influenced by online reviews. Therefore, to study how

bloggers affect consumer attitudes, this thesis applied the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986); ELM was used in this thesis to explain the influential characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers based on dual processes (central and peripheral routes). Existing scholars have, for the most part, used ELM to determine the relationship between factors affecting the credibility of online reviews using quantitative methods (Lee et al., 2008; Cheung et al., 2012), which have limitations in terms of depth of understanding. This thesis used ELM in qualitative research to understand the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers that affect their credibility.

In summary, this thesis aimed to understand the influential role-played by social media and bloggers in consumers' decision making based on the TPB and ELM models. The thesis also explored the influential characteristics of social media and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility using qualitative methods and confirmation of purchase. Sections 3.1 presents the research questions and objectives of this thesis.

3.1 Research aim and objectives

The aim was to explore how bloggers influence the consumer decision-making process in the Thai beauty market particularly in terms of blogger trustworthiness and credibility.

- How do bloggers influence consumer-purchasing intentions within the Thai beauty market?

- How do consumers judge the credibility of beauty bloggers?

- How do bloggers build and sustain trust and credibility with their audience?

- What are the characteristics of an influential blogger when it comes to maintaining trust and credibility?

- How can existing models be developed to explain the role of a blogger and their ability to effectively influence the consumer decision-making process in view of criticisms of ELM and TPB?

Table 5: The summary between research objectives and research questions for this thesis

Research objectives	Research questions
To understand the influential role of bloggers on the consumer decision-making process.	How do bloggers influence consumer-purchasing intentions within the Thai beauty market?
To understand consumer perception towards credibility of bloggers.	How do consumers judge the credibility of a beauty blogger'?
To investigate and study the blogger characteristics that sustain bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility.	How do bloggers build and sustain trust and credibility with their audience? What are the characteristics of an influential blogger when it comes to maintaining trust and credibility?
To develop the TPB and ELM models to explain the characteristics of bloggers that can build and sustain their credibility, which in turn affects the consumer purchasing intention based on the consumer decision-making process.	How can existing models be developed to explain the influential role of a blogger with regard to sustaining their trust and credibility, also thus their ability to effectively influence the consumer decision-making process in view of criticisms of ELM and TPB?

3.2 Research Philosophy

The idealist ontological approach was be taken because the approach is dependent on developing human understanding (Stepanich, 1991). The idealist ontological approach accepts the individual's contribution to society because all consumers come from different cultures and communities. This thesis explored human understanding towards society and communities based on different cultures. Moreover, this thesis was also developed using the

epistemology idea referred to by Crotty (1998). According to Crotty (1998), constructionism based on knowledge is the process of human beings making sense of the world and other individuals.

Constructionism is the theory that suggests social phenomena developed in particular social contexts and the world is socially constructed. According to this theory, the consciousness of reality was formed from the interactions of the researcher with the external world; the interactions may seem obvious and natural, but they are actually subject to context (Crotty, 1998). This thesis specifically examined Thai consumers' trust towards Thai beauty bloggers and how consumers employ bloggers' reviews in the decision-making process. This thesis was based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which assumes bloggers and online reviews as social factors.

The main point of this study was matched the main perspective of constructionism, which focused on the collective results of social interaction (Crotty, 1998; Blaikie, 2009). In terms of research paradigms, interpretivism used in this study to explore individual experiences and understand behaviours which are largely influenced and shaped by social norms; people have different interpretations and preferences when adopting a decision-making process, so the goal was to understand the same objective reality in all the many different ways that individuals experience it (Thompson, 2015). Abductive inference used as a research approach as well. The abductive approach has been often employed in social science research, in which studies tried to explain everyday social life (people's thought and views) in terms of scientific descriptions. Thus, this kind of research strongly depends on the interpretation of the individual social scientist, i.e., on an interpretivist research approach (Blaikie, 2007; Chirkov, 2015).

This thesis used qualitative methods to develop an understanding of how consumers perceive beauty bloggers as influencers in the decision-making process based on the TPB

model, with emphasis on blogger trustworthiness via consumer interviews and online observation on blogs and social media forms.

Most researchers have been developed their research based on the basis of either of the two ontological assumptions about reality and knowledge claims. The two mutually exclusive assumptions were realist ontology (objectivist) and idealist ontology (subjectivism) (Popper, 1972; Burns, 2000). Realist ontology (objectivist) assumes that social phenomena and natural reality has an independent existence outside of social actors (Bryman, 2003; Phil and Joanne, 2003; Saunders et al., 2009). Conversely, idealist ontology (subjectivism) assumes that what we assume to be reality is an output of human cognitive processes. This thesis studied the bloggers' communication process, which can influence the decision to buy a beauty product. Moreover, bloggers affect marketing managers of beauty companies who may select them to engage customers. Idealist ontology perceives that a social phenomenon is shaped from perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors; this thesis will research bloggers, readers/customers and marketing managers. The expected result from this thesis will be analysed based on the experiences of bloggers, readers/customers and marketing managers. The data collected from their daily activities exists only as experienced by the subject of the research (Airenti and Colombetti, 1992; Archer 2007). The advantage of using idealism ontology to develop this thesis is that the idealist ontological is more agreeable to the ontological thesis because it is dependent on human understanding (Stepanich, 1991). It accepts the individual contribution to society because all consumers come from different cultures and communities. This thesis explored human understanding towards the social and communities based on different cultures. In online communities, people create their own cultures, especially bloggers who can lead readers to believe what they believe and promote their values by sharing their experience, expressing emotion, providing information, and contributing their opinions on social channels. Readers will then interpret those values based

on their experiences. This relevant to subjectivist assumption, because consumers construe and perceive reality by their own social experiences.

Epistemology is defined as the theory of the source, nature and limits of knowledge or social reality so we use epistemology to judge the ways to understand and acquire knowledge of reality (Crotty 1998; Grix, 2002; Blaikie, 2008). Epistemological assumption is the belief that true knowledge can be testified through experiences; however, if certain situations happen regularly enough, they can be generalised and used to predict future events (Blaikie, 2008). From the perspective of Crotty (1998), constructionism based on knowledge is the process of human beings in their sense-making processes with the world and other individuals. In this proposed research, the communication of bloggers were studied, including how they interact with their readers. Schultz (1967) took the view that individuals' interpretation of social phenomena is ingrained in human action and networks of social objects. Readers will interpret information from bloggers to help them decide what they will reject or purchase. This thesis aimed to explore how consumers are influenced in their decision-making process by beauty bloggers. Moreover, this thesis was based in the theory of planned behaviour, which assumed bloggers and online reviews as social factor.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions guide the research paradigm. The perspective of research paradigm is the pattern of belief and practice that guide a discipline by providing the frame and process for investigation, which can explain an all-embracing and practical thought process that organizes scientific research (Bettis and Gregson, 2001; Weaver and Olson, 2006; Bally 2012). This thesis approached paradigms from the perspective of social science, which includes positivism, interpretivism, and constructionism (Bashkar, 1978; Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Blaikie, 2008). The main difference between positivist and interpretivists is that interpretivists believe human beings understand and interpret the world differently (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Positivistism is suitable for scientific quantitative methods, while interpretivism is

appropriate for humanistic qualitative methods (Carson, 2001). This thesis studied the interactions of influential role of people in social networks, such as players in the market, consumers and marketers. Interpretivism was employed in this thesis, to explore individual experiences, so to understand the same objective reality in the many different ways that the individuals experience it (Thompson, 2015).

The different between interpretivist and constructivist is blurred; according to one scholar, they are the same (Schwandt, 1994). However, in 1998 and 2000; Schwandt purposed new perspective that the different of epistemological assumptions and selected methodology, and some scholars avoid the confusion by grouping them as "anti-positivism".

Hence, this thesis agreed that interpretivist and constructivist are not much different, but one point to focus on – this thesis aimed to look at the decision-making process of consumers given the influence of bloggers, these aimed to claim to constructivism. After marketers found out that bloggers influence consumer decision-making process, then they employed bloggers in their marketing strategy. This thesis is consistent with perspective of Crotty (1998) who mentioned individuals through interactions with the external environment construct that constructivism.

The perspective of interpretivism was taken in this thesis in understanding the social role of bloggers through their own blogs and other social media channels. Moreover, this thesis tried to understand behaviours, which are largely influenced and shaped by social norms, and people have different interpretations and preferences when adopting a decision-making process.

In addition in this thesis, abductive inference was employed as a research approach. The abductive approach have been often employed in social science research, in which studies try to explain everyday social life (people's thought and views) in terms of scientific descriptions. This kind of research thus strongly depends on the interpretation of the individual social scientist, i.e., on an interpretivist research approach (Blaikie, 2008; Chirkov,

2015). Hence, the research discussion can be difficult or easily misunderstood by taking a deductive or inductive approach. In this thesis, the influential role of bloggers on the decision-making process was explored through three groups: bloggers, consumers, and marketers. The research method involved interviewing, interpreting, analysis and finally building a hypothesis or theory. This thesis employed some well-known theories in social media context (Teng et al., 2015), for example, Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and Elaboration likelihood model (ELM). In short, the research approach in this thesis are abductive inference, not retroductive inference, as defined above.

Regarding the research choice, this thesis developed based on a qualitative design. Qualitative involves the subjective analysis of social phenomena, attitudes, opinions and behaviour (Morgan and Smirch, 1980; Berg *et* al., 2004; Kothar, 2009). This design was based on a researcher's understanding and interpretation, which may lead to the generation of new hypotheses or theory (Crotty, 1998; Blaikie, 2000; Kothar, 2009). Researchers who employ qualitative design generally use interpretive approaches, for example, semi-structured interviewing techniques, interviews, in-depth interviews and participant observation (Blaikie, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Kothar, 2009). As mentioned above, the purpose of this thesis aimed to explore and understand the influential role of the blogger in the consumer decision-making process, which is obviously suitable with qualitative design. In addition, semi-structured interviews was used as a main method to study in bloggers and marketer perspectives

3.3 Research Strategy

This thesis aimed to explore consumers' perspectives in terms of how beauty bloggers influence consumers' decision-making. The characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers were based on consumers' interview responses. Exploratory research was a method

that allows researchers to gain insight and increase the understanding of a problem. Therefore, to determine consumer's perspectives, this thesis used qualitative methods of interview and online observation. The main tool in qualitative research was the interview. In the present study, before the interview, online observations were employed to investigate selected bloggers' activity on Facebook, YouTube, and blogs in terms of how often bloggers post and interact with followers. The online observation results were beneficial in creating a semi-structured questionnaire (see appendix). The online observations also allowed the researcher to recruit participants. The following section explains the research methods (interviews and online observations) in greater detail.

3.3.1 Online observations

Online observations have been used to allow the researcher to gain a general understanding of bloggers' use of social media. Online observations are beneficial in developing interview questions as well. Moreover, online observations were used in the present study to recruit interviewees before the semi-structured interviews (i.e., the main research method used in this thesis).

The internet has influenced consumer behaviour; thus in order to study how consumer attitudes affect behaviour change, online observation is required. Online observation is developed from ethnographies of online cultures and communities, which symbolises ethnographic cultural analysis and representation, from observation to technologically mediated interactions in online networks, communities, and culture (Kozinets, 2010).

This thesis aimed to understand the attitude of consumers towards social networks and online reviews, hence takes into consideration online communities. Online communities represent the cultures, learned beliefs, values, and customs of a particular society (Kozinets, 2010). Hence, this thesis developed online ethnography as a tool for studying online communities and involves studying online social interaction among users (bloggers and

followers/readers). Online observation is a new qualitative research method based on online activity. The method is currently being used to identify and understand the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups; it is adapted from the ethnographic research technique used to study culture and communities via computer-mediated communication (Kozinets, 2002).

Online observations were applied. Bloggers' activities on social media and other online communication channels are captured. Online observation is a new qualitative research method, which is based on looking at online activity to identify and understand the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups; it is adapted from ethnographic research techniques to study culture and communities via computer-mediated communication (Kozinets, 2002). Moreover, online observation is the new method for analysing online communities systematically (Kozinets, 2010). This thesis was developed based on research, focusing on understanding the needs and decision influences of online consumer groups. In this thesis, online observation mainly aimed to explore the influential behaviour of bloggers and the ways in which bloggers may influence decision-making in the buying process. Online observation was also developed to observe the engagement between beauty companies and beauty bloggers.

The online observation method was employed to investigate the characteristics of Thai beauty bloggers. The method will be used to identify and understand the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups; it is adapted from the ethnographic research technique used to study culture and communities via computer-mediated communication (Kozinets, 2002).

Moreover, online observation applied to study the behaviour of readers and followers with the interaction and communication of particulars bloggers based in the Thai cultural context. Online observation was developed to investigate the messages of bloggers and sponsorships from beauty products companies. If bloggers were contacted and/or sponsored

by beauty companies for their reviews, do they review those products in an authentic way and how they provide sponsored reviews? In studying the influential role of bloggers, online observation used to observe the behaviour of readers (consumers) and how they interact with bloggers (influencers) including enquiries relating to product review, which affect their decision-making process before buying, and with the feedback of consumers after they have used those particular products.

The objective of employing online observation in the study was to permit more focus on the characteristics of beauty bloggers, including the activities of these bloggers, their interactions with readers, and their narrative style, content, and blog and social media platforms. Blogger activities were captured on beauty blogs and social media channels hosted on Facebook and YouTube, as Facebook ranked first among the most popular social media platforms (Thailand) and YouTube is a popular channel for beauty bloggers.

Online observation on beauty bloggers' social media platforms

The period of observation covered three months (May – July 2016), specifically looking at blogs, Facebook, and YouTube from selected bloggers (Table 8: Shows list of selected bloggers). Only these three channels were employed. Blogs are the basic and original platforms for bloggers' reviews. YouTube is a popular channel for beauty bloggers because it allowed them to demonstrate the product's colour, texture and how to use it. Sometimes an explanation in text is not sufficient. Facebook is a popular social media channel in Thailand. There are 33 million Facebook users in a total population of 69.7 million who use the internet (Vichienwanitchkul, 2017).

Regarding public websites, www.kapook.com (one of top three most popular websites in Thailand) provides a ranking of the top twelve most popular Thai beauty bloggers in 2016 of the most popular bloggers are Pearypie, Momay Pa Plearn, Sp Saypan, Feonalita, Mayyr, Nobluk, Nina Beautyworld, Cinnamongal, Tuniez83, Kirarista, Sononui and Mhunoiii.

Among these twelve bloggers, five bloggers were selected (see Table: 9) and how to select bloggers in Section 3.4 (Recruitment).

Online observation was used to observe the following over 3 months:

- Blogs and other social media (YouTube/Facebook) of top 5 selected bloggers in Thailand.

- General content, whether or not a narrative style is employed in writing, frequency of blogs and social media posting.

- The interaction of bloggers and readers/followers.

- Users' reflections on product information, their experiences and their opinions after using the blogger's post on the product through their own social media channels compared to brand's social media channel

- The narrative writing of bloggers, when brands sponsor them, how the blog aligns with sponsored products. This will reveal how the company controls the communication message.

The online observations were based on three criteria: content, activeness, and network. Content was the most important factor in investigating online reviews (Agarwal et al., 2008; Li et al., 2009; 2011) and included writing style, video and photo quality, and presentation style. Agarwal (2008) defined the key characteristic of influential bloggers as "blogger's activeness, namely the recognition, activity generation and novelty". Agarwal's characteristic is similar to the *activeness-based factors* proposed by Li et al. (2009; 2011). Moreover, Li (2009; 2011) also developed a model to identify influential bloggers by proposing characteristics of bloggers as the determining factor in their level of influence. One of the characteristics is *network-based factor or popularity.* This characteristic is similar to the *centrality factor* in the research of Cho et al. (2012), which means that

influential bloggers should attract public attention and prompt a high degree of connection within the group.

Online observation was conducted between May and July 2016, based on three factors as highlighted by Li et al. (2009; 2011), namely content, network, and activity. These factors relate to three social media platforms—Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. The reason why those three factors are selected for guidance online observation because, the factors from Li et al. (2009; 2011) needed to be basically confirmed that applicable for interview questionnaire in Thai beauty context. Observations were recorded each month, beginning with the first week of the month. However, if nothing was highlighted, tracking was done for the day after or week after.

However, the online observation mainly aimed to be grounded the understanding of how actual bloggers activities and social media environment, but not the main tools for analysis in this thesis. Notable issues regarding blogger activities were noted. For instance, a blogger had some personal issues that compelled pausing of posting activity. The online observation was conducted weekly by recording overall posting activity, as shown in the appendix.

For the content-based factor, bloggers' platforms were observed. The focus was on three main areas: quality of content (such as writing or clear presentation related to products), narrative style (narrative and presentation), and quality of photos and videos. Others elements observed were theme of social media platform, platform attributes, as well as beauty and lifestyle content. Sponsorship from cosmetics brands involved in online reviews was also noted.

The activity factor relates to the frequency of posting by bloggers. This included frequency of replying to messages. These criteria of observation relating to activity were applied to the three social media platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, and blogs.

The network-based factor is related to networks with social media. Observation focused on the number of followers, number of subscribers, number of shares, and number of cited. The network-based factor also relates to the popularity of bloggers, hence the number of comments and likes were counted as well.

As already mentioned, the main objective of online observation was to build understanding about how actual situations happen, involving beauty bloggers, social media, and followers. The online observation in this thesis is not the main methodological tool for the study. However, Chapter 4 presents a table (Table 9) that shows the summary of recorded online observation to help in understanding of social media activity of beauty bloggers in Thailand. Moreover, the online observation results could be used to implement the pre-determined factors effectively. The semi-structured questionnaires were thus developed using those characteristics as the basic guide for structuring the questions.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews with consumers

In-depth interviews were conducted to understand consumer perception towards blogger trustworthiness and how consumers integrate bloggers in their decision-making process. Interviewees are Thai female consumers who have had experience with beauty blog reviews and intend to purchase products because of beauty blogger recommendations.

Zanette et al., (2013) conducted qualitative research aimed at exploring how bloggers use their influence to support commercial interventions in their blogs. The researchers performed a longitudinal analysis of three blogs' sites and interviewed the bloggers of each site using questions based on each blogger's narrative style and products of focus. The result showed that homophilic traits are a significant dimension allowing readers to affiliate with blogs. Hence, age group is selected as the main variable for this thesis due to the fact that different age groups of consumers will represent different levels of education, psychological

factors (such as lifestyle and preference), experiences, incomes, jobs and physical factors (such as skin type), all of which are important factors affecting consumers' decision making in beauty. In addition, light observation of the selected beauty bloggers' Facebook pages indicateed that most of the bloggers' followers left comments on particular posts related to their preferences. These comments typically shared the followers' own experiences in using particular products related to the followers' psychological factors and physical factors. Zanette et al. (2013) mentioned that on beauty blogs, readers often share their own experiences about products on the blogs, which automatically influences other readers. Consequently, the tie between bloggers and readers in the beauty area is very strong. Hence, it would be interesting to observe and study the consumers in different age groups to see whether the consumers respond to different perspectives or share similar perspectives about the characteristics of bloggers.

The took place by interviewing approximately 30-40 bloggers' Facebook followers from 4 age groups: 18-22 years old, 23-26 years old, 27-30 years old and 31-34 years old. The income, education level and skincare and beauty concerned were implied in those age groups. This thesis will interview at least 30 Thai female consumers or continue until information proves sufficient data for analysis. The language used is Thai, and face-to-face interviews were conducted in Thailand in coffee shops and the university cafeteria. The locations were considered based on interviewees' convenience in public. The environment and atmosphere during interviews was comfortable because most interviewees were familiar with beauty and beauty bloggers. However, the semi-structured questionnaire was a guided interview.

The interviews did not reveal the actual purchases of consumers, but rather explored how consumers can be impacted by bloggers, and how that impact could then be applied and developed to understand the consumer decision-making process. Moreover, the questions explored how consumers select a blogger to trust and how consumers form an attitude and

perception towards that particular blogger based on trustworthiness and credibility, especially when the blogger did sponsored posts. Finally, the interview questions were developed to find out how the consumer uses blogger reviews in their decision-making process. The interview was semi-structured to allow for a natural flow (Gibson and Brown, 2009) through a pre-planned structure accompanied by open-ended questions. However, a pilot study is always desired because it can identify unforeseen problems and test whether the questionnaire questions can be used to form the research questions (Bryman, 2008). Hence, a pilot study was performed at the beginning of the research by interviewing 3 followers of the selected top 5 Thai beauty bloggers .Then, the questions were improved and tested again before collecting the real data.

During the interview, the researcher took voice recordings after gaining the interviewees' permission. Interviewees were informed of the objective of this interview and stated their names before the conversation was recorded. All interviewees received compact lipsticks or mobile phone cases to thank them for their participation.

However, during data collection and data analysis, an unexpected event happened, namely Thai King Rama VIII passing away on 13th October 2016. This thesis collected data in Thailand from 15 October 2016 to 20 November 2016, during which there were government restrictions on using social media, online communications, and all media broadband. Permitted activities had to respect the King and use only black, white, and other solemn colours. This event had a significant effect on the Thai population's emotions. Moreover, traffic in Bangkok was dense because Thai citizens from other provinces were coming to Bangkok in order to attend The King's funeral. Therefore, some interviewees chose to participate over telephone or simply dropped out of the study entirely.

Because some of the interviewees who were unable to participate in face-to-face interviews were willing to take part via telephone interviews. However, telephone interviews are limited in that the interviewer cannot read participants' body language. The flow of

conversation was reduced compared to that of the face-to-face interviews, meaning that the researcher had to ask more questions. The time and appointment of each phone call was determined before the interviews by sending Facebook messages or email between interviewees and interviewers. Interviewees were informed of the objective similarly to the face-to-face interviews. Interviewees also received some complimentary beauty products as a reward for their participation.

The interviews were conducted either on virtual platform via face-to-face interaction and telephone interviews. Due to the distance, there may be some signal problems, so afterwards the transcripts were shared with the interviewee for confirmation.

Interviews with marketing managers

In-depth interview was conducted to understand how marketing manager perception towards blogger trustworthiness and how consumers integrate bloggers in their marketing practices. Some marketing managers also chose not to participate in the interviews because they were concerned with company confidentiality. Only one marketing manager, who works in a leading beauty company, was willing to respond to this study's questions. This participant's responsibilities include below-the-line marketing, direct contact with bloggers in creating sponsored posts, and using bloggers in PR events. The following sections discuss the data collection and analysis in greater detail.

Because this individual works directly with bloggers, his opinion accurately reflects his actual marketing practices between his brand and bloggers. This interview was conducted via phone and also relied on a semi-structured questionnaire, but one geared towards the marketer' perspective. This individual's answers are beneficial in the discussion of consumers' perspective in Chapter 5 in understanding the role of the brand. This interviewee also received a complimentary case phone via post as well.

Table 6 summarises the data collection methods employed in this research.

Table 6: Summary of methodologies for data collection

Research methods	Bloggers	Interviewees	Marketer
Online observations	Investigate 5 bloggers' and followers' activities from May – July 2016 using Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. Use the characteristics of blogs and bloggers from previous scholars (Argawal, et al., 2008; Li et al., 2009; 2011) to build semi-structured questionnaire.	Investigate bloggers' followers to recruit participants.	
Face-to face interviews		19 interviewees agreed to do face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured questionnaires were created based on online observations.	
Telephone interviews		15 interviewees agreed to do phone interview Semi- structure question interview	1 marketing senior staff from online beauty retailer in Thailand

3.4 Recruitment

Online observation for recruitment

Online observation was employed not only to observe the activities of bloggers, but also to randomly select bloggers' followers to form a sample for in-depth interview. Next, initial screening questionnaires were randomly distributed by to at least 10 followers from each blogger (at least 50 followers in total) via private instant message on Facebook. The screening questionnaire (see in appendix) helped the researcher seek out specific potential interviewees.

However, because of an unexpected event happened, namely Thai King Rama VIII passing away, some interviewees chose to participate over telephone or simply dropped out of the study entirely.

So, initial screening questionnaires needed to haphazardly distributed and online observations were carried out, as detailed above, before the interview to investigate bloggers'

activities and allow recruitment. Because some participants chose not to participate in the study, other bloggers' followers were then selected. However, as time at this point was limited, recruiting additional participants on short notice was difficult. The researcher's Facebook friends and selected bloggers were the targets. Most of these individuals agreed to participate because of their connections to the researcher.

The questions asked about the readers' activity on social media, such as; how often they access online reviews through bloggers' social media channels, and demographic questions.

The screening questionnaire (see in appendix) identified qualified potential interviewees. The following criteria was be applied for selection:

1. Follower must be active on social media (Facebook, and YouTube) at least everyday.

2. Follower must purchase beauty products once in 3 months.

3. Follower must be at least 18 years old.

The following criteria are preferred but not essential:

1. Follower follows at least 3 bloggers on Facebook out of the selected 5 beauty bloggers.

2. Follower has experience purchasing beauty product because of bloggers' reviews.

3. Follower regularly visits bloggers' other social media platforms, not only Facebook but also their blogs and YouTube channel or and others.

The research for this thesis started by recruiting suitable candidates. There are three groups of candidates: bloggers, consumers/readers and marketing managers (see Table: 7).

Table 7: Sample to be selected in each methodology

Methodologies	Samples
Online observation	Top 5 Thai beauty blogs
Interview	• 4 groups of Thai readers or followers based on age • 7-10 persons per group 1. 18-22 years old 2. 23-26 years old

	3. 27-30 years old 4. 31-34 years old
Interview	At least 1 marketing manager from cosmetic company based in Thailand.

3.4.1 Criteria of selecting bloggers

For online observation, bloggers are considered from the top Thai beauty bloggers which was available on public website www.kapook.com, www.sanook.com and www.bloggang.com. Those websites mention similar bloggers, but they are ranked differently. Therefore there is no consistent source to identify the top beauty bloggers. So beauty Thai bloggers will be selected from online observation, based on the criteria as follows. The bloggers should have three specific channels of communication: the blog, Facebook and YouTube. The number of followers and visitors on blogs, Facebook and YouTube will be considered. Moreover, the bloggers must be active on those channels: twice a week on Facebook, but not specific frequency on blog, and on YouTube within the period of three months. These criteria of selection will be firstly observed from their blogs. Each selected blogger should also have a different lifestyle, which will be related to the different target readers. Thus another of this study's criteria to select bloggers was that the blogger had to have over 50,000 followers on Facebook. The following table shows the five bloggers selected from the top twelve bloggers.

Table 8: Selected bloggers and their activeness on blog and social media

Ranking	Pseudonyms	User name in social media channel		
		Blog	YouTube	Facebook
#3	Sp Saypan	http://spsaypan.com	SPSaypan	Sp Saypan
#4	Feonalita	http://www.feonalita.com	feonalita	feonalita
#6	Nobluk	http://nobluk.blogspot.com	NOBLUK	Nune noppaluck
#7	Nina Beautyworld	http://ninabeautyworld.com	NinaBeautyWorld	Nina BeautyWorld
#11	Sononui	http://sononui.com	Keira Phitchakorn	Sononui

3.4.2 Criteria of selecting interviewees

To select consumers/readers, firstly Thai readers/consumers will be observed for a month from Facebook and YouTube channels to find readers who have ever responded to blogs or Facebook; this proved that they were involved in beauty blogs and social media channels. After the initial screening session, then they will be asked to answer the recruit questionnaire (see Appendix). Before setting up the questions, the researcher will research news or topics related to beauty bloggers and how they influence customers in Thailand. This will also include asking some questions about the influence on beauty purchasing on the researcher's own social media channels (the researcher maintains her own beauty Facebook page, as well as a YouTube channel about beauty). A pilot study will be carried out because it can not only identify unforeseeable problems, but also test if the design really answers the research questions (Bryman, 2008).

The questionnaire (see Appendix) will help the researcher to seek out specific potential readers. The questions will ask about the readers' activity on social media and blogs, their lifestyle, and factors that influence them to purchase beauty products. Moreover, the questions will ask about customers' understanding of who bloggers are versus who Youtubers are. Confirming this understanding will ensure respondents answer the questions about the right people.

The questionnaire will group the readers based on age. Four age groups will be formed: 18-22 years old, 23-26 years old, 27-30 years old and 31-34 years old. Demographic factors such as age, gender and income affect trust in online information (Sbaffi and Rowley, 2017). Hence, this thesis considered groups of interviewees based on gender, and considered factors such as education, lifestyle, income, and some physical aspects such as concerns over skin issues (these physical aspects affect what kind of products the consumers seek). Moreover, only women will be interviewed, as women are the main target market of beauty companies.

As for the marketing managers of beauty companies, it will be quite difficult to set up criteria for selecting managers. Not many marketing managers will be willing to give internal information to external people, especially considering that this thesis will be public in the future. However, some marketing managers may be willing to do the interview, because after this thesis is completed, some beneficial information will be provided to them. The only criteria that will be considered in the selection of beauty marketing managers are their experience, which has to have employed bloggers for promotion. Eucerine, for example, would qualify because the brand used three bloggers for TV advertising. The brands could also have sponsored bloggers to tie in their products.

3.5 Sampling

For sampling, the researcher aims to choose an appropriate sample size and the most representative group of people from a much larger population. Sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of people from the whole population (Sekaran, 2003; Bradley, 2007; Neuman, 2007; Thompson, 2012). As mentioned above, judgment sampling was employed in the beginning of the research to select 5 beauty bloggers from the top bloggers, whose blogs and social media are observed. Only those bloggers' female followers are considered for study. After that, convenience and random sampling was employed by randomly asking at least ten followers from each five qualified bloggers' Facebook page to participate in the research (approximately 50 followers is an expected number) by contacting and through instant messenger on Facebook to explain the study in detail and invite them for the interview. The random sampling method will also help to reduce bias from the researcher (Hair et al., 2007; Saunders et al., 2007).

However, because of the unexpected event happened, namely Thai King Rama VIII passing away, so some interviewees chose to drop out of the study entirely. During the rush

hour, haphazard sampling was used. Then mutual friends of researcher on Facebook who have followed five particular bloggers, and were familiar with beauty bloggers online reviews were haphazardly asking to participate for the interviews. Haphazard sampling is a nonstatistical technique used during rush hour, which create the random sample by haphazardly then can guarantee that the sample will be representative, the entire population (Hall et al.,2012) .

If a participant confirms their participation, a consent form and the screening questionnaire are emailed to her or sending through Facebook messenger. The qualified participants were grouped by age to reflect a variety of incomes, education levels, lifestyles and experiences of using social media channels.

3.6 Data Analysis

Utilising interviews, this thesis was developed based on qualitative research methods. So data analysis adopted in the study used Nvivo 10.1 software, which organizes transcribed qualitative data collected from the field and uses thematic analysis to identify themes. Thematic analysis is frequently used in qualitative research because of its flexible theoretical position, which is also appropriate for a social constructionist epistemology in which it unravels socially construed realities (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Data generated during the online observation, interviews and archive research will be condensed into themes.

Regarding the data analysis of online observation, there were two essentials of data collection: the data directly copied from the computer-mediated communications of online community members, and the data the researcher collects regarding his/her observations of the community and its members, interactions and meanings.   The data analysis was conducted by means of NVivo, which expedites coding, content analysis, and data linking. Kozinets (2010) mentioned the usefulness of data analysis which is interpretive and holistic,

also known as the "hermeneutic circle approaches". Analysis and interpretation involves classification, coding analysis and contextualization of communicative acts. This thesis also followed the principles of data collection and analysis of qualitative data outlined by Kozinets (2010). These principles ensure a systematic and rigorous procedure for minimizing human error. They included recording processes, memos, focus on responding to research questions (which in turn should focus not on the objective meaning of text, but on the meaning of that text for people in the situation under study), appropriated level of interpretation appropriate for situation, timing of certain actions (processes of inquiry and analysis are often simultaneous, for example), effort to explain or educate, and evolutionary. Especially, during analysis, researcher should be aware of the need to avoid biases, and personal opinions.

This research was conducted in Thai, so before coding and analysis took place in NVivo, all interview results were transcribed and then translated from Thai to English. For data validation, triangulation across resources (Denzin, 1970; Wallendorf and Belk, 1989) was realised through the interview translations being rechecked by two Thai PhD students, one from the University of the West England and one from Bristol University. The data analysis of the qualitative data gathered during the customers' interviews was then conducted using NVivo 10.1 software. The results were coded using the keyword characteristics of blogs and bloggers from previous scholars as well as the keyword characteristics based on the TPB and ELM. The results were then revised to identify important coding and to determine the characteristics of social media platforms and consumers' perceptions of bloggers and bloggers' influential roles. The analysis and findings of the customer interviewees' data are discussed in Chapter 4. The findings of the interview with the marketing manager were not analysed using NVivo, as only one interview of this type took place. Nonetheless, the interview yielded some interesting results, which are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.7 Research Validity

Evaluation of a research was a pivotal process before the application of data collection because collecting unwanted data did waste time and effort. Traditionally in quantitative research, external and internal validity (true knowledge) were used to measure the value of the research in terms of generalisability and reliability respectively (Hammersley, 1998). In qualitative research, during data collection and analysis, validity referred to as trustworthiness or reliability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Wallendorf and Belk, 1989). In online research, validity is a point of central concern (Kozinets, 2002). In online observation, validity can be considered in the same way in general qualitative research. For example, the researcher should ensure that their analysis method is reliable, the quality of data is high, and their research is representative (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Denzin and Lincoln 1994). Hence, in this thesis, data and methodological triangulation will be adopted to strengthen the research and its transferability, which means the research would show the same result when repeated under the same conditions (Lincoln and Guba, 1994; Creswell 2007; Neuman, 2007). In addition, Kozinets (2002) also provides some important guidelines for online observation validity, for example, the selection of relevant groups and a focus on relevance for community members.

3.8 Research Ethics

Regarding ethical consideration, the research plan had to be approved by the University of the West of England's ethics committee prior to the beginning of the research. This thesis did not involve confidential information on people or companies. There were no sensitive questions on age or sex. This thesis was conducted on people who are age 18 and above. This thesis involved public blogs, Facebook and YouTube channels, which did not analyzed any confidential on particular social media platforms, so and the ethical approval document was not needed. Ethical approval forms were sent to readers who were targeted as

potential interviewees participants. Hence the study did not raise any ethical concerns. Relating to interview marketing managers from beauty companies, the obtained information was kept confidential since it is considered as part of marketing strategy, which was secret internal information. It was challenging for the researcher to negotiate with managers. However, the needs for confidentiality might arise due to the answers of participants, and a promise of project anonymity will be included in the consent form issued to research participants. This thesis was not related to external funding, so there were no concerns about stakeholders influencing the research findings.

Chapter 4
Findings and Analysis

This thesis seeks to understand the influence of social media and bloggers towards consumer decision-making process for beauty products in Thailand, and also explores characteristics of blogs and bloggers in terms of trustworthiness and credibility.

The previous chapter described data collection which involved the interview method. Additionally, the chapter identified the three main factors that guided data collection namely, content, activity, and network factors (Li et al., 2009; 2011). These factors could be effectively applied to the process of analysing online beauty product reviews. All three factors (content, network, and activity) represent the characteristics of beauty bloggers who engage in online review of beauty products, using social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. Moreover, the online observation helps to build understanding of the social media activity of Thai beauty bloggers. Table 9 presents the summary of the online observation results for selected beauty bloggers.

However, the table only captured specific details such as defining characteristics and activity of each blogger, presentation style, narrative, theme of videos, as well as photo and video editing skills. Regular activities of bloggers were also captured such as frequency of posting and online interaction with followers. The average number of followers, number of comments, and number of likes on each social media platform was also recorded for each month, which represents their popularity. The appendix shows a detailed recording of online observation. Table 9 will be grounded the idea of how beauty bloggers use their social media to provide reviews, especially when sponsorship involved, then can support the understanding of other finding from interview in this chapter later.

Table 9: Summary of the online observation results from selected beauty bloggers from May -July 2016 in terms of content, activeness, and network

Bloggers	YouTube	Facebook	Blog
Sp Saypan	**Content** Friendly presenting style Clear objective in every video Medium-quality videos Content related to beauty and lifestyle Clear disclosure of sponsorships **Activeness** Monthly reviews No scheduled posting Infrequent replies to viewer comments **Network** At least 10,000 views and 100 comments per video Approximately 80,000 subscribers	**Content** Use of friendly narrative style Photo posting suggests that the blogger actually takes the photos herself more often than using advertising photos Use of Facebook functions in order to communicate with followers. Varied content, such as trending news, shopping advice, new product launches, food, and lifestyle A number of sponsored posts **Activeness** At least 2 reviews per month Daily updates such as statuses, photos, lifestyle, new products, and news. **Network** Replies to a number of viewer comments 10,000+ likes and 1,000 shares from followers Posts shared as part of giveaway campaigns. 1,400,000 followers	**Content** Varied content but focus on beauty and lifestyle <u>Images posted with text</u> Use of friendly narrative style **Activeness** Normally, monthly reviews
Feonalita	**Content** Friendly presentation style Clearly sponsored posts Professional production Clear communication of video objectives **Activeness** 2 reviews per month Viewer comments rarely replied to **Network** At least 10,000 views per videos 5-10 comments from viewers per videos 90,000 subscribers	**Content** Friendly narrative style and use of slang and hashtag trends Personal photos used more frequently than professional advertising photos Content surrounding beauty, lifestyle, news, and food Content largely on luxury and high-end products. Some reviews mentioned about sponsorship, some did not, but can be noticed from reading reviews. **Activeness** Approximately four posts per month Daily updates	**Content** Content categorised based on beauty, lifestyle, and fashion. Friendly narrative style Posts identifiable due to brand sponsorships **Activeness** Reviews posted 1-2 time per month **Network** Few visitor comments

		Network At least 100 likes and 10 comments from other beauty pages 1,080,000 followers	
Nobluk	**Content** **Focus on** beauty, food. and lifestyle content. Mentions sponsorships Friendly presentation style Collaborations with other YouTubers Professional production **Activeness** Four publications per month No agenda posting **Network** 467,000 subscribers Approximately 50,000 views per video	**Content** **Focus on** beauty and lifestyle content High-quality photos Recognisable sponsored posts Friendly narrative style **Activeness** Daily updates No agenda posting **Network** At least 1,000 likes per post and 100 comments	**Content** Mostly formal language Mostly sponsored content High-quality photos **Activeness** Monthly posting **Network** No visit comments
Nina Beautyworld	**Content** Use of soft tone of voice So feel unclear somethimes to listen leads to affect overall of performance of presentation Brand-sponsored posts Lifestyle, beauty and fashion content Professional videos **Activeness** Posts one every two months No agenda posting **Network** 172,000 subscribers Approximately 5,000 - 10,000 views per video	**Content** Beauty and lifestyle content Brand-sponsored brands Beauty and fashion content from third-party websites Friendly narrative style Hashtag of her name on every post **Activeness** 2-4 times per day, particularly on weekends -No agenda posting **Network** Approximately 200 likes and 20 comments on each post 1,300,000 followers	**Content** Blog sectioned content based on reviews and videos, which are about beauty, fashion, food and travel, and lifestyle Posts clearly sponsored by brands due to positive message and tone **Activeness** -Not regularly post, but about once a month **Network** No visitor comments
Sononui	**Content** Professional video production and editing Clearly sponsored posts Friendly presentation style and unique personality, though unprofessional **Activeness** Video posted every 4 months No agenda posting	**Content** Very high-quality photography Beauty, lifestyle, and travel content Clearly sponsored reviews **Activeness** Updates at least once a day **Network** 160,000 followers Approximately 100 likes	**Content** Largely beauty and lifestyle content Mostly sponsored reviews Informal language High-quality photos **Activeness** Posts every 3 months No agenda posting **Network** No visitor comments

| | **Network**
10,000 subscribers
At least 1,000 views and
10 comments per video | and 10 comments per
publication | |

Source: Online observation recorded from May-July 2016 in appendix

According to interview result, out of 38 interviewees, only 32 respondents were selected, based on related key words and content from data collected that mostly related to this thesis. Before data analysis, all interviewee result were translated from English to Thai, then two Thai doctoral students reconciled the language, definitions, and wording. Interview.

In translating from Thai to English, every effort was made to retain similar meaning between the two languages, especially the characteristics of bloggers and attributes of social media platforms (such as sincerity, actual use, and up-to-date activity). Moreover, the translation also considered the perspective of interviewees. Hence, during the translation exercise, the voice recording of interviewees was replayed in a bid to achieve a high level of accuracy in the English translation in terms of wording, terms, and definitions used.

One Thai word, when translated into English, can have several meanings. For example, sincerity, honesty, and authenticity all have the same meaning in Thai language. Therefore, this issue was addressed by undertaking translating based on interviewee perceptions. Moreover, the words and definition used were similar to those used by previous scholars. For example, a scholar in the field of fashion used the word"authentic" to express sincerity (Chittenden, 2010; Marwick, 2013). However, sincerity is "honesty without pretence", the quality of being genuine and purer than honesty (Quora, 2017; Marwick, 2013). To determine whether sincerity was appropriate, the perspectives of interviewees were considered. Due to interviewees sought to obtain product reviews (two-sides product reviews) by bloggers based on actual use. Interviewees also had to state when reviews involved sponsorships.

Interview results were analysed using NVivo version 10.1. Regarding the NVivo analysis, interview answers were first grouped and coded based on findings by previous scholars and which related to characteristics of blogs and bloggers.

Thereafter, all interview answers were revised again, then coded according to three main considerations: consumer behaviour related to consumer decision-making process and purchasing (such as information searching both offline and online, purchasing behaviour in both offline and online), effect of influencers on purchasing behaviour (such as reviews contributors from online beauty communities), and consumers' attitudes towards blog and blogger characteristics.

In order to select the quotation to represent the finding, three criteria were considered. First, the purposes of interviewees had to be similar to the perspectives of this thesis. Second, highlighted keywords were included in interviewees' answers and clearly explained the highlighted words emphasised the objectives of the thesis which aimed to purpose the characteristics of blogs and blogger; such as sincerity and actual use. Interviewee answers were carefully considered to determine areas of agreement and disagreement. Interviewee responses could not be clarified in numbering because qualitative research aims to explore interviewee responses beyond what they actually state (Dominguez et al., 2007). However, providing reasons to support their answers allows for expression of different opinions among interviewees regarding the various topics of analysis. For example, when consumers were asked about their attitude towards product type preferences (high-end or drugstore brands), interviewees supported their answers by identifying factors that influenced their attitudes. Price was a popular factor expressed by interviewees. Interviewees who preferred high-end brands were less concerned about price, unlike those who preferred drugstore products because, as they explained, they found the price more reasonable. For the question that sought to determine who actual influencers were in their decision to purchase beauty products, interviewees mostly mentioned three main groups, bloggers, friends and family.

Furthermore, they discussed reasons why these groups were important in their purchase decisions and cited key factors such as similarity of lifestyle, expertise, and reliability. These key words were points of emphasis during the analysis of data. And then whose answer was clearly to support the analysis would be picked up as the quotation.

This chapter is organized by considering the objective of this study, refer to figure 6 to see how this chapter is organized based on the conceptual framework.
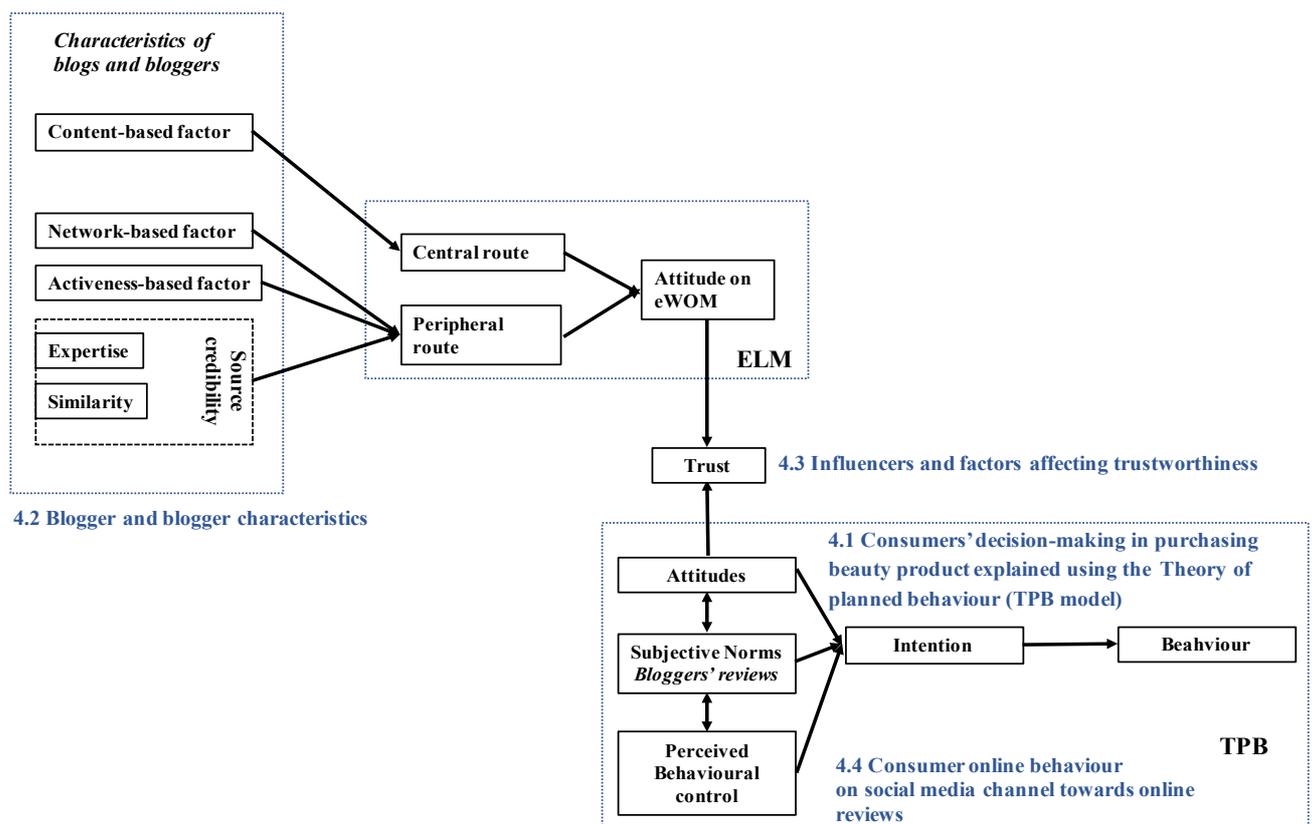
Figure 6: Shows how chapter 4 organized based on conceptual framework

Due to this thesis aimed to explore social media and blogger influence consumers' decision-making process based on explanation by TPB, so in this finding chapter will start with (4.1) Consumers' decision-making in purchasing beauty product explained using the TPB model. Then influential characteristics of social media and bloggers in term of credibility will identified based on explanation by ELM model, so next are section (4.2)

bloggers and blogger characteristics. Moreover, during the analysis trust effect behaviour intention in consumer's decision-making process, other influencers (not only bloggers but friends and family) also mentioned from interviewees. In order to discuss the unique characteristics of each influencers, so next section is (4.3) influencers and factors affecting trustworthiness. Last but not the least, this thesis also explores the consumers towards social media behaviour, which can implies interaction between bloggers and interviewees, and the effective online review platforms from interviewees' perspective in (4.4) Consumer online behaviour on social media channel towards online review. This chapter presents findings and analysis in five sections, as shown in the table 10.

Table 10: Key ideas in each section for this chapter; finding and analysis chapter

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Chapter 4
Findings and analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Section/Subject</td><td align="center">Key idea</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.1 Consumers' decision-making in purchasing beauty product explained using the
Theory of planned behaviour (TPB model)</td><td>Key ideas: explain consumers' decision-making in purchasing behaviour in three stages as follows:
Stage1: Before intending to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspective
Stage2: Intention to purchase beauty products from a consumer perspective
Stage3: Purchasing beauty products behaviour from a consumer perspective</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.2 Bloggers and blogger characteristics</td><td>Key ideas: explore consumers' attitudes on bloggers in general, and particularly in terms of blogger characteristics. Also find and analyse blogs and bloggers' characteristics based on previous literature and consumer interviews, which structure the analysing concept based on Elaboration likelihood model (ELM), including the central and peripheral route.</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.3 Influencers and factors affecting trustworthiness</td><td>Key ideas: explain the trust and impact of online (bloggers, online forum users) and offline influencers (friends and family) from consumer perspective</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.4 Consumer online behaviour on social media channel towards online review</td><td>Key ideas: explain the following:
- How do consumers access online reviews?
- Why do consumers access online</td></tr>
</table>

	reviews?
	- Which blogger social media platform do consumers prefer?
	What do consumers think about the interactions with bloggers on social media in terms of blogger credibility?

4.1 Consumers' decision-making process in purchasing beauty products

Consumer decision-making concept will be discussed based on three main stages, namely before intention behaviour, intention behaviour, and behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991; Bagozzi, 2001). With regard to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), the model emphasises three types of beliefs that affect three perceptual constructs: behavioural beliefs that influence attitudes, normative beliefs that affect subjective norm, and control beliefs that shape perceived behavioural control, these three perceptual constructs determine behavioural intentions and actual behaviour (Pavlou and Chai, 2002).

To determine the consumer decision-making process, this chapter applies the consumer theory (TPB) to construct the analysis of consumer behaviour in purchasing beauty products in Thailand, which will be separated into three stages, namely before intending to purchase beauty products, intention to purchase beauty products, and purchasing beauty products behaviour.

4.1.1 Stage I: Before intending to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives

This section determines which factors affect consumers before they intend to purchase beauty products, which can be separated into three main factors, namely the *attitude towards purchasing, social influence, and the influence of an individual's conditions.*

<u>Attitudes towards beauty purchasing</u>

Attitude towards beauty purchasing refers to the criteria in selecting a beauty product. Interviewees named three criteria, namely *product quality*, *price*, and *brand image*.

Most interviewees considered *product quality* the most important factor because, beauty products can directly affect, their skin, hair, body, etc. Interviewees were concerned about the risk of allergic reactions.

> I always consider quality first. For me, Tom Ford lipstick is the best, even it is expensive. I think it is worth buying rather than many cheaper lipsticks. I don't like YSL lipstick, even though it is high-end brand, because it stains my lips. I've stopped buying it. (Interviewee 2, 18-22 years old)

The second factor mentioned was price, and interviewees mostly preferred lower prices, which may suggest that they prefer to purchase drugstore product over high-end products.

> I buy drugstore products because I can buy them more often. I don't take time before buying. High-end brands are expensive, so I have to consider carefully before buying something. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

Quality and price are related, and some interviewees compare and contrast price and product quality. These interviewees mentioned that price is often indicative of product quality. Amongst those who mentioned quality and price together, mostly it was stated that high prices from high-end brand are of better quality than drugstore products.

> I consider quality before price. I prefer high-end brands because of the high quality, even if they are more expensive. (Interviewee 9, 23-26 years old)

> I like high-end brands because they're good quality. (Interviewee 10, 23-26 years old)

Few interviewees considered that *brand image* was the most important factor in their decision-making process. However, brand image was a factor that interviewees mentioned in relation to other factors. Interviewees related brand image to product quality and price. Mostly, when interviewees were concerned about product quality, they also mentioned good brand image and high price, which are characteristic of high-end brand products. Interviewees tend to believe a higher product price tends to indicate higher quality. When they use it, it also impacts on their image and also positive product result.

> Brand image is most important factor for me in choosing products. Drugstore products have lower brand image than high-end products, even though they might be similar in terms of results. However, quality also important. (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old)
> I like high-end brands because of their brand image, which implies quality, especially in cosmetics. (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old)

In conclusion, purchase attitudes reflect the factors important in selecting beauty products, which, as suggested by the findings, include mostly considerations of product quality and price. Moreover, each factor is related to one another, such as price, quality, and brand image, which implied quality and price. However, as product quality is the most frequently mentioned factor amongst interviewees, it also the main indicator of price and brand image. Table 11 shows how each factor of purchasing attitude is related to one another.

Table 11: Relationship between the factors that influence purchasing

Factors	Product quality	
	High	Low
Price	High price (high-end brands)	Low price (drugstore brands)
Brand Image	High brand image (high-end brands)	Low brand image (drugstore brands)

Social Influence

Aside from their purchasing attitudes, most of the interviewees also mentioned online reviews. Interviewees shared that before buying, they normally search for online reviews to support their decision-making. Before purchasing, interviewees consider the product factors (product quality, price, and brand image) and sources of that information are mostly from online reviews. Scholars have also agreed about the social influence in the decision-making process, in which online reviews were included (Hsu et al., 2013). In general, online reviews (including online review from bloggers and other sources), based on interviewees' perspectives, can be separated into two major functions, namely product reviews and the introduction of new products. Interestingly, when interviewees mentioned the introduction of new products (even based on perceived benefit of both functions), they also mentioned *trying the product on themselves* before buying it. Table 12 summarises consumers' perceptions of online reviews.

Table 12: Consumers' perceptions of online reviews

Perceived benefit of online reviews	Representative respondents' quotations
Product reviews	Online reviews help me decide if a product is good or not. (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old) For example, if I can't find the right cleanser, I search for online reviews to find out which one matches my preferences. I then go to the store if the reviews I've read were positive. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)
Introducing new products	Normally I hear about new products from Jeban.com (online beauty community). I normally read online reviews but don't make decisions without trying the product myself (Interviewee 16, 23-26 years old) I get product news from bloggers' channel but always visit stores before purchasing something. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

Both product reviews and introducing new products	I always search for product information and reviews after seeing new products in online reviews to determine the most interesting product. I will then go to the store to test the colour on myself before purchasing. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old) I checked product out at the store based on bloggers' reviews, then search on Google for more reviews, especially for products that I'm not familiar with. (Interviewee 29, 31-34 years old)

Consumers feel that they are required to read online reviews because the outcome can affect their physical appearance. Most interviewees stated that they spent time looking at reviews before deciding to purchase a product.

Mostly interviewees discussed taking from a week to a month before purchasing beauty products, though many did not specify exactly how long. However, most of them shared the reason to taking time for decision-making, that they mostly spent it searching and considering for the online reviews.

A very long time! Especially expensive products, like the Tarte palette, which costs 1,600 THB. I consider many reviews as I can from bloggers' channels to see the colour on differences on various skin tones and compare the prices and promotions of each retailer. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old,)

Quite a long time, about 3-7 days. Especially if I have never used that product, I'll google it for reviews and think carefully about it because it affects my skin. (Interviewee 14, 23-26 years old)

It depends, mostly I spend a week to decide on a product. If there are controversial reviews on the product, I lose interest. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

Surprisingly, both interviewees who stated that they take time in decision-making and people who made immediate decisions (when they were in store and would like to buy the product at that time) sought online reviews before purchasing. However, people who make decision immediately also highlighted the importance of trying the product themselves.

Some interviewees made an immediate decision, which normally happened when they had seen the product in-store. These interviewees mentioned trying the product themselves before searching for product reviews. Consumers in-store are more concerned with their own perception and used online reviews to support their purchase decision. Trying the product themselves is analysed further under the influence of an individual's conditions.

If I walk into a store and see something interesting, I normally try it out and buy it if I like it. (Interviewee 2, 23-26 years old)

If I see a product in-store that interest me, I will try it and then go back home to look for online reviews. However, if that product is on sale, I immediately look for reviews. I still read product reviews anyway. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

When I'm in a store and find an interesting product that I'm not familiar with, I will try it. I will buy it if I like it. If not, I will search more for reviews at home. (Interviewee 17, 27-30 years old)

Table 13: The factors that influence how long the decision-making process takes

How long does decision-making take?	Factors that affect decision-making	
	Online reviews	**Trying the product themselves**
1 week to 1 month	Consumers take time to read and search for online review, as the factors to consider before purchase a product include -Different appearance that leads to different results	Some interviewees mentioned that if they have a chance to try a product, they will do, but it is not necessary, as they decide at home after reading reviews.

	-Price and promotions -Negative online reviews	
Immediate	Some interviewees searched for online review if they do not like the product, or if the product is on sale for a limited time.	Most interviewees considered the immediate results of the product after trying it on themselves.

The influence of an individual's conditions

In the beauty product purchasing context, some interviewees will try a product themselves before deciding to purchase it. Moreover, trying a product is important when a consumer is in store and has the opportunity to determine if the product will work in the short-term (which is seen in representative responses under social influence). Moreover, consumers often decide to try the product themselves before consulting online reviews. Some consumers try the product, decide they like it, and buy it without any online review searching. Therefore, *an individual's conditions* can directly affect purchasing behaviour. However, there are some factors that directly influence consumers to purchase beauty product after trying it themselves.

Table 14: How trying a product can influence consumers' purchasing behaviour

The conditions under which customers have tried a product	Representative responses
Repurchasing	I always repurchase after using up a particular product. I'm loyal to brand and don't want to risk trying new products (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old) I always repurchase the same product after using it and knowing that it works. If I know a brand is good, I won't change to another one. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

	I always repurchase skin care but not body lotion. I buy body lotion based on promotions. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old)
Products tried in-store	If I see an interesting product in store, I buy the small size to try first to determine the quality, but not foundation. Sometimes I'll search for online reviews on my phone. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old) I purchase immediately after trying some products, such as nail products. However, if it affects my skin, such as facial products, I will research at home and return to buy it later. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old)

4.1.2 Stage II: Intention to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives

The next stage in the analysis relates to factors influencing purchasing behaviour. Following this stage, the intentions to purchase products were determined from the interviewees' justifications for purchasing beauty products. However, this stage is the middle stage between influencing factors and purchasing behaviour, so it is difficult to identify the difference between each stage and evaluate consumers' actual intentions. For this reason, few interviewees mentioned this stage of the process. However, some interviewees talked about the reason to purchase based on two main objectives, namely purchasing a product because they actually need it or because they want it in which, one factor that affects purchase intentions is a finished product. Many interviewees mentioned their desire to purchase new products, which is influenced by promotions, new product launches, and bloggers' suggestions. All interviews mentioned using up a product as motive to repurchase. However, some interviewees justified their purchases with their desire to own a particular product. Table 15 summarises the motivations to purchase together with representative responses.

Table 15: Why customers choose to buy beauty products

Reasons to purchase	Representative respondents' quotations
Interviewees need the product because -They have finished the product they are currently using	I mostly buy new products to replace finished ones. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old) I try to buy only what I need instead of what I want. I'm trying to shop less. (Interviewee 7,18-22 years old)
Interviewees want the product because - The products are on offer - Online reviews are positive - A new product has been launched	I normally buy cosmetics when I run out of something, but sometimes I shop based on bloggers' suggestions. (Interviewee 10, 23-26 years old) I only shop for products I've run out of or products that have recently been launched. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

4.1.3 Stage III: Purchasing beauty products behaviour from consumers' perspectives

Purchasing behaviour was found to be related to questions about the purchasing channels (offline vs online channels), and product type preferences (drugstore vs high-end brands), which will be analysed in detail as follows.

Purchasing channels from consumers' perspectives

The interviewees largely prefer purchasing offline more than online because they are able to try on the product, though this finding may be specific to the cosmetic industry. Interviewees who choose to shop online do so because they are concerned mostly with price and convenience. These interviewees prefer purchasing online because online shopping is more convenient and perceived to offer lower prices than physical stores. This finding shows that attitude towards beauty purchasing may affect online shopping behaviour.

I often buy online because it is easier compared to buying in-store. It is unnecessary to try a product myself if I conduct research on online reviews. Hence, beauty bloggers have the most significant influence on my decisions. I trust them to provide two-sided reviews. (Interviewee 1, 18 – 22 years old)

However, in offline purchasing, interviewees prefer to try a product themselves before buying it, especially for foundation products. In general, when consumers purchase foundation, they match foundation colour to their skin tone, and other physical conditions, such as oily skin or an uneven skin tone. Also, there are variety foundation tones of colour in the market and different brand have different effects on different consumers. So, this factor is influenced by an individual's conditions and affects offline-purchasing behaviour.

I never buy things online because I like to try a product before buying it. For example, lipstick or foundation, when applied on me, will have different result from that of online reviews. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old)

I like to buy cosmetics at the counter because I like to try the products myself. (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old)

However, being able to try the product not only affects offline purchasing, but also can affect online purchasing, as many users may choose to test the product in-store or through sample before deciding to buy it online. Many interviewees will only buy a product online after they have tried product on themselves in-store. This behaviour reflects the attitude towards beauty purchasing in terms of convenience and price.

I preferred to purchase online since it is cheaper than in store. However, I try to go to stores to test the products (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

In addition, purchasing from online channels can also be way for consumers to repurchase products. If a consumer is completely certain about the results of a product, they do not feel it is necessary to try it themselves. When, interviewees mentioned re-purchasing

the same product (one factor of an influenced individual's conditions affect), they mostly purchased from online channels, largely due to convenience and price.

I mostly buy online because it is convenient and they do home delivery. Also, the price is a bit cheaper if I buy from the grey market. I just bought an Estee Lauder foundation online because I have used it before and know the exact shade number. (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old)

I like to buy products in store, especially if I'm using it for the first time. I like to try a product myself. I buy products online that I've used before. I've just started to buy online in the last couple years because it's cheaper. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

In conclusion, there are two main factors that affect online and offline purchasing behaviour, namely attitude towards beauty products (convenience and price) and the influence of an individual's conditions (trying a product). Convenience and price affect online purchasing, whereas being able to try a product affects offline-purchasing behaviour. However, these factors are often related to one another, particularly if consumers are sure about the product results because they have already tried the particular product and are concerned with convenience and price, which influence online purchasing. Figure. 7 summarises the relationship between each factor in the two purchasing channels.
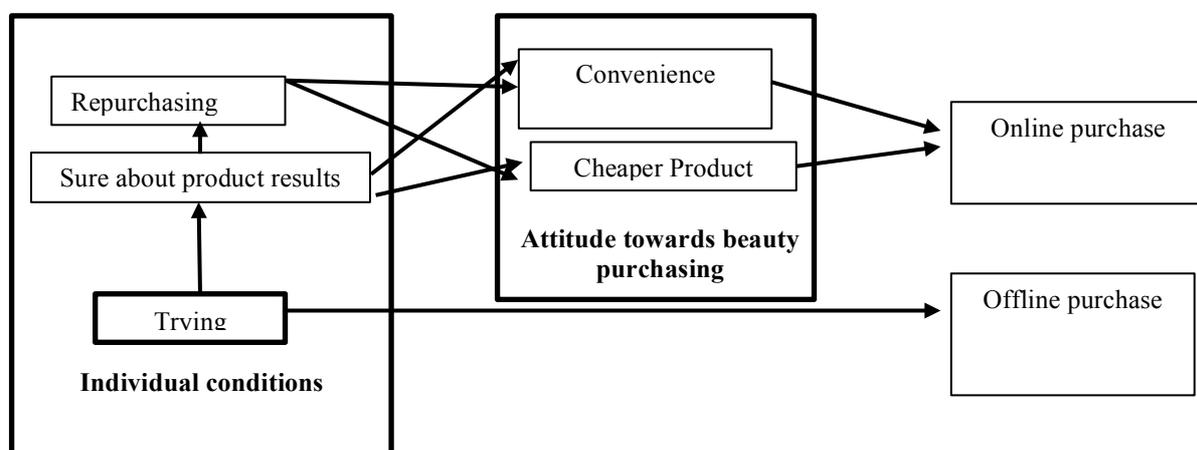
Figure 7: The relationships between the factors of online and offline purchasing behaviour.

<u>Purchasing drugstore vs high-end brands</u>

In terms of beauty products, product type preference (drugstore and high-end brands) can influence the consumer's attitude towards purchasing. After the interviews, when interviewees mentioned which types of product they preferred, most interviewees supported the reasons that can be given as the factors that inform attitude towards purchasing.

However, most interviewees stated that they preferred high-end brands because they believe that high prices indicate that the product is of a higher quality. Consumers are also concerned with products that directly influence their physical appearance, so quality is a key factor in their purchasing behaviour. In contrast, when interviewees considered product quality, they chose not to purchase drugstore products, as they stated that cheaper products were of a lower product quality.

> I started using high-end brands when I was beginner. In my opinion, price affects product quality, expensive products are of a better quality. These products affect my skin and my face, so I don't want to take risks. (Interviewee 14, 23-26 years old,)

> I live outside of a big city, if I have a chance to go shopping, I like to purchase good products. So, I prefer high-end brands, which are of a higher quality compared to those from the drugstore. For example, brushes from high-end brands are long lasting and cannot be matched by drugstore products. I have experience purchasing drugstore products, and I have not been impressed with their quality, as it damaged my skin. So now, I always use high-end brands. (Interviewee 22, 27-30 years old)

Moreover, interviewees who prefer high-end products mention that brand image is important in the products that they choose to buy.

> I like high-end brands because of their image, which can guarantee product quality, especially for cosmetics. (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old)

I think high-end brands are better than drugstore brand, because I think their brand image is more reliable. I also read online reviews, especially reviews from Pu-Pae of high-end brands. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

In contrast interviewees who prefer drugstore justify their decisions with lower prices.

I prefer to purchase drugstore brand because they are affordable. However, if I have enough money to purchase high-end brands, I will, because of their quality. (Interviewee 1, 18-22 years old)

However, most interviewees preferred drugstore brands and agreed that price does not necessarily imply product quality. Interviewees prefer good quality and an affordable price.

In terms of quality, I don't think there's a huge difference between drugstore and high-end brands, it's more about brand image. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old)

High-end brands do not guarantee quality. Some products, when compared to those from the drugstore, do not justify their high price. (Interviewee 5, 18-22 years old)

Moreover, the interviewees who preferred drugstore brands justified their purchases with the ease of access.

I prefer drugstore brands because they are easier to find and buy. (Interviewee 15, 23-26 years old)

I like both drugstore and high-end brands, but I mostly purchase from drugstore brands because they are easy to find and buy. (Interviewee 18, 27-30 years old)

In terms of cosmetics, many interviewees mentioned the effectiveness of products as a defining difference between drugstore and high-end products. Most interviewees could not decide between drugstore and high-end brand because they liked using both types, based on how much of an effect they have on the interviewee's physical appearance. So, if a product

has less effect, interviewees perceived it as low-risk and opted for drug store so they prefer drugstore products. However, interviewees stated that they preferred high-end brand when the product at hand poses a significant risk to their physical appearance.

> I like both drugstore and high-end brand depending on the category of products. For example, for eyebrow products and mascara, I'll use drugstore products. For foundation and powder, I will buy high-end brands. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old)

> I prefer high-end brand, but some it is too expensive, so I have to buy drugstore products. I purchase lipstick from high-end brands because I have issues with my lips. However, I will buy cheap mascara. Where I buy depends on the type of product (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

Hence, perception of product quality is the most important factor when consumers are differentiating between drugstore and high-end products. However, different consumers prioritise this factor differently. Consumers who purchase high-end brand first consider product quality, but those who prefer drugstore brand prioritise price and convenience.

However, consumers concerned with product quality also tend to be concerned about the price of products. These consumers consider the physical risk of a product before deciding to purchase it. This group of interviewees prefers to purchase a high-end brand if the product poses a high physical risk in its use. In contrast, these consumers will purchase products that pose a low risk from drugstore brands.

In comparing purchasing channels, only factors from consumers' attitude affect the process of purchasing drugstore brand and high-end products, whereas an individual's conditions have little to no effect.

Table 16: Summary of the factors that affect drugstore and high-end brand purchasing.

Factors	Levels of brand preference	
	Drugstore brands	**High-end brands**
Quality	Concerned	Concerned as first priority
Price	Concerned as first priority	Not concerned at all
Brand image	Not concerned at all	Concerned
Convenience	Concerned	Not concerned at all
Physical risk after use	Low risk	High risk

Before analysing consumers' decision making based on the TPB model, which has been defined in Section 4.1.4, Table 17 was constructed to summarise the interview analyses. This table assisted in understanding consumers' decision making in the context of the Thai cosmetics market using the TPB model.

Table17: Summary of finding and analysis; Consumers' decision-making process in purchasing beauty product

Stages	Factors affect consumer decision-making process	Highlights from the analysis
Stage1: Before intending to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives.		
Attitudes towards beauty purchasing	-Price -Quality -Brand image -Convenience	-Quality is indicator from price and brand image. -Low quality perceived as low price and low brand image (drugstore brand). -High quality perceived as high price and high brand image (high-end brands).
Social Influence	Online reviews from bloggers and users in online communities	Consumers perceived usefulness from online review in order to: -Product online review -Introducing new products

		-Both product reviews and introducing new products Online review also effects for consumers who take time at least a week for decision-making and consumers who immediate decide to purchase (mostly for consumer who is in store)
The influence of an individual's conditions	-Refers to consumers behaviour on trying a product. -Consumer decide they like it, and buy it.	The conditions under which customers have tried a product. -Products tried in-store -Repurchasing

Stage2: Intention to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives.

Intention to purchase	Discuss on the reason to purchase: -Interviewees need the product. -Interviewees want the product.	-Interviewees need the product because: They have finished the product they are currently using -Interviewees want the product because: - The products are on offer - Online reviews are positive - A new product has been launched

Stage3: Purchasing beauty products behaviour from consumers' perspectives.

Purchasing behaviour: **-From online and offline channels** **-Prefer high-end brands and drugstore brands**	Factors effect purchasing - Quality - Price - Brand image - Convenience - Physical risk after use - Trying product	Consumers who prefer high-end brand concerned: - Quality as first priority -High risk on physical after product use Consumers who prefer high-end brand concerned: - Price as first priority

		- Low risk on physical after product use -Consumers who purchase from offline channel prefer to try product by themselves -Consumers who purchase from online channel concerned the place to purchase and low product price.

4.1.4 Analysing consumer behaviour findings based on the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model

The discussion on consumer decision-making finding is presented before going on to show the implication in TPB and ELM in the next chapter (discussion)

This thesis aims to contribute new factors that affect consumers' decision-making processes in purchasing beauty products based on the TPB model. TPB is categorised into three concepts, namely attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1985). The more favourable the attitude and subjective norms, the greater chance that perceived behavioural control leads to stronger intentions in an individual's action (Ahmad et al., 2014). After determining and analysing consumers' behaviour, the TPB model will be developed to explain how each factor is related in Figure 8.

In terms of attitudes towards behaviour, the TPB model contains two components, namely the belief of consequences about the individual's behaviour and the outcome evaluation (the corresponding negative or positive judgments about the features of the behaviour) (Ahmad et al., 2014). Based on the findings and analysis in this thesis, attitude is defined as the degree of the influence of ***consumers' attitude towards beauty purchasing***,

which is the evaluation of each factor of the product criteria based on consumers' perspective. This component includes *product quality, price, brand image, convenience, and the potential physical risk of product use*. The analysis of attitudes towards beauty purchasing shows that quality, price, and brand image are the most important factors in consumers' purchase decisions. Moreover, both quality and price are related in terms of how they affect customer purchase intentions. Consumers perceived expensive products as having high quality and high brand image. In contrast, consumers perceive lower priced products as having low quality and low brand image.

However, convenience and risk of product use were mentioned as part of consumer attitudes. These two factors were grouped together because, based on consumers' perceptions, those two criteria affected purchasing behaviour in terms of channels (offline channel and online channel) and behaviour relating to the level of brand purchasing (drugstore and high-end brands).

Convenience was a key factor in purchasing for consumers who preferred online channels and drugstore brands. Moreover, in terms of physical risk and its relation to quality, consumers preferred purchasing drugstore products when they considered that the product posed little risk to their physical appearance after use. In contrast, these consumers prefer to buy high-end brands for the products that pose a high risk to their physical appearance.

The next factor is *social influence,* which refers to the subjective norms in the TPB model (Ajzen, 1985). This thesis applied social influence in the form of favourable consumer perceptions of reviews from online beauty communities and beauty bloggers. From the findings and analysis, consumers perceived the usefulness of online reviews in terms of reviewing and introducing new products. Online reviews are the first important step for consumers who normally take at least a week to a month to make a decision before purchasing beauty products. However, this factor's significance is reduced for consumers

who make decisions immediately based on the assumption formed when viewing products in-store.
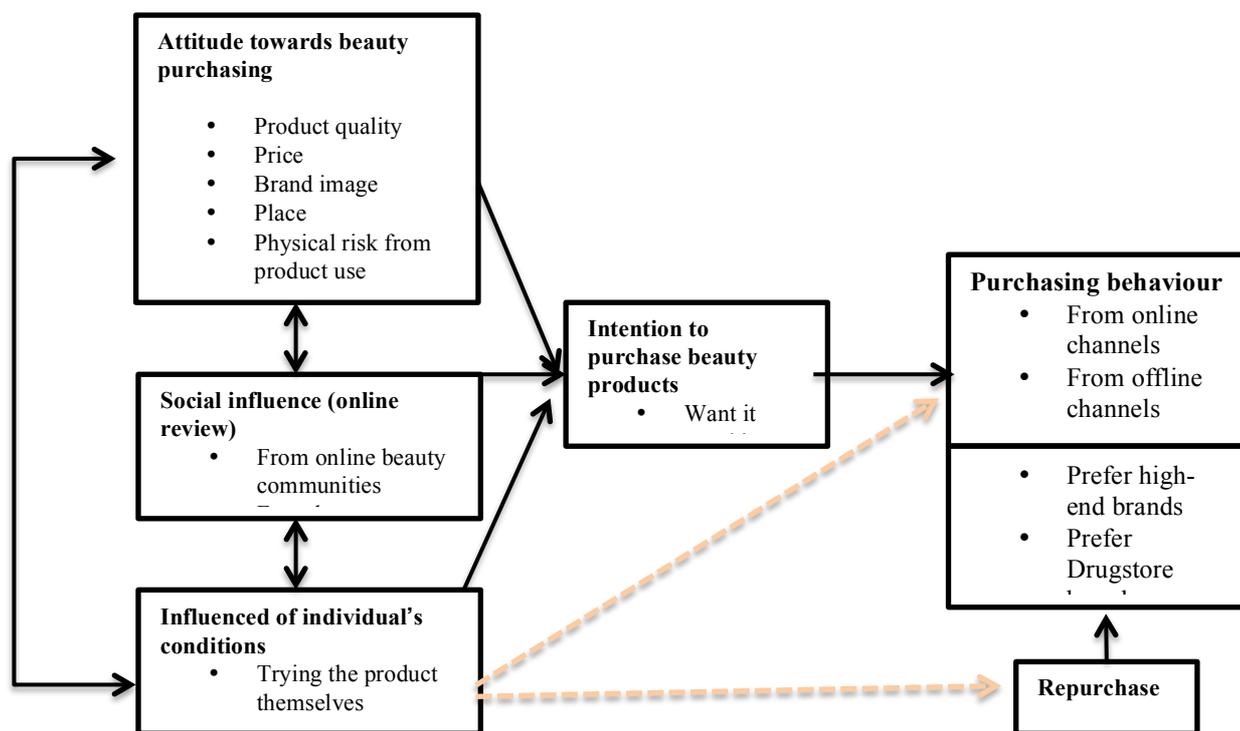
Figure 8: Conceptual framework applied from the TPB model (Ajzen, 1985)

The factor defined as perceived behavioural control in the TPB model (Ajzen, 1985), has been applied as the ***influence of an individual's conditions*** in this thesis. This factor mainly refers to a customer trying a product themselves before deciding to purchase it. The TPB model defined perceived behavioural control as the influence of an individuals' beliefs (Ajzen, 1985). When a consumer tries a product, they are able to ascertain whether the product is right for them and will use their own individual conditions to make this decision (such as their physical appearance). Moreover, consumers trying the products themselves also directly affect purchasing, especially in repurchasing and offline purchasing. When a consumer has already tried a particular product, they know the results of using the product and can decide whether or not they intend on repurchasing. In addition, consumers prefer to purchase offline to ensure the product results, even when they have read online reviews.

The next factor, ***intention to purchase beauty products,*** is defined as behaviour intention in the TPB model (Ajzen, 1985). In this thesis, this intention was explained under two conditions, namely when consumers need or when consumer want a product. Need refers to when consumers have finished another product, whereas want can be influenced by sales promotions, new product launches, and online reviews.

The final stage is ***purchasing beauty products*** and is categorised into three sections, namely channels of purchasing, level of brands preference, and repurchasing. Channels of purchasing refer to online and offline purchasing, where consumers who prefer to try products before purchase tend to prefer offline channels. However, consumers who prioritise low price of products on online grey markets and convenience prefer to purchase from online channels. Also, in terms of repurchasing, consumers prefer to repurchase from online channels, because they are already certain of the result of the product at hand.

Brand preference is defined in terms of whether consumers prefer drugstore or high-end products and brands. Consumers who considered product quality, brand image, and the risk after product use preferred to purchase high-end brands. In contrast, consumers who preferred to purchase drugstore brand products were most concerned with price, convenience and the low risk of product use.

4.2 Bloggers and blogger characteristics

Before discussing social media platforms and bloggers' characteristics, the perspective of interviewees towards bloggers in general is analysed. Interviewees' perspective of general topics surrounding bloggers, interviewees' perceptions of bloggers' purposes for doing their blogs, and interviewees' definition of bloggers are discussed. The discussion of characteristics is thus grounded in an understanding of interviewees' attitudes

towards bloggers, which in turn supports the later analysis of interviewees' perspective of bloggers' reviews.

4.2.1 Why do bloggers contribute online reviews?

Before analysing consumers' perspectives towards bloggers in detail, this thesis discusses what consumers think about bloggers' intentions, based on the consumption that if now marketing and brands involve to online reviews. The answers from interviewees reveal whether consumers think that bloggers are biased by factors such as brand incentives and sponsorships if they think that that bloggers post their opinions without any personal benefit.

Some interviewees stated that bloggers choose to blog because they enjoy it, whereas other discuss motivation of incentive from brands.

Table 18: The motivation why do bloggers contribute online review?

Motive	Representative respondents' quotations
Earn money Enjoyment Popularity	I think people want to be bloggers because they enjoy writing and sharing their opinions. Some people want to earn some money from blogging (Interviewee 20, 27-30 years old). I think people tend to blog because they enjoy it but also because they enjoy it but also to be popular and earn money from their blog. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

4.2.2 How do consumers define the role of beauty bloggers?

Previous scholars have defined bloggers in many ways. In business communication, bloggers are considered product or category experts. (Cox et al., 2008). Bloggers are those who use blogs as tools to share everything from political issues to technology trends (Singh et al., 2008). Previous literature has focused on two interesting points in defining bloggers,

namely that the platform they use is a blog, and that the content shared is comprised of blog posts. However, this thesis defines bloggers based on beauty and cosmetics context and refers to them as beauty bloggers. Age does not influence how bloggers are perceived, but the results show that the perceived benefit of bloggers depends on how they are defined by interviewees. Some interviewee agrees with previous literature (Agarwal et al., 2008; Ko, 2011) in that bloggers are those who **share knowledge and experiences and act as advisors or counsellors**.

When the interviewees were asked to define who was a beauty blogger most of them defined bloggers according to their roles and how bloggers benefit them in two ways, namely people **who introduce new products, and** **those who review products**.

Introducing new products

60 per cent of interviewees agreed that bloggers benefit them in terms of introducing new products.

However, some interviewees in the 31-34 years old age group proposed two interesting points, that bloggers are not beneficial in terms of product reviews. Instead, bloggers serve in attracting the interviewees' interest and demonstrating how to use the products.

Some interviewees defined bloggers in terms of how bloggers can be their inspiration and reference how they are influences by bloggers' routines and lifestyles.

> For me, bloggers are people who introduce new products instead of reviewing existing ones. Sometimes, I like watching bloggers' lifestyle videos more than their reviews. (18-22 years old)

I think bloggers can sometimes influence what I do. For example, when I saw Nobluck posting about her daily life, such as when she went to the temple to pray, it encouraged me to do the same thing. (23-26 years old)

Moreover, in defining bloggers and their function, interviewees discussed their trust of bloggers. Mostly, interviewees defined bloggers as beneficial to them in introducing new products. Interviewees tend not to believe bloggers' product reviews for a variety of reasons, such as deceptive photograph or video editing, results differing between bloggers and real users, and the review being influenced by sponsorship. Interviewees are highly aware of brand sponsorship and its influence on reviews. This thesis focuses on studying which blogger characteristics can sustain their credibility in the long term, particularly when working with brands to sell their products.

For me, beauty bloggers are those who introduce new products rather than reviewing or entertaining. I choose to believe forum users over beauty bloggers because they are real users and have not received brand sponsorship. (23-26 years old)

Bloggers are those introduce new products (like an advertisement). After reading or watching a review, I will search for more information and form opinion based on the reviews on forums. Forum members are real users, whereas I think bloggers are sponsored and can be biased. (27-30 years old)

Product reviews

Around a third of all interviewees who believe that bloggers who do product reviews is smaller than that of people who think that bloggers benefit in terms of introducing new products.

Interestingly, the reasons why consumers perceived bloggers in terms of introducing new products instead of who do product reviews, due to consumers reduce trustworthiness in

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bloggers' review in order to believe that bloggers got sponsored to review only positive side of products. Then the reasons why consumers do not believe bloggers was showing by the follow.

Table19: Representative respondent's quotations on consumer define beauty bloggers

Representative respondent's quotations on consumer define beauty bloggers		
Who introduce new product	**Who review product**	**As advisor or counsellors**
I think bloggers are those who introduce new products rather than do product reviews. Sometimes, I prefer watching bloggers' lifestyle videos more than their reviews. (Interviewee 4, 18-22 years old)	A beauty blogger is somebody who reviews products instead of making tutorials like the bloggers of the past. I already have make-up skills, so now I just want to know which products are good. (Interviewee 6, 18-22 years old)	Bloggers are those who share beauty knowledge and experiences. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old)
I think bloggers are those who introduce new products because they are the most up-to-date people and often receive products before they are launched. In terms of reviews, I don't really trust their information. I will seek information from forums. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)	Nowadays, beauty bloggers are those who review products instead of demonstrating how to use the products. I now have much better make-up skills, so my perception has changed. I see bloggers as reviewers, and so I expect to be able to determine what a good product is based on blogger reviews. (Interviewee 3, 18-22 years old)	They are counsellors in judging beauty products. (Interviewee 10, 23-26 years old) Bloggers are advisors who guide me to use products effectively. (Interviewee 15, 23- 26 years old)

This thesis aims to find out about the credibility of bloggers, who issue online reviews. As mentioned in the literature review, TPB (theory of planned behaviour) was

developed to explain the influence on decision-making process however, TPB can only explains the relationship between attitude and intention but, cannot explain process prior to attitudes changes (Wang, 2015), and cannot explain the attitudes of consumers in their trust of online reviews (Cheung et al., 2012; Wang, 2015). This part of the analysis aims to look at the perspective of consumers towards bloggers reviews in relation to their trust in bloggers and their creditability. So, this part of analysis is explained by developing ELM (elaboration likelihood model), which enhances TPB in the influence process before an initial attitude change and then can be used to explore the characteristics or factors affecting   the credibility of bloggers reviews (Cheung et al., 2012).

ELM suggests that attitude changes along two distinct routes: central and peripheral routes (Petty et al., 1983). In the central route, individuals actmore cognitively. It is about an informational message-related, argument-oriented approach where consumers analyze both pros and cons as related to those arguments (Bhattacherjee and Sanford, 2006; Wang, 2015). Previous scholars tested source credibility and argument quality of social media related to attitude based in different contexts (Filieri and McLeay, 2014; Shu and Scott, 2014; Wang, 2015).

Based on this research content-based factors relate to the central route. While, source of credibility (expertise, trustworthiness and social homophily), activeness-based factors and network-based factors are positioned as factors in peripheral route, due them requiring more affective, processing, based on cues-orientation; such as cues of personal experience and credibility (Bhattacherjee and Sanford, 2006). So, ELM; the dual-process theory will be developed to explain how attitude change based on each assigned factor and bloggers' characteristics from previous literature and the findings from this research.

4.2.3 Consumers' attitudes toward beauty bloggers

This section analyses consumers' attitude toward bloggers, namely their favourite and least favourite bloggers, which are a deciding factor in whether they choose to follow beauty bloggers' social media channels. Moreover, this section discusses consumers' opinions on the Thai top ten beauty bloggers and brand new beauty bloggers, which emphasises bloggers' credibility and affects consumer trust.

What kind of favourite and least favourite blogger on consumers' perspective?

This section discusses which factors are mentioned by interviewees when discussing their favourite and least favourite bloggers. Interviewees talked about the factors that lead to them following or unfollowing particular blogger, which is the primary focus of this research. Moreover, interviewees' answers demonstrate not only why they choose to follow or unfollow certain bloggers, but also provide insight into how they seek information online. However, this part of the analysis may be different interviewees' expectations, which this thesis cannot identify in detail because interviewees define each characteristic in different ways.

Firstly, interviewees were asked to discuss their favourite bloggers (some of whom are not relevant to this thesis). However, a number of interviewees just proposed the impressive characteristics of blog or/and bloggers. In addition, some interviewees have many favourite bloggers and can specify which characteristics they like most about particular bloggers.

There are five characteristics of blogs and bloggers (content-based factor, network-based factor, activeness-based factor, expertise used in the following analysis of consumer perception (chapter 4; 4.2.4). However, based on the interviewees' attitudes, there are no significant differences between the age groups.

Moreover, this topic not only is identified in terms of characteristics, but also in terms of how interviewees seek online content. Some interviewees state that they do not follow particular bloggers, though they search for them on social media when they need them to meet particular objectives. Interviews use different bloggers for different purposes. For example, some bloggers can conduct high quality product reviews, whereas others they follow because of their make-up style.

Some interviewees support the reason of follow and unfollow by like and dislike factors or characteristics of bloggers, some they did not, though whether they like or dislike a blogger does not influence their decision to follow or unfollow them.

Secondly, bloggers' negative characteristics are relative to the positive ones. In contrast, most interviewees follow their favourite bloggers' social media channels, but they often do not unfollow their least favourite bloggers.

So, the analysis of bloggers' negative characteristics is separated from the analysis of why interviewees choose to unfollow them. Also, there is a smaller number of interviewees who actively dislike and unfollow their least favourite bloggers, so the number of negative characteristics is smaller than that of positive characteristics.

Some interviewees mentioned the names of particular bloggers, but this thesis does not include these names due to reputation and credibility concerns. There are four characteristics that make interviewees dislike bloggers, which are outlined below.

Content

This characteristic includes all factors related to blog content, in terms of writing, photographs, and video. Interviewees have varying opinions on content, particularly when discussing writing, the ease of their tutorials, two-sided reviews, reviews that include

affordable products (some interviewees mentioned the difference between high-end and drugstore brands), variety of product choice, presentation skills, and video style (professional, entertaining, and understandable).

The sincerity of bloggers is expressed in review and bloggers' presentation (content). Sincerity is most often associated with two-sided reviews. This characteristic was referenced by members of every age group.

However, content is defined in terms of writing, photographs, and videos. Interviewees do not like bloggers who do one-sided or sponsored review, similar posts, disappointed reviews, dramatic posts, and too much personal information

Attractiveness

As this thesis is based on beauty bloggers, attractiveness is a blogger characteristic expected by interviewees. In terms of make-up skills, most interviewees expect bloggers to be able to see make-up skills that can transform bloggers' look. Interviewees prefer bloggers that have physical features similar to themselves, so that bloggers show how make-up can resolve these issues. Moreover, interviewees expect that the make-up can be used in their daily routines.

Similarity

This characteristic refers to the similarities between bloggers and interviewees, which includes make-up, physical, lifestyle, and beauty brand preference similarities. In contrast, Interviewees the ways in which they differentiate between bloggers, such as physical appearance, make-up, lifestyle, and beauty preferences. Interviewees discuss their thoughts on differences between bloggers.

Expertise

This characteristic was referenced by interviewees over 26 years old. Reference to this characteristic may be because experience requires time to be built, and beauty bloggers in Thailand have been popular over the last 10 years. Beauty bloggers who started blogging 10 years ago will have a lot more experience that those who started blogging recently.

Some interviewees prefer particular bloggers for different reasons based on their objectives. Some interviewees stated that they do not trust even their favourite bloggers.

Table 20: Show the consumers' perspective about influenced by bloggers compared with user in online review

Consumer attitude towards beauty bloggers			
Factor	**Favourite**	**Unfavourite**	**Representative respondents' quotations**
Content	-Sincerity on review -Entertaining presentation style	-Insincerity on review -Posts are not interesting	I prefer Feonalita because she is sincere and always advises her followers that they should try the product themselves, because the same product works differently for different people (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old) Sometimes, bloggers are overly positive because of brand sponsorships. I feel like they're forcing me to buy a product. Bloggers should act like they are an impartial source of information. They should provide two-sided reviews. (Interviewee 22, 27-30 years old)
Attractiveness	-Prettiness of bloggers -Presentation of bloggers -Make up skills and style	- Boring and same presentation style -Bloggers are not pretty -Different makeup style between bloggers and interviewees.	My favourite blogger is Moss because she is attractive and I like her talking style. She gives both pros and cons in her reviews (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old) I don't like that one blogger. I don't think she's pretty. She always uses the same style of make-up. Her make-up is exaggerated and unnatural. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)

Simirality	-The similarities between bloggers and interviewees	-No similarities between bloggers and interviewees	I like Nune's make-up style the most and I follow it. I think Nune and I have the same style. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old) I mostly believe Asian bloggers, particularly Thai bloggers, because of their skin tone and type. For this reason, I don't follow European bloggers (Interviewee 24, 27-30 years old)
Expertise	-High knowledge and experience on beauty	-Review related to blogger's benefit	I like Momay because she uses both drugstore and high-end brands. She also talks about hair and stuff. She is one of the first bloggers I ever found. I also think she's pretty and has a lot of experience compared to other bloggers. (Interviewee 18, 27-30 years old) I go on Mayr's Facebook page sometimes but I don't really follow her style. I like Nobluck's makeup style of but I don't use it myself. Also, I don't believe her much because I know she always promotes her brand, and so I just read her page to receive trend updates." (Interviewee 1, 18-22 years old)

Interviewees' attitudes towards bloggers in general were analysed, which proved helpful in understanding how interviewees perceive beauty bloggers. Moreover, the factors that affect interviewees' attitudes towards their favourite bloggers were keys in analysing and understanding these bloggers' characteristics. Some factors, such as context, have been discussed in existing research, whereas others, such as similarity and expertise, are important characteristics of source credibility. Sections 4.2.5 and 4.2.6 discuss the characteristics of bloggers and social media platforms

4.2.4 How do brand define the role of beauty bloggers?

As already mentioned in Chapter 3 that one marketer from online beauty retailer was interviewed. So, this section analyses beauty bloggers from a brand perspective. Analysing the brand perspective will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the consumer perspective. Furthermore, due to consumers' perceptions of brand sponsorship, interviewing brands may confirm the potential of the influential role of bloggers in business practices. Also, comparing the perspectives of brands and consumers may allow marketers to more effectively develop campaigns involving beauty bloggers.

Few beauty brands were available for interviews due to the secrecy of many brands' marketing strategies. Only one marketing executive from a popular beauty online retailer was willing to discuss his work with beauty bloggers. The findings of this interviews are analysed and compared to consumers' perspectives of bloggers, their influential role, and their trustworthiness.

This subject's interview provides an alternative perspective based on experience and knowledge of managing bloggers and sponsored posts for approximately three years. Therefore, this interviewee was able to discuss the process of working with beauty bloggers and offer an insider perception of bloggers' roles due to his experience working with them in Thailand. Moreover, some parts of the interview are also keys in understanding the effectiveness of bloggers as marketing tools.

After interviewing a representative from an online beauty retailer, beauty bloggers are defined based on their functions and how they are beneficial to brands, similar to interviewees' criteria. However, from a marketing perspective, beauty bloggers may now be defined as **"beauty influencers"**. Moreover, interviewees also specified that anybody could be a beauty blogger, but only those with enough power to influence viewers could be referred to as beauty influencers. The term "beauty influencer" may have been developed because blogs no longer play an important role in online presence. Therefore, instead of "beauty

blogger", the term "influencer" is more appropriate because it can be applied to various platforms.

> Normally, I don't use the word beauty bloggers and call them beauty influencers instead. Beauty bloggers is anyone who reviews a product. An influencer refers to people who have enough power to influence people to follow them. To make it easier, when people see influencers, they are recognisable. (Marketer, online cosmetic retailer)

Interviewee (marketer) confirmed that in Thailand beauty bloggers are popularly used in marketing strategies, especially in online marketing. These bloggers are used in a smaller proportion in offline marketing compared to other promotions tools. However, using bloggers in the form online marketing is also relevant in offline purchasing, which can be measured by analysed the number of customers who mention particular bloggers when in-store.

> If talking about online marketing yes, the proportion of bloggers used for promotion is high, especially because of the growth of e-commerce in Thailand, which is why beauty bloggers have such a significant impact on this business. Not necessary for just online channel, for offline store as well, we also employ beauty influencers in marketing, though to a lesser extent. For example, people use online reviews as a reference when in-store (Marketer, online cosmetic retailer)

From an interview with an employee of an online cosmetics retailer in Thailand, it was ascertained that most brands are experienced in both traditional and online marketing. This marketer also confirmed that beauty bloggers were important in generating e-WOM, especially in beauty products, even beauty bloggers are not as well-known as celebrities. For this reason, brands employ beauty bloggers to publish sponsored posts.

> I can compare celebrity endorsements with online influencers. In mass media, like advertising still occupies large proportion of the marketing strategy, and the

endorsements still have greater power than beauty influencers because the celebrities are more well known. However, beauty influencers are still very important and useful in beauty because influence has become a useful marketing tool. (Marketer, online cosmetics retailer)

The interview with marketers have confirmed that bloggers are often sponsored by brands to influence consumers and advertise their products and services, which may affect consumer trust. Therefore, consumers' trust of bloggers' recommendations and online reviews after brand sponsorship is yet to be explored in full.

4.2.5 Bloggers' characteristics from previous literature

Scholars have suggested factors and characteristics (Agarwal et al., 2008; Li et al., 2009, 2011; Cho, Wang, and Lee, 2012; Wang, 2012; Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014) that strengthen the reliability and robustness of influential blogs and powerful bloggers (Li et al., 2009, 2011). Previous scholars have discussed similar factors and characteristics, but using different terms and extended definitions. However, this thesis has developed and extended the terms and definitions of the factors, namely *content-based, network-based, and activeness-based*, from Li et al. (2009; 2011). The reason for choosing Li et al. (2009; 2011) definitions is that the aims of their study are relevant to the field of marketing, and their proposed model covers all factors related to the study, which have observed bloggers' society and includes bloggers' interactions and followers, as well as bloggers' networking (network), resonance, bloggers' reviews (content) and bloggers' activities (activeness). The analysis in this thesis builds upon Li et al's work through including feedback from consumers, as to how blogging impacts their real consumption behaviour. In the following paragraphs, each factor will be analysed with findings obtained from interviews. The channels chosen for analysis included not only blogs, but also principal social media platforms, namely Facebook and YouTube.

Central route

First as mentioned above content-based factors are assigned to the central route due referring to of the content of bloggers' writing, photo and clip VDO through their reviews

Content-based factors

Scholars have studied content as one of the factors that can affect the power of blogs and other online reviews, though it has been defined in different terms (Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014; Li, et al., 2009, 2011; Wang, 2012; Du and Wagner, 2006). Li, et al. (2009, 2011) proposed the idea of content-based as the essential factor, as blogs are content-oriented and express the tendencies, preferences, and viewpoints of bloggers on specific products and services. Therefore, this thesis will analyse based on all forms of information provided by bloggers. The term will also include information shared by other followers, which can be divided into three categories. In this thesis, content covers writing and review, VDO clip and presentation, and photograph, which will be analysis based on the subjective, post length and time spent. The findings will then be analysed based on the expectations of interviewees in terms of content. Finally, these findings can suggest the bloggers' activities to meet readers' expectations. The understanding of blogs' characteristics and bloggers activities will be discussed by asking interviewees how content affects bloggers' credibility. Through interviewing, other sub factors under the *content-based factor* were found to affect bloggers' credibility.

Writing narrative and review

When asked about the writing narrative, respondents stated their information expectations and their supporting reasons behind those expectations. This topic is analysed in this section. Interviewees mentioned two mains keywords: ***professional writing***, which included correct spelling, word use, friendliness, and an entertaining writing style that is easy

to understand, and *quality of review*, which included information provided, two-sided reviews, reviews that can show actual usage, and length of writing.

Yes, this will impact their credibility. Their way of writing shows their expertise on product knowledge and experiences. The way they present products with their words. They should communicate the words that hit to the point and show their knowledge" (Interviewee 2, 18-22 years old).

Narrative style of writing should show their actual used, also sincerely reviews, even they got the sponsored from brand, they also should tell followers frankly" (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old)

VDO clip and presentation

When interviewees talked about VDO clips, they mentioned the quality of VDO clips and photos, information value, professional production, bloggers' presentation skills, bloggers' presentation style, and the length of VDO clips. The presentation and presentation skills of bloggers can show from the VDO clips, as these factors reflect the way that beauty bloggers express and share their experience via VDO. However, on the VDO clips, consumers not only expect the review of the product but also entertainment from bloggers and demonstration of make-up skills. Interviewees mentioned not only their expectations of reviews but also bloggers' attractiveness in following and trusting the review.

Professional production can affect the credibility; such as HD picture, it will make more interesting. (Interviewee 15, 23-26 years old)

Photograph

When the interviewees stated photography, they mentioned photos that show the actual product being used, and photos that are sponsored. Moreover, they stated that photos should be of high quality and clearly show the product since cosmetic and beauty products require that the users see the colour and texture details, showing the basic quality of the products. Therefore, bloggers are also required to have professional photography skills because the photo's mood and tone will positively or negatively impact the customers' emotional state towards particular products.

> Bloggers, they are qualified to have photography skill, which can show the product clearly, the colour of product. Those will represent the mood and emotion on product and particular bloggers. Also show that they are actual used (Interviewee 17, 27-30 years old)

The effect of the content on perception

This research explored the perspectives of consumers and what they expect from bloggers. The research aims to understand what consumers expect from bloggers' reviews, not only proposed factor based on previous literature review, but also the hidden blog's and bloggers' characteristics. These findings will be discussed in terms of consumer perspectives, the literature, and also the brand management perspective, which help brands employ bloggers who match their brands and deliver appropriate messages to readers. When consumers receive useful reviews, they will continue following particular bloggers, and brands can employ them in long term.

Most respondents agreed that content affects bloggers' credibility. Only three people from all interviewees felt neutral about the content's effect on bloggers' credibility. Respondents had different perspectives on content. They mostly pointed out that writing style and information provided by bloggers could demonstrate bloggers' credibility. Bloggers should show their *expertise*, knowledge, and experiences using particular products.

Yes, this will impact their credibility. Their way of writing shows their expertise on product knowledge and experiences. The way they present products with their words. They should communicate the words that hit to the point and show their knowledge (Interviewee 4, 18-22 years old).

I think it will affect other opinions a lot, but for me it does not matter on professional photography and theme of their presentations. I more consider their information providing and reviews (Interviewee 6, 18-22 years old).

Consumers also expect sincere reviews from bloggers, as writing is included in content. So, bloggers must express their feelings and share their opinions through their writing. According to the interviews, sincerity was demonstrated through bloggers' writing.

Interestingly, *sincerity* was mentioned with regard to the content-based factor, namely that the narrative style of writing and presentation, including photos, should show the bloggers' actual use of products. So, bloggers should sincerely communicate to their followers through their blogs and social media channels.

Bloggers, they are qualified to have photography skill, which can show the product clearly, colour tone and mood of photo will impact my mood and emotion towards particular product and bloggers. Bloggers should make me believe that they actually use the products from the photos and narrative of writing. They should provide sincere review, even if they got products from brands. They should frankly tell us that posts are sponsored by brands (27-30 years old).

Table21: Summary of the characteristic of bloggers from consumers' perspective

Bloggers characteristics based on previous literature		
Content-based factor		
Writing and providing	VDO clip and presentation	Photograph
-Professional writing includes product strengths and limitations, result, quality, and price.	-Hit to the point on communication on presentation	-Prefer unedited photo - Prefer photo can shows actual

	-High quality of VDO clip	use of product
-Shows bloggers' opinions and reasoning about why a product is good or bad.	-Use the appropriate speaking language on Clip VDO	- Tone and mood of photo affect interviewees' mood and emotional leads product attractiveness.
-An entertaining writing style and the post's length do not affect bloggers' credibility.	-Friendly and neutral presentation and nice voice tone	- Photos provide proof that the bloggers are actually using the products
-Sincere reviews that prove their actual usage.	- Sponsored clip reduce bloggers' credibility	
-Two-sided review is also expected.	-Prefer homemade clip	
-Show how to use a product step by step.	- Sincerely reviews and use the product in the VDO clip.	
	- Creativity and entertaining clips.	
-Write clearly conclusion of product.		
-Beware on spelling		

Peripheral route

The peripheral route, according to existing studies, is useful under low elaboration-likelihood conditions. Furthermore, source of credibility is an important factor in attitudes towards online messages and in evaluating the reliability of different message diffusers and sources. (Rieh and Belkin, 1998; Sussman and Siega, 2003; Wang, 2015). In studying credibility in existing online reviews using ELM, researchers have highlighted source credibility factors (Sussman and Siegal, 2003; Brown et al., 2007; Cheung et al., 2009).

In this thesis in the study refers to credibility of online reviews which specific on reviews from Thai beauty bloggers' social media channels (Facebook, YouTube and blog). Moreover, activeness-based factors and network-based factors (Li et al., 2009, 2011) are positioned as factors in the peripheral route, due to then factors being more less cognitive, so those factors are analysed in this part.

Network-based factor

Li et al., (2009, 2011) defines *network* as composed of two parts; "social connection" which is the relationship between links or visits, and that a blogger of greater popularity generally has greater influential strength and "social interaction", which refers to the amount of citations, comments and other connection activities related. A high number of comments and citations on bloggers' posts show a greater amount of attention from followers. The blogroll also reflects bloggers' trustworthiness, and, as a result, attention and trustworthiness demonstrate a powerful influence. Network included number of bloggers' online friendships that bloggers have. This Ph. D. thesis will explore network-based factors, not only in terms of the interactions between bloggers and followers, but also in terms of all social interaction, such as how many external and internal links lead to their citations, as well as number of citations, and how comments can demonstrate a blogger's reputation. However, this thesis emphasised the three main social media channels, namely Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. So, network-based factor also included information shared on Facebook and clip sharing on YouTube. Network is defined to include numbers of Facebook followers and YouTube subscribers. Network will be determined by the reputation and popularity of a blogger.

The *network-based factor* was proposed as a possible characteristic that could maintain bloggers' credibility. In this research, from the consumers' point of view, bloggers' credibility can be affected by *number of posts' shares, number of comments, number of followers, number of likes,* and *number of views*.

Number of shares

However, the interviews, the number of shares could not encourage interviewees to trust both bloggers and their post. However, it can still attract them to the products or posts:

"Number of shares doesn't increase their trustworthiness, but it can attract me more (like a viral marketing)" *(31-34 years old)*.

Number of shares calls my attention to find out more about their review, but I don't rely on them because people will share for different reasons. Some, they would like to have it. So, it does not affect bloggers' trustworthiness. (Interviewee 17, 27-30 years old).

Shares of posts of bloggers from other people, that doesn't affect bloggers' trustworthiness, just attracts me to read or be interested in that post. Because I will find out more information and other reviews to find out what most people think about those particular products, then I will decide should I buy or not. However, high number of shares just represents the popular content. Some they will like the product, not the bloggers, so that is why they share" (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old).

In contrast, most participants from the youngest age groups (18-22 years old and 23-26 years old) believe that the number of shares can increase bloggers' credibility

Number of shares can increase their trustworthiness but not number of followers. I don't really care. (Interviewee 1, 18-22 years old)

Number of shares can increase their trustworthiness. It is necessary for bloggers to use it actually. That's why I like YouTube more than Facebook. I will trust top-ten bloggers more than others. (Interviewee 12, 23-26 years old).

Number of followers

Approximately half of the participants agree that the number of followers can directly increase bloggers' credibility. This number can encourage readers to trust the content that the

bloggers provide, especially when the contents come from new or unknown bloggers. In addition, a high number of followers can indicate approval of bloggers' professionalism. Consequently, bloggers will attract more readers and gain more followers.

Number of followers can increase their trustworthiness. I will trust bloggers who have high number of followers more. I think this number can guarantee that it's the best. (Interviewee 5, 18-22 years old).

Number of followers and likes can increase their trustworthiness especially for bloggers who I don't know (Interviewee 24, 27-30 years old).

Bloggers who have high number of followers should have high experience or good attitudes towards review, or they can show their expertise in their field. That is why many people have followed them. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old).

However, some participants also mentioned that although they trust bloggers who have a high number of followers, that factor doesn't mean that they ignore bloggers who have less. Readers still watch or read their content, but they will search for more information:

Number of followers, shares, and views can slightly increase their trustworthiness and attract me more. However, for bloggers with fewer followers, I still watch them, but I need to search more information. (Interviewee 4, 18-22 years old)

Regards to the above results, although the number of shares doesn't seem to have an effect on bloggers' credibility, it can still help in attracting targeted consumers to particular posts or to bloggers themselves. This finding is also in line with previous studies, which state that particular posts have greater impact than others and successfully catch the attention of potential consumers (Li et al., 2009; 2011). On the other hand, number of followers has both

a positive and negative effect on a blogger's credibility. This effect is due to the awareness of brand sponsorship that is provided to bloggers with a high number of followers. From the consumers' point of view, bloggers who are sponsored by brands tend to be biased towards products. Consequently, consumers choose to not rely on popular bloggers' opinions. However, similar to the number of posts' shared, a high number of followers can attract readers but does not seem to have a direct positive influence on bloggers' credibility.

Activeness - based factor

Li et al. (2009; 2011) established that activeness in bloggers' activities, as it especially represents bloggers, and how they share information on their sites. However, this thesis not only observed bloggers' activities on their own sites, but also analysed other online social media platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube. Bloggers' behaviour was determined by their post content, post agenda, and posting frequency. Moreover, other activity obtained from interviews was included in the analysis of this factor.

Agenda Posting

This research selected the *activeness-based factor* as an important characteristic that can affect consumers' attitude through the peripheral route, as described in the research framework. Several questions were set up based on this characteristic including *the agenda of posting, the frequency of posting,* and *number of replies*. None of the participants in the age groups of 18-22, 27-30, and 31-34 believes it was necessary for bloggers to have a posting agenda. They all agrees that it did not affect the bloggers' credibility.

> I think the agenda of posting is not necessary, also it doesn't affect their credibility. (Interviewee 4, 18-22 years old).

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Once a month of posting is enough. It's unnecessary to have an agenda. I don't think it increases their trustworthiness. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)

In contrast, participants liked knowing the posting agenda. One of them even mentioned that the agenda can increase the bloggers' credibility: "It would be good if bloggers have their agenda for when they will post on their channel. Agenda can increase their trustworthiness."

Posting Frequency

In terms of posting frequency, the participants from the other age groups also agree that it's necessary for bloggers to regularly update their channel: Everyday posting on Facebook is expected from most of the participants. Because it made followers to remind those particular bloggers.

Frequency of posts can increase their trustworthiness, almost every day for Facebook and 2 clips per week on YouTube. (Interviewee 14, 23-26 years old)

However, if bloggers post on their channel too often, it can also have an unfavorable effect, resulting in being un-followed by their followers: "I think once or twice a day of posting is enough (I won't follow if it's more than this)." (Interviewee 16, 23-26 years old).

Regarding bloggers' interactions with their followers' comments, most participants from all age groups agree that replies from bloggers can impress them, but there is no effect on credibility. It is interesting that there are no bad feelings for not replying but good/favourable feelings when they are replied.

I used to comment and got replied from bloggers. It made me very impressed. But if they didn't, I am still okay. But it makes me really like her when she replies. (Interviewee 6, 18-22 years old).

I never comment and never see Momay reply to comments, but I am not disappointed because I think it's normal. I don't really care whether she replies or not, but I read the comments just to know other opinions. (Interviewee 14, 23-26 years old).

However, it doesn't affect their trustworthiness, but makes me feel more impressed with them. They can attract me more. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old).

I never post comments, but I feel better if bloggers reply to comments. I don't think it increases their trustworthiness. It may make me feel impressed a little, but not too much (Interviewee 29, 31-34 years old).

Some participants also mentioned that the reply from bloggers could directly increase credibility. Only a few participants from the oldest age group did not feel anything when they saw bloggers' replies. It is noteworthy that the impression toward bloggers can strongly support the changing attitude through the peripheral route where the consumer's cognition is low.

Table22: Summarized the characteristic of bloggers from consumers' perspective on network-based factor and activeness-based factor

Bloggers characteristics based on previous literature	
Network-based factor (Number of shares, likes, and comments)	**Activeness-based factor** (Agenda posting, interactions with followers)
-The number of shares and followers can increase their trustworthiness -However, for consumers who agree that the number of shares does not increase trustworthiness but attracts us to their posts, perceived significant following suggests expertise.	-Agenda posting and Posting frequency is not necessary -Replies from bloggers do not affect credibility

This thesis developed the three main dimensions of source credibility based on previous scholars in existing online review which are expertise, trustworthiness and social homophily (similarity) in peripheral route based on ELM (Reichelt and Sievert and Jacob, 2014; Wang, 2015).

However, this thesis focuses on expertise and similarity factors of source credibility because the thesis aims to determine which characteristics of social media and bloggers determine credibility. As this thesis considers that the definitions of trust and credibility are interchangeable and difficult for interviewees to grasp (Hong, 2005; Hargittai et al., 2010), trustworthiness is not examined.

Similarity or social homophily

The interviewees viewed about similarity as one of the favorable characteristics of bloggers. In this part social homophily, which mostly interviewees mentioned about four main dimensions of similarity; age, physical condition, product preference and styles will be analysed in detail as source of bloggers' credibility. However, not only similarity will be analysed but interviewees also referred to the differentiation between themselves and bloggers.

Some interviewees mentioned that all similarity dimensions (physical, style and age) affected their trust and decision to follow bloggers' social media channels.

The similar of physical and lifestyle between me and bloggers affect my trust on them, such as product they use, taste on product using, make up style, and skin tone. Age also important, if they are too young, make-up look will be different what I normally do. It is ok if similar to me or a bit older, because age effect my life style. (Interviewee19, 27-30 years old)

Other interviewees mentioned that the similarity between themselves and bloggers did not affect trust or following on social media, but that the differences between themselves and bloggers could reduce opportunity of accessing to that particular bloggers, or some bloggers provide reviews in general for everyone can applied.

> I also follow bloggers who have different style or skin type with me because I can get new knowledge or idea. Yet, I will watch them lesser than bloggers who have similar style as me. (Interviewee 29, 31-34 years old)

> Some bloggers already mentioned and give the information for all skin tone and type. It might be nice to see bloggers, who have similar skin tone with me, see how the product result when try it on themselves. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

Table23: A summary of the characteristics of bloggers from consumers' perspective on similarity

Bloggers characteristics based on previous literature	
The dimensions of similarity	**Representative responses**
Physical conditions -Skin type, tone -Skin problems -Face structure	I will trust them more, if they have similar skin tone. Because what they review I will use less cognitive on my decision making. I can trust her that we have the same shade of skin tone, so we can use the same tone of makeup colour (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old) If I have same skin problem with bloggers, I will trust them more. I don't follow blogger because of similar skin type but will follow them if have the similar skin tone (Interviewee7, 18 -22 years old)
Style -Lifestyle -Make-up style -Style of presentation	Similar style and face structure between me and bloggers can make me follow her, and also her skill of makeup. Lately, I follow one blogger, because I really like her style of talking (friendly). It is very entertaining (Interviewee 16, 23-26 years old)

	Similar life style can also attract me to follow those bloggers. It can be compared when I go to shopping with friends who have the same style. Their reviews on my opinion same as sharing opinion from friend to friend. (Interviewee 22, 27-30 years old)
Product preferences -Category of beauty products; lipstick -Drug store or Hi-end brands -Asian or Europe brands	One blogger always review lipstick, as they more prefer review lipstick than other cosmetics categories, which I also prefer lipstick more than other cosmetics categories. And another one blogger who always update Japanese cosmetics stuff, which I also prefer as well. So, both of them have the similar lifestyle and preferences, also similar skin tone which impact trust on bloggers. (Interviewee 21, 27-30 years old) Similar skin tone between me and blogger attract me to follow her. It is also because she always reviews drugstore brand which I normally buy. (Interviewee 15, 23-26 years old)
Age	Age impact me to trust on bloggers, especially on skin care review. If bloggers older than me, the skin care product will be different required. (Interviewee8, 18-22 years old)

Some interviewees did not agree that the similarity between bloggers and themselves to their decision to follow and trust bloggers.

Similar skin type and tone doesn't increase trust on bloggers or credibility. I will try on myself anyway. Similar style of make-up doesn't increase their credibility, but watching their make-up demonstration in VDO clip for make-up reference. (Interviewee 2, 18-22 years old)

Moreover, some interviewees mentioned about some dimension effect their following trust on bloggers' reviews.

I choose to follow bloggers from their style. If their style is different with me, I just like their post but not relied on them. I don't think I follow any bloggers because of the same skin types. Similar in skin type or physical condition between me and bloggers or age doesn't make me to follow (or not follow) or believe (or not believe) any bloggers. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

Those interviewees who agree the social homophily is important towards their trust on bloggers' review and follow their social media channels, which mostly support the opinions by different similarity dimensions, most of them related to individual's conditions. Compares to TPB model (4.1) the similarity, especially physical condition (skin tone, type and problem), and age can relate to *the influence of an individual's condition* in TPB model (4.1.1; stage I before intending to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives). The influence of an individual's conditions mainly referred to trying products by consumers' themselves, then consumers can judge product result by themselves leads to making decision by themselves whether to purchase or not purchase. Mostly influence of an individual's condition effect when interviewees were in store, then had a chance to try products or repurchasing products.

However, homophily refer to the similarity between bloggers and interviewees, then interviewees is not necessary to try product on them if they have the similar physical conditions, such as same skin tone, type and problems with bloggers. Then interviewees perceived usefulness of bloggers' review leads to increase trust and bloggers' credibility.

So, this analysis can conclude that bloggers review (which located as social norms or social influence in TPB model) not only influence consumer's decision-making process but also reduce the influence of an individual's condition when consumer agree that social

homophily is effect their trust on bloggers based on the similarity between bloggers and interviewees especially, sharing same the individual conditions.

4.2.6 Proposed bloggers characteristics from consumers' perspectives

In the literature review, many blogs and blogger characteristics were established and discussed, as mentioned in the conceptual framework. However, other characteristics were also found among interviewees, which are actual use, sincerity, updates, and experience.

However, this analysis only highlights the most often mentioned five characteristics, namely *sincerity*, *actual use*, *updates*, e*xperience, and expertise.*

Sincerity

According to the results, ***sincerity*** is the most highly prioritised characteristic across all age groups. It is important for bloggers to be sincere with their audience. Most interviewees expected sincerity from bloggers in the form of two-sided reviews. Interviewees mentioned that bloggers should detail both the strengths and limitations of products, even if the brands sponsor the bloggers. Bloggers should also disclose which posts are sponsored.

Sincerity and activity can maintain blogger credibility, even when they are sponsored by brands. They should give the pros and cons of the products. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old)

Bloggers must be sincere even when they are sponsored. Sponsorship is okay, but they have to tell the truth in terms of whether a product is good or bad. Brands should improve their products based on users' feedback. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)

Sincerity is very important in bloggers' reviews. It is ok if they do positive reviews more than negative reviews, though they should state if they are sponsored. They should also consider not only their benefits, but also the value of the review. (Interviewee 17, 27-30 years old)

I am also concerned with sincerity. If a brand sends a product to five bloggers, all five of them should not have exactly the same positive experience. I can accept the negative sides or limitation of products. It is more useful for bloggers to tell the truth. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

Sincerity is not related to brand sponsorship, and if bloggers are perceived as sincere by their followers, they will gain their trust.

I will follow a blogger if she is nice to her followers. I do not mind if she gets sponsorship from brands if she is sincere and does not take advantage of her followers. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

Actual use

Next, *actual use* is the second most important characteristic mentioned by interviewees. Actual use can persuade audiences to believe that bloggers post reviews based on their own experiences. Also, actual use allows bloggers to be perceived as sincere. The audience believes that the reviews are sincere because the bloggers use the products themselves.

If a blogger can prove their actual use, leads to gain more trust from me, so YouTube an support their demonstration, and actual using during their reviews (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

Well, I will only believe a particular review when I see a blogger actually use it in their video. If only photos are provided with the reviews, I can't tell whether they have used it or not. (Interviewee 12, 23-26 years old)

I trust bloggers who show that they have actually used that product and show their experiences in the review of those particular products. (Interviewee 24, 27-30 years old)

When discussing sponsored posts, I think of Sypan. I believe in her because, to me, she is a sincere person and can prove that she has actually used the product. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

In addition, actual use is also related to sincerity. Bloggers should also indicate that they have actually used the products, which will lead their audiences to believe that they are sharing their personal experiences.

I think sincerity is the most important characteristic. I prefer it if bloggers actually use the product before reviews. If they got sponsored, they should state that it is a sponsored post. (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

Up-to-date

Among all age groups interviewed, bloggers are also expected to provide ***up-to-date information*** in order to maintain their popularity and credibility. The need for up-to-date information could be because consumers see bloggers as an introduction to certain products. If bloggers do not remain up-to-date, they are no longer effectively performing their role. Once their posts become popular and are widely shared, they themselves are recognised and become popular. If bloggers can make this popularity and sharing happen continuously, they can maintain their reputation and increase their credibility This characteristic is linked to both network-based and activeness-based characteristics. Blogs can be classified as up-to-date according to their number of shares and frequency of posting. This blogger characteristic was the second-most popular characteristic in the 27-30 age group.

I think being up-to-date is the most important characteristic in maintaining a blogger's reputation. (Interviewee 29, 23-26 years old)

Bloggers should be up to date and be good entertainer, also sincerity is important. I do not really like sponsored videos. (Interviewee 24, 27-30 years old)

For a blogger to sustain their popularity, they should be up to date and open to feedback and comments from their followers. Bloggers should also maintain their character, being unique and realistic. (Interviewee 29, 31-34 years old)

Experiences

Web boards allow all users to share their opinions of and feedback towards products and brands. Based on similar interests, these particular users can build up their own community, which can develop as a source of online reviews. If a user is mentioned frequently by other online users or receives a high number of followers and views on their posts, they are popular among the community and automatically become beauty bloggers. However, when comparing those bloggers to A-list bloggers, experience is a characteristic that should be considered in maintaining trust from readers and followers. Experience is the third most important characteristic that interviewees expect from bloggers. Interviews referred to experience as a competitive advantage for A-list bloggers over new bloggers.

Compared to new bloggers, I trust A-list bloggers because they have more experience. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

I think experience and knowledge can make A-list bloggers to surpass new bloggers and ensure that their reputation is long-lasting. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old)

Compared to new bloggers, I trust more A-list, experienced bloggers because they can provide reliable information that offers greater detail even than the brand itself, especially if they provide the strengths and limitations of products. (Interviewee 24, 27-30 years old)

I believe experienced bloggers if I have followed them for long time. I know who they are. Also, experienced bloggers' makeup skills can increase their credibility. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

However, when interviewees mentioned about blogger *experience*, they also mentioned the differences in the trust towards bloggers and everyday users, such as members of an online beauty community. In consumers' perceptions, trustworthy reviews must have both experience and expertise. Expertise is another factor that consumers expect from bloggers.

Expertise was also a priority across all age groups. Even for interviewees who searched for third party reviews, bloggers influence their purchase decisions, due to their experience and expertise.

I trust other users more than I trust bloggers. However, bloggers have greater influence on me because I believe they have more experience with brands, so they can compare and contrast. (Interviewee 26, 31-34 years old)

Moreover, when bloggers are considered experts, their followers are more likely to perceive them as sincere, even if their reviews are different from other bloggers.

In my opinion, bloggers experts in this area, but they have different skin types, which is why their opinions may differ from other bloggers and forum users. (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old)

Popular beauty bloggers are seen as experts and professionals in their field. Thus, followers expect to learn from them and purchase based on their opinions. Moreover, followers also seek bloggers' advice for solutions to their personal problems. When compared to other influencers, such as friends, web board users, and family, bloggers were chosen as the most credible by many participants, largely due to their expertise in cosmetics and makeup.

Momay Paplern is well-known blogger and professional, because she always posts high-quality reviews and make-up demonstration videos. However, the products she reviews are from imported brands and difficult to buy. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

Table24: Summarized the proposed characteristic of bloggers from consumers' perspective

Proposed bloggers characteristics from consumers' perspectives			
Sincerity (The most important characteristic)	**Actual use (2nd important)**	**Experience (3rd important)**	**Up-to-date**
-Sincerity of bloggers can show on the review, which provide a two-side assessment -Due to sponsored posts, bloggers should also provide the negative side of products. Then brands should bring it for product development -They should state on the review when that post is sponsored -When bloggers hold different views to the majority opinion in online communities, consumers tend to believe that the posts are sponsored by brands.	- Actual use allows bloggers to be perceived as sincere - Actual use, gains more trust from consumers -Bloggers should prove their actual use in the review, especially, when they demonstrate how-to use products.	-A-list bloggers are perceived as highly experienced bloggers, when compared to users in online communities. -Highly experienced bloggers gain more trust from consumers	-Bloggers are perceived as those who introduce new products, so they should be up-to-date about new product launching.

4.3 Influencers and the factors affecting trustworthiness

4.3.1 Trust on online reviews from online influencers (bloggers, users on online forums)

In this section, interviewees are asked who influences them to purchase beauty products. Specifically, bloggers, users on online communities, and family and friends were referred to as influencers. However, different factors lead to being trusted by consumers, which is analysed in the following subsections.

Before analysing the online influencers, consumers' behaviour and trust is explain. Refer to Section 4.2, (consumers' online behaviour in terms of product review and updates), in regards to searching for online reviews for a particular product review, in comparing between online beauty communities and bloggers' channels, most interviewees prefer to access reviews on forums and feel that forum users are more trustworthy than bloggers, who are often sponsored by the brands that are being reviewed. Moreover, if a consumer accesses one online forum, they have available to them various opinions from many users on one particular product.

Reviews on Pantip (beauty online community) are from real users, who are sincerer than bloggers sponsored by brands. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old)

I use reviews from Pantip because they're from a variety of users. (Interviewees 17, 27-30 years old)

However, some consumers who prefer to access bloggers' social media channels trust those particulars bloggers because they know who they are, and it is likely that any particular blogger has a better reputation when compared to users on online forums. Also, beauty bloggers are more likely to be perceived as experts at providing better reviews when compared to users in online forums, in terms of greater detail in reviews.

I also read reviews on Jeban and Pantip, but I trust bloggers more because I know them, but not users in online communities. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)

I've never bought products just passing by. I search for them on Google first and look for bloggers' reviews instead of forums because I feel like their reviews have more useful information. I think bloggers normally do research before posting their reviews, whereas other users normally give their opinion towards the products after using it. (Interviewee 29, 31-34 years old)

Table 25: Consumers' online behaviour towards and perceptions of online sources

Online platforms	Consumers' behaviour and online platform perception	
	Product reviews	**Product updates**
Bloggers' social media (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube)	-Searching product type or name on social media. -Perceived as experts. Better reputation than forum users.	-Updates on social media news feeds. -Offers information and review. -Perceived as actual use.
Online beauty communities Pantip.com Jeban.com	-Searching product type or name on google and being led to beauty forums. -Perceived as real users. -No brand sponsorship -A range of reviews on the same product.	-Not mentioned by interviewees
Brand's social media	Not mentioned by interviewees	-Loyal consumers prefer to hear about new product from brand channels. -Perceived as advertising. Only mentions the positive aspects of products.

Table 25 showed the consequence of trust towards particular online review sources based on consumers' perception. So, bloggers can influence consumers decision-making for

both product review and update, but mostly on product update, because consumers more trust on reviews from users on online forums, who perceived as actual users.

Moreover, this thesis aims to determine the characteristics that sustain blogger credibility in the long term and develops three main dimensions of credibility (expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity) in terms of a conceptual framework, surprising after interviewing. Reichelt et al. (2013) studied the impact of those three dimensions' credibility on e-WOM and found that trustworthiness was the most important factor in credibility. Therefore, this section also analyses which factors effect trustworthiness and build blogger credibility. There is not much difference in the opinions on bloggers and forum users, but the factors and reasons behind do matters.

Bloggers

Previous scholars in terms of how they influence others to trust them have highlighted the credibility of online reviews, and that highly credible bloggers have the most significant influence (Hening-Thuru and Walsh, 2003; Henry, 2005; Chu and Kamel, 2008; Zhang and Watts, 2008). This thesis mainly aims to determine the characteristics that sustain credibility, which can be ascertained from consumers' perspectives of the trustworthiness of bloggers' reviews.

Generally, if an interviewee trusts bloggers, it is agreed that bloggers have greater credibility than forum users because bloggers are perceived as *experts with considerable experience in and knowledge of the* beauty field. Consumers believe that bloggers have tried many products and are able to contrast and compare across products and brands. Therefore, one blogger review from them is perceived as useful, as it can allow consumers to stop seeking other reviews.

Moreover, bloggers have a reputation, and consumers know their background, whereas forum users' whose identities, for the most part, are unknown.

I don't trust people who review on forums because I do not know them, whereas bloggers are more credible. Compared to forum users, I trust bloggers more because of their experience. (Interviewee 21, 27-30 years old)

I don't normally use Pantip because I don't know the forum users. Brand themselves can make profiles pretending to be users giving positive reviews of their products. At least I know who bloggers are. I trust bloggers, because they are experts and are given many products to try out. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old)

Users on online beauty forums

Brown, Broderick, and Lee (2007) mentioned that strength ties, homophily, and source credibility are important factors in constructing online communities. In online communities, people shares same interests and preferences. This research focuses on the online beauty community, and interviewees refer mainly to two sites, Pantip.com and Jeban.com (see Section 3.2 for further explanation). The number of interviewees influenced by bloggers and users in online communities does not have significant variation. Furthermore, bloggers were often uses as a reference point when discussing consumer trust in online forum users and their reviews. Interviewees state that they trust users in online beauty forums because *they are not sponsored by brands*, and it is assumed that they *actually use the products*. Moreover, when consumers access one website, they can see reviews from various users and compare these opinions to determine the majority opinion (whether positive or negative) across reviews. Refers to table 10; compares how consumer perceived bloggers and forum users in terms of trustworthiness and influence.

I trust forum users more. Bloggers make me interested in new products, but I search for more details on Jeban. We can never know whether bloggers are paid to promote

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the products. In the past, bloggers weren't paid like they are nowadays (Interviewee 30, 31-34 years old)

Table 26: Consumers' perspectives on the influence of bloggers compared to forum users

Consumers' perceptions of influencers		Representative responses
Bloggers	**Forum users**	
Perceived as professional, expert and highly experienced	Perceived as genuine users	Pantip users are not popular, but I see them as real people. In terms of demonstrations, I trust bloggers, who are more professional (Interviewee 20, 27-30 years old)
Brand sponsorship undermines trustworthiness of bloggers	Providing reviews from actual use, so perceived as sincerer than reviews produced by bloggers.	Reviews on Panthip tend to be from real users, who I believe are sincerer than bloggers who are sponsored by brands. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old)
Receive only bloggers' opinion on one particular review	Offers the opinions of a variety of users in a single message thread or review	Reading message boards allows me to compare the opinions of many users. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)
Consumers familiar with them and their identity because of their social media channels and blog	Identity of these users is unclear because of their aliases	I don't really like reviews from online communities, especially not Pantip. Users on Pantip and Jeban are not reliable to me because I don't know them, and most don't provide photos or videos. (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

Moreover, interviewees indicated the importance of shared opinion, and that forum users have the same opinion in their reviews. However, a widely-shared opinion on online communities can indicate sponsorship from brands on bloggers' posts, based on interviewees' responses. When compared to reviews made by bloggers, if an opinion is

shared, it can be trusted. In contrast, if bloggers have different reviews to what the majority think, it is assumed that the bloggers are sponsored. This factor is key in determining bloggers' trustworthiness.

> I'm influenced by Pantip users, even though I don't know them. If seven of ten reviews of a particular product are positive, I will consider buying that product, even if the users are paid by brands to post. I find that forum users tend to be real users, so I trust them. (Interviewee 14, 23-36 years old)

> If reviews from bloggers and forum users don't align, I look for further information. If bloggers are sponsored by brands, they only give positive reviews. Therefore, reviews from bloggers are not trustworthy. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)
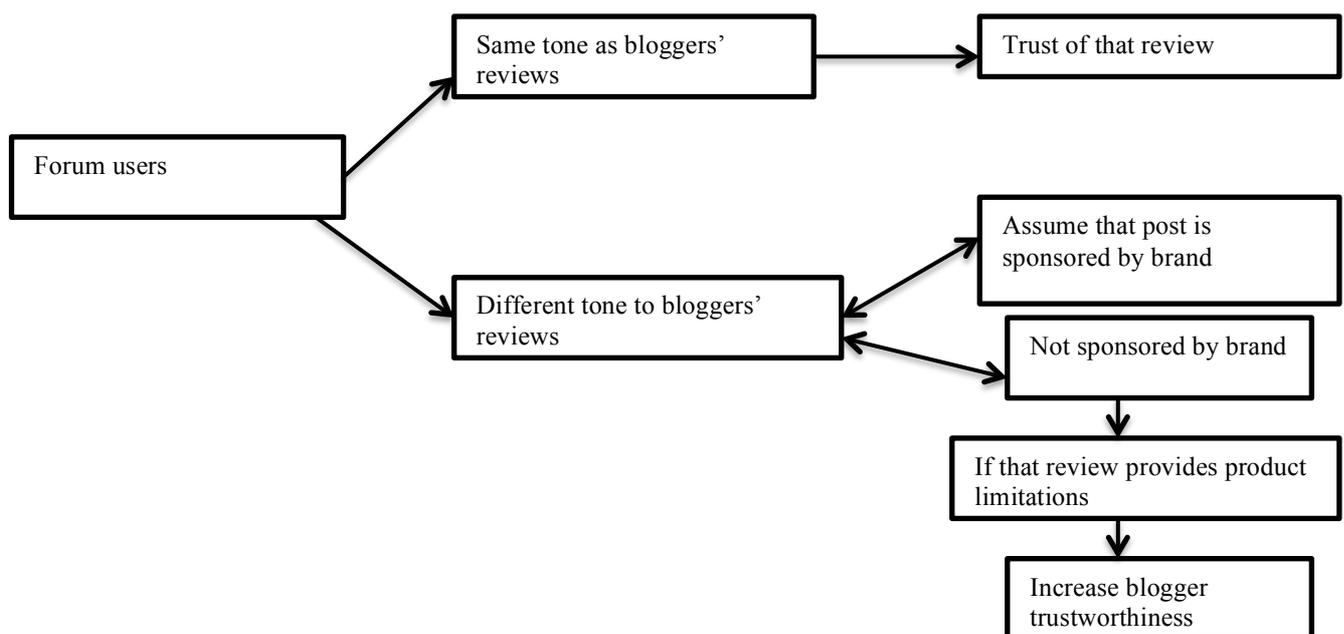
Figure 9: What people think about the reviews by bloggers and forum users

Interviewees' opinion of bloggers' post also reflects their trust of bloggers in terms of how they made purchasing decisions. Some they totally purchasing after bloggers' reviews, without any conditions.

I normally buy cosmetics because of bloggers' suggestions on Facebook. I look at Facebook reviews almost every day. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)

I trust bloggers' reviews because I don't have much experience and I don't want to try the product myself. (Interviewees 24, 27-30 years old)

However, some interviewees do not purchase anything after reading bloggers' reviews. Some interviewees stated that they searched for other online reviews and trust other users' reviews of particular products. Some interviewees only trust themselves after trying the product. This information is displayed in table 27.

Table 27: Why consumers do not trust bloggers' reviews

Why do consumers not trust bloggers' reviews?	Representative responses
Differences between bloggers and consumers	I don't really trust them. Once I bought make up because of Momay's reviews, and it didn't work for me because my skin is a different colour. (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old) I purchase products that match my skin tone. For example, both online users and bloggers hyped cushion products (a type of foundation). However, I tried a cushion foundation myself and decided it wasn't for me. Maybe I've tried too many cosmetics. (Interviewee 21, 27-30 years old)
Brand-sponsored blogger reviews	If it's not sponsored, I tend to trust a review, though I always search for further reviews. (Interviewee 20, 27-30 years old) I also bought because of Nobluck's suggestions. I think it may be a sponsored post, so I search for other reviews. (Interviewee 17, 27-30 years old)
Opinions from forums and online communities	I never buy cosmetics because of bloggers' suggestions. I trust users on forums more. (Interviewee 2, 18-22 years old)

4.3.2 Trust and offline influencers

<u>**Family and friends**</u>

Family and friends are analysed together because their trustworthiness is dependent on one principal factor, intimacy. Chai et al. (2012), studied the factors affecting knowledge sharing and mentioned that based on social role theory, women emphasised intimacy and friendship in different social interactions, which maintains strong relationship and the sharing of knowledge. This thesis focuses on beauty blogging and targeted only women. Interviewees stated that their decisions are often influenced by their closest female family members, such as their mothers and sisters. Interviewees believe that their mothers and sisters are sincerer with their advice compared to other influencers.

> My mom influences me the most because we're really close. She tells me honestly when I look good, and we share products. When I go to the store, my mom helps me decide and supports whatever I decide to buy. (Interviewee 14, 23-26 years old)

> I think my friends have the biggest influence on me because we talk about everything. I believe they are sincere. (Interviewee 12, 23-26 years old)

Moreover, family and friends influence consumers because of their *similarity*. Similarity was mentioned by interviewees in terms of physical features, preferences, and lifestyle. For family, interviewees mentioned that they had similar skin tone to their sister and mother. Moreover, their family members also have similar preferences and interests. However, interviewees did not mention the credibility of friend and family, even though similarity is one dimension of credibility. Interviewees instead mentioned their trust of their family and friends' opinions in influencing them because of their similarities.

> My colleagues influence me the most because we are all interested in make-up and share tips with each other. Moreover, they also make me interested in new product

launches. I read bloggers' posts every day because from my friends shared, though their posts don't make me want to buy new products. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

My older sister has the biggest influence on me the most because we have similar preferences and she is sincere, whereas bloggers can be biased, because they are sponsored by brand, so their similar style isn't important. Moreover, I trust my sister about how a product can affect my skin due to allergy, particularly in terms of foundation. (Interviewee 1, 18-22 years old)

Table 28: Discusses the factors that influence trust across the three groups

Bloggers	Users in online communities	Friends and Family
-Perceived as experts and professionals in the beauty field -Highly experienced -Some bloggers are perceived as being sponsored by brands -Similarity with consumers -Know who they are from social media and photos, leading to high reputation	-Perceived as Real users -Actual use of the product -Majority opinion in one particular review. -Sincerity due to the lack of sponsor - Potential use of an alias, resulting in a level of uncertainty concerning their identity -Some users have the similarity with consumers	-High level of intimacy leads to an increase of trust -Sincerity due to high level of intimacy -Similarity

Table 28 discusses the factors that influence trust across the three groups and shows that these factors have an impact on interviewees' trust and credibility in different influencers. These factors are similar to the characteristics of bloggers that were discussed in Sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, such as similarity, sincerity, and perception of the blogger as a real product user. Therefore, this analysis may also aid in the analysis of interviewees' attitudes

towards bloggers' characteristics (Section 4.2), which are key in building interviewees' trust and bloggers' credibility, particularly in terms of sincerity in reviews, similarity, and expertise.

When sponsorship is apparent in online reviews, consumers are more concerned with bloggers' actual use of the product rather than with sincerity. Moreover, because similarity is a key concept of trustworthiness, family members are often considered more credible than bloggers because of their higher degree of similarity to consumers. This part of the analysis can be used to provide guidelines to brands in collaborating with bloggers. Brands should persuade consumers to believe that bloggers are actual product users, while also ensuring that the bloggers are as similar to their target market as possible in order to increase interviewees' trust, as explained in greater detail in Section 5.2.

4.4 Consumer online behaviour on social media channel towards online reviews

Section 4.1 showed that before the decision-making process, most interviewees searched for online reviews, especially before deciding to buy, though some consumers look for online reviews in-store after trying the product themselves. This thesis aims to study the online reviews in detail and determine how effective online reviews influence consumers' decision-making processes.

In this section, the analysis includes consumers' search, access, and use of online reviews, particularly bloggers' channels and platforms mentioned by interviewees Lee and Koo (2012) stated that the platforms used to share and exchange product experiences were retailers' websites, brand communities, consumers' blogs, and other platforms. However, this study focuses largely on bloggers, who have three main social media channels, namely Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. After analysing consumer behaviour in Section 4.1,

interviewees mentioned other online review sources, such as online review from online beauty communities, which are also included in this section of the analysis.

This section analyses the behaviour of consumers in terms of social media and online reviews, as well as the perspectives on the channels of online reviews. Next is the consumers' perspective towards bloggers' review, which is the main subjective of this study.

4.4.1 Consumers' online behaviour

To confirm what consumers experienced in searching online reviews and whether online reviews affect their decision-making process, only interviewees who had experienced and written their own online reviews were asked in detail about the process of their online search behaviour.

The online behaviour is analysed based on two situations experienced by consumers, namely consumers' online behaviour towards product reviews, and online behaviour towards product updates. Different interviewees may offer different perceptions and experiences when responding. Moreover, there are different consumers' behaviours based on different situations such as keywords for searching, searching channels, source of online reviews and reason for searching. Consumers access both online forums and bloggers' social media platforms because they believe that forum users are real users and offer fair opinions.

Consumers' online social behaviour in terms of product reviews

Consumers' online behaviour is analyses based on two specific conditions, namely reviews of particular products and review of needed product.

Consumers' online behaviour in terms of particular product reviews

Online behaviour towards product reviews is analysed based on how consumers perceive the value of reviews from each online source. This online behaviour of searching for reviews of particular products occurs when consumers are interested in a particular product but have no prior knowledge of the product. Consumers tend to use keywords to search for exact products when they have the product name on hand, then they know the reviews from exactly products, also *products type* when they need to compare other brands in the same product categories.

> I normally google the keywords, such as the product name or category. I mainly use Pantip.com to look for reviews. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)

Then, from various online sources respectively. First, online beauty communities; only two online communities that consumers referred which are Pantip.com (a popular Thai website that allows users post and share opinion on beauty forums named Toa-kherung-paeng) and Jeban.com. (a popular beauty website that allows users to post and share their thoughts on beauty content) Also, bloggers channels are the second type of channel mentioned by consumers and included bloggers' Facebook, Instagram, and blogs.

Consumers' online behaviour in terms of reviews of needed products

Online behaviour in terms of reviews on needed products refers to when consumers look for a particular product to serve their needs or fix their problems. Some consumers look for products that fix their problems or seek products based on their particular objectives. Interviewees also referred to searching using keywords, such as the question for needed products and their particular problem (what is the best skin care for oily skin?).

This need was mentioned by just a few interviewees, but offers a new insight into what motivates consumers to seek product reviews from difference sources, and how their

behaviour is influenced. In general, product reviews are beneficial for consumers in obtaining further information of a product, so reliability is important. However, when consumers mentioned developing product reviews to fix their problems and meet their needs, sources of reviews and who they trust were not mentioned. Instead, interviewees mentioned that the keywords used to access expected reviews were important. Because the keywords are specific leads to various online reviews sources that provide related to keywords searching.

> I look on Jeban by using the question or problem as keywords, for example "a good foundation for graduation", which shows me a list of products I'm looking for. (Interviewee 32, 31-34 years old)

> Sometime I hear about products from friends and Google more information. Also, over the last three years, I have started to develop skin problem, so I google to find the right product for me. But I don't buy the product straight away, I will google and go to Pantip because it's always the first result. I read bloggers' posts on Facebook. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

Table 29: Consumers' online social behaviour when accessing product reviews of a particular product

Expected source of online reviews	Search engines	Representative responses
Online beauty communities Pantip.com Jeban.com	Google (mostly Pantip.com, which is usually first result in Google search)	Normally, I search for online information before purchasing a product so I know how much it costs and where to buy it. Then I'll go and buy it. However, sometimes I search for reviews in-store if I see an interesting product. Mainly I use Pantip. (Interviewee 8, 18-22 years old)

		Sometimes I see new, interesting products and google them for reviews. I always use Jeban because it has cosmetics reviews from real users. I prefer Jeban's forum over blogs because I get lots of opinions. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)
Bloggers' social media platforms	-Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube -Google	I look at online reviews before making decisions, which are usually from bloggers' Facebook pages. I search for bloggers specifically instead of looking on my news feed when I want specific product details (Interviewee 22, 27-30 years old) When I am interested in a product, I look at Instagram hashtags. (Interviewee 12, 23-36 years old) I normally google reviews, but I go on bloggers' channels first. (Interviewee 25, 31-34 years old)

However, there are differences between the behaviour on different search platforms. When accessing online reviews from forums, consumers tend to use Google. However, to access bloggers' channels, consumers mostly directly search on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Moreover, according to interviewees there is no significant difference in terms of *online social behaviour towards reviews for particular product* between beauty forums and beauty bloggers' channels. Interviewees tend to use opinions based on which source of reviews is perceived as more trustworthy.

Consumers' online social behaviour in terms of product updates

For online behaviour in terms of product updates, all interviewees mentioned bloggers. Because the behaviour of searching to update new products, consumers tend to be following bloggers' social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram. Most interviewees check Facebook routinely and so do not have to exert any particular effort to read blogger reviews' of certain products. Based on the interviewees' responses, online communities were probably not mentioned because users would have to join the website to access the posts, whereas to access Facebook pages, they would just log in to the application on mobile or log in to the Facebook website.

> I see new products on Facebook and Instagram, will click the link to their page when I see it, then try it myself at the store. If I like it, I'll buy it straight away. (Interviewee 15, 23-26 years old)

> I use Facebook most often, I normally see bloggers' posts on my news feed. I always read bloggers' post on Facebook. (Interviewees 17, 27-30 years old)

In general, if consumers prefer to routinely use social media, they can also receive updates of new products being launched from brands' social media channels as well. Interviewees were therefore asked to compare between seeing new product launched by brands' social media channels and bloggers' social media channels.

Most interviewees agreed that they prefer to hear about new products from bloggers' social media channels, though four interviewees stated that brands' channels can attract them to interesting new products being launching because of brand loyalty.

> Brands' post attracts me to new products more than bloggers' posts because I like the brands that I already follow. (Interviewee 3, 18-22 years old)

Interviewees stated that brands draw their attention to new products being released, but they will then go to bloggers' sites for further information on and more substantial review of the product. These reviews are provided based on actual use from bloggers and include understandable information. Moreover, interviewees compared the value of information from bloggers and brands and stated that bloggers provide two-sided product reviews, whereas brands mostly introduce new products using only positive information.

> Compares to brands' channels, I prefer to read reviews by bloggers because they are honest and have expertise, where the brands tend to talk only about the positive aspects of a product. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)

> When I buy a new product, I'm always inspired by bloggers' posts about new product launches. I prefer blogs to brand channels because I feel like bloggers are more honest and give me a more accurate review. Even when a particular brand releases an advertisement of the same particular product, I prefer to research on blogs. I more often make decisions based on bloggers' opinions rather than brand websites, because of their reviews and information. (Interviewee 23, 27-30 years old)

However, one interviewee had a different opinion of how brands style product launches. Brands also now provide product reviews, especially on new products to guide consumers on how to use the products.

The reason why I prefer to visit brands' channels is because now brands also provide the product reviews on their own channels, such as 3concept eyes (Korean cosmetics brand). They show how the product is used. The actual use is similar to what bloggers do, even when I expected just a colour swatch. In terms of results, I prefer to ask my friends or sister, who have experience using products. (Interviewees 8, 18-22 years old)

In conclusion, in online behaviour in terms of reviews of a particular product, consumers highlighted the importance of the reliability of the reviews. Interviewees discussed which sources they trusted based on who showed the actual product's actual use instead of those sponsored by brands, which were largely reviews from users of online beauty forums. However, some interviewees stated that they trusted bloggers for their perceived expertise.

However, for consumers' online behaviour in terms of product updates, consumers did not emphasise trustworthiness of the reviews given. Instead, consumers highlighted the importance of the value of the information, which can show them not only the positive information of the product but also product details, both negative and positive aspects, understandable information, and actual use before the review. On the other hand, to attract consumers to the new product launching, it is more effective to include product reviews in the advertising campaign.

Interviewee statements revealed that consumers accessed different online review sources, namely *bloggers, online forum, and brand channels, based* on different review needs (product review and product update). Most interviewees agreed that for product reviews, they preferred to use reviews from online forum users, which supported previous scholars where consumers tended to believe reviews from peer consumers (Blackshaw, 2006; Sen and Lerman, 2007).

However, when brands employed blogs as a marketing communication platform, bloggers were no longer perceived as actual users, and their reviews became popular as product updates. However, some interviewees continue to use bloggers' reviews as product reviews. This finding implies interviewees' trust of bloggers' reviews compared to reviews from other sources, which is discussed further in the following section. Moreover, brands' social media channels were also referenced in terms of product updates. However, interviewees agreed that product updates from brand channels only discussed the positive aspects of the products. In contrast, bloggers update new products and discuss both the strengths and limitations of the products, which supports previous findings that personal blogs tend to be more influential when compared to brand websites because the blog tends to be perceived as reflecting the product's actual performance (Lee and Youn, 2015).

The following table shows a summary of online behaviour in terms of consumers' access to online reviews for product reviews and updates.

Table 30: Consumers' online behaviour in term of accessing online reviews for product review and update

Online review sources	Platforms	Objectives for accessing
Bloggers	Bloggers' social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube)	-Product review -Product update
Online forums	-Pantip.com -Jeban.com	-Product review
Brands	Brands' social media channels (Facebook)	-Product update

4.4.2 Consumers perspectives of beauty bloggers' social media channels

This thesis focuses on beauty bloggers' social channels, specifically on how consumers view these channels. The analysis of bloggers' social media channels is conducted on three social media sites, namely Facebook, YouTube, and blogs. In terms of co-creation concept, these three forums allow bloggers to create networks, relationships, and interactions

with consumers by providing and sharing videos, photos, and content (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009).

This section analyses the opinions and experiences of consumers in terms of beauty bloggers' social media channels, as well as the interactions between consumers and beauty bloggers, which is assumed to be one of the factors that affects blogger credibility, which is the subject of this study.

Consumer perspectives of bloggers' social media channels

This research focuses on three platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, and blogs (the justification for this choice is discussed in the methodology chapter), so consumers were asked about their experiences of bloggers' social media channels, which reflects consumers' perspective on bloggers' credibility from interactions with followers.

Among the three social media platforms, Facebook was the most frequently mentioned across every age group. Consumers stated that they preferred to access bloggers' posts through Facebook, because Facebook's structure (such as news feed, friends, likes, reactions, and comments), and Facebook applications. Facebook allows users to post many kinds of media items, such as photos and videos, to interact with their audiences.

Consumers use Facebook daily as part of their routine, so there is a chance for consumers to see bloggers' posts every day.

> I normally buy cosmetics because of bloggers' suggestions on Facebook. I check my Facebook news feed almost every day. (Interviewee 11, 23-26 years old)

> I use Facebook every day and see bloggers' posts on my news feed, except for when I need makeup tutorials and go to look for them on YouTube. (Interviewee 30, 31-34 years old)

Interviewees preferred Facebook over YouTube and Instagram, as Facebook is a more convenient platform compared to the other two. Interviewees mentioned that Facebook allowed any type of content, particularly photo, writing, or and video. Facebook posts allow users allowed to post photos, clips videos, and writing. On the other hand, YouTube only allows users to upload videos, and Instagram only allows photo posting. Facebook also allows users to share links from other platforms, as users can share videos from YouTube on their Facebook page.

I like information from Facebook more than Instagram. Facebook allows for longer videos than Instagram. However, Instagram is faster than Facebook. (Interviewee 12, 23-26 years old)

I prefer to follow bloggers on Facebook. I think Facebook allows for all types of content, but for Instagram is only for photos, and YouTube is not convenient when I'm not at my computer. (Interviewee 3, 18-22 years old)

YouTube only allows for videos, which is not convenient when interviewees want to watch videos out of their homes. On the other hand, Facebook allows consumers to select whether they want to see particular posting, clip video or photo, so it is more controllable.

I prefer Facebook because I can read it whenever I want. I only watch YouTube, I watch when I am at home because it is not convenient to watch it at work. I normally see posts on Facebook first then go to YouTube for demonstrations. (Interviewee 31, 31-34 years old)

Consumers also frequently mentioned YouTube as their second favourite platform, as the long videos allow them to see the details of the product.

I follow them on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. However, I go on YouTube around once a week. I spend 10-15 minutes on each video then watch other videos. I

think it's necessary for bloggers to make YouTube videos, which is why I like YouTube more than Facebook. (Interviewee 16, 23-26 years old)

I like watching videos more than reading. I do read but I think videos can show me more on the details of cosmetics and how well they work. I can see the real colour of cosmetics and their results. (Interviewee 13, 23-26 years old)

Some consumers stated that they watched beauty videos on YouTube because they were entertaining. Some respondents stated that they preferred YouTube because they can access specific content by searching by product name.

I like YouTube, I could watch videos all day, even videos that aren't relevant to me. I watch the videos to see new products and because I like make-up. (Interviewee 7, 18-22 years old)

I tend to watch videos on YouTube rather than Facebook, because I have a lot of friends on Facebook, so bloggers' posts don't show up on my Facebook news feed. I watch the videos that I am interested in. For example, I won't watch their videos reviewing skin care because I prefer medical products. (Interviewee 10, 23-26 years old)

Blogs are less frequently referred to in interviews, and just one interviewee prefers reading reviews on blogs because of the more comprehensive information provided. Moreover, this interviewee is a loyal follower of that particular blogger.

I like blogs more than Facebook and YouTube because the posts give me more details. I normally see blog updates on Facebook rather than checking the actual blog. However, if I want to search for a product review, I'll search through the blog. (Interviewee 28, 31-34 years old)

However, Facebook and YouTube are the most preferred channels. Consumers agreed that Facebook's functions supported product reviews, by allowing content in terms of photos, videos, and long messages. For demonstration, such as make-up tutorial and product reviews,

YouTube is the most appropriate channel. Blogs were not viewed as often by consumers. Respondents agreed that bloggers do not need to have all three platforms, as Facebook and YouTube are sufficient.

It's necessary for bloggers to have both Facebook and YouTube. I normally see new products from Facebook first on my news feed then search for more details on YouTube on other bloggers channels by searching the product name. Then, I will visit blogs I know first. I don't think it's necessary to have a blog in order to be bloggers, because other channels more accessible. It's more difficult to read blogs. (Interviewee 1, 18-22 years old)

Just YouTube and Facebook are enough, not Instagram and blog. I think bloggers should have these two channels. I prefer Facebook because there are too many recommended videos on YouTube, so I don't see many bloggers' videos. On the other hand, I can set "see first" as a Facebook function and see most of their posts. It is easier to see the posts, and I prefer reading to watching videos. (Interviewee 20, 27-30 years old)

Consumers agreed that bloggers do not necessarily need to have a blog, though they should have Facebook and YouTube to post reviews. Consumers agreed that Facebook allowed for all types of content and all users to post and share photos, videos, and messages, which are similar to blogs, but easier to access through the Facebook application and website. Moreover, consumers use Facebook daily, which allows them to see bloggers' posts daily. For demonstrations, such as make-up tutorials and product reviews with colour swatch, which is important in beauty reviewing. Consumers agreed that YouTube was the best platform for posting. The interview responses support that blogs are no longer necessary anymore because YouTube and Facebook offer the same post support.

In conclusion, Facebook allows users' activities to share their messages on other forums, such as Instagram and blogs. The site also allows users to post a variety of

third-party content on Facebook, such as videos from YouTube or multimedia from Instagram. Furthermore, interviewees confirmed that they used Facebook because this was routine for them. The second most popular social media platform is YouTube because product reviews often require video demonstrations, and YouTube is the most efficient channel for delivering content in the form of videos. However, one limitation of YouTube is that it is often difficult to watch videos away from home. The third most popular platform are bloggers as this platform allows users to post a variety of content.

Table 31: Consumer perspectives of bloggers' social media platforms

Bloggers' social media platforms			
Facebook	**YouTube**	**Blogs**	**Instagram**
Favourite channel -Allowed to post different types of content. • Videos • Messages • Photos -Consumers routinely use the site -Allowed to share posts from other sites, such as Instagram and blogs Constant updates on news feed	2nd favourite channel Content in the form of videos Consumers prefer to use for further detail after seeing initial posts on Facebook Not appropriate outside of the house Consumers search for specific videos	-Bloggers are able to post different types of content, but not the popular channels when compared to Facebook and YouTube.	- Mainly photos are posted Updated quickly and easily

However, blogs are not as popular as they required the user to access specific websites, whereas Facebook is more convenient and also allow users to see a variety of posts from different bloggers' reviews on the same page (Facebook news feed). This site also provides access to a blogger's many social media accounts. The fourth most popular social media channel is Instagram, which allows users to update and post quickly and easily. However, the limitations of this channel include that it only allows pictures, limits the word

count on captions, and only allows short videos. Table 31 summarises the conclusion of interviewees' perspective of effective social media channels for online reviews.

Consumer behaviour on social media interaction between consumers and bloggers effect bloggers' credibility

Facebook allowed both followers (consumers) and bloggers to build relationships and networks through interactions, such as comments, likes, and shares of bloggers' posts. Similarly, YouTube allowed users to like and comment on videos, which allows consumers to interactively both positively and negatively with bloggers.

Interviewees were asked about their experiences on bloggers' social media channels and their perspectives of bloggers' interactions on particular posts. Some interviewees had experience of likes, shares, and comments on bloggers posts on both Facebook and YouTube, though some stated that they just read posts instead of commenting. Facebook was the popular social media platform mentioned among consumers, that they have ever comments and read comments in bloggers posts on social media channels. Respondents commented that other followers' comments and replies are useful and allow them to be provided with further information about a product.

> I have never commented, but when I see bloggers replying to comments, I'm impressed. Sometimes other users ask what I want to know, which is useful. (Interviewee 19, 27-30 years old)

Most interviewees agreed that interactions between bloggers and followers did not affect bloggers' credibility, in terms of both positive and negative comments from consumers. Comments just make consumers feel impressed by that particular blogger if they reply to any user comments. Interviewees perceived that bloggers were friendly, reliable, caring, and sincere, which are related to bloggers' characteristics (4.2 in chapter4 characteristics of bloggers).

I never ask any questions on bloggers' Facebook posts, though I read other comments. I see bloggers reply to them, which makes me feel that they are more reliable and sincere. (Interviewee 22, 27-30 years old)

Some interviewees agreed that if bloggers responded to follower's comments and they perceived that bloggers had positive attitude meant an increase in their perception of credibility. Furthermore, if a blogger answers followers' comments about a product, consumers believed that bloggers were experienced in comparing and reviewing products.

Negative comments on bloggers' posts don't make me think of them negatively. However, bloggers' responses make me admire them. Their responses increase their credibility because they obviously are familiar with the products. (Interviewee 20, 27-30 years old)

I never leave comments on bloggers' posts, but when I see bloggers replying to other comments, it's impressive and improves their credibility. It implies that they know those products really well and have a lot of experience in comparing products. (Interviewee 15, 23- 26 years old)
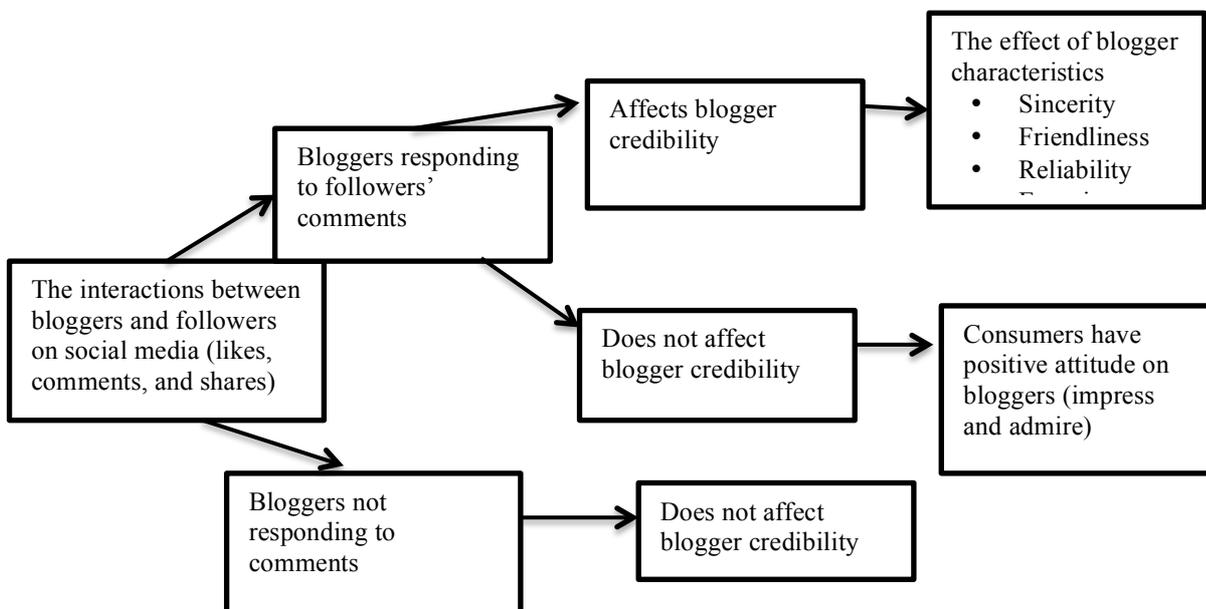

Figure 10: The relationship between bloggers' responsiveness and credibility from participants' perspectives

In conclusion, whether or not bloggers respond to comments does not affect their credibility. However, if a blogger responds, this increases the relationship between bloggers and followers in positive way. While not every participant felt that blogger responsiveness affected their credibility, the majority of participants felt that.

Before going to the next chapter Chapter5, (discussion and contribution) Table 32 shows the summary of key points from this chapter.

Table32: Summary of the key point from this chapter

4.1 consumers' decision-making process in purchasing beauty products	4.2 Bloggers and blogger characteristics	4.3 Trust on online reviews and other influencers	4.4 Consumers' online behaviour on social media In term of online reviews
Stage1: Before intending to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives. **Attitudes towards beauty purchasing** -Price -Quality -Brand image **Social Influence** Online reviews from bloggers and users in online communities **The influence of an individual's conditions** -Refers to consumers behaviour on trying a product. -Consumer decide they like it, and buy it. Stage2: Intention to purchase beauty products from consumers' perspectives. **Intention to purchase** Discuss on the reason to purchase: -Interviewees need	**Interviewees' attitude towards bloggers roles** - Introducing new products - Product reviews -Beauty Influencer (brand) **Blogger characteristics based on previous literature** Central route -Content-based factor Peripheral route -Network-based factor -Activeness-based factor -Social homophily -Expertise **Proposed blogger characteristics from consumers' perspectives** -Sincerity 1st -Actual use 2nd -Experience 3rd -Up-to-date -Attractiveness	**Bloggers** -Perceived as expert -Sponsored by brands -Consumers know who they are from their personal social media channels -Receive only bloggers' opinion on one particular review **Users in online communities** -Perceived as genuine users -Providing reviews from actual use -Receive a variety of opinions from users -Users use an alias **Friends and Family** -High level of intimacy	**Bloggers' social media platforms** -Search from social media platform • Facebook • YouTube • Blog • Instagram -Product review -Product update **Online beauty communities:** - Search from Google • Pantip.com • Jeban.com -Product review **Brand's social media** -Update from social media newsfeed -Product update **Product review** Reviews of particular product -Keywords: product type, exactly product Review of needed product -Keywords: specific to unsure about source that provide related to keywords searching.

the product. -Interviewees want the product. <u>Stage3:</u> Purchasing beauty products behaviour from consumers' perspectives. **Purchasing behaviour:** **-**From online and offline channels -Prefer high-end brands and drugstore brands **Factors effect purchasing** - Quality - Price - Brand image - Convenience - Physical risk after use - Trying product			**Product update** Update from social media newsfeed **Interaction between consumers and bloggers effect bloggers' credibility** (sincerity, experience, friendliness, reliability)

Chapter 5

Discussion and contribution to theory

Scholars have confirmed that consumers judge the usefulness of bloggers' recommendations, which impacts on their purchasing behaviour (Hsu et al., 2013). For this reason, brands have begun to utilise bloggers in marketing communication strategies (Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Zanette et al., 2013; Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014). However, previous studies have only studied influential bloggers for the benefit of marketers and advertisers (Agarwal et al., 2008; 2011; Li et al., 2009; 2011) and have not determined the blogger characteristics that can sustain their credibility in the long term, especially based on the assumptions of the marketing skills involved. Therefore, blogger credibility is key in ensuring trustworthy reviews.

Previous studies of online reviews' impact on consumer decision-making have used the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explain the decision-making process in terms of purchasing and intentions (Pavlou and Chai, 2002; Lee, 2009). However, in order to understand the attitude of consumers towards online reviews, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is also adopted in this thesis to explain the process of how purchase intentions are developed (Sussman et al., 2003). Previous scholars have used ELM to investigate particular perspectives; such as online review credibility (Cheung, 2009; Filieri; 2015). However, this thesis investigated the two models together to explain the influential role of bloggers on consumers' decision-making process, which may be explained using the TPB, and the process of developing consumers' attitude towards bloggers' reviews, which may be understood using the ELM.

This chapter is structured into two main parts based on the two developed models. The chapter's discussion and contributions are organised based on the findings discussed in Chapter 4, and the following figure shows the link between each topic from chapter 4 and 5.
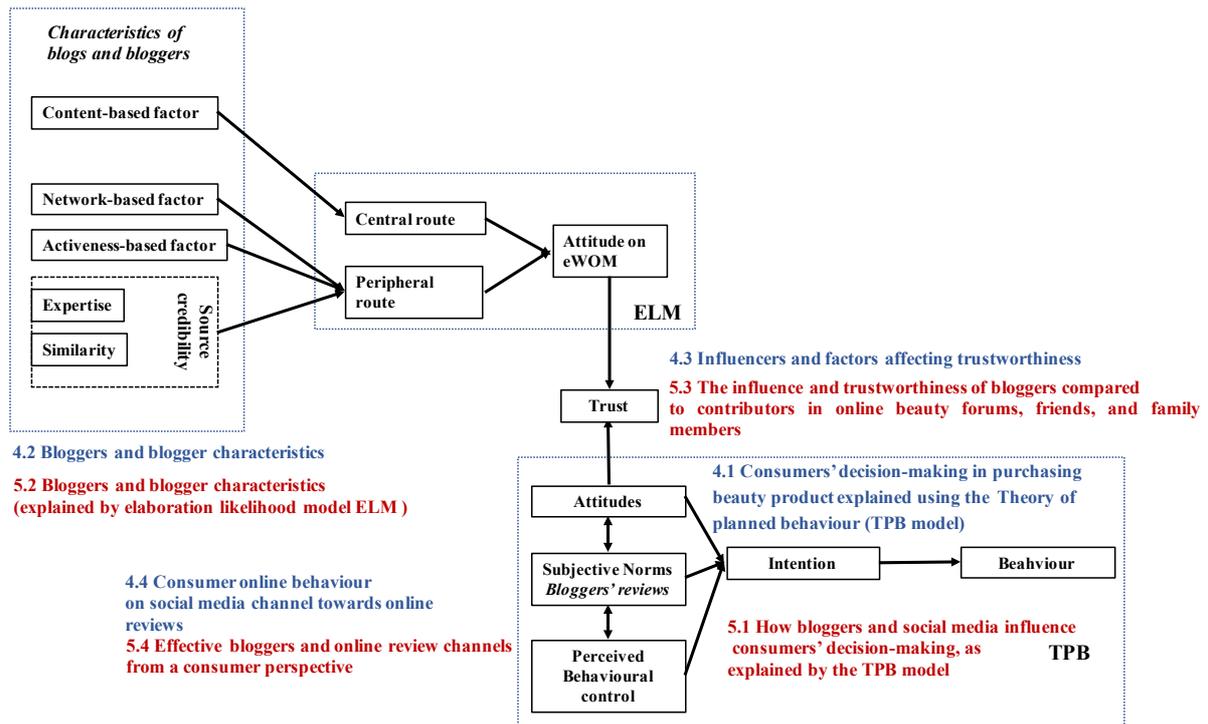
Figure11: Organization in Chapter 5

5.1 How bloggers and social media influence consumers' decision-making, as explained by the TPB model

Previous studies on online reviews have used the TPB model to investigate online reviews in terms of consumer behaviour, particularly in terms of online purchasing (Kassem et al., 2010; Sparks, 2007; Sparks and Pan, 2009; Quintal et al., 2010; Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; Wen, 2009; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). However, the interviews conducted in this study suggest that online reviews not only affect online behaviour, but also have an influence on offline purchasing, which is discussed in the following section.

To address assumptions made about online reviews influencing attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, the following sections discuss data obtained from interviews based on beauty products and services. The data are categorised into attitudes

towards beauty product purchasing (attitudes), social influence (subjective norms), and the influence of individual conditions (perceived behavioural control).

5.1.1 How bloggers and social media influence consumers' attitudes in beauty product purchasing (attitudes in the TPB model)

Previous scholars have argued that attitudes may aid in predicting intentions (Conner et al., 2007), but few scholars have discussed factors that affect attitudes. This thesis aims to help fill that research gap. The interview results suggest that interviewees' attitudes can be used to predict their behaviour in two ways: choice in online or offline shopping and purchasing decision about high-end or drugstore brands (brand preferences).

In this thesis, interviewees identified their attitudes towards beauty purchasing as a criterion for decision-making. This criterion affects decision-making in two ways, both in terms of attitudes that affect intentions to purchase beahviour (from online and offline channels) and attitudes that affect brand preference (high-end or drugstore brands). In both the factors that affect attitudes are: *product quality, price, brand image,* and *convenience*.

Online purchasing is more convenient because many products are not available in Thailand or are only available in large department stores in cities. A number of interviewees also purchase imported products from private online markets (without being charged VAT), which are often of a lower price than the same products in-store. Interviewees also mentioned quality, price, and brand image, all of which determine if a consumer decides to purchase drugstore or/and high-end brands (product preference). Product quality and brand image are mostly considered by interviewees who prefer high-end brands, whereas interviewees who consider price prefer drugstore brands.

Interestingly, only perception of product quality in outline reviews was identified as important in the analysis. Moreover, interviewees stated that, for beauty products, quality was a key factor in decision-making because these products may directly affect their skin, hair,

and body. This focus on quality leads consumers to seek online reviews (from online forums, communities, and beauty bloggers) to determine quality. The last two factors, namely price and location, can be found on both brand websites and in advertising campaigns.

This thesis proposeed four factors that affect attitude in beauty product purchasing in Thailand, namely product quality, price, brand image, and convenience. Product quality is the most important factor in online reviews, particularly when reviews are based on users' actual experiences. Price, brand image, and convenience also have an effect on product preference and purchasing channels but are not necessarily expected in online reviews.

5.1.2 How beauty bloggers and social media are perceived as social influences on beauty products (social norms in the TPB model)

The analysis confirms that interviewees do use online reviews to support their decision-making. In the interviews for this study, reviews from bloggers and online forum users were highlighted. Two main functions of online review were identified namely introducing new products and particular product reviews.

The interviewees stated that online forum users and beauty bloggers served different purposes in their online reviews. Interviewees, for the most part, agreed that bloggers were useful in introducing new products because they believed that bloggers received new products from brands or are sponsored, which allows customers to be aware of new product launches. As a result, bloggers' reviews are perceived to be less trustworthy in terms of actual use. Therefore, bloggers are perceived to be less trustworthy in terms of particular product reviews, though some interviewees mentioned that the experience and expertise of bloggers mean that they are more reliable than online forum users. Moreover, bloggers' reputations and identities on social media allows them to be viewed as reliable in terms of particular

product reviews. Furthermore, beauty bloggers are often concerned with their public image, which suggests that their message is often more credible.

In contrast, online forums users are more trustworthy among interviewees in terms of particular product reviews because they are not sponsored by brands, and so their reviews are more likely to be based on their actual use of the product.

Previous studies have found that bloggers viewed as more credible are perceived to produce more trustworthy reviews (Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Hsu et al., 2013). This thesis argues that users in online forums have the sufficient power to influence interviewees in product reviews, particularly when interviewees consider quality in online reviews. Forum users that produce online reviews have a less positive reputation than bloggers, though a number of interviewees stated that they would often search for multiple reviews of the same product on forums to determine if all of these reviews had the same general opinion.

Hsu et al. (2013) also state that reputation leads to bloggers being perceived as opinion leaders, particularly in terms of product reviews. However, this thesis argues that, in terms of beauty reviews, reputation is less important, actual use is key in influencing and building interviewees' trust in particular reviews. Actual use is determined by the contributors to the online forums, not by the beauty bloggers, and as a result, marketing practices involving online reviews can affect bloggers' reputation.

In conclusion, bloggers' and online forum users' reviews are perceived as influential, which confirms that reviews influence consumer purchasing intentions as is supported by existing research (Hsu and Tsou, 2011; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Hsu et al., 2013). However, the interview responses revealed that online reviews not only influenced online purchasing, but also had an impact on offline purchasing. Therefore, purchasing behaviour reflects interviewees' online review search behaviour, both online and offline.

Table 33: Summary of how interviewees perceived the differences between bloggers and online beauty forum users based on review functions

Interviewees' perceptions of beauty product reviews	Bloggers' reviews	Online forum users' reviews
Potential in introducing new product reviews	High	Low
Potential in particular product reviews	In average	High
Potential reviews based on actual use	Low	High
Potential of reviews in terms of credibility	High	Low
Potential of reviews in terms of experience	High	Low
Potential of reviews based on expertise	High	Low
Potential of reviews based on reputation	High	Low

5.1.3 How beauty bloggers and social media relate to the influence of individual conditions on beauty products (perceived behavioural control in the TPB model)

The influence of individual conditions is defined as a perceived behavioural control in the TPB model. The responses to the interview questions determined that individual conditions can be influential because they allow interviewees to determine how well products work by trying the product themselves. The individual conditions variable refers to the situation that the interviewees generally experience when they are in physical stores, as the situation may increase the chances that the interviewee will purchase products from offline channels. However, even when interviewees have a chance to try products themselves, they often use online reviews (social influences) to support their decision-making before purchasing these products. Also, these interviewees also mentioned consulting online reviews before looking for products in physical stores.

This thesis proposes a relationship between social influences (subjective norms) and the influence of an individual conditions (perceived behavioural control) because interviewees use online reviews together with their own judgment and products testing to

determine beahviour. Consequently, customers use online reviews together with their own judgement to support decision-making, which applies not only to online purchasing, but also to offline purchasing. This thesis argues that online reviews effect not only online shopping, as confirmed by previous research (Hsu et al., 2013; Cheung, 2003; Lu et al., 2014), but also offline shopping.

The interview findings, together with the discussion of consumer decision-making process based on TPB, has confirmed that interviewees were influenced by online reviews. Moreover, the findings support the importance of encouraging trust as a way to gain influence for particular sources of online reviews because of the characteristics of online reviews. Especially when marketing practices and sponsorship are involved, the trustworthiness and credibility of blogs and bloggers is questioned. In addition, this thesis questions the suggestion from Hsu et al. (2013) that reputation is important in selecting bloggers for a marketing campaign. This thesis proposes instead that reputation is less important due to consumers being aware of sponsorship. Indeed, the interviewees in this thesis pointed out that high-reputation bloggers are regularly used in marketing practices. So, this thesis emphasises the importance of discussing blogger characteristics related to trust and credibility, the Elaboration Likelihood model ELM is used to discuss this in the final sections of this chapter (5.2; characteristics of blogs and bloggers).

5.2 Bloggers and blogger characteristics (in relation to the elaboration likelihood model (ELM))

5.2.1 Beauty bloggers from a consumer perspective and marketer perspective

To more effectively use bloggers as marketing tools, brands should understand consumers' expectations and perceptions. Both interviewees and marketers defined bloggers based on bloggers' roles and perceived usefulness. The definition offered by consumers

reflects beauty bloggers' trustworthiness and determines bloggers' influence. The impact of trust in bloggers allows marketers to define bloggers based on bloggers' influencing power.

Beauty bloggers from a consumer perspective

Existing literature has largely considered bloggers as product experts or people who use blogs to share particular issues and opinions (Cox et al., 2008; Singh et al., 2008). However, the last section (5.5), which discussed effective platforms, showed that social media sites were now more important than blogs. Therefore, this thesis aims to propose a new definition of the term "blogger". In this thesis, a number of interviewees defined bloggers in terms of their general functions, which includes as advisors or counsellors who share knowledge and experience. However, most interviewees defined bloggers based on their perceived usefulness or functions, particularly as individuals who introduce new products or review products.

The function of introducing new products is the definition mentioned by most of the interviewees, followed by product reviews. Beauty bloggers are more likely to be valued for their introduction of new products because they are often sponsored from brands and have more opportunities to receive new products. Brand sponsorships have both positive and negative consequences for bloggers. Bloggers that receive products first are able to share them first with their followers. However, these bloggers are perceived as less trustworthy because they have been paid by the brand as part of the marketing campaign. Therefore, bloggers may be perceived to not have actually used the product before reviewing it. Consequently, most interviewees agreed with the definition "beauty bloggers are people who introduce new products".

Though bloggers are perceived as less credible than review contributors in online beauty online forums, they are also perceived as "people who review products" because their expertise and experience mean that their reviews are beneficial. However, compared with

contributors in online forums, who are perceived to have actually used the products, bloggers' reviews may need support from outside source to make them more credible. Therefore, consumers can trust bloggers' reviews if the review is similar to those found on online forums.

Based on perceptions of the perceived usefulness of bloggers, interviewees are now able to reflect on the prevalence of brand sponsorship. Interviewees who perceived that bloggers introduced new products believed that bloggers who received sponsorship from brands to talk about new product launching were less trustworthy than those who were not paid and have used the product. Bloggers are viewed as more up-to-date than contributors in online forums. In contrast, interviewees who considered bloggers those who review products seemed to trust bloggers' reviews and tend to use these reviews in their decision-making.

Beauty bloggers from a brand perspective

Thailand beauty bloggers are popularly used in marketing strategies, especially in online marketing. Many scholars have agreed that bloggers can often become a part of a brand (Huang, 2012; Lee and Watkins, 2016) or the consumer decision-making process (Hsu et al., 2013; Wang, 2012). That is the reason why bloggers are often sponsored by brands to influence consumers and advertise their products and services, which may affect consumer trust.

Existing research has highlighted the difference between bloggers and influential or "A-list bloggers" by comparing and categorising their differences (Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005; Agarwal et al., 2008; Ko, 2012; Zanette et al., 2013) instead of separately defining the two terms "introducing new products" and "product review". However, existing research has defined bloggers in terms of specific categories based on the focus of their study and used terms such as "specialists" and "general bloggers" (Zhao and Kumar, 2012). However, little research has explored blogger definitions or categories based

on a consumer perspective together with a discussion of the influential role of bloggers, which is explored in this thesis.

From a marketing perspective, beauty bloggers may now be defined as **"beauty influencers"**, who enough power to influence viewers could be referred to as beauty influencers. Instead of "beauty blogger", the term "influencer" is more appropriate because it can be applied to various platforms, due to blog has been less popular and replaced by other social media platform, such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. Interviewees (marketer) defined bloggers based on how they perceived the usefulness of their roles and functions. However, a number of scholars argue that bloggers are only beneficial for product reviews (Hsu et al., 2012; Lee and Ma, 2012; Zanette et al., 2013; Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014). This thesis suggests that bloggers have other functions, such as introducing new products. Therefore, this chapter discusses how interviewees use bloggers' reviews in their decision-making based on their perspective of their functions (introducing new products or reviewing products). The definitions offered by interviewees not only define bloggers in general, but also imply bloggers' trustworthiness, which is reduced by brand sponsorship. The prevalence of brand sponsorships was confirmed by the interviewee who had worked with beauty bloggers. Consequently, beauty bloggers, from a brand perspective, defined bloggers as beauty influencers. This definition was also based on bloggers' usefulness. Bloggers' trustworthiness not only affects consumers' perspective, but also has an influence on brand perspective. As a result, the trustworthiness of bloggers influences their trustworthiness, which may be used as an indicator that makes them suitable for brand sponsorships.

This section also confirms that the perceived usefulness of bloggers' recommendations affects consumers' attitudes towards online reviews, which is one of the factor in TAM, also as discussed in Section 5.1. Therefore, the perceived usefulness of bloggers' recommendations has an impact on consumers' trust and bloggers' characteristics,

which is strongly replicate the important of this research question about the characteristics of beauty that can sustain bloggers' credibility in long term.

5.2.2 Characteristics of bloggers and social media platforms explained by ELM

Moreover, this section offers a critical analysis of blogs and bloggers' characteristics using the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) to explain consumer attitudes. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the ELM was developed to explain the attitudes towards online reviews, and this thesis aims to identify the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers from a consumer perspective.

The ELM is mostly used to examine user behaviour in information systems (Sussman and Siegal, 2003; Wang; 2015; Fan et al., 2013; Hsu et al., 2013), but little existing research has used ELM to identify the characteristics of propose bloggers that sustain credibility, particularly when marketing techniques are involved. The ELM provides a theoretical explanation of two routes of message-processing in terms of perception. The first of these routes is the central route, which covers concern persuasion by messages or arguments (Park et al., 2007; Hsu et al., 2013). People who do not or do focus on content cues, which are more affective, are using the peripheral route (Park et al., 2007; Hsu et al., 2013). Therefore, this section analyses the characteristics of blogs and bloggers and discusses their relevance in terms of the two main routes of the ELM, namely the central route and peripheral route.

The ELM is used in conjunction with the marketing influential value (MIV) model Li et al., (2009; 2011), which is based on three dimensions of blogs (content factors, network factors, and activeness factors) that are key in determining consumers' perceptions of bloggers. However, this research only proposed a useful model to identify effective bloggers based on their blogs' potential and did not test each dimension in detail, particularly when the assumption of marketing played a key role. A number of other studies have used the ELM in

study to propose blogger characteristics based on the factors proposed by the model (Cheung, ett al., 2012; Lis, 2013; Cheng and Ho, 2015; Wang, 2015). Interviewees in this study also proposed a number of characteristics, and so the two routes proposed in the ELM are separated into blog and bloggers' characteristics based on existing literature and interview data.

Characteristics of bloggers and social media platforms in the central route

Characteristics of blogs and bloggers based on existing research

Content factors

Scholars have identified central route persuasion as message or information value and argument quality, as well as content factors, such as argument quality (AQ) (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Li et al., 2009; 2011; Lis, 2013; Wang, 2015).

In this thesis, content is related to blog content and includes writing, photographs, and video. Also, the analysis included bloggers' blog content, which includes presentation skills, video style, writing style, and image editing. However, similar to studies of Li et al. (2009, 2011), this thesis not only studies blogs, but also examines content on social media platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

The analysis determine that interviewees agreed that content was extremely important for bloggers in terms of the quality of content and writing, videos, and photographs. Interestingly, the analysis not only confirmed the importance of content on blogs and social media, but also reflected on bloggers' characteristics including professional writing, quality of reviews, video editing skills, and the techniques used in the photography on blogs and social media. For example, photographs should clearly illustrate the qualities of the product, such as colour and texture.

In conclusion, Li et al. (2009; 2011) proposed content factors as a component of the MIV model to identify influential bloggers, but the content factors included only review ratings and popular author approaches as content mechanisms. In contrast, this thesis defines content factors as any information that may be processes by in the central route in ELM. Furthermore, Li et al. (2009; 2011) considered content factors based on blogs' characteristics, but when analysing bloggers' credibility and content, referenced bloggers' characteristics (actual use, sincerity, and expertise), which all comprise the peripheral route of the ELM model.

Characteristics of beauty blogs and bloggers in the peripheral route

This section discusses characteristics based on interview findings and those of existing research. Moreover, all blog and bloggers' characteristics in this section are related to the peripheral route, which is motivated by affective or non-content cues. This research aims to study credibility, which is mostly related to the peripheral route in the findings. Moreover, interviewees were mostly concerned with the peripheral route, which includes affective factors. In terms of the role of peripheral route cues under low elaboration-likelihood conditions, the source of credibility plays an important role in consumers' attitudes to evaluating online sources based on different recipients' attitudes (Wang, 2015). This section not only discusses characteristics proposed by Li et al. (2009; 2011), but also uses factors of credibility, namely expertise, and homophily (Lis, 2013; Cheung et al, 2012; Cheng and Ho, 2015; Wang, 2015). The section also discusses characteristics proposed by interviewees.

Characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers based on existing research

According to Li et al. (2009, 2011) network factors and activeness are used in the marketing influential value (MIV) model to determine influential bloggers. However, Li et al.

(2009, 2011) did not analyse how these two factors can be used to identify influential bloggers, particularly in terms of blogs' and bloggers' credibility. This. thesis discusses these two characteristics in the following sections.

<u>Network and activeness factors</u>

Network and activeness-factors were developed by Li et al. (2009, 2011) and are applied in this study to examine blog and bloggers' characteristics that determine their credibility. This thesis has adapted the definition offered by Li et al. (2009, 2011), who states that network factors refer to all social connection activities of bloggers and indicates the number of online friendships based on social media channels, namely Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and blogs. In this research, from a consumer perspective, bloggers' credibility can be determined by number of posts shared, number of comments, number of followers, number of likes, and number of views.

Number of followers is the main network-based factor that affects credibility of bloggers. Normally, a high number of followers indicate a good reputation and high credibility. Number of followers has a two-sided effect on bloggers' credibility because of the prevalence of brand sponsorship. Brands tend to work with bloggers with a large number of followers in sponsorships because it allows them greater access to the target market. Therefore, consumers are wary of messages from these bloggers, and a large number of followers might reduce bloggers' credibility. This finding supports the discussion in Section 5.1, which stated that reputation was not important in determining credibility.

The last type of factor proposed by Li et al. (2009; 2011) was activeness factors. This thesis users this term to evaluate bloggers and how they share information on their sites, namely their posting agenda, the frequency of posting, and number of replies. The finding

shows that bloggers' activeness does not affect their credibility. However, if bloggers reply to comments on their social media channels, consumers are more likely to view them positively.

In conclusion, according to Li et al. (2009; 2011), only network factors affect bloggers' credibility, particularly number of followers. However, consumers now are able to notice marketing techniques and may be less likely to trust bloggers with significant followings because of the belief that these bloggers will receive brand sponsorships.

Therefore, factors proposed in the MIV model by Li et al. (2009; 2011) should be revised due to the prevalence of brand sponsorships. Network factors should be recalculated based on the assumption of marketing techniques being involved, also activeness factors might not be appropriate to determine influential bloggers because activeness does not affect bloggers' credibility, which is influential on consumer trust. So, it would be beneficial for marketers to replace these factors with revised factors that can influence consumer trust.

Credibility is important in trust towards bloggers and online reviews (Wang, 2015), and so credibility factors proposed by scholars are selected and discussed in terms of blogger characteristics in the following paragraphs.

Credibility factors

Existing research has investigated sources of credibility based on the peripheral route (ELM). The term "credibility" refers to when an individual perceives a source of information as "unbiased, believable, true, or factual" (Hass, 1981). However, it is easy to examine merely the overall credibility of online reviews instead of identifying the factors that influence credibility (Wang, 2015). Moreover, a number of scholars have identified sources of credibility, but these definitions are affected by context and researcher bias. Furthermore, previous scholars have examined this relationship using only quantitative methods. Lis

(2013) and Reichelt et al. (2013), also proposed credibility factors, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily. This thesis selects only expertise and homophily to study consumers' trust towards bloggers' credibility. Existing research has offered a range of definitions of trustworthiness, meaning that the concept is non-specific. Therefore, the characteristics proposed in the interviewees may be useful in expanding this definition. This thesis also discusses the factors that affect trust of bloggers' reviews.

The following sections discuss expertise and experience.

- *Expertise*

The findings demonstrated that consumers often are more likely to trust bloggers because of the bloggers' perceived expertise. Perceived expertise was ranked third among the characteristics that interviewees proposed. Therefore, bloggers can earn consumers' trust based on their expertise, even when they were perceived not to have actually used the product. Expertise is also important in the perceived usefulness of bloggers' reviews, even when their reputation is affected because of marketing techniques.

The findings of this thesis support those of previous scholars, who have found that expertise is an important source of credibility (Cheng and Ho, 2015). Reichelt et al. (2013) have argued that expertise affects the utilitarian function of online reviews rather than credibility, however, this thesis argues that expertise is one of the factors caused by the relationship between the central and peripheral routes, in that bloggers can expand their expertise on their reviews across various types of media, such as photographs on Facebook or videos on YouTube. Expertise means that consumers are more likely to trust bloggers' reviews. Therefore, this thesis proposes that expertise is one of the characteristics that affect blogger credibility.

- *Homophily or similarity*

Homophily, or similarity, has been examined as one dimension of credibility (Reichelt et al., 2013; Cheng and Ho, 2015; Wang, 2015). Similarity has also been used to determine opinion leaders in terms of diffusion speed and maximum cumulative number for marketing campaigns (Cho et al., 2012). This thesis defines similarities between bloggers and followers in terms of age, physical appearance, product preferences, and style.

Similarity is one of the reasons for the influential role of friends and family because consumers have bonds with their friends and family that make their opinions more reliable. However, similarities between bloggers and followers reduce the influence of individual conditions (perceived behavioural control from TPB) and increase the reliability of bloggers' reviews. When consumers trust a blogger because of similarities, it is no longer necessary to try products by themselves, and they are able to rely on the opinion of bloggers with characteristics similar to their own. Therefore, similarities between bloggers and their followers affect credibility.

Cho et al. (2012) argue that similarity is an important factor in the perception of intimacy. Furthermore, intimacy is an essential factor in social networks. In this thesis, similarity was mentioned when interviewees talked about friends and family as a group of influencers, but it was less discussed when interviewees talked about bloggers. The participants in this research referenced similarities in physical factors such as skin type. In terms of credibility, similarity was not as frequently mentioned by interviewees. However, similarity affects the perceived usefulness of online reviews, particularly when bloggers, readers, and/or followers have something in common, which leads to reviews being perceived as more trustworthy.

Characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers proposed by consumers

- *Sincerity*

Sincerity was the most frequently mentioned factor by interviewees. In this thesis, **sincerity** was proposed in terms of providing two-sided reviews and whether these reviews were sponsored by brands. Two-sided reviews refer to reviews that present both the strengths and weaknesses of products and/or services. The marketing techniques employed were also important in determining sincerity. This finding indicated that bloggers should ensure that sponsored posts are not perceived as advertising and should inform consumers of their sponsorships.

Sincerity is another factor that affects the relationship between the central and peripheral routes because blogs and social media platforms allow bloggers to express their opinions. When bloggers share written and photographic reviews, readers and/or followers can evaluate and perceive bloggers' sincerity. Therefore, sincerity is one of the factors on the peripheral route connected to context factors on the central route. This thesis suggests that sincerity affects consumers' trust and has an impact on bloggers' credibility, which is evaluated by bloggers' appearance and writing.

In previous studies (Reichelt, et al., 2013). sincerity has been discussed as an aspect of trustworthiness. However, sincerity has been discussed in existing studies in terms of its role in, which is a source of credibility However, this thesis proposes that sincerity is important in terms of bloggers' credibility and should be defined as a key characteristic by itself.

Moreover, sincerity has been investigated in studies on fashion blogs and is referenced alongside the term "authenticity" (Marwick, 2013). Marwick (2013) defined that authenticity as a contemporary reworking of the concept of sincerity. However, this thesis uses the term "sincerity", which is defined as "honesty without pretence" (Marwick, 2013). The reviews from bloggers are judged in terms of on their actual use, experience, and product

results. Authenticity is defined as "staking claims and expressing preferences about our relationships to one another, to the world, and to things, but those judgments, claims, or preferences don't pick out real properties in the world" (Chittenden, 2010). Marwick (2013) suggests that beauty and fashion blogs should use term and definition of authenticity. However, this thesis also suggests out the actual use is one of the key characteristics of blogger credibility, and so sincerity would be more appropriate than authenticity.

- *Actual use*

Consequently, **actual use** is the characteristic that plays the most important role in sincerity. Due to brand sponsorships and marketing campaigns that involve online reviews, interviewees expect bloggers to review products based on actual use. Interviewees may accept messages from sponsored posts, but they felt that bloggers should review products based on actual use rather than as a form of advertising. The benefit of actual use is more often perceived online forum users instead of bloggers, which supports the findings of existing research. Akehurst (2009) also conducted travel research and found that interviewees trusted reviewers who had actually visited the places being reviewed. Interviewees tend to trust product reviews from contributors on online forums rather than those of bloggers. Therefore, actual use is the characteristic that most affects blogger credibility.

In conclusion, the characteristics of blog and bloggers that effect their credibility include content, networks, expertise, homophily, sincerity, and actual use. The following section synthesises these characteristics in terms of the relationship between ELM central and peripheral routes.

5.2.3 Bloggers and social media platforms characteristics in relation to the elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

Existing studies have used ELM to study attitudes towards online reviews (Cheung et al., 2012; Cheng and Ho, 2015; Wang, 2015). However, these studies have only investigated argument quality via the central route and credibility via the peripheral route. However, this research not only identifies and proposes the characteristics of blogs and bloggers based on their relationship to the central and peripheral routes, it also determines the relationship between the two routes. Because the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers, such as sincerity and expertise in the peripheral route, can also feature in the central route, this can be represented through their reviews in form of writing, video clip, and photographs with less editing. So the online content persuades via argument quality and active responses. The figure below presents the revised conceptual model on attitude towards online reviews, which is based on ELM and proposes the characteristics of blogs and bloggers that affect their credibility.
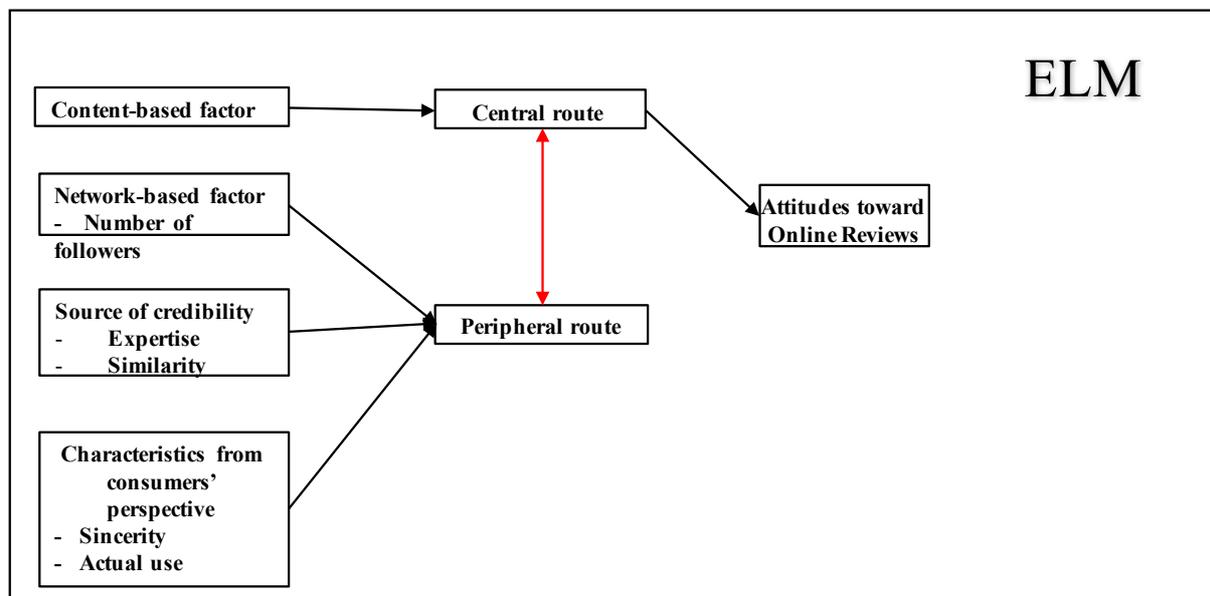
Figure 12: The revised conceptual model of blogs and bloggers' characteristics based on the ELM models

5.3 The influence and trustworthiness of bloggers compared to contributors in online beauty forums, friends, and family members

This section identifies key influencers and the factors affecting trustworthiness. In this study, interviewees proposed top three influencers on their decision-making in beauty product purchasing. In terms of both online and offline influencers, interviewees mentioned three reference groups, namely bloggers, online forums users, and family and friends.

The critical analysis helps to reveal why interviewees selected those three groups as the most trustworthy and hence most influential on their decision-making. The findings of the analysis reveal the factors and characteristics of each group as follows.

Bloggers were perceived as the most influential because their characteristics include expertise and experience using beauty products. In terms of product update reviews, bloggers perceived reviews based on actual use as the most important. Bloggers may review a product while also introducing it, which may be perceived as more useful than the advertising messages from brands' channels. Those advertising involves introducing new products with general product information. Even if bloggers are sponsored by brands in making their videos, consumers may use knowledge of their reputation to decide if they can be trusted. Brand sponsorships may make bloggers more trustworthy because brands prefer to work with credible influencers. Moreover, interviewees accept sponsorships if the blogger is able to convince them with a balanced, two-sided review, mentioning both the positive and negative aspects of a product.

Reviews by online beauty forum contributors can also influence consumers because these reviews are not sponsored by brands, which means that the contributors are believed to have actually used the product. However, online forums users are not as credible as bloggers because online forums are not as easily identifiable. Interviewees mentioned referring to a

number of reviews on forums to determine the value of the products based on the majority opinion.

Moreover, consumers also mentioned sponsorships from brands, which affect blogger credibility and consumer trust. However, the most influential sources of information are bloggers and online forum users, and so their recommendations are key in shaping consumer behaviour. Online forums users' product reviews are trusted in particular product reviews because they assumed that these users provided review without brand sponsorships. However, bloggers are often perceived are sponsored by brands, and so their reviews are perceived as less useful in terms of particular product reviews This finding question those of previous research, which has found that blogs are more influential because they are independent and reflect a product's actual performance (Lee and Youn, 2015).

Although interviewees seem to trust product reviews from online forums users, some interviewees do trust bloggers' recommendations. Those interviewees argued that bloggers are experts and have a good reputation, and so their opinion in terms of product reviews was perceived as valuable, which supports existing research on credibility. Yao-Hsu (2011) proposes characteristics that affect blogger trust, such as reputation and experience. Furthermore, Lis (2013) and Reichelt et al. (2015) argue that expertise is a source of credibility that affects e-WOM.

Family and friends are proposed as offline influencers because of similarity and intimacy. Interviewees stated that friends and family shared the same lifestyle and physical conditions, such as skin type. Interviewees stated that they trusted friends and family because they were close to them and perceived as more honest than beauty bloggers and online forum users. Importantly, intimacy is an important factor to build trust, familiarity and friendship leads them being perceived as more sincere.

5.4 Effective bloggers and online review channels from a consumer perspective

Section 5.1 confirmed that consumers use online reviews in their decision-making (for product updates and/or particular product reviews). This use of online reviews was indicated by the source of the online review (blogger or online forums). Consequently, when interviewees access different sources of online reviews, they behave differently in accessing this information, and there may be variations in the keywords used in searching for online reviews and the selected platform for accessing. For example, in terms of product reviews, product name and interviewees' particular issues were used when looking for reviews via search engines such as Google or via particular bloggers' social media channels; such as Facebook.

A critical analysis of consumers' online behaviour showed which online reviews platforms the interviewees frequently access. These platforms are effective for the interviewees in terms of receiving messages and bloggers in terms of diffusing messages, which would be benefit for marketing and brands.

So, this section proposes an effective platform for bloggers based on the perspective of interviewees, who discussed their online behaviour in terms of accessing online reviews for new product updates and particular online reviews. The most frequently mentioned online beauty forums among interviewees were Pantip.com and Jeban.com. However, the most effective platforms are bloggers' social media platforms. Accordingly, this study selects Facebook, YouTube, and blogs as the objects of investigation. Interviewees also agreed that these three platforms were what they used to access bloggers' online reviews, though Instagram was also mentioned. Because of the development of social media attributions and functions (specifically Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and blogs), bloggers and consumers may share their opinions of and experiences with beauty products in the social network sites.

However, each platform offers different benefits based on social media attribution. Facebook is the most popular social media platform in Thailand because it allows bloggers to post various type of media, such as photographs, text, and video. The site also supports interactions between bloggers and their followers. Furthermore, interviewees can sign in to Facebook using a mobile application, which allows them to access online reviews easily on a daily basis. YouTube was preferred interviewees who prioritised video clips and beauty demonstrations. Instagram was also proposed by interviewees who preferred searching using hashtags.

Blogs were less preferred by interviewees because accessing them means having to use a web browser rather than a mobile application. However, blogs were mentioned interviewees who preferred detailed reviews. Also, interviewees who searched using Google accessed blog reviews using the search engine.

In terms of online review platforms, blogs were deemed as the least important to interviewees, whereas social media sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were key. Most interviewees agreed that Facebook was their preferred social media platform because the site's functions allowed them to post and access various types of content, such as videos, messages, and photographs.

It is likely that blogs are not as popular because social media sites have the same attributes but are more easily accessed. Moreover, Facebook allows users to post a variety of third-party content, such as videos from YouTube or multimedia from Instagram. Also, when consumers access social media, they can interact in a number of ways, such as talking to friends, consuming content from bloggers, sharing content, etc.

Furthermore, the three social media functions (such as; Facebook messenger, Instagram direct message) allow users to connect with others users, which refers not only to commenting on the content of other users, but also to sharing particular posts. Also, these sites allow users to give feedback and comment on bloggers' content with likes or using

emoji. Also, tagging other users to see particular posts. Therefore, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are more convenient and useful than blogs. These mentioned activities (liking, sharing, and commenting) may be defined as network- based factors, which are key characteristics of blogs and bloggers, as discussed in Section 5.2.

Moreover, these three social media platforms are popular among interviewees because these platforms are used on a daily basis, particularly in Thailand, where social media use is fourth in the world (Leesa-nguansuk, 2018). In Thailand, Facebook users constitute 70 per cent of the population, whereas Instagram users constitute 20 per cent (Leesa-nguansuk, 2018). These figures indicate that reviews on social media channels may be diffused more effectively than those on blogs

Existing literature has not yet proposed platforms that effectively diffuse brand messages and provide online reviews, thereby influencing consumers' social media behaviour. These studies have suggested that blogs are essential platforms for bloggers, whereas this thesis proposes that other social media platforms are more effective than blogs, namely Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

5.5 Summary and analysis of the technology acceptance model (TAM) based on the perceived usefulness of online reviews and perceived ease of use of social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram) in conceptual framework

As mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, the findings and analysis found that a factor of TAM, namely **perceived usefulness of online review** could be used to explain consumers' attitude towards bloggers, due to current online marketing practices on popular social media platforms. Consumers are now aware of marketing practices on online reviews, especially with bloggers who have a high reputation (Hsu et al., 2013) (more discussion in 5.6.1). Therefore, the importance of reputation is less of a consideration in order

to build trust for certain blogger reviews, but it depends on how consumers perceive the usefulness of blogger reviews, based on factors such as characteristics of bloggers from thesis findings in Section 5.2.

Moreover, perceived ease of use, which is one of the features of TAM, can be used to explain consumers' attitude towards online reviews on social media platforms. This also explains why social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, are more popular than blogs. This thesis found that consumers regularly access and use these social media platforms in their daily routine. Additionally, these social media attributes and functions support online review activities in the same way that blogs do, and are more effective for online review platforms (more discussed in 5.6.2).

5.5.1 The adaption of TAM and TPB model in perceived usefulness of bloggers' reviews

This chapter has discussed the importance of blogger reviews in influencing purchasing behaviour (Hsu et al., 2013; Cheung, 2003; Lu et al., 2014). This section discusses reviews by bloggers and online forum users to identify how different reviews influence consumers' purchasing behaviour. These differentiations determine the characteristics of blogs and bloggers, which are the main contributions of this thesis. This thesis not only supports existing findings on online reviews and their influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour, but also determines that online reviews are key in both online and offline purchasing. When consumers encounter a product in store, they are likely to research the product online. This finding confirms that interviewees need online reviews to support their purchasing decisions, even if they are given the chance to try a product themselves.

This thesis posits that online reviews influence consumers' purchase intentions (Hsu et al., 2013), and each dimension (attitude towards beauty purchasing, social influence, the influence of an individuals' conditions) is related to all of the others. Because online reviews

(social influence) influence interviewees' attitudes, particularly in product quality (attitudes towards beauty purchasing), reviews can aid decision-making, even when consumers try the product themselves.

However, in reviews of product quality, interviewees tend to trust reviews from users in online forums where the review focuses on particular products and is where the review based on actual use. Interviewees differentiate between bloggers' reviews and those of forum users in terms of the prevalence of brand sponsorships. Though bloggers are perceived as less useful in terms of actual use, bloggers are more experienced, have a better reputation, and are afforded more credibility than forum users. Therefore, bloggers' reviews are still influential in consumers' decision-making processes, despite the sharing of influencing power with forum users. Hsu et al. (2013) proposes that reputation is a key factor in bloggers' perceived influence and credibility. However, this thesis determines that other characteristics, such as reviewers' actual use of the product, are also important. This thesis focuses on the characteristics of bloggers necessary in sustaining their credibility, which is discussed further in later sections.

Moreover, this thesis posits that interviewees use online reviews in both online and offline purchase decisions, even when they have tried a product themselves. Existing research has only been able to confirm that online bloggers' recommendations affected online purchasing intentions if consumers perceived that the reviews were useful. The perceived usefulness of bloggers' recommendations is key because if a consumer perceives that a review is useful, they will use the review in their online and offline purchasing decision, regardless of the reputation of the blogger. Perceived usefulness is one of the factors in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) that has been adopted to explain technology acceptance. TAM (Davis, 1989) was originally adopted to explain users' behavioural intentions; the model describes behavioural intentions as a consequence of an innovative information system, such that users' attitudes change according to the system and its

perceived usefulness (Liao et al., 2007). However, this thesis applies the concept of perceived usefulness to online reviews in terms of changing consumer attitudes, if the consumer can identify the usefulness of particular online reviews, and how online reviews might impact their attitudes.

This thesis determines that the perceived usefulness of online reviews may be used to enhance the findings of studies where blogger reputation is perceived to have been reduced. The critical analysis supports the findings of Hsu et al. (2013), who found that the perceived usefulness of online reviews is related to trust in online reviews, also suggest that marketers should employ bloggers with high reputations, especially popular ones, in marketing campaigns. However, reputation does not play a significant role in trust because sponsorships affect bloggers' reputations, but bloggers are still perceived as more credible than forum users.

Existing research has found that attitude and subjective norms are key in final purchasing decisions (Ahmad et al.; 2014). This thesis also finds that positive online reviews of particular products and brands (social influence) may have a positive influence on consumer attitudes (towards beauty purchasing), which will have a positive influence on consumers' decision-making, even when these consumers are given the opportunity to try the products themselves (individual conditions). Therefore, brands use online reviews in marketing campaigns in order to create a positive brand image and effectively advertise their products.

Hsu et al. (2012) developed the TAM and TPB models to examine the effect of bloggers' recommendations on customers' online shopping intentions based on quantitative research by proposing perceived usefulness as a significant factor and confirming that the perceived usefulness of online reviews has a significant influential effect on online shopping.

However, using qualitative methods, this thesis questions Hsu et al. (2012), finding that blogger reputation does not have a significant influence on consumer attitudes and

intentions and that, more importantly, blogs only have influence if consumers perceived the particular online review to be useful for them.
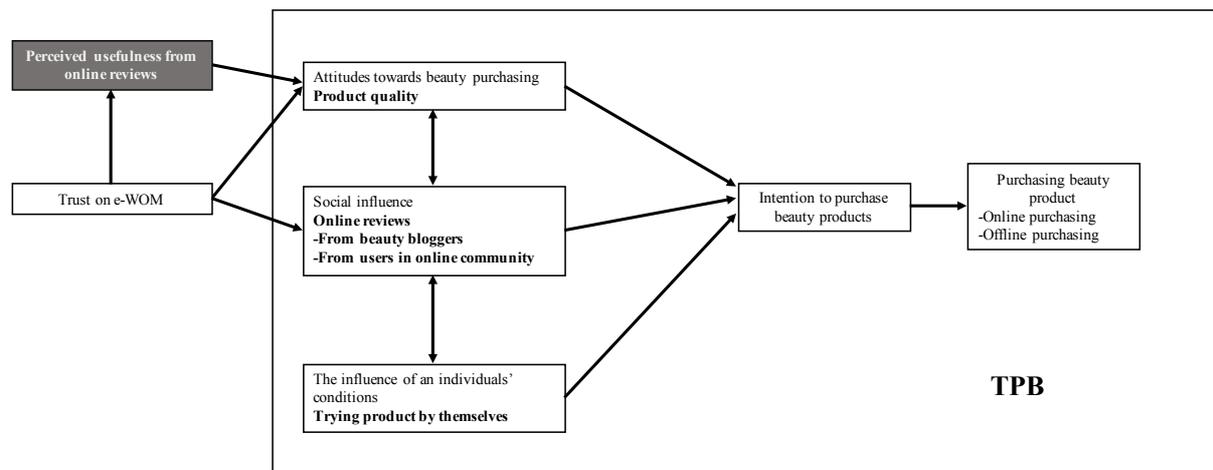
Figure 13. The revised conceptual model of bloggers' recommendations and their influence on consumers' decision-making in beauty product purchasing based on the TPB and TAM models

The TPB model is used in this thesis in order to determine how online reviews affect consumers' attitudes and influence their purchasing behaviour. However, after the analysis found that the TPB model can determine the factors behind the attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural control, namely trust and perceived usefulness of online reviews, which are key in influencing consumer attitudes. When interviewees justified the reasons that they trusted particular online reviews, and how those particular reviews influenced them, they always defined their attitudes towards particular reviews by identifying blog and blogger characteristics. Furthermore, these blog and blogger characteristics lead interviewees to perceive particular reviews as useful and as having different benefits. Namely, bloggers are beneficial in introducing new products, while online forum users are preferred for particular product reviews. In conclusion, the critical analysis of the TPB model not only discussed interviewees' attitudes towards beauty purchasing, but also investigated interviewees' attitudes towards online reviews.

The interview findings, together with the discussion of consumer decision-making process based on TPB, has confirmed that interviewees were influenced by online reviews.

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Moreover, the findings support the importance of encouraging trust as a way to gain influence for particular sources of online reviews because of the characteristics of online reviews. This finding emphasises the importance of discussing blogger characteristics relate to trust and credibility, which Elaboration Likelihood model ELM is developed to discuss in final sections of this discussion chapter (5.2; bloggers and characteristics).

5.5.2 The adaption of the TAM and TPB models in effective online review platforms from a consumer perspective

The critical analysis shows that interviewees prioritised the convenience and ease of use of social media, and so blogs were deemed as not as useful. As a result, this thesis finds that the consumers' perceptions of social media are based on the perceived ease of use, which can be theorised using the TAM model. Perceived ease of use concerns how much effort the user believes he or she will have to expend to use the system (Liao et. al, 2013). This thesis defines perceived ease of use as users being able to easily use a platform and choosing to use it based on its convenience.

The TAM model can be used as a framework of the online behaviour of consumers in terms of online beauty reviews and their ease of use. When comparing blogs and social media channels, consumers tend to prefer social media, which means that social media is often used to access online reviews, particularly when social media platform function and attribution supported. Hsu et al. (2012), who developed TAM as a conceptual model, did not refer to ease of use due to the specific sample of their study.

The findings in this thesis about social media platforms questions the findings of existing research (Lee and Koo, 2012; Hsu et al., 2012 which finds that blogs are the key platform for bloggers and have played an influential, active, and important role in affecting readers' attitudes. Hsu et al. (2012) confirm that blogs play this key role in affecting readers' attitudes. However, the interviews for this thesis suggest that Facebook and YouTube and

Instagram were more useful than blogs and a number of interviewees stated that it was not necessary to have a blog to be a blogger. The finding again questions previous research on the beauty industry, which suggests that blogs have become a key channel for providing information and sharing product reviews (Baker and Moore, 2008; Hsu et al., 2012).

According to the interviewees, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook are perceived as more useful than blogs in accessing product reviews. In addition, perceived ease of use, which is a key factor in the TAM model, can be used to explain why social media is more effective than blogs, in that Facebook and YouTube are more accessible than blogs. Furthermore, the functions of social media, which allow users to connect with one another, leads to an online network between bloggers and followers, which suggests that network-based factors are key in blogger characteristics, as discussed in Section 5.2.

The findings of this section sum up those of previous sections. Firstly, the characteristics (actual use, experience, and network-based factor) of bloggers and social media platforms are determinants of consumer behaviour, which is discussed further in Section 5.2. Therefore, in terms of the link between each section, the conceptual model should be revised as follows.

TAM may be used to predict and understand online users in terms of their perception of their adoption of certain sites, the TPB may be employed to explain human behaviour. However, only one model fails to explain the consumers' online behaviour (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). Hence, an integrated model consisting of both TAM and the TPB is introduced as an appropriate tool to predict the behaviour of consumers in an online context (Davis, 1989; 2000; Featherman and Pavlo, 2003; Gefen et al., 2003; Wu and Chen, 2005). Much existing research has used the TAM and TPB models to explain online behaviour. Wu and Chen (2005) studied the models in the context of the tax system, and Lee (2009) used them to explain investors' intentions to use online trading.
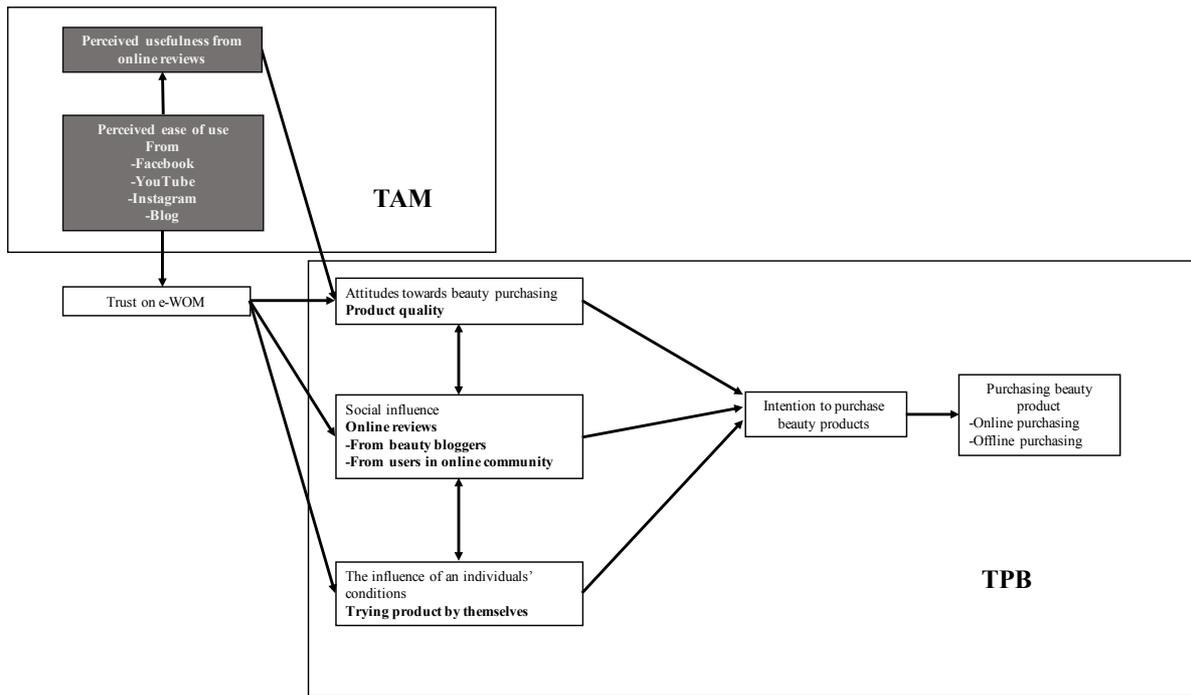
Figure 14: The revised conceptual model of bloggers' recommendations and effective channels based on influence on consumers' decision-making in beauty product purchasing, based on the TPB and TAM models

Hsu et al., (2012) proposes that perceived usefulness is one of the significant factor of consumers' online purchasing and confirms that the perceived usefulness of online reviews is a significant influential factor in online purchase decisions. This thesis not only confirms that the perceived usefulness of online reviews is important for consumers' attitudes in terms of purchase intentions, but also proposes that ease of use is key on social media platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Consequently, blogs were described as less effective in the diffusion of online reviews because social media channels are more easily accessible via mobile applications.

5.6 Conclusion

Following critical analysis and discussion, this chapter has made two principal arguments to address this thesis's research questions. This research has explored, understood, and contributed to the new knowledge of the influential role of blogs and bloggers in the consumer decision-making process in beauty product purchasing in Thailand based on the

TPB model and ELM model, as discussed in Sections 5.1-5.2. However, a critical analysis in Section 5.5 showed that features of TAM could be used to explain consumer attitudes towards online reviews. The perceived usefulness of bloggers also affects how consumers and marketers define bloggers based on the bloggers' functions, namely to share product reviews or to introduce new products. A blogger is only defined as an influencer when the blogger's perceived influence is significant.

Bloggers' online reviews affect consumers' attitudes towards price, convenience (place), and brand image. These reviews are even more useful in affecting perceptions of product quality regardless of the shopping channel (online/offline channels) and brand preference (drugstore or high-end brands). Online reviews are not only beneficial in online shopping, but also for offline shopping. Even when consumers have the opportunity to try a product by themselves, they still use online reviews before making a decision, especially when consumers perceive that a blogger is similar to them.

Moreover, this thesis contributes new knowledge on which blogging platforms are most effective, namely Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, all three of which are available in the form of mobile applications. These platforms' functions allow users to upload media similar to that of blogs, such as video clips, photographs, etc. These platforms also allow users to interact with other users, encouraging relationships between bloggers and followers. Moreover, consumers more frequently use social, so it is easier to access reviews from Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram than from blogs. As a result, these platforms are more popular than blogs because of ease of use. Therefore, this thesis has proposed perceived ease of use, a TAM factor, in the revised conceptual model (Figure 14).

In the decision-making process, consumers are influenced by three groups, namely bloggers, online beauty forum reviewers, and friends and family. The characteristics of these three groups that allow members to influence consumer trust are expertise, experience, actual use, intimacy, similarity, and sincerity. These characteristics are important in understanding

the characteristics of bloggers. Some of these characteristics are mutually present in family, friends, and beauty forum contributors. These characteristics are beneficial for bloggers in building consumer trust towards reviews. However, many bloggers struggle with sustaining credibility because of the prevalence of sponsorships.

This thesis has proposed characteristics that sustain bloggers' credibility. The ELM has been used explore blogs and bloggers' characteristics based on an understanding of consumer attitudes. Hsu et al. (2012) suggest that popular bloggers are beneficial for brands, which aligns with this thesis's findings, and that consumers are now aware of brand sponsorships, particularly for more popular bloggers. Moreover, Li et al. (2009; 2011) propose the dimensions of the MIV model (content, network, and activity, which are used to determine the most influential bloggers. However, based on the consumer perspective of bloggers' credibility, those dimensions are not effectively applied. Therefore, to more effectively employ brand sponsorships as components of marketing campaigns, this thesis has confirmed the characteristics that may sustain bloggers' credibility, namely content, network, expertise, and homophily. From a consumer perspective, a number of other factors are key in building trust, namely sincerity, actual use, and experience. Sincerity, actual use, homophily, and experience were mentioned in Section 5.2 in building consumers trust towards influence. Sincerity is most valued in friends and family, actual use is prioritised in online forum contributors, and experience is expected from beauty bloggers.

Section 5.2 made clear that bloggers should have certain characteristics (sincerity, actual use, homophily, and experience) in order to sustain credibility and earn consumer trust. When sponsorships are involved in online reviews, said reviews should be honest and reflect bloggers' expertise and experience. In addition, bloggers can persuade consumers to trust them, when they have something in common (homophily), such as lifestyle or skin type. Consumers are more likely to purchase a product without trying when it is positively reviewed by somebody that they perceived to be similar to them.

A critical analysis of the characteristics of blogs and bloggers established ELM knowledge to understand consumers' attitude towards reviews based on the central and peripheral routes. Although only content factors were on the central route, this thesis found that the central route was related to the peripheral route. Consumers are aware when a blogger is being sincere, when the blogger has actually used the product, and when the blogger has expertise based on the blogger's content and narrative in reviews. Therefore, this thesis proposes that there exists a relationship between the central and peripheral routes of the ELM. The table below (Table 34) is a summary of this chapter and illustrates the final revised conceptual framework, Figure 15.

Table 34: Summary of chapter 5 discussion and contribution

Previous Scholars	This thesis
Overall discussion and contribution	
Most studies have confirmed that online reviews affect consumers' purchasing using either the TPB or ELM models. These studies have not explored the role of bloggers and social media in marketing and sponsorships, based on the credibility. ELM was developed to determine attitudes towards online reviews but does not identify the characteristics of bloggers and social media that sustain their credibility.	**Considering the research gap, the present study has two main purposes:** - Propose which characteristics of bloggers and social media sustain bloggers' credibility based on marketing and sponsorship assumptions. - Explore the influential role of bloggers and social media using the TPB and ELM models to explain how bloggers and social media affect consumer decision-making.
5.1 How bloggers and social media influence consumer decision-making, as explained by the TPB model	
Online reviews affect consumer decision-making only in terms of online shopping. **Attitudes towards purchasing** Specific factors that affect attitude have not been identified.	Online reviews influence consumer decision-making process, not only in terms of online shopping, but also in terms of offline shopping. **Attitudes towards beauty products purchasing** Factors that affect attitude are identified based on purchasing channels (online and/or offline) and brand preferences (drugstore brands and/or high-end brands) and are categorised into the following: - Product quality - Price - Convenience (place) - Brand image

Product quality is the most important factor in online reviews because other factors can be determined from brand sources.

Useful online reviews should be based on content contributors' actual experiences, which are mostly found in reviews in online forums rather than those of bloggers because of consumer awareness of sponsorship.

Social norms

Existing studies have not…

- specified the specific benefit and function of online review from a consumer perspective.
- explored the consumers' perception of blogger and other online reviews sources.
- moved beyond a focus on how the reputation and credibility of bloggers affect consumers' purchase intentions and on how marketers should use high-reputation bloggers in campaigns.

Social influence

Consumers perceive that online reviews serve different purposes, categorising reviews into reviews and introduction to new products:

- Particular product reviews aim to provide content related to product use based on contributors' experiences and opinion of particular products;
- Introductions to new products aim to familiarise consumers with new products and opinion and experience of the product.

Determining consumer perspectives of blogger and forum review are based on the function of the review.

Perceived behavioural control

It has been confirmed, for the most part, that online reviews affect online shopping.

Bloggers' reviews

Bloggers' reviews are more useful in introducing new products due to sponsorships.

Furthermore, bloggers' expertise and reputation mean that their reviews are perceived as useful.

Online contributors' reviews

Online contributors provide honest reviews based on actual use. Furthermore, because these users do not receive brand sponsorships, their reviews are beneficial in terms of particular product reviews rather than the introduction of new products.

Determining the function of reviews and how they influence purchasing is not only based on reputation and credibility, but also dependent on actual use, experience, and knowledge.

Also, consumers are aware of beauty bloggers being used in marketing campaigns, which affects their reputations.

The influence of individual conditions on beauty product purchasing

Online reviews affect online and offline shopping because even though consumers may have the chance to try a product in the store, consumers still want to consider online reviews before deciding to purchase.

Homophily overcomes perceived behavioural control because similarity between bloggers and consumers encourages consumers to try products themselves based on their similarities with bloggers, such as same skin tone and type.

5.2 Bloggers and characteristics explained by ELM	
Existing scholars have defined bloggers in generic terms: - Experts or people who use blogs to share particular issues and opinions - Advisors. Li et al. (2009, 2011) proposed the following factors to describe blogs and bloggers: - Content - Network - Activeness	**Definition of bloggers from consumer and marketer perspectives based on their influence and perceived usefulness** **Consumer perspective** Beauty bloggers are those who introduce new products or/and review products. **Marketer perspective** Beauty bloggers are beauty influencers, and only bloggers with influential power are beauty influencers.
Li et al. (2009, 2011) just proposed as the dimension in MIV model (marketing influential value), which examines influential bloggers but did not actually explore this topic from a consumer perspective. Existing scholars studying ELM have mostly examined the factors in the central and peripheral routes that affect consumers' attitudes towards online reviews. Information quality (central route) and sources of credibility (peripheral route) are often used for testing in ELM studies. Existing studies have not discussed the relationship between the two routes. Most existing research, particularly that examining fashion blogs, has used the term "authenticity" instead of "sincerity".	This thesis uses the principles proposed by Li et al. (2009, 2011) and sources of credibility (expertise and homophily) to explore blogs and bloggers' credibility, which is explained by the ELM model. Only content and network factors (number of followers) affect blogger credibility. This thesis determines that, in terms of credibility, only expertise and homophily affect credibility. The following characteristics are important for bloggers' credibility from consumers' perspective - Sincerity - Actual use - Experience This thesis determines the relationship between the central and peripheral routes (ELM). Content can reflect the sincerity of bloggers, which is seen in two-sided reviews, particularly when marketing and sponsorship deals are clear.
5.3 The influence and trustworthiness of bloggers compared to contributors in online beauty forums, friends, and family members	
Existing literature has not compared the importance the different types of influencers, particularly online and offline influencers.	The proposed top three influencers from a consumer perspective are as follows: - Bloggers - Contributors in online beauty forums - Family and friends **Aspect of influence** <table><tr><td>Influencers</td><td>Factors</td></tr><tr><td>Bloggers</td><td>Expertise Experience Sponsorship</td></tr><tr><td>Online forum contributors</td><td>Actual product use Reviews without sponsorship</td></tr><tr><td>Family and friends</td><td>High level of intimacy High level of similarity High level of sincerity</td></tr></table>

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5.4 Effective bloggers and online review channels from a consumer perspective

Most existing studies have only investigated blogs rather than considering other channels used by bloggers.	From a consumer perspective and based on the development of social networking, this thesis proposes effective platforms for bloggers that reflect on the behaviour of consumers, who tend to use the following platforms: - Facebook - YouTube - Instagram - Blogs The advantages of social media (Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram) are as follows: - Social connections that allow users to interact with one another, such as sharing posts from particular social media with their friends, commenting on particular posts, and tagging friends in other posts; - All of the platforms are available in the form of mobile applications, meaning that they are more accessible than blogs. Moreover, this thesis also determines the benefit of these platforms based on their functions and attributes: - Facebook and Instagram allow users to post various type of media, such as text, video, and images. - Blogs also allow users to post these types of content but do not allow for user interaction to the same extent. - YouTube is the most appropriate platform for beauty tutorials.

5.5 Adapting factors in TAM to explain the consumers' attitudes towards bloggers and effective online review platforms

TAM is a model developed for technology acceptance, so most existing studies investigating information system and technology fields have used TAM. Some existing scholars in marketing such as Hsu et al. (2012) have confirmed that perceived usefulness of recommendation does not appear to drive blog users' shopping intention in the online context.	TAM applied based on marketing perspective, So, this thesis revises the conceptual frameworks TPB and TAM (Figure 14). This thesis found that consumers categorized online reviews from bloggers based on the bloggers' introductions of new products and reviews of particular products. These two types of blogs consequently form whether consumers trust bloggers when sponsorship is involved. TAM was applied in this thesis together with TPB, so this thesis proposed the idea that perceived usefulness of online reviews affects purchasing intentions. When consumers perceived bloggers' reviews as useful, consumers tended to trust the reviews, which in turn led to an influence on the consumers' intention to purchase. So, when marketing is clear, reputation is not

|	important. Instead, **perceived usefulness on bloggers' recommendation** (TAM) is considered (Figure 14).
Few existing studies have used TAM to explore why certain platforms, especially social media platforms, are more effective for bloggers based on consumers' perspective.	Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are perceived to be more accessible in terms of accessing online reviews based on social media behaviour, meaning that **perceived ease of use** is a TAM factor in the conceptual framework.
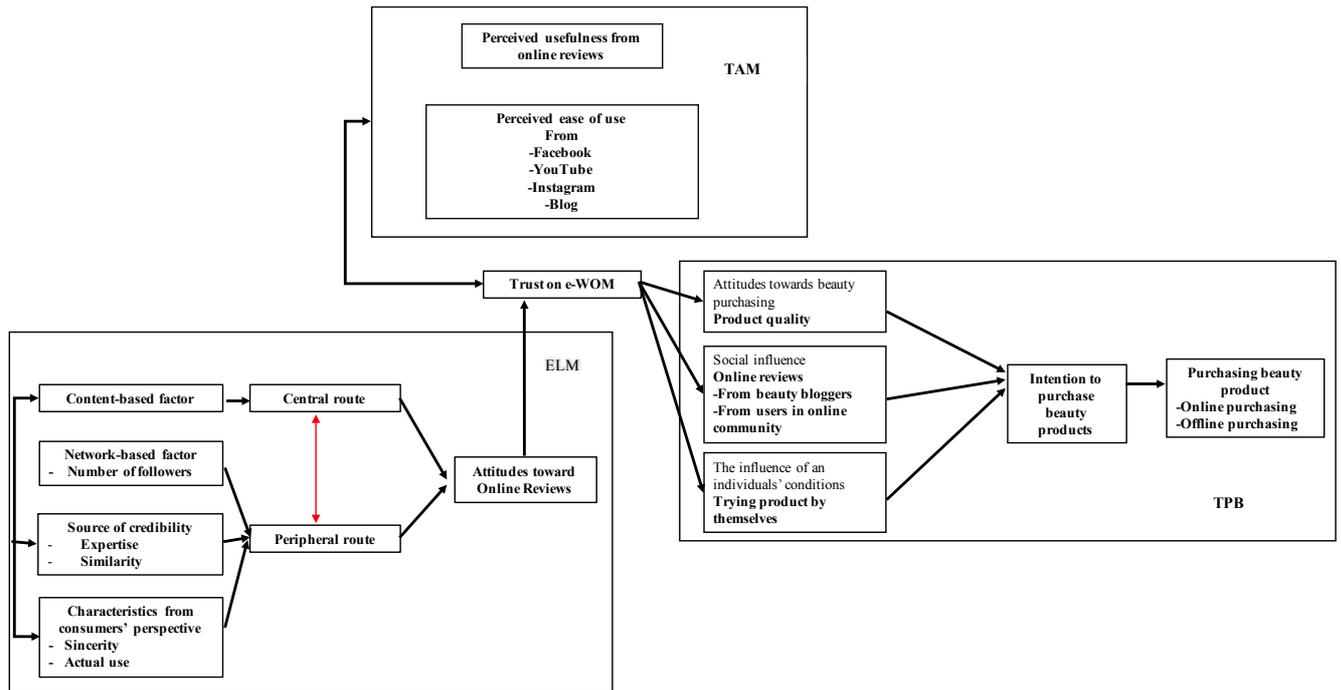
Figure15: Revised conceptual framework

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Implementation

This thesis has probed the influential characteristics of bloggers that affect consumers' decision-making process for beauty products in the Thai market. Regarding sponsorship from brands, this thesis not only confirmed the influential roles of bloggers in consumers' decision-making process, but also proposed what influential characteristics of blogs and bloggers affect bloggers' credibility and hence consumers' trust in the bloggers' reviews in the long term.

In the Findings and Discussion chapter, this thesis has confirmed that online reviews are beneficial for consumers for both offline and online purchasing. However, previous scholars have not specified the precise benefits of online reviews. Also, in previous studies, the characteristics of social media platforms and bloggers have not been the focus in order to determine how these characteristics affect bloggers' credibility and trustworthiness. Moreover, most previous studies have defined bloggers in generic terms studied only blogs instead of other social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Table 34 from Section 5.4 summarises the contributions and findings from this thesis, which aimed to address those gaps in the research.

Existing studies about how online reviews influence consumer behaviours have mostly focused on identifying which factors affect either consumers' purchasing intentions or, to a lesser extent, consumers' trust. Moreover, previous scholars have developed only one particular model for each topic studied. For example, the theory of planed behaviour (TPB) is used to explain which factors affect consumers' intention towards purchasing, especially online purchasing. Similarly, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) is mostly used to explain which factors of online reviews affect consumers' trust, mostly in terms of dual

processes between a central route and peripheral route. Both the influential role of bloggers in consumers' decision-making process and how the characteristics of blogs and bloggers affect their credibility need to be further explored. Even existing scholar used both theories TPB and ELM, but conducted based on quantitative research (Wang, 2015). This thesis used both TPB and ELM to study how blogs' and bloggers' characteristics affect their trustworthiness and credibility in the long term based on qualitative methods. After the findings and analysis, this thesis found that factors in the technology acceptance model (TAM) can explain the perceptions of consumers of beauty bloggers' reviews, i.e. the perceived usefulness of online reviews, and the perceived ease of use of three social media platforms (i.e. Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram).

6.1 Research findings and contribution

Online reviews of particular products and services are now available on various platforms, such as third-party websites like TripAdvisor and Beautypedia, online communities, personal blogs, Facebook pages, etc. Consumers rely on these online reviews before making purchase (Hus et al., 2013), but trust and reliability are a challenge for bloggers and reviewers in influencing consumers' decision-making, particularly when brands employ popular bloggers to present or positively review their products. Potentially brands can access specific segments and target market based on nature of the followers in particular online communities. Much existing research (Hus et al., 2013) has emphasised trust in online reviews to discuss the influential role of bloggers without focusing on sponsorship and marketing, especially in electronic purchasing. However, many consumers are now aware of sponsorship posts. This thesis explored the role of blogs and bloggers in terms of the consumers decision-making process based on an understanding of theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model. The thesis also suggested the characteristics of blogs and bloggers

that will sustain their credibility on a long-term basis, using the ELM to investigate consumers' attitudes towards online reviews.

The following presents the findings of this thesis, which has advanced knowledge about blogs and bloggers based on its exploration of how their characteristics influence their credibility. The findings centre around five main points: (1) how consumers perceived the benefits of online reviews, (2) what characteristics changed consumers' attitudes towards intention and purchasing, (3) How marketing practices and sponsorship affect consumers' perceptions of bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility, (4) which platforms for online reviews are most effective based on consumers' perspective, and (5) the knowledge and new contribution from the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), and the technology acceptance model (TAM).

First, in line with existing studies, this thesis agrees that online reviews are beneficial and can positively influence purchasing intentions, especially in online purchasing. However, this thesis has advanced the knowledge about the influential role of online reviews by identifying which factors of bloggers' reviews affected consumers' attitudes towards beauty purchasing. The thesis also examined which particular functions of reviews affected perceived usefulness of bloggers' reviews from consumers' perspective. This thesis found that online reviews from bloggers and other sources (such as online beauty forums) affect consumers' attitudes towards both online and offline purchasing and product preference (drugstore or high-end brands). Product quality plays an important role in influencing consumers attitudes, and is a principal reason that consumers access online reviews. Moreover, a number of other factors, namely price, convenience, and brand image, which can be found from brand information, also affect attitudes. Consumers determine the usefulness of online reviews based on the function of a particular product review. Some reviews serve to introduce new products, whereas other are to share experiences and opinions after having

actually used the product. The functions of bloggers' reviews affect how consumers perceive bloggers, describing them as those who "who review products and introduce new products".

However, when brands and marketers offer sponsorships, they only offer these deals to those who are perceived as "beauty online influencers". Only influential bloggers can be referred to as beauty online influencers, so brands should only sponsor effective bloggers. However, the characteristics of effective beauty online influencers are a subject for further research. This thesis found that both consumers and marketers defined beauty bloggers from a perspective of usefulness of bloggers.

Second, while existing studies have discussed and proposed the characteristics of blogs and bloggers from different perspectives (Li et al., 2009, 2011; Agarwal et al., 2008; Uzunoğlu and Kip, 2014), this thesis advanced existing knowledge by further studying some of the characteristics identified by previous scholars and by proposing several new characteristics based on an exploration of which blogs' and bloggers' characteristics affect trustworthiness and credibility in the long term and thereby affect consumers' purchasing intentions. Because of the prevalence of sponsorships in online reviews, consumers now have a different perception of bloggers. Consumers believe that bloggers provide reviews based on sponsorships, meaning that the content of the reviews is largely positive and that bloggers are more useful in terms of product update. Online beauty forums are an alternative for consumers in accessing online reviews because the reviewers are perceived to have actually used the product before posting. However, some consumers do trust bloggers' reviews, even when they become aware of a sponsorship, because bloggers have experience and expertise and can be identified in a social network. Friends and family are also referenced as influencers because of their sincerity, intimacy, and homophily. Although this thesis aims to explore the influential characteristics of bloggers in terms of credibility, the characteristics of other influencers' characteristics may be investigated to bloggers' characteristic in order to

strong tie to consumers and build up trust, such as how the similarities between bloggers and consumers (similar skin tone and beauty issues) affect consumers' trust of reviews without having tried a product.

Existing research has proposed a number of factors to investigate influential bloggers. For example, Li et al. (2009, 2011) proposes dimensions (content-based factor, network-based factor and activeness-based factor) using the MIV model to determine influential bloggers from a marketing perspective. However, the finding of this thesis show that only content (writing, photograph, video quality) and network factors (number of followers, likes, and views) affect bloggers' credibility.

Hus et al. (2013) suggest that marketers use bloggers' reputations in marketing campaigns. The bloggers used in marketing tend to have large numbers of followers (network-based factor from Li et al. (2009, 2011)) and interactions with these followers. However, brands should not consider only reputation and number of followers because customers have become aware of the prevalence of sponsorships. Therefore, to more effectively employ bloggers, brands should consider other factors, such as sincerity, actual use, experience, and expertise.

Bloggers use content as a tool to express sincerity by providing two-sided reviews and persuading consumers to believe that they have actually used the product through video, where they demonstrate how to use the product, share opinions and experience, and even receive brand sponsorships. Experience and expertise are characteristics unique to bloggers when compared to other influencers (online forum review contributors and friends and family). Therefore, bloggers can show their ability and potential to use a product and criticise its quality through writing, photography, and videos.

Using ELM, this thesis explained consumers' attitudes changing towards bloggers' and how bloggers' characteristics affect credibility via each route (central/peripheral).

Content also refers to blog characteristics, in that bloggers can express their characteristics through blogs (sincerity, actual use, expertise, and experience) with their narrative voice in reviews. Therefore, this thesis found that content-based factors exist in the central route but are related to the peripheral route (sincerity, actual use, expertise, and experience).

Third, in existing scholarship, blogs mostly refer to platforms for bloggers, but this thesis examined Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram as platforms. These three platforms, particularly Facebook, are in fact the most frequently used platforms by bloggers and consumers. However, in the research for thesis found, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram as the platforms most frequently used by bloggers and consumers, who frequently use social media platforms, particularly Facebook. These social media platforms are also available as mobile applications, so it is easier to access online reviews through Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Moreover, these platforms allow bloggers to post media similar to that of blogs but with greater opportunity to interact by commenting, sharing posts, liking publications, and following and subscribing to bloggers. These interactions can strengthen the relationship between consumers and bloggers, leading to an increased level of intimacy. This intimacy leads to further trust from consumers (Cho et al., 2012). Furthermore, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are more accessible to consumers.

Finally, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) has often been used to explain consumers' intention and purchasing behaviour. The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) has been developed in many previous studies (Hsu et al., 2013; Gupta and Harris, 2010) to understand consumers' attitudes towards online reviews. However, this thesis aimed to explore more effectively the influence of bloggers and of specific characteristics of blogs and bloggers on trustworthiness and credibility. Therefore, this thesis integrated both TPB and ELM. After obtaining the research findings, this thesis further found that two factors of the technology acceptance model (TAM) had to be incorporated as well, namely perceived

usefulness of online reviews and perceived ease of use of social media platforms. This conceptual framework was then revised by proposing factors from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which are the perceived usefulness of online reviews and perceived ease of use of social media platforms. Online reviews affect consumers' attitudes in purchasing if consumers perceive that the usefulness of bloggers' reviews is based on the function of particular product reviews and/or introducing new products. The perceived usefulness of a review determines how persuasive it is in influencing consumer decision making. In order to build trustworthiness and sustain credibility, bloggers should have the proposed characteristics, namely a high number of followers and citations (network factors), expertise, homophily, sincerity, actual use, and experience. Social media platforms, namely Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, are effective platforms to diffuse a message. However, blogs are still important in reviews, particularly when consumers seek more detailed publications.

6.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this thesis supported that consumers use online reviews in decision making in offline and online purchasing, even when consumers can try the product themselves. Therefore, this thesis recommends that brands use online reviews in their marketing campaigns, particularly with bloggers whose followers represent the target market. Because of the prevalence of sponsorships, consumers perceived bloggers as useful in terms of *particular product reviews* and *product update*s. Because consumers are aware of sponsorships in bloggers' reviews, consumers use these reviews for product information rather than for obtaining opinions based on actual use. As a result of the challenge posed by consumers' attitudes towards sponsored reviews, this thesis recommends that beauty brands focus on review content and blogger reputation as well as number of followers.

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This thesis found a relationship between central route and peripheral route in ELM, which suggests that bloggers' content and narratives of representing should be based on bloggers' experiences and expertise. Consumers perceive that reviews are beneficial in introducing and providing opinions on products if bloggers are believed to be sincere. Brands should allow bloggers to provide two-sided reviews that reference both the strengths and limitations of the product. These reviews should include images that allow users to identify actual use and product details.

Some consumers perceive sponsorships as positive because sponsorships allow bloggers to share new product updates. Consumers are more positive towards updates seen in bloggers' reviews than towards updates in clear marketing campaigns because bloggers are perceived as being the same tier of end-users.

Similarity between bloggers and followers leads to an increase in bloggers' trustworthiness and credibility. When consumers share a skin type/tone/lifestyle/issues with a blogger, they tend to perceive the blogger as more trustworthy and spend less time on decision-making. Moreover, similarities between bloggers and followers affect intimacy, because consumers feel that bloggers understand their needs and can make proper suggestions.

This thesis recommends that brands use online forum contributors as an alternative to bloggers in sponsorship. This thesis found that consumers tend to trust reviews from online forum users because these reviews are perceived to be based on actual use and not influenced by sponsorships. However, a limitation of online forum users is that they are difficult to identify on social networks, particularly when compared to bloggers. Therefore, brands should select contributors who have high numbers of shares and followers for marketing campaigns.

Moreover, effective online review platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and blogs. Consumers regularly use these platforms, which are also available in the form of mobile applications and are therefore more accessible than blogs.

Facebook is the most popular social media platform because it allows users to post various media types, such as text, images, and videos, which may also come from third-party sources. Facebook's functions encourage social networking, with features such as liking, sharing, and commenting. These functions increase the intimacy between bloggers and their followers.

YouTube was referenced as useful because it allows bloggers to demonstrate how to use products. Furthermore, if consumers see that a blogger is actually using a product, it increases the blogger's credibility.

Instagram was highlighted by this study's participants as the most frequently updated platform and one that supports images and short videos. Therefore, Instagram is the most appropriate platform if intending to launch a viral campaign. Blogs may be useful to consumers who prefer more detailed content but are now less popular among internet users. Therefore, these sites may not be as advantageous in online market campaigns.

This thesis studied only the beauty industry, which is characterised by sponsorships in the form of online reviews. However, the findings of the thesis may be applicable to other industries with similar characteristics, such as the clothing, accessory, and jewellery industries. The findings may also be extended to automobile and technology sectors. Although this thesis investigated the Thai market, the findings may be used to discuss behaviour in other collectivist cultures across Asia (Mattila et al., 2004; Buriyameathagul, 2013). e-WOM can be generated by advisors and friends of consumers. Bloggers are intimate with followers and serve as influencers for marketers.

The table below (Table 35) summarises the findings of this thesis, which may offer practical

implications in brands' marketing strategies.

Table35: The summary of research finding relates to managerial implications

Key points	Research findings	Practical implications
Effective characteristics in terms of credibility	High number of shares and followers Expertise Similarity Sincerity Actual use	Employing bloggers for marketing practice will benefit brands in their target market (followers). Bloggers should be used to introduce new products because they offer reviews based on experience. Not only reputation and followers should be considered. In sponsorships, consumers expect to see sincerity and actual use in the form of two-sided reviews. Bloggers should be chosen based on similarity (homophily) to followers.
Effective online reviews	Content and narrative style is most important.	The narrative style should be natural because consumers are now aware of marketing techniques. Brands should allow bloggers to provide two-sided reviews that reference the strengths and limitations of products. Review content and photographs should represent the sincerity of bloggers and actual use of the products.
Effective platforms	Facebook (1st) YouTube Instagram Blogs	Social media platforms are used daily by consumers and are available in the form of mobile applications, hence they are more effective than blogs. Facebook is the most effective platform for marketing practices because of its popularity among consumers. The site also allows users to post various types of media and supports social interactions, allowing bloggers to connect meaningfully with consumers. YouTube is practical in demonstrating products and their uses.

| | | Instagram is the most frequently used channel, and brands can use it promote new products with images and short videos.

Blogs are still appropriate for detailed reviews rather than marketing campaigns because they are neither widely used nor accessible. |
|---|---|---|

Source: Research finding in chapter 4 (Findings and analysis)

6.3 Research and theoretical implications and suggestions

This thesis used the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model from Ajzen (1991) to explore online reviews and social media influence consumers' decision making. Though the TPB model was used to understand purchasing intentions and behaviour, the model may also explain how online behaviour affects these behaviours. Most existing studies on online reviews have used TPB as a conceptual framework in order to explain which factors of bloggers' reviews affect consumers' attitudes towards online shopping. This thesis found that TPB may be used to discuss consumer decision-making both in terms of online and offline purchasing. However, TPB alone cannot explain consumers' attitudes towards online reviews because it only highlights the importance of perceptions and attitudes in predicting intentions and behaviour.

In studying consumers' attitudes towards online reviews, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) is often used to explore which online reviews are most effective in influencing individual behaviour (Gupta and Harris, 2010; Hsu et al., 2013). However, this thesis aimed to determine which characteristics of blogs and bloggers affect their credibility from a consumer perspective. ELM was also used to explain the dual process by discussing how blog and blogger characteristics affect trust and credibility based on the central and peripheral routes of the model. Some characteristics of blogs and bloggers from previous studies were applied to determine their impact on trust and credibility.

As the exploration examined the process of consumers purchasing based on online reviews, the study focused on consumers' trust of online reviews and found that more trust tends to indicate a higher chance of purchasing. Thus trust is the moderator between attitudes towards online reviews (ELM) and attitudes towards purchasing (TPB). Based on the findings, this thesis suggests that combining TPB and ELM can effectively explain attitudes towards online reviews, which indeed affect consumer purchasing intentions and behaviour.

However, some characteristics from Li (2009; 2011), such as activeness, are questioned in terms of how they affect blogger credibility in the context of beauty products in the Thai market. However, other industries in other countries may be influenced to a different degree by blogger credibility because these industries may require content creators to have considerable expertise and experience. Contributors may regularly post reviews and/or create content that aims to challenge and stimulate the consumers' minds. When a product is difficult to find in the mainstream market, activeness may be a key factor in maintaining bloggers' credibility.

Moreover, via the central route, blog characteristics are key and relevant to bloggers' characteristics via the peripheral route. Social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and blogs are essential tools for bloggers in expressing their characteristics, in that their reviews may represent their sincerity and expertise. Therefore, future studies on online reviews should consider platforms or bloggers tools in their analysis because these platforms and tools are the moderators that connect consumers and bloggers. Moreover, different platforms require different levels of user knowledge in order to access online reviews. Furthermore, a consumer's lifestyle may also influence channel preferences. Many users regularly use social media and access online reviews through Facebook, particularly because they follow a number of bloggers on this platform. Moreover, the attributes of each platform should be highlighted for further research, as different platforms support different social

activities. For example, Facebook allows users to 'Like' posts and add emoji on particular posts. Those activities can affect the reputation of bloggers and online reviews, thereby impacting trustworthiness and credibility.

When online review platforms or channels are being considered, the TPB model alone cannot explain the perceived usefulness of online reviews. For example, consumers who encounter difficulties in accessing online reviews may perceive those reviews negatively. Therefore, TAM should be used in conjunction with TPB (Venkatesh and Davis 2000), because TAM may be used to support the analysis. TAM is an extension of Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action (TRA), which in turn is an extension of TPB. This thesis found that Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were more popular than blogs in accessing reviews because they are available through mobile applications which are most frequently used by consumers as part of their daily routines.

TAM's perceived use factor was proposed in this thesis as part of the conceptual framework. Electronic platforms and channels of online reviews were a key element of this study and may represent an area of further research. Studies in the field of communication may focus on how effectively consumer receive message through various online platform, whereas marketing research may study how different online reviews channels affect consumers' purchasing intentions based on cognitive and affective factors.

Moreover, TAM was also used to discuss consumers' and marketers' perceptions of bloggers because both consumers and marketers define bloggers based on perceived usefulness. Consumers perceive bloggers as those introduce new products and provide particular product reviews, whereas marketers perceive bloggers as online beauty influencers. Influential bloggers are employed as online marketing tools, in order and use their power to persuade followers to absorb brands' messages, leading consumers to trust them. Therefore, perceived usefulness was proposed in the factor effect trust. Hsu et al. (2012) argued that the

reputation of bloggers is the main factor affecting trust in bloggers and perceived credibility. In addition, Hsu et al. (2012) suggested using high-level bloggers in marketing campaigns. Because of the prevalence of sponsorships, bloggers' reputations are now less important, and consumers are now aware that bloggers are paid to mention products, particularly among high-level bloggers. Further research on online reviews should consider perceived sponsorships and propose other factors such as consumers' perceptions of marketing sponsorship and attitudes towards reviews when there is knowledge of marketing strategy.

6.4 Limitations

This thesis largely focused on a collectivist culture and emphasized the group over self, which is a key value in a number of Asian cultures (Mattila et al., 2004; Buriyameathagul, 2013). Park and Lee (2009) find that Asian consumers more frequently browse and use online reviews. However, existing research also suggests that Asian consumers evaluate online reviews using evaluative/subjective/less data-oriented criteria. Therefore, suggestions from exiting research about Asian culture may affect the analysis and result if further research conducted based on western context. Moreover, this thesis interviewed participants in Thai, and the subsequent translation of data into English may have affected the findings, even after employing diagnostic techniques.

Qualitative methods of interview and online observation were employed. Those methods rely on individual opinions, judgement evaluation, and interpretation, or call 'ethnocentrism'. This thesis thus employed the triangulation technique. To support the translation from Thai to English, a Thai Ph.D. candidate was recruited, as this candidate spoke Thai and English fluently and was from the same culture. Tracy (2013) noted that one of the limitations of observation is the need to avoid obtrusiveness, as researchers cannot be obvious in data collection; however, online observation minimises that limitation, because

researchers can observe an online space anonymously. However, online observation reduces the ability to observe the natural activities of a sample. For example, this thesis aimed to observed the activities of selected bloggers on Facebook pages; what the bloggers posted and how the bloggers interacted with their followers produced the data that informed the analysis and results. In general, with observation there is also some risk that the researcher's level of detachment and separation from the context will be too low (Tracy, 2013), which might affect the understanding of actions and interpretations of researchers. In this thesis, the researcher has been familiar with beauty products and beauty online reviews especially in the Thai context for years, so the results and analysis was conducted based on her personal knowledge and background.

This thesis studied the beauty industry. Studying other sectors may generate different results because the nature of decision-making varies across industries. Beauty products are simple products to understand and can be easily demonstrated on screen. In contrast, highly technical products that need to be explained are different. Consumers make more affective evaluations on beauty products, which factors into the decision-making process; similarly, in clothing shopping, overall affective evaluation and hedonistic desires, referred to as 'affect-referral', are thought to influence some purchases (Solomon et al., 2006). When decision - making is rooted in emotion, rather than in cognition or attitude, the process is affective (Solomon et al., 2006).

The sample of this study was limited to women because of the assumption that women are the principal source of income for the beauty industry. However, the results may have been different if the respondents were male. Moreover, this study only used a selection of ten popular bloggers for reference during interviews. Bloggers outside of these ten may offer different results in future research.

Because this thesis aimed to study consumers' decision-making processes and the influence of social media and bloggers, however only consumers' perspectives were explored, but not the bloggers' perspectives. This thesis only interviewed marketing managers. However, when bloggers were interviewed, their perspectives and actual online activity, which can develop the analysis to accurately understand the flows of activities and understanding what happened between each party (consumers, bloggers, and marketers). The findings offer practical and business implementations because they can be applied to develop marketing strategies that work with both consumers and bloggers.

Moreover, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are effective platforms for bloggers because Thai consumers use social media platforms on a daily basis. Furthermore, in Thailand, social media use is the fourth highest in the world (Leesa-nguansuk, 2018).

Therefore, these social media platforms are more suitable than blogs for marketing campaigns. However, in other countries, where social media use varies, other social media or blog platform may be appropriate

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Appendices

Information Sheet & Consent Form
เอกสารยืนยันการยินยอมเข้าร่วมให้สัมภาษณ์

Research Study (การศึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์)

You are being invited to participate in a research study exploring the perspective on different individuals based on the subject of bloggers influence your decision-making process.

การตอบสัมภาษณ์ในครั้งนี้ เป็นส่วนหนึ่งในการศึกษาความคิดเห็น และทัศนคติต่อการตัดสินใจ ซื้อของผู้บริโภค ซึ่งเป็นผลจากการ ได้รับอิทธิพลจากบล๊อกเกอร์

Title of the project (ชื่อหัวข้อวิทยานิพนธ์)

An exploration of the role of bloggers and social media as influencers in the consumer decision buying process for cosmetic in Thai market.

การศึกษาการตัดสินใจซื้อเครื่องสำอางค์ ของผู้บริโภคในประเทศไทย ที่ได้รับอิทธิพลจากบล๊อกเกอร์ และสื่อสังคมออนไลน์

Details of research (รายละเอียดโดยสังเขป)

This Ph.D. research will develop the confirmation from previous literatures that consumer perceived usefulness regarding online reviews and blogs influences consumers' intentions in their decision-making process (C.-L. Hsu, Lin, and Chiang, 2013; C.-L. Hsu and Lin, 2008; Park and Lee, 2009), however, this research will study those concept based on theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which mostly develop to explain the subjective and norms (influencers/bloggers) in marketing perspective. Regarding to this research, Thai beauty bloggers will be assigned as subjective norms. Moreover, this Ph.D. research will also develop the proposal and argument of previous studies (Li, 2009; Agarwal 2008; Cho, Wang and Lee, 2012; Lu et al., 2014; Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014) that effective influencers have identifiable characteristics to explore what characteristics can sustain trust and credibility of bloggers in long term based on qualitative methods.

วิทยานิพนธ์ระดับปริญญาเอกฉบับนี้ ศึกษาจากงานที่อื่นๆที่เกี่ยวข้อง โดยเฉพาะงานวิชาการที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ เกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรม

ของผู้บริโภค ต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อ เนื่องจากรับการกระตุ้นจากสื่อออนไลน์ โดยการศึกษานี้อยู่ภายใต้การอธิบาย ของทฤษฎี Theory of

planned behaviour (TPB) ซึ่งทฤษฎีนี้ในเชิงทางการตลาด ส่วนใหญ่ใช้เพื่อศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการกระตุ้นจากปัจจัยภายนอก (Subjective

norms) ซึ่งในที่นี้ คือผู้ทรงอิทธิพล หรือ บิวตี้บล็อกเกอร์ ภายใต้การศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพครั้งนี้ได้ผ่านการวิเคราะห์จากงานตีพิมพ์

ทางวิชาการที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการศึกษาลักษณะของบิวตี้บล็อกเกอร์ และสื่อออนไลน์ที่มีผลต่อการรักษาความเชื่อของผู้บริโภคในระยะ

ยาว

Purpose (วัตถุประสงค์)

The aim of the research is to explore how bloggers influence the consumer decision-making process in the Thai cosmetic market particularly in terms of blogger trustworthiness and credibility.

จุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการตัดสินใจซื้อเครื่องสำอางค์ ของผู้บริโภคในประเทศไทย ที่ได้รับอิทธิพลจากบล๊อกเกอร์และสื่อสังคม

ออนไลน์ ในเชิงของการวิเคราะห์หาความลักษณะของบล๊อกเกอร์ที่ส่งผลต่อความน่าเชื่อถือ

Procedures (ขั้นตอน)

Participants in the study will take part in a one-to-one interview, either face-to-face. The interview will be semi-structured and an open discussion will be encouraged. An audio recorder will be used during the interview. Participants may pause or end the interview at any time if they do not wish to continue. All interviews will be conducted by Panisara Khongthaworn, Ph.d. candidate from the Faculty of Business & Law, University of the West of England.

ผู้เข้าร่วมให้สัมภาษณ์จะถูกขอสัมภาษณ์แบบตัวต่อตัว (one-to-one) ซึ่งเป็นการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งการตั้งคำถาม และเปิดโอกาศ

ให้ผู้สัมภาษณ์ตอบคำถามตามความคิดเห็น ในขณะที่ให้สัมภาษณ์จะมีการบันทึกเสียง และสามารถหยุดได้ทุกขณะถ้ามีการร้องขอ

จากผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ ซึ่งการสัมภาษณ์ครั้งนี้จะขอสัมภาษณ์ โดยนางสาวปาณิสรา คงถาวร นักศึกษาปริญญาเอก มหาวิทยาลัย

University of the West of England ภาควิชาธุรกิจ และกฎหมาย

Anonymity and Confidentiality (การไม่เปิดเผย และการรักษาความลับ)

All interviews will be treated as confidential. In presenting and publishing the data, all interviewees will be anonymised. The transcripts of the interviews will be stored securely in personal folders on the University of the West of England's server.

ข้อมูลของผู้สัมภาษณ์จะถูกรักษาเป็นความลับ และไม่ถูกเปิดเผยใดๆในที่สาธารณะ การแกะข้อมูลจะถูกเก็บอย่างดีในคลังข้อมูล

ของมหาวิทยาลัย University of the West of England

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Right to withdraw from the study (การยกเลิกการให้สัมภาษณ์)

Participants can withdraw from the study at anytime in any format (written or verbal) and that their data will be destroyed.

ผู้เข้าร่วมสามารถยกเลิกการให้สัมภาษณ์ได้ในทุกขณะ ไม่ว่าจะทางลายลักอักษร หรือทางวาจา หลังจากนั้นข้อมูลของผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์ จะถูกทำลายทันที

Contact Details (ข้อมูลการติดต่อ)

Panisara Khongthaworn (ผู้ขอสัมภาษณ์)

Panisara2.Khongthaworn@live.uwe.ac.uk

Director of study (อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา): Professor Tim Hughes

Tim.hughes@uwe.ac.uk

Supervisor (อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา): Dr Yvette Morey

Yvette2.morey@uwe.ac.uk

To give your consent to taking part in this research, please put a cross in the boxes below, print and sign your name, date, and return the form to Panisara Khongthaworn.

กรุณาทำแบบสอบถามด้านล่างเพื่อยืนยันการยินยอมให้สัมภาษณ์และส่งกลับมาที่ นางสาวปาณิสรา คงถาวร

	Please initial all boxes Y/N ใช่/ไม่
I am 18 years old or above. อายุ 18 ปีหรือมากกว่า	
I read and understand this information sheet. ฉันเข้าใจข้อมูลด้านบนทั้งหมด	
I understand the purpose of this research. ฉันเข้าใจจุดประสงค์ของการศึกษา	
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. ฉันยินดีร่วมเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์	
I understand that taking part in this research is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. ฉันเข้าใจสิทธิในการยกเลิกการให้สัมภาษณ์	

I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. ฉันเข้าใจถึงการเก็บข้อมูล และการรักษาความลับของข้อมูล	
I understand that the researcher will be discussing the progress of her research with her supervisors at University of the West of England. ฉันเข้าใจถึงขั้นตอนการถกเถียงเกี่ยวกับผลของการให้สัมภาษณ์ ต่อนักศึกษาและอาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา	
I understand that any information about me will be used solely for research purposes. ฉันเข้าใจถึงข้อมูลส่วนตัวของฉันใช้เพื่อการศึกษาเท่านั้น	
I understand that the research will involve befriending the researcher on my selection of social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn); email communications are needed for additional questions and an informal interview ฉันเข้าใจว่าการศึกษาครั้งนี้ อาจมีการอ้างอิงสื่อสังคมออนไลน์ของฉัน เช่น Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn และจะมีการติดต่อผ่านทางอีเมล์	
I understand all data will be coded and encrypted, so no identity could be traced ฉันเข้าใจว่าข้อมูลจากการสัมภาษณ์แจะถูกแปลง และไม่มีการเปิดเผยตัวตนใดๆ	

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

ชื่อผู้เข้าร่วม   วันที่   ลายเซ็นต์

_____   _____   _____

Name of Person
taking consent.   Date   Signature

ยื่นยันการยอมรับเข้าร่วม   วันที่   ลายเซนต์

Initial Screening Questionnaire

This questionnaire is arranged as one part of a PhD research project to explore how bloggers influence the consumer decision-making process in the Thai cosmetic market particularly in terms of blogger trustworthiness and credibility.

What is your age?

    ☐18-22 years old ☐23-26 years old ☐27-30 years old

    ☐ 30 years old and above

How much is your income per month?

    ☐ Less than 5,000 baht ☐5,000-15,000 baht ☐15,000-30,000baht

    ☐30,000-50,000 baht ☐More than 50,000 baht

What is your education level?

    ☐ High school ☐Bachelor degree ☐Master degree ☐Doctoral degree

Are you normally Facebook user? ☐Yes   ☐No

Do you follow any beauty bloggers? ☐Yes   ☐No

If yes please select whom are you following (can select more than one)

☐ SP Saypan   ☐Feonalita   ☐Nobluk   ☐Nina Beautyworld

    ☐Sonunui   ☐Others

How often do you buy cosmetic product? _____.

How much do you spend on purchasing cosmetic each month?

_____.

Have you ever purchase beauty product because of beauty bloggers' recommendations/reviews?   ☐Yes   ☐No

Semi-Structure Questionnaire

Consumer behaviour towards cosmetic purchasing

1. Please tell me about you cosmetic purchasing.

2. What influence you the most to purchase cosmetics? (Such as brand, promotion, influencers and etc.)

3. What source of information do you normally access, when you would like to get more product review or information? (such as web board, brand website, other online channel or bloggers 'channel)

What influence consumers' decision-making according to cosmetic purchasing

1. Compare to other media sources, how information obtained from bloggers' channel is different from others?

2. Do you think those information can help you on your decision-making process to purchase cosmetic? If yes, why?

Trust on blog/bloggers

1. Do you think what motivate beauty bloggers to blog?

2. What do you think about sponsored blog?

3. What do you think about information provided by bloggers and company?

Characteristics of blogger to sustain their trustworthiness (consumer perspective)
What are the factors that motivate you to follow those bloggers?

Activeness-based factor

How important do you think it is for bloggers to be active/update their blogs regularly?

Network-based factor

What do you think will affect bloggers, when people share or cite their post?

Content-based factor

How important of the narrative styles of bloggers? (Such as writing style, multimedia, length of content)

Intimacy factor

What do you think about the similar interests or lifestyles between you and bloggers?

Online observation recorded from Facebook

Bloggers/Week	Factors from Li et al. (2011)		
Sp Saypan	Content-based	Network-based	Activeness-based
May 2016			
Week1	-Posting mostly about beauty update, which can tell that from her routine posting when she saw the promotions about beauty items. -Posting her photos which show make-up and outfit with the captions -Also sharing quote about life and living from third party website - Shared the post from third part, which related to food, beauty. -Sharing her Video clip on the Facebook page	- Approximately followers: 1,150,000 -Always got likes from every posting, but approximately 3,000 likes for product reviews, also 5,000 likes and more on her outfit and make up photo -Always got the cited and share from followers, especially with the post for giveaway posting which bloggers had the conditions for participants to share the particular post.	-Not always reply comments but mostly like on comments then followers can tell that she have read the particular comment - 2-3 days posting on newsfeed. Maximum 5 posts per day.
Week2	- Posting reviews about product using (hair products) -Posting about the beauty products, which can tell that the post is sponsored from brands because using brand message and slogan and hashtag -Posting activities about participating the event from magazine Cleo, and brands Avene trip in France	- Approximately 1,150,000 followers -Got approximately 6,000 likes and 1,000 shares, also more than 200 comments per post.	-Less reply and like on followers comments -Less updating on Facebook compared to last week, because the her traveling
Week3	-Mostly posting reviews about the result of using	- Approximately 1,350,000	-See likes on the top 5 comments

		followers	-Daily posting on newsfeed
	products from Avene, which reveal the sponsorship from brands	-Got approximately likes and 1,000 shares, also more than 200 comments per post.	
Week4	-Posting reviews about new product launching, (mascara and foundations) which didn't mention about the sponsorship -1 times Live on Facebook for giveaway.	- Approximately 1,150,000 followers -Got approximately 2,0000 likes and 500 shares, also more than 200 comments per post. When she post from third parties	-Daily posting on newsfeed -Just sharing opinion in the comment box with no plying specific comments
June 2016			
Week1	-Posting about product used which are the blush -Posting new product launching which can tell that from sponsorship -Provide price, place and promotions of products when talking about new products -Posting about the event that she invited from brands -Sharing the news about beauty from third party websites	-She used her personal Facebook together with Her Page, in order to sharing her content from Page	-Almost daily update newsfeeds
Week2	-Brands posting the new product launching on her newsfeed Also brands post the event that she participated on her new feeds	-Consequently from the giveaway participation, which have conditions that who would like to join this giveaway, need to follow hers, so number was increased.	-Almost daily update newsfeeds -But not much replying

| Week3 | -There is no any update activities. | | |
| Week4 | -She posting about her admit in hospital. | -Followers like and give emoji | - Not any active, might be because of her illness |

Bloggers/Week	Factors from Li et al. (2011)		
Feonalita	Content-based	Network-based	Activeness-based
May 2016			
Week1	-Posting mostly about beauty update, such as news and beauty bloggers awards -Posting herself photo -High quality photograph with professional skill and set up -Posting her photos which show make-up and outfit with the captions about products details - Shared the post from third part, which related to travel and beauty. -Posting VDO clip which linked from YouTube about her blush review which can tell that from brand sponsored	- Approximately followers: 660,000 -Always got likes from every posting, but approximately 300 likes and emoji on posts -About 50 comments in average	-No reply comments - 2-3 days posting per times
Week2	- Posting reviews about product using (hair products) -Posting about the beauty products, which can tell that the post is sponsored from brands because using brand message and slogan and hashtag -Sharing VDO clip from YouTube about make up tutorial which sponsored from Loreal	- Approximately 650,000 followers -Got approximately 6,000 likes and 1,000 shares, also more than 200 comments per post. -Got about 25 comments in average per post	-Less reply comment, but do reply for in general for majority comments -Update on newsfeed almost everyday
Week3	-Sharing the VDO clip from YouTube related to the skincare routine	-Approximately 150 likes and emoji	-See likes on the top 5 comments -Daily posting on

			newsfeed
Week4	-Sharing the post about beauty -Nothing special about her posting, almost the same activities from previous weeks	-Approximately about 200 – 1,000 likes and emoji per post	-2-3 post per week - Not any comments or reply back
June 2016			
Week1	-Posting the product bought from Givenchy brands which mentioned that she bought it by herself -Sharing in general about the beauty tips from their website -Posting make up photo which can show her skill by comparing before and after make up	-If she sharing post from third party she will get more likes. -Approximatly 1,000 likes and emoji	-Active2-3 times per weeks -Reply some selected comments about product questions
Week2	-Sharing linked from her blog post about products reviews (lipstick)	Approximately 1,000 likes and emoji about 20 comments	-Almost daily update newsfeeds -But not much replying
Week3	Mostly posting about photo that show beauty products, which didn't provides	-Approximately 500 likes and emoji -About 10 comments	-2-3 times update on newsfeed -One reply to the comments
Week4	-Posting the activities that brands invited to the event -Posting the beauty topic and sharing beauty topic as usual	-Approximately 100 likes and emoji	- Daily update on newsfeed
July 2016			
Week1	-Live on Facebook with sharing the products and experience about her make up	-Approximately 1,000 views and likes and emoji	-Reply the answer within the live when viewers ask about question.
Week2	-Sharing her blogs post about the lipstick swatch from brands golden rose, which can tell that from brand sponsorship	-Gloden rose repost her reviews -about 1,200 likes and emoji -30 comments	-No replying -2-3 times posting per week
Week3	-Posting about her trips in UK	-about 1,000 likes and emoji	-Reply only the top comments

	-Sharing her blogs on newsfeed about the sunglasses she was sponsored from brands	-10 comments and 100 likes and emoji	
Week4	-Sharing her blogs posting about the beauty items swatch (lipstick), which sponsored from brands Jillstuart	Approximately 40 likes with emoji, and 10 commets	-Almost daily update on newsfeed -Not much reply

Bloggers/Week	Factors from Li et al. (2011)		
Nobluk	Content-based	Network-based	Activeness-based
May 2016			
Week1	-Always posting about her photo which showed her make up and outfit -Sharing the post from third website which related about traveling and -Posting her photos which show make-up and outfit with the captions	-Approximately 900,000 -Always got likes from every posting, but approximately 3,000 likes for product reviews, also 5,000 likes and more on her outfit and make up photo -Always got the cited and share from followers, especially with the post for giveaway posting which bloggers had the conditions for participants to share the particular post.	Daily update
Week2	-Posting herself photo that show product using (lipstick) -Sharing the third party post which related about traveling	-about 500 – 1,000 likes and emoji	-No reply and comment
Week3	-Posting the VDO clip	-Because Loreal	-Comment and replied

	which can tell that sponsored from brands Loreal, which is tutorial	reposted from her page, so it is expanding to gain more liks from Loreal followers -Got approximately 10,000 likes and emoji, also more than 200 comments per post.	about 5 comments all -Daily posting on newsfeed
Week4	-Repost the third party website about beauty and fashion -Posting about the event that she participated from NYX	Approximately 1,000 likes and emoji	-Daily posting on newsfeed -No reply and comments
June 2016			
Week1	-Sharing her make up tutorial from YouTube -Content in this week mostly about the drugstore products -Repost the third party post about the dietary and food	-About 2,500 likes and emoji, 46 comments	-2-3 times update -Reply only the top comments
Week2	-Posting about the trip to beach which from brands events (sunscreen product)	-About 500 likes and emoji 30 comments	-Not any reply -Active 3 days per week
Week3	-She shared the opinion about the traffic in Bangkok. -Posting the lipstick product swatching	-10 comments and 200 likes	-Daily update on newsfeed -Not any reply
Week4	-Sharing her lipstick purchasing and swatching. -Always sharing the post from third party website which related about fashion and dietary.	-Followers like and give emoji about 1,000. -20-50 comments per post	- Comment only the top comment from the list -Active everyday
July 2016			
Week1	-Live on Facebook when she doing make up -Sharing the experience about make up -Answer question from	-Approximately 8,000 views and 3,000 Likes and emoji -About 500	-Almost update newsfeed everyday -Replying about her products launching

	viewers -Promoting about her own brands products, which is contact lenses	comments -200 reposted from followers	
Week2	-Reminding about the workshop which cooperate with NYX brand -Posting about NYX products which sponsored her the workshop and products used	-About 100 Like and emoji	-No replying -Almost daily posting
Week3	-Sharing the photo about the workshop from NYX -Also giveaway the products from NYX, which required only followers to participate	-About 20,000 likes and 15,000sharing -Consequent form giveaway campaign, so gain more 1,200 followers	-Not any reply -Update daily on newsfeed -Announced the winner (NYX giveaway) under the post at the end of the month
Week4	-Still posting the photo and content about the workshop with NYX -Also mostly posting herself photo using NYX product make up -Sharing the VDO clip from her YouTube channel about make up tutorial	Approximately 1,000 on Likes and emoji	-Almost daily update on newsfeed -Just some replied under the comments of her make up tutorial
Bloggers/Week	**Factors from Li et al. (2011)**		
Nina beauty world	**Content-based**	**Network-based**	**Activeness-based**
May 2016			
Week1	-She got the sponsored from brands to do post the reviews, she did not directly mentioned about sponsor. However, she provide reviews in detail, place, and price, such as review product from Bioterm. -However, the posting without sponsored, just only the short reviews and recommendations to purchase	- Approximately followers: 1,000,000 -Only about 300 likes on the sponsored post -20 shared about 1,000 likes and emoji on un-sponsorship	-Never reply the comments - 2-3 days per week posting on newsfeed.
Week2	- Sharing her Vlog from her YouTube channel,	- Approximately 700 likes and	- Not any reply the comments

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	which is about her traveling in Japan by sponsorship from Jillstuart -Keep posting photo at the event in Japan -Posting the content about products from Jilstuart -But still posting the content about beauty by sharing and repost the	emoji -20 comments	-Keep updating the newsfeed about the sponsored content 2-3 days a week
Week3	-Posting the content about sponsored content from Ponds, also doing giveaway the products from Ponds as well	- Approximately 1,000 Likes and emoji -Ponds also repost her giveaway on Ponds' Facebook page -As a result from giveaway participation then followers in increase about 200	-Update the newsfeed 2-3 times per day -Comment and interact with followers because of the giveaway participations
Week4	-Live on Facebook for giveaway. -Also sharing experiencing about the using Ponds products and answer the questions from viewers comments	- About 2,000 viewers on Live -Got approximately 1,500 likes and emoji	-Reminding about the giveaway everyday during this week -Daily active on newsfeed
June 2016			
Week1	-Posting the sponsored content which can tell by the brand message and detail about product use (Oriental Princess brand) -However daily posting is about beauty, food and fashion which are not related to the sponsorship	-About 100-300 likes and emoji -Not many comment and reposts from followers	-Daily update -Not any reply due to not many comments from followers
Week2	-Posting reviews, which included which sponsored from brands. The new product and new brands launching in Thailand. -During the week, she sharing the post from third party website	-About 300 Likes and emoji -Not many comments and shares from followers	-2-3 times active on newsfeed
Week3	-Sharing the content from	-500 Likes and	-2-3 times updates on

	her blogs about fashion, which sponsorship by Hair products -Also posting activities about the judging the best products of the year which coordinate with magazine	emoji -not many comments	news feed -Not any reply to the comments
Week4	-Sharing the post from third party website about beauty, wedding and fashion -Also sharing the competition form MissGrands Thailand	-Due to repost from their party, so got repost and like more than normally got. -About 5,000 Likes and emoji	-Not any replying -Daily update on newsfeed -Not any agenda posting
July 2016			
Week1	-Posting the sponsored content which is skincare from Japanese brands, she did not mentioned about the sponsorship but she provide details and brands message, also positive on products reviews -Sharing the blog content on Facebook which is about the supplementary food and products	-Approximately 100 Likes and emoji 10 comments and 20 shares	-Almost update newsfeed everyday -Not any reply comments
Week2	-Live on Facebook which content related to make up and her routine skincare	-2,500 views and 1,000 Like and emoji -About 20 shares	-Replying the answer from comment through the Live
Week3	-Participate the Sephora open house, then sharing content and photo related	-About 5oo Like and emoji	-Daily update on newsfeed -Not any reply to the comments
Week4	-Sharing the content from blog related to the sponsored post (hair products)	Approximately 2,000 on Likes and emoji	-Almost daily update on newsfeed -Not much reply -
Bloggers/Week	**Factors from Li et al. (2011)**		
Sonunui	**Content-based**	**Network-based**	**Activeness-based**
May 2016			
Week1	-Posting post the photo which show her lifestyle, make up and traveling -The photographs are high	- Approximately followers: 600,00 folowers	-Not always reply comments - 2-3 days posting on newsfeed.

		-Got less likes and emoji when compared with other selected bloggers maximum about 500 likes	
	quality with the professional editing. - Shared the post from third part, which related to food, beauty.		
Week2	-Sharing the photo about her event participating with Kate cosmetics -Posting the sponsored content about the new product collection launching	-24 likes and emoji -Not any comments and sharing	-2 times a week updating on Facebook.
Week3	-Posting her lifestyle photo -Share the content from her blog on Facebook page -Posting high quality photo about herself which can see make up clearly	-100 Likes and emoji	3 times update on newsfeed
Week4	-Not any new update, mostly about repost from the their parties website about life style and beauty	Abot 50 Like and emoji	-2 times active on newsfeed
June 2016			
Week1	-Posting sponsored post from Fashion brands. -She is very outstanding with the mood and tone and theme of photo. -High quality photo and professional editing and flitter	-If she sharing post from third party she will get more likes.	-Almost daily update newsfeeds
Week2	-Sharing the content which related to the sponsored post (Fashion and Living by Living Mall)	-25 Likes and emoji	-Almost daily update newsfeeds with sharing third parties posted.
Week3	Posting about using medicine for women -Also sharing content on blogs about women and lifestyle	-200 Likes and 45 share	-Not any comment reply -Active on facebook 4 times a week

Week4	-Posting about the exercise and dietary food daily	-Followers like and give emoji about 50-100	- Daily active on Facebook
July 2016			
Week1	-Posting about the beauty products, with the short reviews -Posting her lifestyle photo when she is in Singapore	-Approximately 80 Likes and emoji -About 24 comments	-Almost update newsfeed everyday -Not any reply comments
Week2	-Sharing the third party website content as a routine -Live on Facebook with her friends, the content is about answering the question from viewers and followers	-About 50Like and emoji -Not any comments	-No replying -Almost daily posting
Week3	- She got the content about traveling in Thailand -Posting photos about her traveling.	-About 100 Likes and emoji	-Not any replying -3-4 times update on Facebook
Week4	-Still posting about traveling, leads to show her outfit and lifestyle on traveling in Thailand and Singapore	Approximately 100	-3-4 update on Facebook -No any replying in the comment

Online observation recorded from YouTube (monthly)

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Sp Sypan			
May 2016	-4.00 minutes length VDO clip -Sponsored content as she mentioned that receive product from brands -The skincare reviews -Content included how products work -Mostly talking about positive side of product -VDO record both indoor and outdoor -VDO recording and	-Scribers: 99,000 -75,000 views -290 thumb up -27 thumb down -Not any replying the comments	-Monthly active

	editing based on the simple skill		
June 2016	-Content is related about hair style with sponsorship -Content provide both strength and limitation about products, but mostly positive about sponsor from brands -About 4 minutes length -One more clip also sponsored from brands, skincare brands	-about 20,00 views -about 130 Tumbes -about 4 Thumb down -14 comment	Twice a month posting on YouTube -No reply in comments
July 2016	No VDO clip in this month		

Bloggers/Month Feonalita	Content	Network	Activeness
May 2016	-4.00 minutes length VDO clip average -4 Sponsored content as she mentioned that receive product from brands -The skincare reviews -Content included how products work and clear photo, VDO clip -Mostly talking about positive side of product -VDO recording and editing based on the high skill	-99,000 subscribers -20,00-100,000 views -200 Thumb up 10 Thumb down -40 comments	-5 VDO clips post in this month -Reply some comment'- but Like on comment
June 2016	-All are sponsored post from brands, which discuss about new product launching. -High quality VDO	-About 15,000- 150,000 views -200-10,00 Thumb up 20-50 Thumb down	-5 Posting this month -Just reply back in the comments that discuss about negative

	clip with the light and profession present products		
July 2016	-1 sponsored posting which mentioned about both positive and negative of products 2 VDO about the traveling in UK. One is Vlog which show her lifestyle when she was in UK. Another one is shooping haul	-9,000-28,000 views - About 100-500 Like -About 20 unlike per post	-3 VDO clip posting -Not any reply in comment -Like on comments to show that she saw those comments

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Nobluk			
May 2016	- In this month the content is mostly make up tutorial. -However, there are two VDO clips which is related to the sponsorship, she mentioned about products and brands. -One clip content is about the Vlog from travel in Korean -Production is professional, the editing, sound and presentation skill are highly qualified -The presentation skill is clear and confident	-Approximately 390,000 subscribers - about 20,000-80,000 views	-8VDO clips post in this month -Not any reply comments from any clip
June 2016	-In this month, the content mostly is related to the make up tutorial, and her actual product use in routine -Only one VDO is the sponsored VDO clip because she mentioned the name of brands in the clip	-The highest views are from the VDO show how to produce own make up by yourself (DIY), which is the trend now about 300,00 views -The rest average views are about	5 VDO clips post in this month -Just only one and two reply on the top comments

		20,000-40,000	
	and discuss only one brands on particular products	-Likes are about 1,500-2,000, unlikes are about 20 in average	
July 2016	-Average 4-5 minutes per clip -There are 4 VDO which can tell that are from sponsored brands, because she mentioned only one brands in the particular clip -She didn't mentioned about the negative of products -She demonstrate how to use particular product clearly -The production is professional, light and sound is clear. -One VDO clip is content about the challenging for make up, which is the trends now among Youtubers -One Clip is the tutorial make up clip	- Average views are 40,000-200,000 -Approximately 200 likes and 20 unlike	-5 VDO clips with in this month -50 comments, she replied only comments that is from Youtubers

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Nina beautyworld			
May 2016	-2 VDO clip are sponsored clip, which she post the brands on the cover page and clip name -One clip is about her lifestyle -One clip is about how-to make up -She read the script when she talkigng	-Approximately 150,000 subscribers -minimum 10,00views and maximum 80,000 views -200 Thumb up 10 Thumb down -10-40 comments	-4 VDO clips post in this month - Not any reply comments - Weekly updating the clip
June 2016	-The presentation	- 7,000-50,000	-5 VDO clips in this

	styles seem girl talk. -In this month, there are 2 sponsored VDO clips, which mentioned the brands on the cover page and cover photo. -She speaks quiet slow and mono-tone. -However, she provides lot of information about products, price, price and place. -One clip is sharing about her shopping from UK when she was on holiday, which took about 40 mins -The rest clips is about 4.00 length. -The presentation is quiet natural and shoe her personality -However, during the traveling she got sponsored from one beauty brands, and she also mentioned in the clip that she got sponsorship	views among 4 clips -The highest views is from the sponsored clips, which related to camera (50,000 views) -about 100 likes and 20 unlikes - about 30 comments in average	month -Not any reply comments -Update weekly
July 2016	-If it sponsored content, she set up the name included brand and product on cover page. So viewers know immediately that is sponsor from brands -This month she post 3 sponsored clips. -The rest VDO clips are make up tips and how-to -The clip editing is professional, light	-The maximum views are 40,000 views, and the minimum is 7,000 views. -about 1,000 likes and 70 unlikes in average	-5 VDO clips in this month -Update weekly -She reply comment regards to product information, which only sponsored VDO clip

	and tone is bright and clear. -There is the theme of cover pages.		

Bloggers/Month Sononui	Content	Network	Activeness
May 2016	- High profession production like TV ad, especially Pandora clip, which provide and explain the product functions, promotion and place clearly.-Only one clips in this month -Sponsored content from Pandora, which she did not mention about the sponsorship. But can tell from the style of presentation which is like TV ads -VDO clips did not see her face, just only see products -2 mins length	-9,000 subscribers -40,000 views -170likes -3 unlikes	-1 VDO clip post in this month -Not any reply comment
June 2016	-All 4 VDO clips are sponsored clip -She only mentioned one particular product and brands. -High profession production like TV ad, which provide and explain the product functions, promotion and place clearly. -the message used can tell that is from brands message -5 mins length	-Maximum views is 10,000 views, and minimum is 5,000views -About 300 Likes in average and 5 umlike	4 VDO clips in this month -Not schedule posting -No any reply the comment
July 2016	-4 VDO clips are all sponsored clip, which she did not mention that she got sponsored, but she	-Minimum view is 1,000 views and the maximum is 10,000 views	-4VDO clips -Monthly posting -No any reply comments

| | only mentioned about one particular brands in the clip
-The production is professional, like TV production.
-The script is creating, not like other bloggers which talking with the camera. But she lip-sync and recording the voice to explain about products
-She created the content which bring the brands to her lifestyle
-Average 5 mins length
-The content is not only related to the beauty items abut also consumer product, such as washing liquid.
-But she can related the product to her lifestyle | -20 like and 1 unlike | |

Online observation recorded from Blog

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Sp Sypan			
May 2016	-The content is about the Lipstick swatch, she did not mentioned about the sponsorship from brands -However, in the content only mentioned about one particular brands -Narrative style of writing is informal, some is Thai slang	-Not any comment -Cant see number of visitor	-Only one post in this month -No agenda posting -If observe from overall blogs, some month she posted about 1-3 times per months, some she have no posting

	-Most of the content are about the photos that show the lipstick swatching more that the writing. -The writing is about how can they buy this lipstick, and the positive opinions on the lipstick function -Photo quality seems from the mobile phone and photo with the selfie -Less editing and flitter, because the colour payoff needed to demonstrate		
June 2016	No blogging in this month		
July 2016	No blogging in this month		

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Feonalita			
May 2016	-The clip is about skincare routine update. She mentioned that this clip is no sponsorship. -However, this blog only posted the clip from YouTube. Not any content of writing. -Only writing is about the describe what the clip is.	-Not any comment -Can't see number of visitor	-Only one post in this month -If observed from overall blogs, normally posting once a month
June 2016	-The blog content is about the introducing new product (lipstick) from brands -She clearly always mentioned about the sponsorship posted, which brands they are from.	-Not any comment -Can't see number of visitor	-Monthly posting

	-The content is only the brands message seems as the advertising mentioned only the positive reviews of products -Also provides price and place for purchasing.		
July 2016	-The content is about shopping haul. -Only the VDO clip from YouTube posting which related to her UK trip -Also some description about what the clip is which the narrative style is informal	-Not any comment -Can't see number of visitor	- Monthly posting

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Nobluk			
May 2016	-Every posts in this month are suspect as the sponsorship post, due to each post refers to one particular brand. -The product reviews are not only cosmetics, but also supplementary food. -She provide the quality photo which related to the content -The narrative of writing is informal and provide a information about particular products. -Moreover, she provides the products info included the price place and the	-Not any comment -Can't see number of visitor	-4 posts in this month -There is no agenda posting, 2 reviews are post in same day.

	promotions on particular products -She only provide the product functions and positive reviews.		
June 2016	-In this month there are only 2 blog posts. -Both posts suspect that are the sponsorship, due to mentioned only on particular brand in the post. -One post s about the service review which also suspect as the sponsored post from brands, because of the narrative of writing which provide service information in detail. -The content is not only the brands message seems but provides some opinion from bloggers. -However, only positive side -Also provides price and place for purchasing or servicing.	-Just a few comments from visitors -Can't see number of visitor	-There are two posts in this month. -No agenda posting. -Not any reply the comments
July 2016	-She did not mentioned about sponsorship. -However there are 4 posts which talking about one particular brand. -Only one blog is about the product review, which discuss among various brands and product type	-There is some comment from visitors -Can't see number of visitor	- 5 times in this month -Weekly posting -Not any reply to the comment -No reply to the comment

| | -Normally the narrative style is informal and using some slang language.
-She provide both picture and word content clearly
-The quality of photo is good and professional.
-The product reviews she not only describe the detail of product result but also ranking the score. | | |

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Nina beautyworld -She is very outstanding in order to provide the personal information to introduce yourself on blog -Categorized based on lifestyle, fashion and make up and travel			
May 2016	-She related all her channels together, which posted YouTube VDO clip on her blog as well. -Also the content is related between each channels, now she participated the campaign with ATH, which is about how to styling her hair in various looks. -On blogs she also post the reviews about this program, which liked to her YouTube VDO clip.	-Not any comment -From 20-50 views	-5 posts in this month -Weekly posting

	-The photos are high quality to see the detail of products and colour. -All 5 posts are suspected that sponsored post, which provide all positive reviews towards particular products and services. -However, she also provide her opinion together with brands message, which included Price, place and promotions.		
June 2016	-She did not clearly mention about the sponsored posting. -However, I can tell that all 4 posts are sponsorship, because she mentioned about the particular brands. -The message used is similar as brands message, which included price, place and promotions. Moreover, she also has her own promotion code for her followers in order to purchase products. -She linked the YouTube VDO clip in the post as well -The narrative of writing is informal. -The photo posted are clearly see the product colour. -She also posted the actual use products photo as well.	-Not any comment -Number of visitors are minimum at 15, maximum are 150	-Weekly posing -4 pots in this month -Not any reply comment

	-Moreover, she post the link website for particular products use, in order for further information.		
July 2016	-Among 4 posts are suspected as the sponsored posts. -Because the content provide seems like the brand message, provide channels of purchasing, promotions, and price. -Moreover, only positive reviews provided. -However, she provide the photo of actual using products (which is removing the make up by cleansing water). -She also post the YouTube clip in her blog for tutorial	-Not any comment -Average views about 150 views for the how-to tutorial. -But the rest posts are about 15 views -There is no comment from visitors.	- Weekly posing -4 pots in this month

Bloggers/Month	Content	Network	Activeness
Sononui -She clearly post on blogs about her clients and the brands who sponsored her			
May 2016	-The content is about the lipstick swatching from one particular brands -The narrative of writing is informal style. -The photo are high quality and can tell from the professional skill photography with the flitter and editing.	-Not any comment -Can't see the viewers number	-Monthly posting

	-The content is similar as brand message which provide only the reviews based on positive attitudes of bloggers towards products. -Also provide the link that viewers can find out more information on about this particular brands		
June 2016	-Those two posts were suspected as the sponsored post, due to only one bands mentioned -The content only provide the positive reviews of products. -The writing is informal style, which included the brand message, price, place and promotions. -The message encouraged readers to purchase particular products. -Her photo always be outstanding when compared to other bloggers because they are high quality which show the detail of product clearly. -Mood and tone of flitter are professional editing.	- Not any comment -Can't see the viewers number	-Twice a month posting
July 2016	-In this month the reviews are not only related to cosmetics products, but also the beauty service and supplementary food as well.	-Not any comment -Can't see the viewers number	-3 pots in this month -Not agenda posting

	-Again, the post are suspect that are the sponsored post. -She provided the products information clearly, included the price, place and promotions, also the brand website linked for further information. -Moreover the content provided only the positive reviews of product which encourage readers to buy. -As always, photos in the content are high quality, which showed the product detail clearly. -Regards to the service reviews, she showed the photo of using that service, also showing the result of using by before and after photo.		