





# Analyzing the Impact of Social Media Advertising on Consumer Interactions, Trust, and Purchase Intentions in the Cosmetics and Personal Care Sector

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## Abstract

This study analyses the influence of social media advertisements on consumer purchasing intentions within Malaysia's cosmetics and personal care sector, highlighting the significance of interactivity, informativeness, and trust. Considering the growing prevalence of social media in marketing, comprehending how these elements affect consumer choices is crucial for enhancing digital advertising strategies. This research utilises a quantitative approach to evaluate consumer behaviour. Data were gathered from 384 Malaysian consumers aged 18 and older who actively interact with cosmetic and personal care brands on social media using online survey. The research employed descriptive analysis, reliability and validity assessments, and hypothesis testing to investigate the relationships among principal variables. Research demonstrates that informativeness and trust in social media advertisements substantially increase purchase intentions, with trust acting as a vital mediator. Although interactivity enhances trust, it does not directly affect purchase intention, indicating that its influence may be contingent upon contextual variables. These findings underscore the imperative for brands to deliver transparent, reliable, and informative content to enhance consumer trust and stimulate purchasing behaviour. The study's originality is rooted in its examination of the Malaysian cosmetics and personal care market, providing practical insights for marketers to enhance social media advertising strategies. The research underscores trust as a pivotal factor, offering essential insights for brands aiming to improve their digital engagement. This study enhances the existing literature on digital marketing in emerging markets, providing practical insights for businesses seeking to improve their social media efficacy in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Informativeness, Interactivity, Trust, Cosmetics and Personal Care, Purchase Intention, Social Media Advertising, Consumer Behavior, Digital Marketing, Emerging Markets

## 1. Introduction

The digital revolution has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers, and social media has emerged as a dominant force in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in industries such as cosmetics and personal care. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have become integral to daily life, offering brands unprecedented opportunities to engage with audiences and influence purchasing decisions [1], [2]. In Malaysia, where social media usage continues to grow, these platforms serve as critical channels for marketing to a tech-savvy and well-educated demographic [3]. This study situates itself within the human experience and social context, emphasizing the individualized meanings consumers derive from their interactions with social media advertisements. It recognizes that

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consumer behavior is not solely shaped by the content of advertisements but also by the unique perceptions and social contexts that influence how these messages are interpreted [4].

In Malaysia's cosmetics and personal care industry, social media advertising plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer purchase intentions. However, the digital landscape is saturated with advertisements vying for attention, making trust a critical factor in determining the effectiveness of these campaigns [5]. Beyond visual appeal and educational value, the reputation projected by advertisements significantly impacts consumer choices, particularly in an industry where personal trust and credibility are paramount [6]. The interplay of factors such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), influencer marketing, interactivity, and credibility creates a complex dynamic that brands must navigate to influence consumer behavior effectively. Yet, despite the growing reliance on social media advertising, there remains a lack of consensus in the literature regarding the relative importance of these factors. While influencer reliability and attractiveness drive brand loyalty and trust, these attributes do not consistently predict purchase intention, highlighting inconsistencies in existing research.

This study seeks to address these gaps by developing and validating an integrated model that examines the combined effects of interactivity, informativeness, and trust on consumer purchase intentions in the Malaysian cosmetics industry. By exploring how these factors interact, the research aims to provide actionable insights for optimizing social media advertising strategies in a competitive digital landscape. The study is guided by the following research question: What are the effects of interactivity, informativeness, and trust on consumers' intentions to purchase cosmetic and personal care products in Malaysia? To answer this, three hypotheses are proposed: (H1) Interactivity on social media advertising positively influences consumer purchase intention; (H2) Informativeness on social media advertising positively influences consumer purchase intention; and (H3) Trust on social media advertising positively influences consumer purchase intention. These hypotheses are grounded in the recognition that consumer behavior is shaped by a combination of engagement, information quality, and perceived credibility, all of which are critical in the context of social media advertising [7].

By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this study not only contributes to the academic understanding of consumer behavior in digital marketing environments but also offers practical recommendations for marketers seeking to enhance the effectiveness of their social media campaigns. In doing so, it underscores the importance of aligning advertising strategies with the nuanced preferences and expectations of Malaysian consumers, who navigate an increasingly crowded and competitive digital marketplace.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Interactivity

Interactivity in social media advertising represents a dynamic interplay between brands and consumers, where engagement transcends passive consumption and evolves into active participation. At its core, interactivity refers to the degree to which consumers can engage with content, providing feedback, sharing opinions, and co-creating value through actions such as liking, commenting, and sharing [8], [9]. This two-way communication fosters a sense of agency and connection, transforming advertisements from static messages into interactive experiences that resonate deeply with audiences. The ability to customize interactions and receive immediate feedback amplifies the perceived value of advertisements, making them more compelling and persuasive. Yet, the impact of interactivity is not uniform; it is shaped by the nature of the product, the emotional resonance of the content, and the social context in which it is consumed.

Research underscores the pivotal role of interactivity in enhancing consumer engagement and driving purchase intentions. For instance, interactive advertisements have been shown to elevate brand awareness and preference, particularly when consumers perceive a personal connection to the brand. This connection is often forged through personalized content, real-time interactions, and opportunities for co-creation, which collectively enhance the consumer's sense of involvement and ownership. However, the effectiveness of interactivity is not universal; it is contingent on the type of product being advertised. Studies reveal that consumers respond differently to interactive advertisements depending on whether the product is hedonic (pleasure-seeking) or utilitarian (function-oriented) [10]. For hedonic products, interactivity amplifies emotional engagement, heightening the pleasure derived from the

experience. In contrast, for utilitarian products, interactivity may enhance perceived functionality and practicality, aligning with the consumer's goal-oriented mindset. This nuanced relationship between interactivity and product type highlights the need for tailored advertising strategies that align with consumer motivations and expectations.

Beyond product type, the emotional responses elicited by interactive advertisements play a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Positive emotions—such as joy, excitement, or nostalgia—generated through engaging content can significantly influence decision-making, as consumers are more likely to act on their feelings when they feel emotionally connected to the advertisement [11]. Moreover, the presence of social capital—such as shared narratives, community identification, and peer validation—can further amplify the impact of interactivity. When consumers perceive that their interactions are part of a larger social dialogue, they are more likely to trust the brand and feel a sense of belonging, which reinforces their purchase intentions [12]. This interplay between emotional engagement and social capital underscores the transformative potential of interactivity, not only as a tool for driving sales but also as a mechanism for building lasting relationships with consumers.

## 2.2. Informativeness

Informativeness in social media advertising is the cornerstone of consumer trust and decision-making, defined as the extent to which advertisements deliver useful, relevant, and comprehensive information about a product. It is not merely the presence of information but its quality, clarity, and relevance that determine its impact. In an era where consumers are inundated with choices, informative advertisements serve as a beacon of clarity, guiding consumers toward confident and informed decisions. Research underscores that high levels of informativeness enhance the perceived value of advertisements, fostering consumer confidence and driving purchase intentions, particularly in industries like cosmetics where transparency is paramount [13], [14].

The role of informativeness in shaping consumer behavior is well-documented. Studies reveal that informative advertisements significantly elevate the effectiveness of advertising campaigns by addressing consumer needs for clarity and transparency. For instance, Hamouda's research highlights that informativeness is the most critical antecedent of advertising value in social media, particularly in sectors like tourism, where detailed information about offerings directly influences consumer engagement and trust. This finding resonates with Silva's work, which emphasizes that providing comprehensive product details not only enhances consumer confidence but also strengthens the emotional connection between the brand and its audience [15]. In the cosmetics industry, where consumers often scrutinize ingredients, safety, and efficacy, informative advertising becomes a powerful tool for building trust and influencing purchase decisions.

However, the impact of informativeness extends beyond consumer confidence; it also shapes the overall credibility and effectiveness of advertising campaigns. Gu's research demonstrates that trust in the information presented in advertisements is a critical driver of consumer engagement, highlighting the necessity for advertisements to be both informative and credible [16]. Yet, the challenge lies in striking a balance between providing sufficient information and avoiding information overload. For example, in the pharmaceutical industry, while advertisements often include basic details like brand names, they frequently omit essential information such as contraindications and side effects, which can hinder informed decision-making and erode consumer trust. This omission underscores the importance of not only providing information but ensuring it is comprehensive, accurate, and accessible.

## 2.3. Trust

Trust in social media advertising is the bedrock upon which consumer relationships with brands are built, defined as the belief in the credibility, reliability, and authenticity of the information presented in advertisements and the entities behind them. In the digital age, where information flows ceaselessly and skepticism often prevails, trust emerges as a critical determinant of consumer behavior. It is not merely a passive belief but an active force that shapes how consumers perceive, evaluate, and act upon the messages they encounter. Research consistently underscores that higher levels of trust in advertisements correlate with increased purchase intentions, making trust a linchpin of effective online marketing strategies [17].

The role of trust in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors is both profound and multifaceted. For instance, Ellitan et al. found that brand trust significantly mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase

intention, suggesting that consumers are more likely to purchase products from brands they perceive as credible and reliable. This finding aligns with Dinh and Lee's research, which highlights the pivotal role of social media influencers in fostering trust. Influencers, as intermediaries between brands and consumers, can enhance trust by leveraging their perceived authenticity and expertise, thereby positively influencing consumer-brand relationships and driving purchase intentions [18]. This interplay between influencer credibility and consumer trust underscores the importance of aligning marketing strategies with the values and expectations of target audiences.

Trust also plays a critical role in specialized marketing strategies, such as green marketing and eWOM. Tan et al. demonstrated that trust acts as a catalyst in green marketing, where consumers' willingness to purchase environmentally friendly products is significantly influenced by their trust in the brand's commitment to sustainability [19]. Similarly, Qadri's research on eWOM revealed that trust is a key factor in shaping purchase intentions, as consumers are more likely to act on recommendations from sources they perceive as trustworthy [20]. These findings highlight the dual role of trust: as a mediator that bridges the gap between marketing efforts and consumer behavior, and as a safeguard that ensures the credibility of information in an often-ambiguous digital landscape.

Beyond its functional role, trust also elicits emotional responses that further influence consumer behavior. Hahn et al. found that trust positively impacts brand evaluation and emotional engagement, suggesting that advertisements perceived as trustworthy evoke stronger emotional connections with consumers [21]. This emotional resonance not only enhances the effectiveness of advertisements but also fosters long-term brand loyalty. For example, when consumers trust a brand, they are more likely to forgive occasional missteps and remain loyal, even in the face of competitive alternatives. This emotional dimension of trust underscores its transformative potential, not only as a driver of immediate purchase decisions but also as a foundation for enduring consumer relationships.

## 2.4. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention, defined as the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product after interacting with an advertisement, serves as a critical bridge between marketing efforts and actual consumer behavior. It is not merely a passive outcome but a dynamic construct shaped by a constellation of factors, including the quality of advertisements, the informativeness of product information, and the perceived trustworthiness of the brand or influencer. These elements collectively influence how consumers evaluate and respond to advertisements, ultimately determining their likelihood to purchase [22].

The quality of advertisements plays a pivotal role in shaping purchase intentions. High-quality ads, characterized by visual appeal, creativity, and clarity, capture consumer attention more effectively and leave a lasting impression. While information overload does not significantly affect online purchase intention, the overall quality of the advertisement remains a decisive factor in influencing consumer attitudes. This suggests that consumers are drawn to advertisements that are not only informative but also aesthetically pleasing and emotionally resonant. The interplay between visual appeal and emotional engagement underscores the importance of crafting advertisements that are both compelling and credible.

Informativeness, another critical determinant of purchase intention, enhances consumer confidence by providing comprehensive and relevant product information. Zhu et al. demonstrated that knowledge significantly impacts consumers' risk perception and purchase intention, particularly in contexts where transparency is essential, such as genetically modified foods [23]. Similarly, Seelanatha found that the informativeness of social media advertisements directly and positively influences online purchase intention, reinforcing the idea that well-informed consumers are more likely to make confident purchasing decisions [24]. This relationship highlights the dual role of informativeness: as a tool for reducing uncertainty and as a catalyst for informed decision-making.

Trustworthiness, particularly in the context of social media influencers, further amplifies purchase intentions. Influencers who are perceived as credible and authentic can foster consumer trust, which in turn boosts the likelihood of purchase. Ayyash's research indicates that perceived control of information and privacy risk significantly impact purchasing intention, suggesting that consumers are more likely to buy from brands they trust [25]. Additionally, Noufa et al. found that social media marketing activities, when executed effectively, can enhance purchase intentions, though their impact varies depending on the trustworthiness of the source [26]. This underscores the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer expectations for authenticity and transparency.

Leong et al. revealed that the usefulness and credibility of eWOM information significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions, highlighting the power of social validation and peer recommendations in the digital age [27]. In an era where consumers increasingly rely on the opinions of others, eWOM serves as a critical touchpoint that can either bolster or undermine purchase intentions. This dynamic interplay between social influence and individual decision-making underscores the complexity of consumer behavior in the digital landscape.

Social media advertising, with its interactive and participatory nature, further modifies consumer behavior by offering engaging and personalized content. Lim et al. found that interactive features on platforms like Facebook and Instagram significantly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of creating advertisements that foster active engagement [28]. Moreover, the perceived utility and usability of social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping purchase intentions. Lee and Chen's research demonstrates that the ease of navigating through advertisements and the perceived value of the information presented directly impact consumer purchase intentions [29]. When advertisements are both informative and user-friendly, consumers are more likely to perceive them as valuable and act on their recommendations.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the relationships between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention among Malaysian social media users engaged in shopping-related activities. The research design is structured to systematically test these relationships, leveraging online surveys as the primary data collection tool. The choice of a quantitative methodology aligns with the study's objective to generalize findings across a diverse population, ensuring robust and statistically significant insights.

The sampling method employed is convenience sampling, a pragmatic approach that selects participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. While convenience sampling is often criticized for its potential lack of representativeness, it is well-suited for exploratory studies in dynamic environments like social media, where accessibility and responsiveness are paramount. Participants were recruited through email invitations sent to individuals who had previously expressed interest in participating in research studies. This method ensures a pool of respondents who are not only familiar with social media platforms but also actively engage in shopping-related activities, aligning with the study's focus.

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table, a widely recognized tool for estimating sample sizes in finite populations. Given Malaysia's approximately 28.68 million active social media users, a minimum of 384 respondents was targeted to ensure statistical power and reliability. This sample size strikes a balance between feasibility and the need for generalizable results, providing a solid foundation for hypothesis testing and data analysis.

The target population consists of Malaysian social media users aged 18 and above, reflecting the demographic most likely to engage in online shopping and social media interactions. Malaysia's diverse cultural and ethnic landscape, coupled with its high social media penetration, makes it an ideal setting for this study. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are widely used for shopping, entertainment, and socializing, offering a rich context for exploring the interplay between social media advertising and consumer behavior. The Krejcie and Morgan (1976) method is commonly used to determine sample sizes in various research contexts, ensuring appropriate representation of the target population. They stated minimum of 385 is a good sample size.

Data collection was conducted through an online survey, distributed via email invitations to potential participants. The survey instrument included multiple-item measurement scales developed from previously validated social media advertising questionnaires. A total of 16 indicators, representing the four key variables—interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention—were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This approach ensures consistency and comparability with existing literature while capturing nuanced consumer perceptions.

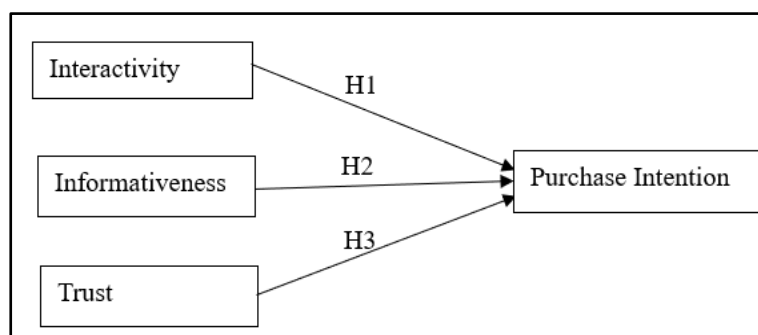
To ensure the dataset's suitability for factor analysis, a pilot study was conducted, followed by reliability testing. These preliminary steps validate the survey instrument's internal consistency and reliability, laying the groundwork for robust



statistical analysis. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and SmartPLS, tools well-suited for handling complex relationships and testing structural models. The results, including hypothesis confirmation or rejection, were thoroughly discussed, providing actionable insights into the dynamics of social media advertising and consumer behavior in Malaysia.

### 3.2. Research Model and Hypothesis Development

The research model (figure 1) for this study is anchored in the interplay between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and consumer purchase intention, positing that these variables collectively shape the effectiveness of social media advertising. The hypothesized relationships are grounded in both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, offering a nuanced understanding of how digital marketing strategies influence consumer behavior. A visual representation of the research model, depicting the relationships between these constructs, will be provided to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation.



**Figure 1.** Research Model

*H1: Interactivity positively influences purchase intention.*

Interactivity in social media advertising refers to the degree to which consumers can engage with content, providing feedback and participating in dynamic exchanges. This two-way communication fosters a sense of agency and connection, transforming advertisements from static messages into interactive experiences. Research suggests that higher levels of interactivity enhance consumer engagement, which in turn positively influences purchase intentions [30]. For instance, when consumers actively engage with digital content—through likes, comments, or shares—they develop a stronger emotional connection to the brand, reinforcing their likelihood to purchase. This hypothesis aligns with findings that highlight the role of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in shaping consumer attitudes through relatable and engaging content [31]. By fostering personalized communication and immediate feedback, interactivity not only captures attention but also builds trust and loyalty, ultimately driving purchase intentions.

*H2: Informativeness positively influences purchase intention.*

Informativeness in social media advertising encompasses the provision of comprehensive, transparent, and relevant product information. This includes details such as traceability, health summaries, and even negative performance contexts, which collectively reduce perceived uncertainty and enhance consumer confidence. Wu et al. [36] demonstrated that traceability information, by offering transparency about product origins and quality, significantly boosts consumer trust and purchase intentions. Similarly, [32] found that clear health summaries enable consumers to quickly assess product benefits, increasing their confidence and likelihood to purchase. Even the inclusion of negative performance contexts can enhance perceptions of reliability, as consumers value brands that are transparent about their shortcomings [33]. This hypothesis underscores the importance of providing detailed and transparent product information, which addresses consumer concerns and facilitates informed decision-making.

*H3: Trust positively influences purchase intention.*

Trust in social media advertising refers to consumers' belief in the credibility and reliability of the information presented, as well as the authenticity of the brand or influencer associated with the ad. Trust acts as a critical mediator between marketing efforts and consumer behavior, bridging the gap between message appeals and purchase intentions. Research [34] highlighted that message appeals—whether rational or emotional—significantly influence consumer

perceptions, but their effectiveness hinges on the presence of trust. Similarly, comprehensive product information reduces uncertainty and builds confidence, but without trust, even the most compelling messages may fail to drive purchases. Study by [35] emphasized that consumers are more likely to act on information they perceive as credible, reinforcing the centrality of trust in shaping purchase intentions. This hypothesis reflects the interconnectedness of trust, message appeals, and product information, underscoring the need for brands to cultivate credibility and authenticity in their advertising strategies.

The research model visually represents the hypothesized relationships, illustrating how interactivity, informativeness, and trust collectively influence consumer purchase intention. The diagram positions these constructs as independent variables, with purchase intention as the dependent variable, and highlights the mediating role of trust in amplifying the effects of interactivity and informativeness. This visual representation not only clarifies the theoretical framework but also provides a foundation for empirical testing and analysis.

### 3.3. Measurement Instruments

The measurement instruments for this study were meticulously developed by adapting scales from existing literature, ensuring alignment with the constructs of interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention. These scales, drawn from validated studies, were tailored to the context of social media advertising, balancing theoretical rigor with practical applicability. The reliability and validity of the adapted scales were rigorously assessed to ensure their suitability for empirical analysis, providing a robust foundation for data collection and interpretation. All data collected were treated as private and confidential and all data were presented anonymously.

For each variable, a set of questionnaire items was crafted to capture the nuances of consumer perceptions and behaviors. Interactivity was measured using items that assessed the degree of engagement and responsiveness in social media advertisements, such as the ability to provide feedback or participate in dynamic exchanges. Informativeness was operationalized through items evaluating the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of product information, including aspects like traceability and health summaries. Trust was measured by items reflecting consumers' belief in the credibility and authenticity of the brand or influencer, while purchase intention was gauged through items assessing the likelihood of purchasing the advertised product. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), ensuring consistency and comparability across responses [36]. See appendix for full questionnaire.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software, a powerful tool for structural equation modeling (SEM) that is particularly suited for exploratory research and complex relationships. The analysis followed a systematic sequence of steps, beginning with the evaluation of the measurement model and culminating in hypothesis testing and model validation.

The first step involved assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, both of which provide insights into the internal consistency of the scales. Values above 0.7 were considered acceptable, indicating that the items consistently measured the intended constructs. Convergent validity was assessed through the average variance extracted (AVE), with values exceeding 0.5 confirming that the items adequately captured the underlying constructs. Discriminant validity, which ensures that each construct is distinct from the others, was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings. These analyses collectively confirmed that the measurement model was both reliable and valid, laying the groundwork for subsequent structural analysis.

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention. Path coefficients, which indicate the strength and direction of these relationships, were examined to determine their statistical significance. Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping, a non-parametric method that generates confidence intervals and p-values for the path coefficients. Model fit indices, such as the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI), were also assessed to ensure the model's overall adequacy. These indices provided a comprehensive evaluation of the model's ability to explain the observed data, offering insights into the robustness of the proposed relationships.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

As per [table 1](#), the demographic profile of the study's participants provides a comprehensive snapshot of the sample, reflecting the diversity and characteristics of Malaysian social media users engaged in shopping-related activities. The sample comprised 441 individuals, with a gender distribution slightly skewed toward females, who accounted for 57.1% (n = 252) of the respondents, compared to 42.9% (n = 189) males. This gender composition highlights the prominence of female participation in social media shopping activities, a trend consistent with broader consumer behavior research that identifies women as key drivers of online purchasing decisions.

**Table 1.** Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	252	57.1
	Male	189	42.9
Age	>60 years old	9	2.0
	18- 29 years old	222	50.3
	30- 39 years old	113	25.6
	40- 49 years old	79	17.9
	50- 59 years old	18	4.1
Ethnicity	Chinese	251	56.9
	Indian	52	11.8
	Malay	123	27.9
	Others	15	3.4
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	265	60.1
	Diploma/ Certificate	106	24.0
	High school	14	3.2
	Master degree and above	56	12.7
Monthly Income	<RM3000	78	17.7
	RM3000 - RM5000	148	33.6
	RM5001 - RM 7000	93	21.1
	RM7001 - RM10000	74	16.8
	>RM 10000	48	10.9

Age distribution within the sample revealed a predominance of younger participants, with 50.3% (n = 222) falling within the 18–29 age bracket. This aligns with global trends indicating that younger demographics are the most active users of social media platforms, leveraging these channels for both social interaction and commercial activities (Pew Research Center, 2023). The 30–39 age group constituted the second-largest segment at 25.6% (n = 113), followed by the 40–49 age group at 17.9% (n = 79). Older age groups, including those aged 50–59 (4.1%, n = 18) and over 60 (2.0%, n = 9), were less represented, underscoring the generational divide in social media engagement and online shopping behaviors.

Ethnic diversity within the sample mirrored Malaysia's multicultural landscape, with Chinese participants forming the majority at 56.9% (n = 251). Malays constituted 27.9% (n = 123), while Indians accounted for 11.8% (n = 52). A smaller proportion of participants, 3.4% (n = 15), identified as belonging to other ethnic groups. This distribution reflects the broader demographic composition of Malaysia, where Chinese, Malay, and Indian communities coexist, each bringing unique cultural perspectives and consumer preferences to the digital marketplace (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023).

Educational attainment among participants was notably high, with 60.1% (n = 265) holding a Bachelor's degree. This was followed by individuals with Diploma or Certificate qualifications (24.0%, n = 106) and those with a Master's degree (12.7%, n = 56). A smaller proportion of participants had completed high school (3.2%, n = 14). The high level of educational attainment suggests that the sample is well-informed and likely to engage critically with social media content, making them a valuable cohort for studying the impact of advertising strategies on purchase intentions.

Income distribution revealed a concentration in the middle-income brackets, with 33.6% (n = 148) of participants earning between RM3000 and RM5000 monthly. The next largest group, earning RM5001–RM7000, accounted for



21.1% (n = 93), while those earning less than RM3000 constituted 17.7% (n = 78). Higher income brackets, including RM7001–RM10000 (16.8%, n = 74) and over RM10000 (10.9%, n = 48), were less represented. This income distribution reflects the economic diversity of the sample, with a significant proportion falling within the middle-income range, a demographic often targeted by digital marketers due to their purchasing power and propensity to engage with online content.

Descriptive statistics for the study's key variables—interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention—provide insights into participants' perceptions and behaviors. Interactivity, measured on a five-point Likert scale, yielded a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.78), indicating a high level of engagement with interactive features in social media advertisements. Informativeness, with a mean score of 4.05 (SD = 0.82), reflected participants' appreciation for clear and comprehensive product information. Trust, a critical mediator in the model, achieved a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.85), suggesting moderate to high levels of confidence in the credibility of social media advertisements. Finally, purchase intention, the dependent variable, registered a mean score of 3.89 (SD = 0.91), indicating a favorable inclination toward purchasing products advertised on social media.

These findings collectively paint a vivid picture of the sample's demographic and perceptual characteristics, offering a foundation for deeper analysis of the relationships between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention. The results underscore the importance of tailoring social media advertising strategies to resonate with diverse consumer segments, leveraging insights from demographic and behavioral data to enhance engagement and drive purchase intentions.

#### 4.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Before delving into inferential analysis, the reliability and validity of the measurement scales were rigorously assessed to ensure the robustness of the constructs. This foundational step is critical, as it establishes the credibility of the data and the suitability of the scales for further analysis. Two key tests—the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity—were employed to evaluate the dataset's suitability for factor analysis. These tests collectively determine whether the correlations among variables are sufficiently strong to justify the use of factor analysis, a prerequisite for validating the measurement model.

The KMO value for the independent variables was 0.802, falling within the "meritorious" range, which indicates a high level of sampling adequacy. This suggests that the dataset exhibits strong intercorrelations among variables, making it well-suited for component analysis. Complementing this, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded an approximate Chi-Square value of 415.673 with 66 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level of 0.000. The p-value, being less than 0.05, confirms that the correlations between variables are statistically significant, further validating the appropriateness of factor analysis for the independent variables (table 1). These results collectively affirm the dataset's readiness for advanced statistical procedures, laying a solid foundation for subsequent analysis.

Reliability, a cornerstone of measurement model evaluation, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a widely accepted metric for internal consistency. This measure evaluates the extent to which items within a construct are interrelated and consistently capture the same underlying concept. A Cronbach's alpha value exceeding 0.7 is generally considered acceptable, indicating that the items reliably measure the intended construct. In this study, the reliability test was conducted on a subset of 66 respondents, representing approximately 17% of the total sample size of 384, to ensure the scales' consistency and accuracy. The results, as presented in table 2, revealed strong reliability across all constructs.

**Table 2.** Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Latent Variable 1	0.822	0.825	0.882	0.651
Latent Variable 2	0.822	0.824	0.882	0.652
Latent Variable 3	0.806	0.811	0.873	0.632
Latent Variable 4	0.831	0.832	0.887	0.663

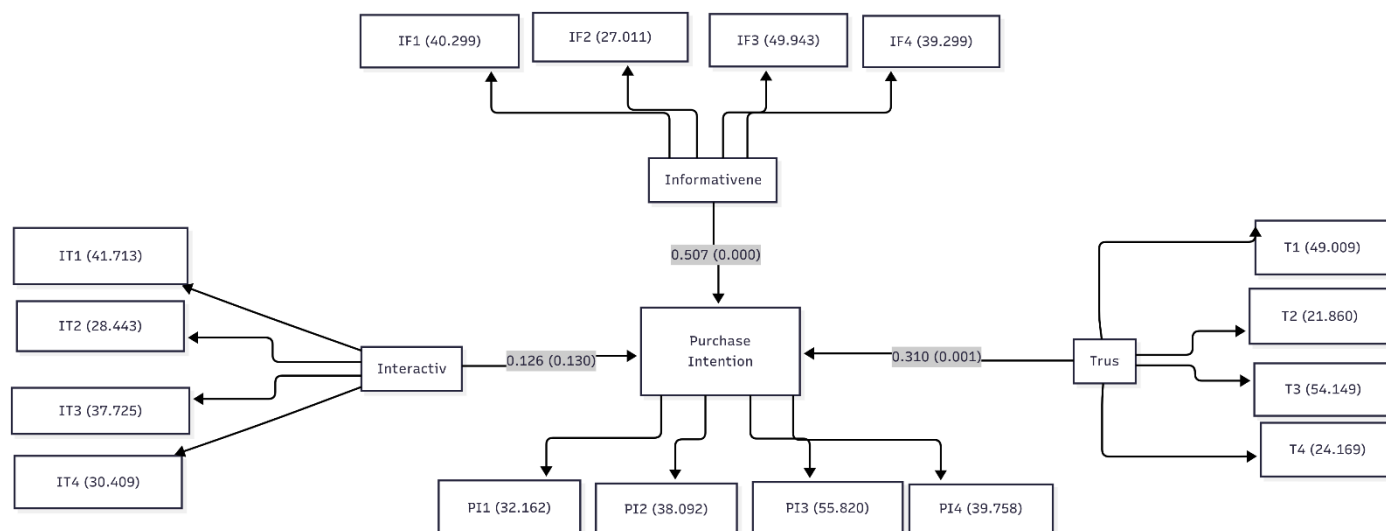
The Interaction scale, comprising four items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.821, indicating high internal consistency. Similarly, the Information scale, also with four items, registered a Cronbach's alpha of 0.718, reflecting acceptable reliability. The Trust scale, with four items, demonstrated robust reliability at 0.765, while the Purchase Intention scale, also with four items, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.700, meeting the threshold for reliability. These findings confirm that the scales are both consistent and reliable, providing a dependable basis for further analysis.

The evaluation of the measurement model underscores the importance of ensuring both reliability and validity before proceeding to inferential analysis. The high KMO value and significant Bartlett's test results affirm the dataset's suitability for factor analysis, while the strong Cronbach's alpha values across all constructs validate the internal consistency of the scales. These outcomes not only enhance the credibility of the measurement model but also provide confidence in the subsequent structural analysis and hypothesis testing.

## 4.2. Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing Results

The structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing provide a nuanced understanding of the relationships between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention. Using SmartPLS, a robust tool for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study assessed the path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels to determine the strength and direction of these relationships. The model's overall fit was also evaluated to ensure its adequacy in explaining the observed data, offering a comprehensive framework for interpreting the findings.

As per [figure 2](#), the path coefficients, which quantify the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, revealed intriguing insights. Interactivity, measured by four observed indicators (IT1, IT2, IT3, IT4), exhibited a standardized path coefficient of 0.126. While this suggests a positive influence on purchase intention, the relationship was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.138$ ). This outcome challenges conventional assumptions about the centrality of interactivity in driving consumer behavior, particularly in digital environments where engagement is often presumed to be a critical factor. The lack of significance may indicate that, while interactivity enhances user experience, it does not directly translate into purchase intentions in this context.



**Figure 2.** Path Analysis

In contrast, informativeness emerged as a powerful predictor of purchase intention, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.507 and a highly significant p-value of 0.000. This strong positive relationship underscores the critical role of high-quality, relevant, and comprehensive information in shaping consumer decisions. When consumers perceive advertisements as informative, their confidence in the product increases, significantly boosting their likelihood to purchase. This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing the importance of transparency and clarity in digital marketing strategies.

Trust, represented by four indicators (T1, T2, T3, T4), also demonstrated a significant positive influence on purchase intention, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.310 ( $p = 0.001$ ). This moderate yet meaningful relationship

highlights the pivotal role of trust in bridging the gap between consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. In digital environments, where physical product examination is impossible, trust serves as a critical mediator, enabling consumers to rely on perceived brand credibility and integrity. This result resonates with studies that identify trust as a cornerstone of successful e-commerce and social media marketing.

The overall fit of the structural model was evaluated using indices such as the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the NFI. These indices collectively confirmed the model's adequacy, with values falling within acceptable thresholds. The SRMR, a measure of the difference between the observed and predicted correlations, was below the recommended cutoff of 0.08, indicating a good fit. Similarly, the NFI, which compares the model's chi-square value to that of a null model, exceeded the threshold of 0.90, further validating the model's robustness. These results affirm that the structural model effectively captures the relationships between the constructs, providing a reliable basis for hypothesis testing and interpretation.

The hypothesis testing results reveal a complex interplay between the independent variables and purchase intention. While interactivity did not significantly influence purchase intention, informativeness and trust emerged as critical drivers, each contributing uniquely to consumer decision-making. These findings challenge the assumption that engagement alone is sufficient to drive purchases, highlighting instead the importance of providing clear, trustworthy information. For marketers, this underscores the need to prioritize transparency and credibility in their digital advertising strategies, ensuring that consumers feel confident and informed when making purchasing decisions.

### 4.3. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a nuanced interplay between interactivity, informativeness, trust, and purchase intention, offering both confirmations and contradictions to existing literature. While interactivity, often heralded as a cornerstone of digital engagement, exhibited a path coefficient of 0.126, its relationship with purchase intention was not statistically significant ( $p = 0.138$ ). This unexpected result challenges the prevailing narrative that interactivity universally enhances consumer purchase intentions. Instead, it suggests that the impact of interactivity may be context-dependent, varying across product categories and consumer segments. For instance, interactivity may play a more pronounced role in high-involvement purchases, such as technology or apparel, where engagement and exploration are integral to decision-making, compared to low-involvement products like basic consumer goods [37]. Additionally, factors such as the quality of interaction, the consumer's prior interest in the product, and the broader advertising context may moderate the effects of interactivity, potentially explaining its limited influence in this study [38].

In contrast, informativeness emerged as a robust predictor of purchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.507 and a highly significant  $p$ -value of 0.000. This finding aligns with prior research underscoring the critical role of informative content in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors. Informative advertisements, by providing detailed insights into product features, benefits, and value propositions, empower consumers to make confident and informed decisions [39]. Moreover, informativeness enhances perceived value and credibility, both of which are pivotal in driving purchase intentions [30]. The study's results reinforce the notion that transparency and clarity in advertising not only build consumer trust but also significantly influence purchase behavior, particularly in digital environments where information asymmetry is a common concern [40].

Trust, with a path coefficient of 0.310 and a  $p$ -value of 0.001, also demonstrated a significant positive relationship with purchase intention. This finding corroborates the well-established role of trust in online consumer behavior, particularly within the realm of social media advertising. Trust reduces perceived risk, a critical barrier in online purchasing, and fosters confidence in the advertised product or brand [41]. Interestingly, trust in the source of the advertisement—whether it be the brand, influencer, or platform—often outweighs the content of the ad itself in influencing consumer decisions [42]. Furthermore, trust not only drives immediate purchase intentions but also cultivates long-term consumer loyalty and engagement, amplifying its impact over time [43]. These insights highlight the enduring importance of trust as a foundational element in digital marketing strategies.

The study's findings carry significant implications for both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the results contribute to the evolving discourse on consumer behavior and digital advertising by challenging the assumed universality of interactivity's impact. They underscore the need for a more nuanced understanding of how different advertising elements interact with contextual factors to shape consumer decisions. The strong influence of

informativeness and trust reaffirms their centrality in consumer behavior models, particularly in digital environments where information transparency and credibility are paramount.

For practitioners, particularly in the cosmetics industry, the findings offer actionable insights for refining advertising strategies. Marketers should prioritize the delivery of clear, comprehensive, and trustworthy information in their social media campaigns, as these elements significantly enhance purchase intentions. While interactivity remains a valuable tool for engagement, its role in driving purchases may be secondary to the provision of informative and credible content. Brands should also invest in building and maintaining trust, whether through transparent communication, endorsements from credible influencers, or leveraging trusted platforms. These strategies not only drive immediate sales but also foster long-term consumer loyalty and brand advocacy.

The study's findings both align with and diverge from earlier research, offering a richer understanding of the complexities inherent in digital advertising. While previous studies have consistently highlighted the importance of interactivity in enhancing engagement and purchase intentions [37], this study's results suggest that its impact may be contingent on contextual factors. This divergence underscores the need for further research to explore the boundary conditions under which interactivity exerts its influence.

Conversely, the strong positive relationships between informativeness, trust, and purchase intention align with a robust body of literature [39], [40]. These findings reinforce the centrality of information transparency and trust in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in digital environments where consumers rely heavily on online content to inform their decisions. The study's results also echo the growing recognition of trust as a critical mediator in the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior, highlighting its role in reducing perceived risk and fostering confidence [41], [42].

## 5. Conclusion

This study delved into the intricate dynamics of social media advertising, focusing on the roles of interactivity, informativeness, and trust in shaping consumer purchase intentions. The findings revealed that informativeness and trust emerged as pivotal drivers of purchase intention, with path coefficients of 0.507 and 0.310, respectively, both statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Informativeness, by providing clear, relevant, and comprehensive product information, significantly enhanced consumer confidence and decision-making, aligning with prior research that underscores the importance of transparency in digital advertising. Trust, on the other hand, acted as a critical mediator, reducing perceived risk and fostering consumer confidence in the advertised products or brands. In contrast, interactivity, with a path coefficient of 0.126 ( $p = 0.138$ ), did not significantly influence purchase intention, challenging the conventional wisdom that engagement alone drives consumer behavior. This suggests that while interactivity may enhance user experience, its impact on purchase decisions may be context-dependent, varying across product categories and consumer segments.

The study makes several theoretical contributions to the understanding of consumer behavior in the context of social media advertising, particularly within the Malaysian cosmetics industry. By challenging the assumed universality of interactivity's impact, the findings highlight the need for a more nuanced approach to studying digital advertising elements. The strong influence of informativeness and trust reaffirms their centrality in consumer behavior models, particularly in digital environments where information transparency and credibility are paramount. These insights contribute to the growing body of literature on digital marketing by emphasizing the importance of contextual factors in shaping the effectiveness of advertising strategies. Furthermore, the study underscores the role of trust as a critical mediator, bridging the gap between advertising content and consumer behavior, and offering a deeper understanding of how perceived credibility influences purchase intentions.

For marketers, particularly in the cosmetics industry, the findings offer actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of social media advertising. Prioritizing informative content—such as detailed product descriptions, health summaries, and traceability information—can significantly boost consumer confidence and purchase intentions. Additionally, building trust through transparent communication, endorsements from credible influencers, and leveraging user-generated content can further enhance the credibility of advertising campaigns. While interactivity remains a valuable tool for engagement, its strategic use should be tailored to specific contexts, such as high-

involvement products or campaigns targeting younger demographics. Marketers should also consider integrating interactive features that complement informative and trustworthy content, rather than relying on them as standalone drivers of purchase behavior. These strategies not only drive immediate sales but also foster long-term consumer loyalty and brand advocacy.

Despite its contributions, the study is not without limitations. The use of convenience sampling, while practical, may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, the focus on the Malaysian cosmetics industry restricts the applicability of the results to other industries or cultural contexts. Future research could address these limitations by employing more diverse sampling methods and exploring the effectiveness of social media advertising across different industries, regions, and platforms. Investigating the role of cultural factors, platform-specific features, and emerging technologies, such as augmented reality or artificial intelligence, could also provide valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital marketing. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could offer a deeper understanding of how trust and informativeness influence long-term consumer behavior and brand loyalty. Also, specific product categories for more action-oriented research.

## 6. Declarations

### 6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: L.S.Y., W.C.H., C.W.W., S.M.S.A.B., and A.N.; Methodology: S.M.S.A.B.; Software: L.S.Y.; Validation: L.S.Y., S.M.S.A.B., and A.N.; Formal Analysis: L.S.Y., S.M.S.A.B., and A.N.; Investigation: L.S.Y.; Resources: S.M.S.A.B.; Data Curation: S.M.S.A.B.; Writing Original Draft Preparation: L.S.Y., S.M.S.A.B., and A.N.; Writing Review and Editing: S.M.S.A.B., L.S.Y., and A.N.; Visualization: L.S.Y.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

### 6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### 6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

### 6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

### 6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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