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Spring 4-29-2020

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### Recommended Citation

Serman, Zehra and Sims, Julian, "HOW SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AFFECT CONSUMERS PURCHASE HABIT?" (2020). *UK Academy for Information Systems Conference Proceedings 2020*. 10.  
<https://aisel.aisnet.org/ukais2020/10>

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# HOW SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AFFECT CONSUMERS PURCHASE HABIT?

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## ABSTRACT

Longitudinal studies that measure the effect of bloggers on consumer purchase are essential to improve our understanding in how social media bloggers become role models in people lives. As the number of blog posts and bloggers are increasing rapidly, this rapid rise is causing changes in people's (consumer's) purchase habits. There are some conceptual studies conducted about the revolution of Web 2.0 technology and social media and some of them specifically studied the different type of blogs. But no study has focused on the factors causing the influence, specifically factors such as social attractiveness, credibility, experience and sponsorship. To fill this gap, this paper suggests and test a model that explains the factors that influence consumers intentions to adopt recommendations. A total of 202 questionnaires were returned in the survey to identify which factors have influence on blog readers' intentions to adopt recommendations". Initially, data identified the demographic distribution of the respondents. Next, explanatory factor analysis was conducted to measure the validity and consistency of factors. Nine hypotheses were measured by conducting linear regression. Lastly, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was performed. The results from a sample of 202 show that the factors: trust, credibility, prior experience, perceived usefulness, sponsorship, social attractiveness, subjective norms, are influencing the intentions of consumers to adopt blogger's recommendations. In addition, the results highlight that social attractiveness has a mediating affect between attitude and intentions. The implications of these findings for bloggers and consumers are discussed in detail.

**KEYWORDS:** Bloggers, consumer behaviour, social attractiveness, intentions, sponsorship, credibility, attitude, subjective norms, experience

## 1.INTRODUCTION

Since Web 2.0 technology, the number of bloggers has rapidly increased and they become an undeniable force in society. Uzunoglu (2018) identifies bloggers as role models and influencers because bloggers play a part in people lives. They influence others by their lifestyle, education, purchase habits and by their attitude and behaviour. Thus, this two-way information flow between consumer to bloggers and blogger to consumers builds up a special connection between them where they have ability to influence their readers with the recommendations. Having flow of information free and fast, increased the popularity of blogs. As the popularity of bloggers has grown, it is confirmed that consumers are increasingly relying on the bloggers recommendations before purchasing a product. Approximately 900,000 articles are published on blogs everyday (Singer 2009). Alsaleh confirmed that 55% of people review blogs more than ten times a day (Alsaleh 2018). Moreover, Wegert (2010) points out that 81% of blog readers check recommendations before purchasing a product (Wegert 2010). This high percentages in the findings highlights how bloggers have become an influential force over the years.

To have ability to influence other people's state of minds become challenging as the number of bloggers has risen. Blog readers reach numbers of blogs online in social platforms, getting like (follow) or dislike (unfollow) becomes a determining factor for affiliation and social attractiveness. Previous literature identified that showing over confidence and undermining others, used to be away to gain status (Gilbert 1970). Some other literature argues that, showing overconfidence and behaving with foreknowledge about everything is not enough to gain status. Leary (1995) points that signs of altruism, agreeableness, friendly dominance, friendliness are highly attractive factors to gain and keep status. All these strategies can be adopted by bloggers to establish consumer relationship. Therefore, we can argue that, bloggers need to be sure to balance between two dominant strategies to gain status.

It can be argued that at least in aggregate level, there are some factors such as trust, credibility, social attractiveness, experience, and perceived usefulness are most likely to influence consumers' intentions to adopt recommendations. When these factors are absent, it can cause humiliation and shame which is equal to dislikes and unpleasant comments. To address these issues, we adopted this study to find out how these factors can influence social attractiveness and affiliation and whether it helps bloggers to gain status or causes them to lose it.

The Purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of the factors that influence consumers' intentions to adopt blogs recommendations. It aims to test if nine these factors: trust, credibility, social attractiveness, subjective norms, attitude, sponsorship, perceived usefulness, experience and intentions have influence on blog readers intentions to adopt blogger's recommendations. A model is developed and tested that posits that blog readers' intentions to adopt recommendations are influenced by these nine factors. Moreover, social attractiveness is modelled as a mediator between attitude and intentions.

The results of this study demonstrate that our factors have influence over blog readers intentions to adopt recommendations of bloggers. This paper is structured as follows: first, the relevant literature is reviewed; next, the methodology of this study is explained and discussed, including the research model. Finally, a discussion of findings and limitations completes the study.

## 2. RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Bloggers are defined as digital influencers who have an influence on communities gathered around similar interest (Uzunoglu 2018). Here, blogs consist of bloggers comments, posts, life experiences and their likes and dislikes. Nardi, Schiano and Schwartz defined blogs as typical website composed of journal posts written in chronological order and recommendations by blog authors. Hsu (2013) defined blogs as one of the most popular Web 2.0 platforms, they can be personal, or organization sponsored. Eva (2014) highlights that blogs provide low cost information sharing in handy software platforms. Having low cost instant information has influenced and shaped consumers' (blog readers) decisions and purchase habits. As bloggers' popularity is rapidly increasing with the ease of low-cost information access, social value is an important factor associated with their popularity. Hence, the way they formed their popularity can be explained by their influential power on consumers (blog readers).

Hsu (2013) emphasized that perceived trust and usefulness play an important role in influencing consumers' purchase behaviour. A number of studies empirically found that trust and perceived usefulness are important factors considering the effect of consumers' intentions to adopt blog recommendations. Accordingly, Alsaleh (2018) finds that trust has a positive effect on blog readers "intentions to purchase products and services". Trust typically grows with shared experiences, shared friends and interactions over a period of time. Thus, blog readers are more likely to adopt recommendations of bloggers in whom they trust. Moreover, recent literature demonstrates reputation has a significant effect on trust and behavioural intention. Literature reveals that consumers are depending on information from credible and reputable sources. Hung and Li (2007) find that a positive reputation of bloggers will positively influence the intentions of consumers to purchase products or services.

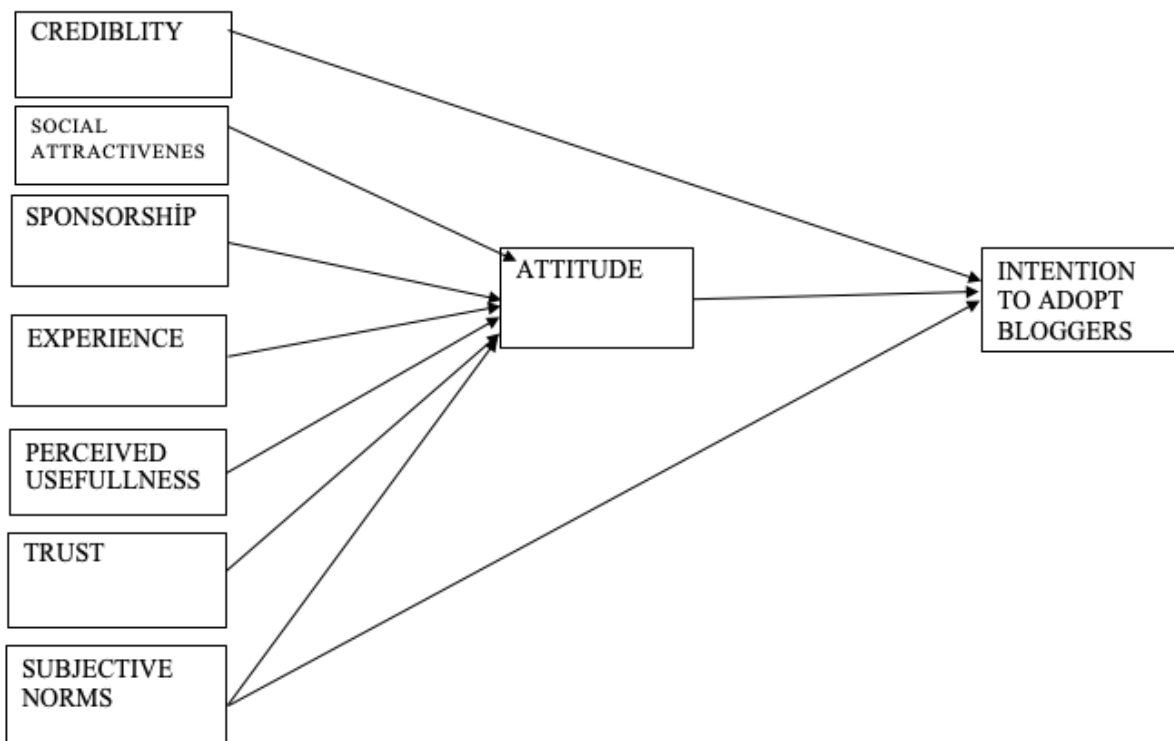
Attitude is considered an important factor when considering decision making and influence. It's the most significant factor in understanding the relationship between decision making and actions. Alsaleh (2018) defined attitude as the degree of a blog readers' positive feelings about purchasing a product or service. Accordingly, literature reveals that blog readers' attitude positively affects the intention to purchase products and services (Hsu and Lu 2007). Therefore, attitude can be considered as influential factor on understanding behavioural intentions and attitude.

Following some factors from literature, we investigate the interaction between bloggers and blog readers' intentions to adopt recommendation and developed our model which illustrates the factors influence of bloggers on blog readers' intentions whether consumers adopt blogs recommendations.

## 3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Consistent with previous research there are some factors such as trust, attitude and reputation that have positive influence and correlations with the blog readers' intentions. Our model posits that trust, attitude and perceived usefulness influence consumers and have a positive effect on attitude towards adopting recommendations.

Figure.1. Research Model



### **3.1 Trust**

According to Bianchi and Andrews (2012), consumers are only happy to share personal information, make purchases or act on web vendor advice when they feel comfortable because of trust. Hsu et al. (2014) carried out a study to investigate whether the influence of blog reader's trusting belief in the blogger is related to the perceived usefulness of the blogger's recommendations. The study also investigated the influence of the blog reader's perceptions of their willingness to follow the advice of the blogger. The study confirmed that trust is vital and consumer behaviour will only be influenced by the bloggers when there is trust. (Hsu et al., 2013).

***H1: The blog readers' trust in the blogger will influence on their attitude towards the recommendation.***

### **3.2 Attitude**

Attitude has been described in different ways in literature as there is no consensus on a single definition for it (Dockery and Bedeian, 1989; Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010; Adliah, 2015). Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) describes "attitude refers to a specific approach toward performing a specific behaviour, based on an evaluation of the believed outcomes resulting from the behaviour" (p.18). Another definition of attitude was presented by Hogg and Vaughan (2005) as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols" (p.150). The rise in studies in the behavioural component of attitude has been linked to the expectation that knowing attitude can make the prediction of future behaviour possible (Herr, 1995). Vishal (2014) also shares the above view since the author claimed the study of attitude has gained importance due to its influence over an individual's behaviour. One of the theories widely used in studies on consumer behaviour is the Theory of Reasoned Action (Hsu and Lin, 2008; Liou, 2008; Liu et al., 2017). The theory was first developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967 when they derived it from previous research studies in social psychology, persuasion models and attitude theories (Gillmore et al. 2012). This indicates that the theory is based on the assumption that consumers are rational and will systematically make use of information they have. Thus, a relationship exists between attitude and behaviours such that the more favourable the attitude and the subjective norms are, the stronger the individual's intention to perform specific behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This study measures if attitude of blog readers affects the intentions to adopt recommendations of bloggers. Our study argues that attitude is influential and determining factor for consumers purchase habit. It defines attitude as blog readers perception and their own feelings about bloggers. If the specific blog reader feels negative about a blogger they will less likely to adopt their recommendations. Attitude can be argued as a mirror effect which reflects people's own values and feelings about a specific thought or concept. Therefore, we generate hypothesis below:

***H2: The blog readers' attitude toward the bloggers will positively affect the intention to adopt their recommendations when shopping online***

### **3.3 Perceived usefulness**

Zehrer et al. (2011) investigates the perceived usefulness of blog postings in an attempt to extend the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm. The findings confirmed that a higher percentage of blog users find the recommendations helpful irrespective of whether they are negative or positive (Zehrer et al. 2011). Behavioural intention is affected by both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Zehrer et al., 2011; Hamida et al., 2016). In relation to the adoption of the bloggers' recommendation, perceived usefulness will refer to the extent to which an individual believes that the adoption will enhance their online shopping in a positive way. The extent to which the blog readers consider the blogger's recommendation to be useful may influence the extent to which they are willing to adopt it.

***H3: Perceived usefulness of the blogger recommendations will influence on blog readers' attitude***

### **3.4 Experience**

Studies investigating the influence of prior experience on attitude (Fazio et al. 1978; Karjaluoto et al., 2002; Alzahrani and O' Toole, 2017) reveal that attitudes develop through experience which can be effective in predicting the later behaviour. This later behaviour can be considered as a decision or an attitude that blog readers are likely to act upon. Moreover, Karjaluto et al (2002) find that prior experience influences attitude towards technology adoption. The expectation confirmation model is applied to investigate the attitude towards technology adoption. Their study suggests that people who have a positive experience of using technology are more likely to have a positive attitude towards using that technology. Therefore, we define experience as the positive behaviour that blog readers gained in long term. Thus, bloggers prior experience is a very important factor explaining their intention. A blogger who has experience about the products or services is more likely to attract blog readers' attention. It will give them the impression that the product or service is already tested by someone, so they will not need to worry about any possible negative outcomes. Thus, we offer the next hypothesis:

***H4: The blog readers' prior experience will influence on their attitude towards the bloggers' recommendation***

### **3.5 Sponsorship**

According to previous research, sponsored blogs form a large proportion of influential marketing. Hughes (year) claims that 75% of companies are promoting bloggers to spread word of mouth about their products and services. Recent literature highlights that 65% of multinational brands are increasing their spending on sponsored bloggers, with spending expected to reach \$10 billion by 2020 (Belton 2019; Mediakix 2018). Past literature highlights that sponsored bloggers could be detrimental to blog loyalty (Maximillian 2016). Some literature argues that sponsorship will not affect attitudes of blog readers because once blog readers trust the specific blogger they are less likely to have doubts about the blogger's recommendations and opinions. However, it is still debatable whether or not sponsored bloggers can be sincere when they are being paid to blog about the products or

services. Past literature failed to address whether sponsored bloggers will have influence on attitudes of blog readers to adopt their recommendations. Therefore, we hypothesize the following;

**H5: *Sponsored bloggers will influence the attitudes of blog readers towards the blogger's recommendations.***

### **3.6 Subjective Norms**

In terms of relationship between attitude and subjective norms, there are inconsistencies in the literature (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist, 2005). For example, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) claim that they might be independent of each other. However, other studies such as Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) have suggested that they are not actually independent. The Theory of Reasoned Action is chosen for this study because it has been adopted in a wide range of studies to investigate behaviour (Hsu and Lin, 2008; Lada et al., 2009). For example, the theory was adopted in the study of Hsu and Lin (2008) to develop a model involving technology acceptance, knowledge sharing and social influences.

**H6: *The blog readers' subjective norm will positively affect their attitude towards the adoption of the blogger recommendations when shopping online***

**H7: *The blog readers' intention to adopt the bloggers' recommendation will be affected by the subjective norm.***

### **3.7 Credibility**

Literature defined the concept of credibility from a multidimensional concept. Thus, it is often confused with trust as they share similar values. A Credible person is the one who is expert, experienced and qualified. A recent study defined a credible person as one who is trustworthy and has excellent communication skills and charisma. Knowing that, it can be argued that they are also sociable and have a good reputation among people. Kefi and Sokolava defined a credible person as a reliable source (Kefi and Sokolova 2019). Esteban (2018) studies the ways to gain credibility for bloggers arguing that unsponsored bloggers are considered more credible as they are the real experts. Esteban adds that quality of information shared is very important. Knowing that a credible person can have an influence on the intentions and attitude of people, we offer this hypothesis:

**H8: *The blogger's credibility will positively influence the intentions of blog readers' to adopt bloggers' recommendations.***

### **3.8 Social Attractiveness**

Social attractiveness is an important concept in psychology to social attractiveness can be argued to be the degree to which a person has ability to influence the state of mind of other people and be socially accepted and approved by society. Leary points that Positive social relationships are crucial for maintaining self and others happy (Leary 1995), therefore, social influence can be gained through cooperation and conformity. (Leary 1995). Maintaining social bonds and conformity is not easy especially when there are millions of bloggers in online platforms. Social Attention holding power helps people to maintain their status and conformity. Theory states that showing altruism, positivism and friendly increases the chances to be liked and accepted by others rather than using showing power by underestimating others. Therefore, when the chance of influencing others increases, the chances of their intentions being influenced is also affected. Therefore, to test the mediating factor between attitude and intentions, we will use the hypotheses below.

Hence, social attractiveness can be argued to be the degree to which a person has the ability to influence the state of mind of others and be socially accepted and approved by society. Social attractiveness is a very beneficial strategy to gain status and develop social bonds. Bloggers are opinion leaders who try to be accepted and supported by society.

**H9: *Social attractiveness has a mediating affect between attitude and intentions.***

## **4.METHODS**

### **4.1 Data Collection**

To test our model and factors, an online survey was conducted during the period Nov-Dec 2019 with university students at Birkbeck, University of London. The sample for study was university students at Birkbeck College because it provides night lectures for students hence it has a higher than average proportion of mature students. Having all age ranges in our study, provides broader insight into the phenomena by seeing how one variable might differ accordingly to different age ranges. Herzog recommends that a high sample size increases the reliability of the study. According to literature there is no fixed number for deciding sample size but, it is important to consider the data collection process all data might go under clarification due to the fact that respondent are not answering questions properly. Therefore, online survey carried out with 202 Birkbeck students by sending them link through social media communications and email. Some students were reached through WhatsApp and Instagram where some others were reached by email. Overall, 210 answers were collected; however, 8 of these were excluded due to incomplete answers. Accordingly, the final sample is composed of 202 answers. Descriptive analysis indicated that female (49.8%) and male (50.2%) respondents were nearly equal. Most respondents were undergraduate students with (40.4%) and postgraduate students (29.1%). More than half of respondents (70.0%) would recommend products promoted bloggers (Table1).

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample**

Variables	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Female	101 (49.8%)
Male	102 (50.2%)
Age	
19 and under	56(27.6%)
20-29	101 (49.8%)
30-39	33 (16.3%)
40-49	11 (5.4%)
50-59	2 (1.0%)
Education	
Certificate for higher education	1(0.5%)
Foundation degree	33 (16.3%)
Foundation year	2 (1.0%)
MPhil/PhD degree	25 (12.3%)
MRes/PhD	1 (0.5%)
Postgraduate degree	59(29.1%)
Undergraduate degree	82(40.4%)
Occupation	
Full-time work	26 (13.5%)
Full-time work and Student	22 (31.6%)
Part-time work	11 (3.8%)
Part-time work and student	28 (39.5%)
Student	112(55.2%)
Unemployed	4 (2.0%)
Experience with the blog	
Less than one per hour	107 (52.7%)
1 to 3 hours	60 (29.6%)
4 to 10 hours	6 (11.8%)
More than 20 hours	5 (2.5%)
Frequency of visit	
1-2 times	31 (15.3%)
2-3 times	21(10.3%)
3-5 times	34 (16.7%)
Daily	29(14.3%)
Weekly	31(15.3%)
Never	57(28.1%)
Do you have a blog?	
Yes	32 (15.8%)
No	171(84.2%)
Would you recommend products promoted by bloggers to your friends?	
Always	3 (1.5%)
Sometimes	142 (70.0%)
Often	17 (8.4%)
Never	41 (20.2%)

#### 4.2 Measures

There are nine factors examined in this study: trust, attitude, sponsorship, credibility, perceived usefulness, social attractiveness, intentions, subjective norms, prior experience. Constructs measured through multi item scaled derived from previous studies with some adaptations to the research setting. Specifically, social attractiveness adopted from Serman (2019). Scales for trust were adopted from Mutum (2011) and Esteban (2018). Intentions factor were developed and adopted by Kosolova and Esteban (2018). Credibility factor is adopted from Hsu 2013. Prior experience was analysed and adopted by Serman (2019). The final set of items is shown in Table 2. All the variables were rated on seven-point, agreement- disagreement Likert-type scales.

**Table 2: EFA Results**

	Factors/Items	Factor Loading	Mean	SD
<b>Trust</b>  <b>Cronbach=0,77</b>	TR_1 - Bloggers who have high numbers of followers and likes are more credible	.826	2,90	1,19
	TR_2 - Bloggers who posts about the products/services frequently are credible	.673	3,65	1,43
	TR_3 - Bloggers who shares good and bad sides of the specific service and product are trustable and make me adopt their advices	.649	2,66	1,02
	TR_4 - I would feel better if I can have chat with the blogger and we can communicate through messages or comments would build up trust between us	.657	3,10	1,19



Table 3 shows the correlation results between the factors. Correlation coefficient values ranged between weak, moderate or strong relationship. Christa (2018) agrees that coefficient of  $<0.1$  indicates negligible and  $>0.9$  a very strong relationship. Trust and Perceived Usefulness are positively related and have the highest value. It is determined that there is a statistically significant positive relation with correlation coefficient of 0.52. Hence, there appears to be a considerable association between two variables. Trust and Sponsorship have the lowest positive relation with correlation coefficient of 0.21. It is unsurprising that trust and sponsorship have a lower value than other factors. This can be explained by the doubts of respondents about sponsorship. There is a correlation coefficient of 0.55 for the relationship between perceived usefulness and experience so there is considerable association between two variables. However, the relation between Perceived Usefulness and Sponsorship correlation coefficient measured as 0.31. The correlation is positive, but the correlation coefficient is lower than other factors. Therefore, we can conclude that those two factors affect each other but they are not highly correlated. Prior experience and subjective norms have a positive relationship with a correlation coefficient of 0.40. When experience increases subjective norms will proportionally rise too.

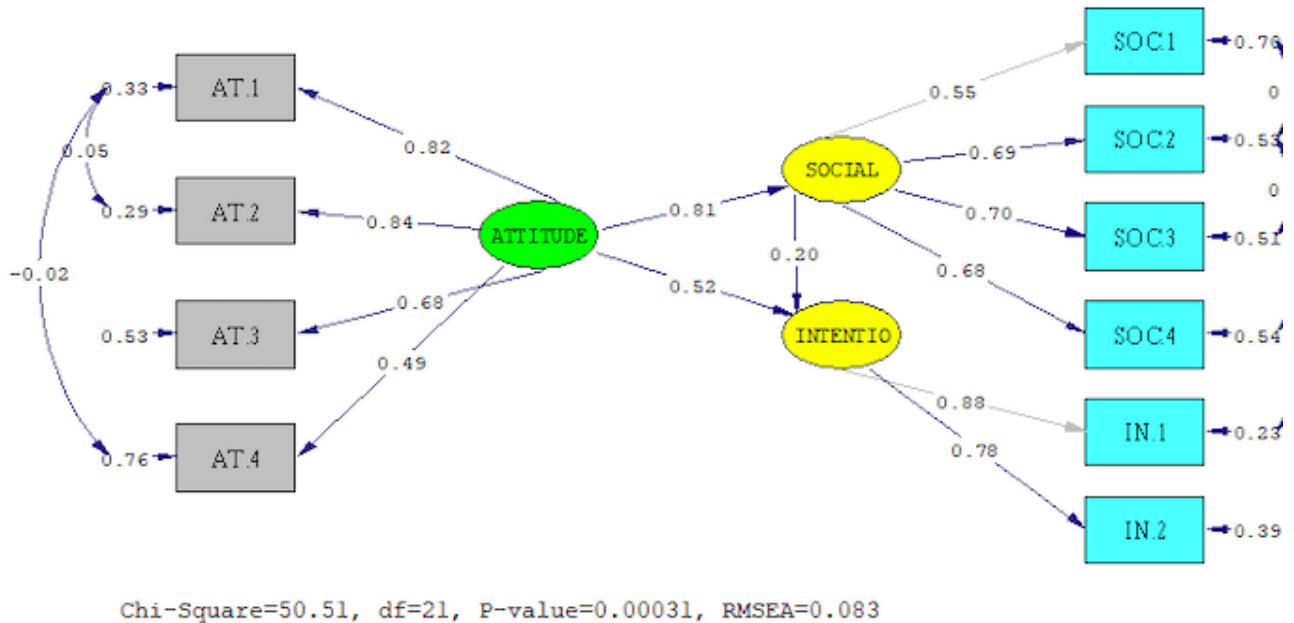
**Table 4: Hypotheses Result**

	Regression Model			
	B	S.E	p	Status
H1. Trust → Attitude	0,366	0,070	0,001**	Accepted
H2. Attitude → Intentions	0,600	0,065	0,001**	Accepted
H3. Perceived Usefulness → Attitude	0,450	0,059	0,001**	Accepted
H4. Prior Experience → Attitude	0,392	0,051	0,001**	Accepted
H5. Sponsorship → Attitude	0,473	0,059	0,001**	Accepted
H6. Subjective Norms → Attitude	0,249	0,057	0,001**	Accepted
H7. Subjective Norms → Intentions	0,186	0,065	0,001**	Accepted
H8. Credibility → Intentions	0,422	0,057	0,001**	Accepted

Hypothesis 1: The relationship between trust and attitude is accepted because the p value is 0,001; which is  $<0.01$ . Knowing p value = 0,001; $<0.01$ , it can be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in trust increases attitude 0.366 units. Hypothesis 2: The relationship between attitude and intentions is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . Therefore, it is found that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in attitude increases intentions by 0.600 units. Hypothesis 3: The relationship between perceived usefulness and attitude is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . It can be therefor be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in perceived usefulness increases attitude factor by 0.450 units. Hypothesis 4: The relationship between prior experience and attitude is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . Hence, the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in prior experience increases attitude factor by 0.392 units. Hypothesis 5: The relationship between sponsorship and attitude is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . So the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in sponsorship increases attitude by 0,473 units. Hypothesis 6: The relationship between subjective norms and attitude is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . It can be therefor be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in subjective norm increases attitude factor by 0.249 units. Hypothesis 7: The relationship between subjective norms and intentions is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . It can therefore be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in subjective norm increases intentions by 0.186 units. Hypothesis 8: The relationship between Credibility and intentions is accepted because the p value = 0,001, which is  $<0.01$ . It can thus be concluded that the relationship between the two variables is significant and a 1 unit rise in Credibility increases intentions factor by 0.422 units.



FIGURE 2: STRUCTURAL EQUATIONAL MODELLING



### 5.1 Structural Modelling

The structural equation model is given in figure 2 above. Our model is statistically significant and shows a good fit overall, with  $\chi^2/df = p < 0.01$  below the cut off 3 (Kline 2011). If the value of  $\{\chi^2/df\}$  is less than 3 it means that there is an acceptable fit (Bollen 1989). For this model  $\chi^2/df$  is obtained as  $50,51/31 = 2.405$  that means the model is statistically significant. Figure 2 illustrates the structural equation modelling for testing the **moderating** affect in the model. Hypothesis 9 supports that “Social attractiveness has a **moderating** effect between attitude and intentions”. Figure 2 indicates that, there is a positive and strong relation between Attitude and Social Attractiveness with the coefficient of 0,81. The relation between Attitude and Intention to Adopt Bloggers’ Advice also positive and good enough with the coefficient of 0,20. The effect of Social Attractiveness on Intention to Adopt Bloggers’ Advice is less than the others. As can be seen from figure 2, Among the variables effecting the Attitude as an indigenous latent variable, AT.2 has the greatest effect with the coefficient of 0,84. Which means that any increase on AT.2 will also increase the effects of Attitude on Social Attractiveness and Intention to adopt bloggers advice. Among the variables effecting the Social Attractiveness and the Intention to Adopt Bloggers Advice as an exogenous latent variable, SOC.3 and IN.1 has also the greatest effects with the coefficients of 0,70 and 0,88 respectively.

Table 5. Limits and the results of the structural model.

Fitness Criterion	Perfect Fitness	Acceptable Fitness	Model
RMSEA	$0 < RMSEA < 0.05$	$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.10$	0.056
NFI	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1$	$0.90 < NFI \leq 0.95$	0.97
NNFI	$0.97 \leq NNFI \leq 1$	$0.95 \leq NNFI \leq 0.97$	0.96
CFI	$0.97 \leq CFI \leq 1$	$0.95 \leq CFI \leq 0.97$	0.98
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR < 0.05$	$0.05 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.045
GFI	$0.95 \leq GFI \leq 1$	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 0.95$	0.95
AGFI	$0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1$	$0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 0.90$	0.88

As can be seen in table 5, our model outputs are found to be between acceptable fit and perfect fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003) (RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, NFI: Normed Fit Index, NNFI: Non-Normed Fit Index, CFI: Comparative Fit Index, SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual, GFI: Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) .

## 6. DISCUSSION

The revolution of social media platforms and potential rise in Web 2.0 has created blog platforms. Blogs are creating opportunity for both bloggers and blog readers to have interactive communication with each other and exchange ideas. Some studies highlight the blogosphere and how different types of blogs become a prevalent force in marketing. Some of them focused on specifically Instagram and YouTube where some others only covered influence of specific factor on consumers (Esteban 2018). However, very few studies analyse reasons behind the influence of consumers. There are no studies that analyse bloggers by looking at “social attractiveness” as a factor where we can understand the core reasons behind the influencing interaction between consumers and bloggers. Moreover, the importance of prior experience and its effect on consumer intentions has not been covered in literature. There were some studies investigating the influence of experience on attitude (Karjaluo et al., 2002; Alzahrani and O’Toole, 2017), Bagozzi (1981) also acknowledges this relationship when they discuss the implication of the extent of prior experience with the focal behaviour. Similarly, Karjaluo et al. (2002) claims that prior experience will influence attitude towards technology adoption. In relation to technology adoption, Alzahrani and O’Toole, (2017) highlight that domestic Internet access could influence positively student attitudes towards the Internet. This study investigated whether prior experience has a positive influence on consumers’ intentions to adopt recommendations. Consumers are more likely to be influenced by bloggers who are more experienced doing things than others. Furthermore, the contribution in this research is defining “social attractiveness” from a blogging perspective. Social attractiveness is a psychological factor found and developed by Gilbert (1970). This factor is composed of two different theories including Social attention holding power (SAHP) and Status Derived Fighting Ability (RHS). RHS is the ability to elicit positive attention and gain status by giving positive signals including: praise, respect, friendliness. SAHP is way to gain status by showing overconfidence in things. This study gives insight into this theory by applying it to the relationship between bloggers and consumers. It is found that social attractiveness is a mediating factor between intentions and attitude. Therefore, the results of this study enrich our understanding of the influence of bloggers by highlighting nine factors (trust, credibility, attitude, subjective norms, social attractiveness, sponsorship, credibility, perceived usefulness, experience). Bloggers play an influential role in blog readers’ everyday life, resembling the roles that they play in all other industries, such as wine (Cosenza et al., 2015); fashion (Halvorsen, Hoffmann, Coste-Maniere, & Stankeviciute, 2013); and tourism (Wu & Pearce 2016). They pass the information consistently in a manner that can be understood with two-step flow theory (Katz Lazarsfeld 1955). In the transmission stage of any information or advice, it is important to understand to what extent it influences and changes the purchase habits of blog readers. Therefore, these results emphasize that the factors trust, credibility, social attractiveness, perceived usefulness, sponsorship, experience, subjective norms and attitude influence the intentions of blog readers when they are adopting bloggers’ advice. This study introduces the effect of social attractiveness and experience by underlining their influence and role in the blogging context.

## 7. LITERATURE GAP

This study demonstrated that bloggers influence blog readers purchase habit by their recommendations. It emphasizes how powerful bloggers advice has become in decision the consumer decision-making process before buying a product or service. This paper finds that the nine factors have positive influence on consumer intentions to adopt bloggers’ advice. However, several limitations should be considered in generalizing these findings. By adopting a longitudinal approach, future research could evaluate whether the influence of bloggers will vary due to the culture factor. The usage of social media might differ between different countries and cultures. More importantly, similar studies may be conducted in other industries where digital influencers play an important role. Finally, research in other countries may enrich our understanding of this phenomenon.

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