

THE INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCERS ON THE PURCHASE DECISIONS OF NEW GENERATION CONSUMERS IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY ERA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims 1) to study the characteristics of influencers towards the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era, 2) to study the attitudes towards purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era and 3) to study the Influence of influencers on the purchase decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era. This is quantitative research; the population and sample group from new generation consumers aged 18 years and over residing in Bangkok and its vicinity of 400 samples by Non-probability sampling and convenience sampling were used. The research results found that the personal factor analysis of 400 samples found that the majority of respondents were female and mostly aged between 18 and 24 years. Most were students and employees of private companies, studied at the bachelor's degree level and had an income of less than 15,000 baht per month. The results of that new generation consumers rated influencer characteristics in all four dimensions at a "high" level, namely, content quality, engagement, credibility and authenticity, respectively. The results of that new generation consumers have attitudes towards purchasing decisions in the digital economy era, presented through influencers, with an overall average value at a "high" level. The results of the analysis of purchasing decisions at a "high" level and the hypothesis test result found that; the results of that four influencer characteristics positively influence the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era and was statistically significant ($p < .001$), the results of that the attitudes of new generation consumers have a statistically significant positive influence on purchasing decisions in the digital economy era and was statistically significant ($p < .001$) and the results of that influencer characteristics not only directly influence purchase decisions but also significantly influence consumer attitudes toward brands, a key variable in building trust, preference and motivation to purchase products in the digital economy and a statistically significant at the .05 level.

Keywords: Influencers, Purchase Decisions, New Generation Consumers, Digital Economy

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of the digital economy over the past decade has significantly transformed economic structures and consumer behavior worldwide, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, which has led consumers to rely on online media and digital platforms as their primary channels for communication, information search, and purchase decisions (The government public relations department, 2024). In this environment, influencers have become a key player in shaping consumer brand awareness, persuasion, and purchase decisions, acting as "digital social intermediaries" that effectively connect consumers with brands. Research has Misra et al., (2024) found that influencer influence is

influenced by factors such as “credibility,” “authenticity,” “engagement,” and “content quality,” which influence consumer trust and attitudes, ultimately leading to purchase intentions or decisions. Furthermore, influencer marketing is becoming more successful because new generations of consumers, particularly Generation Z and Millennials, tend to trust individuals more than organizations and trust information from online influencers more than traditional advertising media (Haenlein et al., 2022).

In Thailand, the role of influencers is particularly prominent. According to Tellscore.(2024), the Thai influencer marketing industry is valued at more than 45 billion baht and expands by an average of more than 15% per year. Popular platforms include TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, which have a combined user base of more than 50 million accounts. The number of full-time content creators/ influencers in Thailand, meaning that their primary source of income is content, is approximately 2 million. If part-time content creators/ influencers, who work on content as a supplementary source of income, such as micro-influencers with a small social media following of 1,000-20,000 followers, and any individuals who have generated income from content production in the past year, totals 9 million. This reflects that Thai consumers are continuously interested in and interact with creators, and influencers have become a significant force in the digital economy in 2025, as competition among creators is significantly heightened, with creators vying for attention and audience appeal. But at the same time, the size of the content creator market continues to grow due to many factors, and new creators continue to flow into the market.

The growth of the digital economy in Thailand has led to widespread social and economic changes, particularly in marketing and the behavior of new generation consumers, who use online media as a primary channel for economic activities, including product search, price comparison, and purchase decisions. This phenomenon has made the role of influencers even more important, as they are content producers who are close to consumers, build trust, and influence the opinions of their followers. Although influencers play a crucial role in consumer decision-making, there are still gaps in research that study influencer characteristics, brand attitudes, and purchase decisions in the rapidly changing digital economy environment, especially in terms of authenticity, engagement, and content quality, which are variables that significantly affect the confidence of modern consumers (Arunchoknumlap, 2023) . Therefore, researchers are interested in studying the topic “The Influence of Influencers on the Purchase Decisions of New Generation Consumers in the Digital Economy Era”, This research is therefore crucial for understanding the influence of influencers on Thai consumer behavior in the digital economy era and for generating new knowledge that truly aligns with Thai consumer behavior in the digital age.

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the characteristics of influencers towards the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.
2. To study the attitudes towards purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.
3. To study the Influence of influencers on the purchase decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis are as follows:

H1 : Influencer characteristics such as credibility, authenticity, engagement, and content quality positively influence the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

H2 : Attitude positively influences the purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

H3: Influencer attributes such as credibility, authenticity, engagement, and content quality act as a proxy for attitudes and purchase decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

METHODOLOGY

The study methods are as follows:

Population and sample group

The population and sample group from new generation consumers aged 18 years and over residing in Bangkok and its vicinity. The sample population of Taro Yamane (1973) and set the confidence level at 95% of 400 samples by Non-probability sampling and convenience sampling were used.

Research tools

This research is a quantitative research. A questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data from new generation consumers aged 18 years and over residing in Bangkok and its vicinity. All variables were measured with a 5-level Likert scale.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including Cronbach's Alpha, Descriptive statistics Frequency, Percentage, average and standard deviation inferential statistics, Pearson Correlation, Multiple Regression, Simple Regression, and Mediation Analysis to test the causal relationship between variables according to the research conceptual framework.

Variables

Independent Variables : Credibility, Authenticity, Participation and Content Quality.

Mediating Variable : Attitude.

Dependent Variable : Purchasing decisions of new generation consumers.

RESULTS

The findings of the Influence of Influencers on the Purchase Decisions of New Generation Consumers in the Digital Economy Era as follows;

Part 1 The results of the personal factor analysis of the sample of 400 samples found that the majority of respondents were female and mostly aged between 18 and 24 years. Most were students and employees of private companies, studied at the bachelor's degree level and had an income of less than 15,000 baht per month.

Part 2 The results of that new generation consumers rated influencer characteristics in all four dimensions at a “high” level, namely, content quality at a “highest” level (mean = 4.22), engagement at a “high” level (mean = 4.18), credibility at a “high” level (mean = 4.12), and authenticity at a “high” level (mean = 4.05), respectively.

Part 3 The results of that new generation consumers have attitudes towards purchasing decisions in the digital economy era, presented through influencers, with an overall average value at a “high” level (mean = 4.19).

Part 4 The results of the analysis of purchasing decisions of 400 samples generation consumers found that respondents had a high level of purchasing decision at a “high” level (mean = 4.14)

Part 5 The hypothesis test result found that:

H1 Influencer characteristics such as credibility, authenticity, engagement, and content quality positively influence the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era as follows; The multiple regression analysis revealed that the model could explain 64.2 percent of the variance in attitude ($R^2 = .642$) and was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The four influencer characteristics dimensions, namely credibility ($\beta = .241$), authenticity ($\beta = .218$), engagement ($\beta = .301$), and content quality ($\beta = .201$), had a significant positive influence on the attitude of new generation consumers in the Digital Economy Era. Form table 1

Table 1
Multiple regression analysis results of influencer characteristics on attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

Model	B	SE(B)	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.428	0.113	–	3.788	0.000**
Credibility	0.215	0.048	0.241	4.512	0.000**
Authenticity	0.193	0.048	0.218	3.984	0.000**
Engagement	0.265	0.045	0.301	5.881	0.000**
Content Quality	0.188	0.053	0.201	3.541	0.001**

** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

H2 Attitude positively influences the purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era as follows; Attitude had a statistically significant positive influence on the purchase decision of young consumers ($B = 0.552$, $Beta = 0.612$, $p < .001$), with the regression model able to explain 37.5 percent of the variance in purchase decision ($R^2 = 0.375$). Form table 2

Table 2
Multiple regression analysis results of Attitude on the purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era.

Model	B	SE(B)	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.845	0.152	–	5.559	0.000**
Attitude	0.552	0.043	0.612	12.843	0.000**

** Statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

H3: Influencer attributes such as credibility, authenticity, engagement, and content quality act as a proxy for attitudes and purchase decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era as follows; The characteristics of influencers, including credibility, authenticity, engagement, and content quality, have a direct positive impact on purchasing decisions. Although some may not exhibit high influence, they are statistically significant at the .05 level. Overall results indicate that influencer characteristics not only directly affect purchasing decisions but also significantly influence consumer attitudes toward brands a critical variable in building trust, preference, and motivation for product selection in the digital economy era. From table 3

Table 3

The results of the analysis of direct influence, indirect influence and combined influence of variables in the structural model of influencer characteristics variables through attitude towards purchase decision.

Model	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	p-value
Credibility $\rightarrow$ purchase decision.	0.112	0.133	0.245	0.016*
Authenticity $\rightarrow$ purchase decision	0.098	0.121	0.219	0.045*
Engagement $\rightarrow$ purchase decision	0.154	0.166	0.32	0.002*
Content Quality $\rightarrow$ purchase decision	0.087	0.104	0.191	0.05*

* Statistically significant at the .05 level.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

The findings of personal factors among the 400 sample groups revealed that the majority of respondents were female and most were between the ages of 18 and 24, the age group with the highest digital media usage and influencer following. Occupation-wise, the majority of the sample were students and employees of private companies, reflecting a new generation of consumers who use online media as part of their daily lives. Regarding education level, the majority of respondents held bachelor's degrees, indicating a strong foundation in knowledge and access to digital technology. Meanwhile, average monthly income was found to be below 15,000 baht per month, which is the typical income level for students and those starting to work today. Overall, this sample group represents a new generation of consumers who are appropriately aligned with the target group of this research.

The findings show that millennial consumers place the highest importance on quality content and engagement, credibility and authenticity remain significant, but secondary, influencer image enhancing elements. New generation consumers in the digital economy era are highly likely to make purchase decisions influenced by influencer reviews and presentations, which include confidence in the product, authenticity, appropriateness, and credibility of the content received. In summary, the attitudes and purchasing decisions of new generation consumers in the digital economy era are high in both aspects, indicating that influencer content has a significant influence on product perception and selection.

Consumers in the digital economy era have significant confidence and are likely to purchase products recommended by influencers. The mean score for each evaluation item is high than 4.10, indicating that influencers play a positive role in influencing attitudes, confidence, and purchasing decisions among young consumers. In particular, the item that states "Influencer reviews or recommendations make me confident in my purchasing decision" has the high mean score (mean = 4.14), indicating that dimensions of credibility and clarity of information presented through content clearly influence purchasing decisions. Further, the high mean scores for all items indicate that influencers are important in credibility and influencing purchasing behavior among young consumers, which is consistent with the current digital economy context where consumers primarily receive information from social media with Pahasing et al.,(2022), the study topic is Business Innovations in The Digital Economy That Affect Online Shopping Behavior and The Trend of Future Service Usage Among Consumers in Bangkok the results of the hypothesis testing, it was determined that business innovation products and processes affect online shopping behavior in terms of cost per time with a significance level of .01, and that innovations in technology and products affect online purchase frequency (times/month) with a statistically significant level of 0.1, and that online shopping behavior cost per time and purchase frequency (times/month) are related to the trend of using the service for future purchases and refinancing

The findings show that four influencer characteristics positively influence the attitudes of new generation consumers in the digital economy era with Hwang's (2022) study found that authenticity and engagement were significant predictors of followers' positive feelings toward a brand, with followers who perceived influencers as sincere and intentional in their communication more likely to develop positive product engagement and attitudes. Kim and Lee's (2023) study further emphasized that content quality, such as clarity, accuracy of information, presentation style, and creativity, were key elements that significantly influenced consumers' evaluations of a brand. When consumers see high-quality content, they are more likely to develop liking, interest, and positive attitudes toward the brand being featured.

The findings show that the attitudes of new generation consumers have a statistically significant positive influence on purchasing decisions in the digital economy era with Zhao. (2024) ,the study topic is The Influencers' Attributes and Customer Purchase Intention. The results of attitude acts as a significant driver of purchase intention, with consumers often developing trust and positive attitudes based on their perception of an influencer's credibility, which then translates into actual purchase behavior.

The findings suggest that influencer characteristics not only directly influence purchase decisions, but also significantly influence consumer attitudes toward brands, a key variable in building trust, preference, and motivation to purchase products in the digital economy with Al.,et al. (2023) the study topic is the effect of social media influencers on purchase intention : The mediating role of attitude the results of all influencer characteristics have a positive influence on attitude, brand attitude has a significant influence on purchase intention. Further, model testing using mediation analysis indicates that attitude is a very significant mediating variable, with the indirect effects of each influencer variable through attitude all being statistically significant, which is consistent with the concept of consumer behavior on digital media.

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