

Developing influencer selection criteria for brand influencer marketing with Generation Z in the Vietnamese context

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Abstract—The concern of influencer marketing has dramatically increased in the last decades. Many scholars have been conducted focusing on the module of impacting influencer marketing, however, rarely focusing on the insight of the problem. With the generational transition going on, gen Z is now becoming one of the major targets for any enterprises to attract their own consumer. However, not many brands can fully utilize the effect of influencer marketing it brings as this generation is hard to predict their own behaviors. A survey of 115 respondents has been taken throughout every region of Vietnam. The result indicates that there are six factors given by Gen Z that significantly and positively affect the attitude towards influencers. Interestingness plays a vital role. The attitude towards influencers has an effect on the attitude towards the brand. In addition, this research proposes a based module for further research on influencer marketing in Vietnamese context.

Index Terms—influencer marketing, influencer, consumer's perception, social media, brand.

I. INTRODUCTION

People spend more time on social media than ever; since 2012, the daily time spent on social networking worldwide has been increasing steadily and taking the average of 147 minutes per day [1]. This development relates in part with the growth of influencer marketing in which influencers are paid an amount of financial assets or similar, to promote products on behalf of the brands and the preference of consumers for viral growth [2] [3]. In reverse, with the explosion of social networking sites, influencers have more platforms to showcase their talents as well as share the content they want to convey. Followers, thanks to these platforms, engage more with the contents to expect influencers to share deeper about their personal life and the recommendation of the latest trend [4] [5].

Social media influencers are changing the role model of being an influencer or simply an individual with a certain number of followers. Over the past few years, the transition as a user to influencer has become more facile than ever on social networking sites. Influencers aren't just celebrities; they're people who are approachable to their followers on social media sites [6] [7]. Influencers may bring a fresh sense of brand awareness and evoke the brand image for follower's preferences which may promoting their purchase intention [8].

Gen Z today is exposed to social media and social commerce in general [9]. In Vietnam, this generation places a high value on online entertainment sites and video sources such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube [10]. This is also the driving force for influencers to build an image for themselves and this is gradually changing the way followers

perceive influencers. However, because the number of influencers is considered to increase dramatically and become an occupation [11]; the trend of interactive experiences transforms when followers gradually fussy in choosing influential people to follow. Followers are not only interested in aspects such as appearance and speech, but they are especially interested in their personal interests to influencers [4]. The knowledge brought by influencers is also noticed by followers as they not only find quality content but also find useful knowledge and learn something from influencers. Generation Z grew up in Vietnam amid its present age of rapid and vigorous economic growth. Therefore, they are fastidious with services and goods. Environmental concerns, gender equality, and social responsibility are all taken into consideration [12]. Because they are constantly keen to try new things, Gen Z is open to testing new brands, even if they currently utilize ones they are acquainted with. This generation's skepticism and improvisation are to blame for their lack of brand loyalty [12].

This research article was written to highlight aspects that followers concern when giving their attention to a particular influencer. By quantitative measurement, the study will be conducted on the sample set is Generation Z and stretching across the three regions in Vietnam. Corresponding the independent variances, the characteristics of influencers that was developed will be taken as the basis to assess the positive/rejective attitude of followers towards the performance of influencers. The obtained insights then are to apply to create a KOLs or influencers model that can achieve the desired results or the right message brands want to deliver.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Literature review

1) Social Media Influencer (KOL)

According to Campell and Farrell's [13] classification of SMIs based on the number of followers: (1) well-known celebrities (the rich and famous with more than 1 million followers); (2) mega-influencers (celebrities with millions or more of followers); (3) macro-influencers (the ideal with 100,000 to 1 million followers); (4) micro-influencers (the rising star with 10,000 to 100,000 followers); and (5) nano-influencers (newcomers with 0 to 10,000 followers). A person's popularity and influence are reflected in the number of followers they have. However, this does not necessarily mean that the more followers a person has, the better. SMIs with more followers are better at promoting a variety of

products, while those with fewer followers are better at promoting exclusive products [2].

Moreover, past research has found that the two most important elements that help SMIs get follower are personality qualities and content. Meanwhile, with high level of genuineness, attractiveness, and intimacy, SMEs are more likely to obtain followers [14] [15] [16]. Furthermore, individuals whose posts are educational, visually pleasing, and entertaining are more likely to gain followers [17] [4] [15].

2) *Expertise*

Expertise is the communicator's capacity to effectively state a point in a particular field of knowledge. An individual's familiarity, comprehension, and experience in a particular field of knowledge are all components of expertise. Professionals are people with deep understanding and deep arguments about a certain area. And have more understanding than common ground. For those looking for accurate information or the information they need, the choice of the "expertise" factor is also one of the factors affecting the user's tracking. Every influencer has a purpose, and so does a brand. Figuring out how interested followers are in the accuracy of the information an influencer provides will also influence users' decisions.

3) *Trustworthiness*

Giffin [18] defined the level of trustworthiness of a source as "recipients' perception of a source is truthful, sincere or accurate". It is a person's belief in something, someone, or a belief in a certain brand. Reliability in an information system or something formed over a long period of time. The trustworthiness of a social media influencer is also one of the reasons that users follow them on social networking sites. Studying the interest of followers to the trustworthiness of an influencer will determine the building of a person's personal brand on social networks.

4) *Likability*

Likeability is the fondness a person has towards another person because of their physical appearance, conduct, or other characteristics [19]. Likeability has been shown to improve persuasion [21], making it an effective method for self-presentation and persuasion [18]. Likeability is significant since it is regarded to have a beneficial impact on the product when conveyed from the influencer [19]. Likeability has also been connected to advertising efficacy [21] [22]. When they are likeable, social media influencers are more convincing [23]. When managing their human brands, social media influencers must take likeability into account.

5) *Interestingness*

Interestingness of content can be seen as the attraction people feel when reading the content posted on social media; it is the perceived enjoyment, pleasure, and entertainment derived from the content [25]. Researchers discovered that one of the principal factors of an individual's social media is for enjoyment, and interesting content can satisfy their entertainment needs [25] sharing interesting information on social media is a useful tactic for attracting users' attention. Previous studies have shown that interesting content is beneficial to content marketing to achieve good results [26].

6) *Attractiveness*

The pilot study identified attractiveness as a common trait, which is corroborated by marketing endorser selection

literature [27]. Additionally, the marketing literature has paid a lot of attention to endorser attractiveness [27] [28] [29]. As defined in this study, attractiveness relates to the social media influencers' physical attractiveness. Previously, attractiveness was regarded as an essential attribute that influenced advertisement and product assessments [30] [28] [31]. The lack of consistency in the findings of studies assessing attractiveness highlights the need for additional research. App reference has been shown in some studies to give more positive qualities to people who are attractive than to people who are not [32, 31]. It has been demonstrated that attractiveness has an effect on a person's popularity, ability to persuade others, and attitude [33].

7) *Similarity*

The degree of likeness between an influencer and a follower, also known as similarity, fit, or congruence, is an important factor in influencer selection [34] [23]. Choi and Rifon [35] argue that consumers' relationships with the endorser should not be disregarded, despite the fact that most marketing literature has focused on the endorser-product association. Endorsers are believed to represent referents that impact consumers' opinions and actions, and hence likely inspire consumers to embrace companies to acquire influencer imparted meanings [36].

8) *Attitude toward a brand*

Attitude is measured as the most distinctive concept in social psychology literature and in information economics perspective. It is the most investigated issue in consumer behavior research [37]. Furthermore, diverse types of approaches are used to study the attitude in order to obtain broad knowledge regarding attitude, intention and behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen [38] define attitudes as "learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object". The definition presumed that attitude can be learned or acquired. In addition, this definition assists marketers because it supports that attitude is learned or acquired neither innate nor instinctive, even if it is learned so can be influenced by marketing activities or messages. Attitude can be associated with one object (a brand) or the whole group (company) in marketing perspective. Attitude towards the brand is defined as "a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular brand after the advertising stimulus has been shown to the individual" [39]. Furthermore "Attitude towards a brand" is consumer propensity to assess the brand, on the basis of previous experiences, available information and environment influences.

9) *Attitude toward the influencer*

Although there is no well-defined construct for attitude toward the influencer, it is essential to comprehend how consumers feel about social media influencers. According to cognitive social psychologists, attitude regarding something should be reflected in appropriate behaviors [40]. Based on the source attractiveness model [19], the attractiveness, likeability, and similarity of the social media influencers may have an impact on communication effectiveness, including the formation of positive attitudes.

10) *Influencers' marketing and the practices of Influencers*

Marketing and media are mutually dependent. Media relies on advertising revenue for commercial viability, while advertisers have traditionally relied on media to address their potential consumers [41]. To deliver an audience, media organizations create interesting, engaging content and one type of content that has been broadly popular with audiences is social media influencers. It was called influencer marketing, which is a marketing approach in which businesses spend in well-known influencers to generate and/or promote branded content for their followers in an order to raise brand awareness and entice them to make a purchase [15] [42].

The rising of social media in recent years has contributed a lot to many changes in business in general and in marketing in particular. Consumers nowadays tend to use social media as their reference to look for the source of product information [4]. Therefore, influencer marketing is rising as a new marketing strategy for many companies which can provide more opportunities to approach a vast audience [43]. Influencer marketing refers to a marketing strategy of brands in which influencers on social platforms are used to promote positive responses of their followers towards the brands by sharing posts with content relating to the brands on their personal accounts on such platforms [44] [45] [15]. Influencers in such marketing strategies play an important role that directly contributes to the effectiveness of this strategy. Therefore, selecting a suitable influencer for the brand is an important step for every business to take into consideration before deploying any influencer marketing strategies. Despite the different criteria for each brand based on their brand's characteristics, there are still some common criteria for every brand to consider when choosing their influencers. For instance, honest and no spurious commercial intention has been proved to be a general expectation of audiences for their influencers when participating in any influencer marketing campaign [46] [47].

In an era of media surplus, where audiences are saturated with so much to choose from, the premium on distinctiveness and visibility grows. Additionally, people actively and freely seek out the materials they are most interested in, which is where the "demand" for self-branding arises. As a result, internet media is a very consumer-focused sector. Social media has occupied an important position as a communication tool. The fact that this information is instant and low-cost to access has influenced and shaped consumers' decisions and purchase habits [46]. As digital influencers' popularity is rapidly increasing with the ease of low-cost information access, social value is an important factor associated with their popularity. Most individual customers lack the ability to co-create or co-opt a brand's story. Online influencers, on the other hand, do have this kind of power; these unusual users of social media actively produce user-generated content that is widely viewed.

At a basic level, the brand represents the identity of a commodity (a product, service, or firm), and its main function is to convey a certain level of quality. But to reach the target audience (at an optimal frequency) with its message, the brand owners (or advertisers) have to pay media organi-

zations for the advertising. When a celebrity, or a human brand, is introduced into the picture, the dynamics change slightly. A human brand is defined here as 'any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communications efforts' [49].

Marketers no longer have complete control over how their brands are communicated. Interactivity and digital platforms are the two main disruptors of traditional marketing communication channels [5]. Globally, people have started to use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to share their experiences. A consumer sharing a brand's television advertisement on YouTube could cause it to go viral; additionally, feedback can be shared by other customers without the firm's control. Influential users with a massive following can also use their own media to influence this audience (e.g., the Kardashians sister). As the result, social influencers as brand ambassadors for goods and services have emerged as the new opinion leaders [50]. In practice, there isn't any such research related to the common criteria of influencer for influencer marketing strategy that is available in the market. Therefore, further research about this topic will be collected and analyzed in this research.

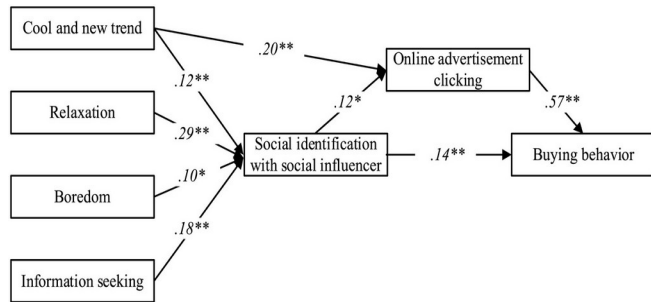
This suggests that self-branding makes most sense if celebrities can lend their names profitably to major brands. Sports stars, for instance, can earn many times more from their endorsement fees than from prize money. This is because major sporting events command a large audience. While not all celebrities have an equal amount of marketing pull, the more successful have talent and personal agents to help convert their fame into lucrative endorsement deals.

B. *Previous models of KOL*

Parallel to the flourishing development of influencer marketing and its impacts on consumers, there are numerous research that have been conducted to investigate this topic. However, previous research about influencer is more focusing on the impacts of influencer marketing rather than creating a model with important factors that might impact the effectiveness of influencer in particular and influencer marketing in general, especially in Vietnam. These previous models of influencers in foreign and international market have framed the model of this study.

As stated by Croes & Bartel [51], although research has shown that social influencers are more successful endorsers than traditional celebrity endorsers, no study has examined the motives that young adults have for following these digital superstars. It is so critical to comprehend why individuals choose to follow a social influencer. Croes & Bartel's model [51] investigated the reasons young adults follow social influencers and how those reasons might relate to how young adults identify with those social influencers. The authors looked at the connection between young adults' identification, online advertising clicks, and purchasing habits and the motivations for following social influencers. Information sharing, information seeking, cool and new trends, relaxing entertainment, companionship, and boredom/habitual pass time are the six reasons young adults follow social influencers [51]. Smock et al.'s earlier research on the motivations of Facebook users is supported by these recent findings [52]. Additionally, UGT's motivations, information, enter-

tainment, and escape from daily life by Katz et al. included following social influencers as well [53]. More specifically, this result demonstrates that following social influencers is separate motivated by information sharing and information seeking. In addition, the paper emphasized the significance of educational background. Compared to community college students, university students valued the motivations of boredom/habitual pastime and information seeking more. Individuals who follow influencers for practical knowledge often have specific interests and seek specialized information that is relevant to them, according to research [54].



Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Figure 1: Croes and Bartels model of young adults' motivations for following social influencers

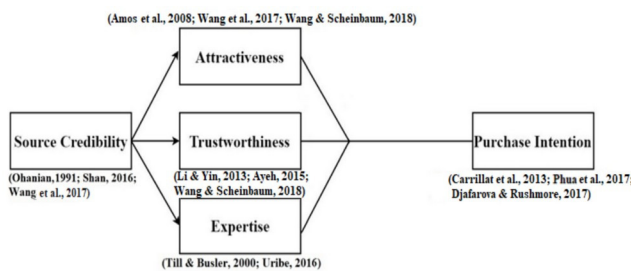


Figure 2: Ohanian model of source of credibility Model

Ohanian [33] also proposed a Source of Credibility model which provides evidence that reliable sources are more persuasive than less reliable sources. Influencer marketing approach, which relies on influencer endorsements, is based on the influencers' trustworthiness, which means that the more trustworthy the influencer is, the more credible the items are [55].

Furthermore, in 2020, Taillon et al. [56] has researched about the moderating role of closeness. In Taillon's model, there are 3 important characteristics of influencer that has significantly impacted consumer perception of influencer marketing including attractiveness, likability, and similarity [56].

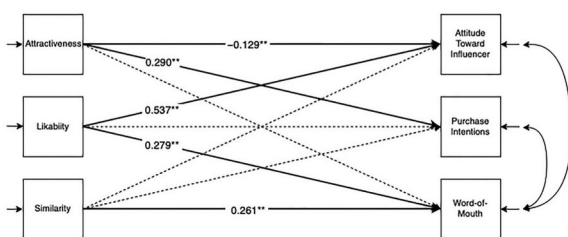


Figure 3: Taillon, Mueller, Kowalczyk and Jones - the moderating role of closeness

C. Hypothesis development and research model

With existing studies, and previous models, this study is focusing on researching the impacts of influencers' characteristics on the followers' attitude towards influencers. Moreover, also based on that followers' attitude to evaluate the effectiveness of influencer marketing in brand when using this marketing strategy. The scope of this research is the Vietnam market with the focus on gen Z (people who were born from 1997 to 2012).

According to previous model developed by Taillon et al. in 2020, attractiveness has been proved to have a significant, distinctive, and positive impact on follower's attitude [56]. In addition, as stated in multiple studies, for instance the study of Petroschius and Crocker in 1989 or the model of Ohanian in 1991, the popularity of influencers and influencers' persuasive impact and attitude is supported by their attractiveness [57] [33]. Furthermore, in the study of Amos in 2018 [29], the authors have been identified the significant impact of attractiveness on advertising effectiveness. Therefore, this study proposed the following:

Hypothesis 1: Attractiveness of Influencers has a positive effect on followers' attitude.

Trustworthiness as mentioned previously, is a person's belief in something, someone, or a belief in a certain brand. Trustworthiness has been listed in Bremner's study in 2011 as the top five traits supporting for leader's decision [58]. This result of Bremner's study has shown a linkage between trustworthiness and the influence on their followers of each person. Moreover, as shown in the model of Ohanian about source of credibility, trustworthiness is considered as the component of source of credibility, it is also proved to have a vital role in the perception of an ad endorsed by influencers [33] [59]. The trustworthiness, for instance, presented through the source of their content, the information they provide on their social media. In fact, there are multiple failure influencer and failure influencer marketing campaign due to the problem of trustworthiness. The case of Tiffany Mitchell – a popular lifestyle blogger from American in 2019 has met with the fierce opposition from her followers due to the untrustworthy content she posted on her Instagram about her accident. This wave of protest of Mitchell's scandal has significantly impacted on her associated brand which is SmartWater and this brand after that has announced not to sign any contract with female blogger. It can be seen from this example that trustworthiness plays an important role, or even a decisive factor that decide the attitude of followers toward an influencer and brand's influencer marketing. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2: Trustworthiness of Influencers has a positive effect on followers' attitude.

In fact, influencer's expertise not only affect the follower's attitude but also impact on follower's behaviors. As stated in the study of Veirman in 2017, influencer's expertise in certain subjects is considered the criteria for follower to value influencer's advice [2]. Moreover, in recent study, the trend of using influencer in marketing campaigns would prefer by brand rather than using celebrities. One of the key factors that making this trend in brand's marketing is that influencer's expertise and proximity which lead to higher credible, therefore, have greater influence on both follower's

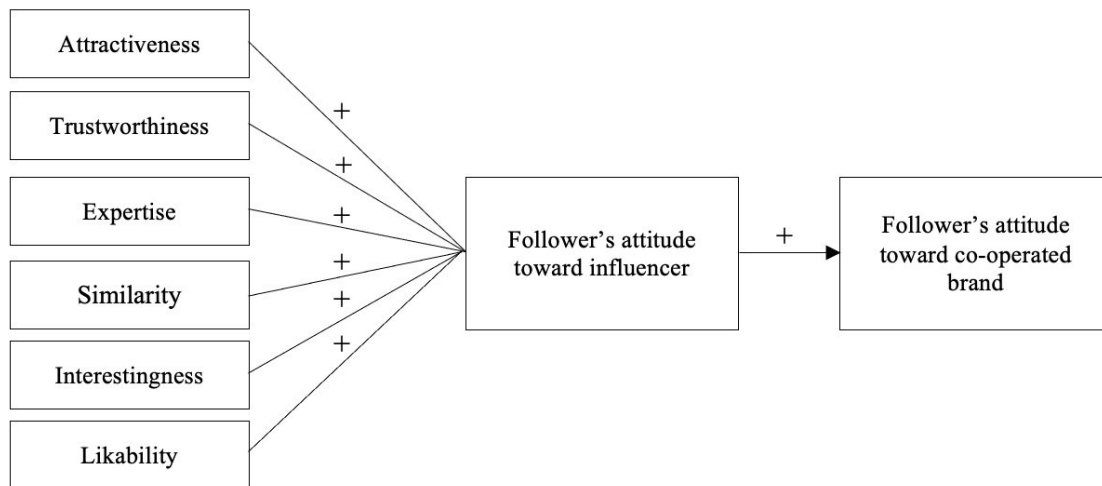


Figure 4: Proposed research model

attitude and behavior [60] [4]. In addition, according to the study of Schouten et al. in 2019, to build strong perceptions of credibility in followers, influencer needs high level of expertise [61]. Thus:

Hypothesis 3: The expertise of influencers has a positive effect on followers' attitude.

The degree of similarity between an influencer and a follower, also known as similarity, fit, or congruence, is an important factor in influencer selection [34] [23]. Normally, followers tend to identify themselves to the influencer in the most popular way which has many things in common with influencers or consider the influencer as their model and having the desire to be like the influencer [62] [63]. In both ways, followers tend to find the influencer who have high level of similar to themselves. Therefore, similarity can be considered the vital factor that affect followers' attitude. Hence:

Hypothesis 4: The similarity between influencers and followers has a positive impact on followers' attitude.

Previous research has found that conducting interesting activities on social media can make users pleased, thereby contributing to the development of a strong preference or sentiment for a brand and eliciting an emotional attachment between users and the brand [64]. As stated by Sokolova, Kefi in 2020, interestingness is one of the key factors that make influencers decide to continue following the update from influencer's account or not [65]. Therefore, it can be stated that the interestingness has significantly impacted on follower's attitude. Hence:

Hypothesis 5: An influencer's interestingness has a positive effect on followers' attitude.

Likeability has been proved to have positive effects on the product when transferred from the influencer [19]. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that likeability improves advertising effectiveness [21, 22]. When they are likeable, social media influencers are more persuasive [23]. When managing their human brands, social media influencers must take likeability into account. In addition, as shown in the model of Taillon, likability has significantly positive impact on follower's attitude. Hence, this study proposed the following:

Hypothesis 6: The likability of influencers has a positive effect on followers' attitude.

Based on the factors that make users follow an influencer on social networking sites, the study explores the influence of KOLs on user attitudes affecting brands. These days, the use of KOLs to promote media is not new, but to choose a person who fits the brand's criteria, style, and orientation, this article also solves those problems. With the study of factors, aspects, affecting the user's decision, then it will be applied to study the user's attitude through KOL to the brand.

Hypothesis 7: The influencer has a positive effect on the attitude toward the brand.

III. RESEARCHING METHOD

A. Sample

The survey was conducted with the participation of 115 respondents. Due to the scope and the requirement of this study, the number of samples proposed must clearly indicate the representative of gen Z within the project scope of Vietnam. Therefore, respondents must come from all three major regions of Vietnam including the South, the Central, the North. To guarantee that the sample is representative of the market and not biased towards any one target group, quotas will be applied to gender. 43% of those surveyed are men. Female responses make up 54% of the total, with others accounting for 3%. Also, if responses are not between the ages of 9 and 25, they will be screened.

B. Data collection procedure

By adopting scales from multiple academic scholars, the original questionnaire of this study was created in English with 3 main parts. For the first part, the questions focus on collecting demographic information of respondents with 2 screening questions about the age range (must be gen Z with the range from 9 to 25 years old) and having experience with influencer marketing before. The items of the demographic information section were measured by nominal scale. The second part was created based on multiple scales from previous study to measure the influencer's characteris-

tics and impacts on the attitude of followers towards influencers. Likert scale with five points 1- totally disagree, 2- disagree, 3- moderate, 4- agree, and 5- totally agree was implemented in this part for measuring the impact between study's variables. In the final part, the queries were created to measure the effectiveness of influencer marketing on the operation of cooperated brands by asking respondents to select the most agreeable answer in the likert scale from 1- totally disagree to 5- totally agree.

With the concentration of this study researching gen Z in Vietnam, the original questionnaire in English was translated into Vietnamese for convenience and misunderstanding avoidance. Multiple translator tools and advice from experts has been applied for the translation to ensure the quality of the study's questionnaire.

Before officially collecting the survey, a pilot test was implemented to ensure the effectiveness of the questionnaire. The pilot was conducted with the participation of 10 respondents that adapt to all screening criteria. After the pilot testing, the questionnaire was transferred into google form for convenience, increasing the number of respondents, and diversifying the respondent's location. The form was published in multiple groups on social platforms by the link <https://bom.so/KRGdV5>.

As stated by Setia [66], the sample size ratio 1:4 which is 1 control ratio to 4 cases can ensure statistical power. Therefore, in this study, with totally 28 questions, the minimum sample size that needs to be ensured is 112 [66].

C. Measure

To measure attractiveness, 3 items including good looking, attractive, and sexy developed by Ohanian in 1990 were adopted. For the other 2 independent variables which are trustworthiness and expertise, scales developed by Ohanian in 1990 were also used. An example item of the scale measuring trustworthiness is feeling confident in his/her favorite influencer's skills. For expertise, an example of the adopted scale's item is that the influencer possesses specialized knowledge. To measure likability, 4 items of the scale developed by Whittler et al. in 1991 were adopted which are warm, likable, sincere, and friendly. Similarity is measured by using the scale developed by Reichelt, Sievert, and Jacob in 2013. An example of this scale is the influencer's identity is similar to him/her. The final independent variable of influencer's characteristics which is interesting is measured by adopting the scale of Wei and Lu in 2013. An example of this scale is interest in my favorite influencer's posts. The four items scale of Hoolbrook and Batra in 1987 was adopted to measure the attitude towards influencers. React favorably is an example item of Hoolbrook and Batra's scale. To measure the influencer marketing activities on the attitude of this influencer's followers on cooperated brands, the 3 items scale developed by Priester and Petty in 2003 would be adopted.

IV. RESULTS

A. Descriptive statistics

As can be seen, this study has the participation of both males and females with nearly equal percentages. The sur-

TABLE I. THE RELIABILITY OF VARIABLES

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	52	45.2%
Female	63	52.8%
Locations		
North	67	58.3%
Center	28	24.3%
South	20	17.4%
Average time spend on social platform		
Below 1 hour	5	4.3%
From 1 hour to below 3 hours	36	31.3%
From 3 hours to below 5 hours	46	40%
From 5 hours to below 8 hours	17	14.8%
From 8 hours and above	11	9.6%
Social platforms currently using		
Facebook	108	93.9%
Instagram	86	74.8%
Tik Tok	82	71.3%
YouTube	101	87.8%
Others	18	15.1%

vey also conducted through all of Vietnam's regions, therefore, avoiding the biases that might happen due to the culture of different regions. Moreover, the data collection also shows that Vietnamese tend to spend an average of 3 to 5 hours on social platforms. These statistics prove the potentiality of influencer marketing in Vietnam. The most popular social platform in Vietnam is Facebook, followed by YouTube and Instagram.

B. Reliability and validity

As claimed by Ahmed and Ishtiaq [67], when evaluating whether research is good or not, the data collection must assure the two important and fundamental domains which are reliability and validity [65]. Therefore, multiple analysis tools have been conducted to test the reliability and validity of this study's data collection.

For reliability testing, Cronbach's Alpha has been calculated. The results show that all variables of this study have Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.8. The highest value of Cronbach's Alpha belongs to similarity with the value of 0.920, whereas the lowest value belongs to trustworthiness with the value of 0.832. These high values of Cronbach's Alpha have proved the high level of this study's reliability.

Through the validity testing by the exploration of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the results show that KMO

TABLE II. THE RELIABILITY OF VARIABLES

Variables	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Characteristics of influencer</i>		
Attractiveness	3	0.841
Trustworthiness	3	0.832
Expertise	3	0.840
Similarity	3	0.920
Interestingness	3	0.906
Likability	4	0.909
<i>Followers' attitude towards influencer</i>		
Attitude towards influencer	4	0.916
<i>Followers' attitude to co-operated brand</i>		
Attitude towards brand	3	0.835

values are 0.919 (higher than 0.5), all variables accounting for 75,2% (higher than the cut off 50%). This result has assured the validity of this study.

For conducting hypothesis testing through calculating regression in the next section, correlation matrix has been used. The results show that all variables have significant correlation together at the 0.01 level.

TABLE III. CORRELATION MATRIX

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.FATI								
2.IA	.652**							
3.IT	.632**	.585**						
4.IE	.616**	.600**	.684**					
5.IS	.484**	.351**	.379**	.448**				
6.II	.685**	.598**	.668**	.634**	.499**			
7.IL	.590**	.567**	.567**	.626**	.418**	.579**		
8.FATB	.556**	.315**	.315**	.348**	.188**	.483**	.262**	

Note. FATI: Follower's attitude towards influencer; IA: Influencer's attractiveness; IT: Influencer's trustworthiness; IE: Influencer's expertise; IS: Influencer's similarity; II: Influencer's interestingness; IL: Influencer's likability; FATB: Follower's attitude towards co-operated brand.

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

C. Hypothesis testing

After conducting the Cronbach' Alpha, EFA and correlation for reliability and validity testing, we move on to the next stage of hypothesis testing in which single regression has been used. The table below shows the result of regression analysis in which all the proposed hypotheses are supported.

TABLE IV. RESULT OF DIRECT EFFECT

Direct effects	Coefficients	T-values	Sig.	Outcomes
Attractiveness → Attitude towards influencer (H1)	0.652	9.153	.000	Supported
Trustworthiness → Attitude towards influencer (H2)	0.632	8.678	.000	Supported
Expertise → Attitude towards influencer (H3)	0.616	8.307	.000	Supported
Similarity → Attitude towards influencer (H4)	0.484	5.876	.000	Supported
Interestingness → Attitude towards influencer (H5)	0.685	9.985	.000	Supported
Likability → Attitude towards influencer (H6)	0.590	7.773	.000	Supported
Influencer marketing → Followers' attitude towards co-operated brand (H7)	0.556	7.107	.000	Supported

According to the figures shown in the above table, all of the characteristics of influences including attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, interestingness, likability have significantly and positively affected the attitude towards influencers. Of the six factors, interest with the T-value of 9.985 has the largest impact on attitude towards influencers. Conversely, similarity has the smallest effect on attitude towards influencers. As for the H7, influencer marketing has a significant positive impact on attitude towards co-operated brands of influencer.

D. One-way Anova and T-test testing

Because of the typical regional differences feature of Vietnam, we want to see the differentiation of each region to influencer marketing. By analyzing the one-way Anova testing, we can test the difference impact between three groups of regions including the North, the Central and the South on two variables Attitude towards influencer and Attitude towards brand. With the Sig. of 0.133 > 0.05 in variables Attitude towards influencer and the Sig. of 0.165 > 0.05 in variables Attitude towards brand, there is no statistically significant difference in the attitude level of the respondents of different region groups. Thus, the regional differences in Vietnam do not affect the effectiveness of influencer marketing.

After conducting the one-way Anova testing, we move on to utilize an independent sample t-test to analyze two groups

of gender. The table below shows the result of t-test analysis.

TABLE V. INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

<i>Variables</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Attitude towards influencer	.197	.658
Attitude towards brand	.016	.900

With the Sig. of 0.658 and 0.900, gender does not affect the attitude of respondents on influencer and brand.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The data table above has shown that the top three factors that most influence a user's decision to follow a KOL are Interestingness, Attractiveness and Trustworthiness. To be able to build an image or a model of KOL, it is necessary to have the above factors to attract users. The most important factor is still the interestingness of the production content, ideas, and messages you want to convey. This finding is completely consistent with the characteristics of generation Z and the context that they are living. According to recent study conducted by Prakash et al., generation Z is a strenuous contributor and consumer of several social contents on social platform [68]. Every day, they approach to thousand online information from several sources created by several people. Therefore, to be outstanding and capturing generation Z attention, the content of each social post will be the most importance factors that every content creator must be aware. Moreover, in recent study posted on American Study of Audiology has shown that, generation Z is nowadays losing its patient with thousand contents on social media. They are now more interested on the short content with attractive idea or attractive visual [69]. This is what also founded in this study when appearance is the next important factors affecting the user's decision. Finally, trustworthiness, the level of trust a KOL may need if that KOL is someone who specializes in reviewing products on the market so that users and followers have an objective view of the product. However, it is not necessary that you have all of the top three factors above to become a successful KOL, those three factors are what user care about when following someone on social networks. An example of not needing all three elements is Thong Soai Ca, a KOL on the TikTok platform who does not have a beautiful appearance, but he has humorous and entertaining content, so there were times when this KOL was very popular on social platforms.

A. Implications

1) Theoretical implications

This research has two main theoretical implications. Firstly, this research has provided the insight of influencer marketing to have a deeper understanding with the issue for brands when doing this kind of marketing activities. Secondly, this study enriches the database of scholars by providing a based module which has been identified from empirical evidence of respondents in Vietnam.

The results of this study provide the impacts and necessities of influencer characteristics in the consumer's attitude towards the influencer, thus, enhancing the efficiency of in-

fluencer marketing for the brands. With the contribution of attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, similarity, interestingness, likability, it can evoke the efficiency of influencer marketing for the brands. It also indicates that interest is the most significant factor influencing the consumer's perception on influencer and similarity is the least factor.

Currently, research in Vietnam do not focus much on the insight of influencer marketing rather than the impact of it. This leads to the requirement of proposing a based module to build on further modules development. By the given module, we aim to become the reference source for other scholars and brands to have further discussions and applications. Otherwise, this research clearly clarifies the factors that affect the consumer's attitude towards influencers. From this, brands can suggest the suitable strategies to utilize influencer marketing effectively.

2) Managerial implications

Consistent to the hypothesis development, this study has provided a deep insight of influencer marketing and consumer perception. The significant consistency between influencer's characteristics and follower's attitude towards influencer, and broader is follower's attitude towards co-operated brands has provided a guidance of influencer marketing for influencers and brands in general.

Foremost, from the perspective of an influencer, recognizing the important factors that can help influencers to build up a better marketing plan on their social media sites. For instance, knowing that something is interesting significantly affects a follower's attitude and it's one of the most important factors for capturing an audience's attention. The influencer should pay more attention to build up a detailed and consistent content plan for their social site in which they focus on sharing contents which are varied, personalized, humorous, and avoiding sensitive content. Moreover, after the pandemic of Covid19, people, especially for generation Z are now facing numerous problems relating to mental health, therefore, they now tends to find the content that empathy for this difficult time after Covid19. Otherwise, attractiveness is also an important characteristic that influencers must ensure. The attractiveness can be understood broader than just good looking or sexy, the influencer should maintain their appearance in the most sympathetic status which is clean and tidy. Furthermore, besides implicating the influencer his/her marketing plan on social media sites, this study also provides a preference for influencers to choose the suitable brands which are consistent to their image and characteristics. One of the key highlights that can be taken from this study parallel to the characteristic of generation Z that has been mentioned previously, short content are now much more preferred. This conclusion doesn't mean that long content are now complete died but rather to have a viral long-content post, the content must be distinguished, target hot topic and creating with an attractive visualize.

Secondly, from the perspective of brand, the manager of each brand can be based on the variables of this study which are the influencer's specific characteristics to build their brand criteria when choosing co-operated influencers. For instance, with a fashion brand that focuses on providing sporty clothes, the co-operated influencer of this brand must have the attractiveness of healthy, dynamic, and fit; the in-

terestingness of frequently using healthy diet, effective workout exercises, etc. This study provides guidance for brands to have better and more effective influencer marketing.

In Vietnam context, the number of influencers is increasing day by day due to the potential and the benefits that this job can bring to them. However, not many influencers become successful and actually gain benefits from this job due to the characteristics of this red ocean market. Moreover, from the side of brands, also because of the huge number of influencers, it is hard to find a suitable collaborated influencer to collab. As find out in this study, 6 independent variables include attractiveness, interestingness, expertise, trustworthiness, similarity, likability are the 6 top common factors that affect attitude towards both brand and influencer of followers. The study suggests developing an app that allow to connect influencer with brand. The category and the criteria to assess influencer will be based on the result of this study, which is the 6 top factors attractiveness, interestingness, expertise, trustworthiness, similarity, likability.

B. Limitations and recommendations

1) Limitations

One of the limitations that this article has is that the characteristics are not yet diverse. It is necessary to add, according to the trend, stronger influencing factors, such as personalization. Synthesizing from many available models to be able to develop a more complete chart and model to help those who aspire to be KOL can find an easier path. Another limitation is that the survey needs to be more diverse. Although the number of surveys is spread evenly across three regions of Vietnam, making the survey more general and accurate, the number is not large enough to have a larger impact to the reader.

2) Recommendations

There have been many directions for further development of this study.

The following research paper needs to collect a lot of data, more characteristics must be added in. Not only that, but this research article is also mainly aimed at the level of user interest up to one KOL. To make the article more certain, it is necessary to study more aspects when KOL is a brand representative to assess the extent of followers to a particular brand.

This study only stops at a relative level, not exactly, the next research needs to improve the problem of collecting surveys in Gen Z and Gen Y age groups to assess the difference between each age group. That way, a KOL or a brand can build a marketing strategy to the right target audience.

As partly show in the previous studies researching about influencers and influencer marketing, the 6 mentioned independent variables include attractiveness, interestingness, expertise, likability, similarity, trustworthiness also have direct impacted on followers' attitude toward brand. Therefore, for further researching, this linkage should be focused and researched more.

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