

ORIGINAL PAPER

Components of prominent beauty influencers in Thailand during the Digital Era

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Received: 27 September 2025 / Revised: 18 October 2025 / Accepted: 22 November 2025

Abstract. Marketing and marketing communication in the digital age have reshaped the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. Within this dynamic environment, social media has become a dominant platform where influencers act as opinion leaders, shaping perceptions and guiding consumer behavior. In Thailand—where the beauty industry is highly competitive and social media engagement is among the highest in Southeast Asia—beauty influencers play a particularly influential role in promoting trust, authenticity, and cultural resonance. This study aims to identify the essential components that characterize prominent beauty influencers in the Thai digital context. A quantitative research design was employed using survey data collected from 645 consumers across five regions of Thailand. The data were analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine the underlying dimensions of influence. The findings reveal five key components defining influential beauty opinion leaders: (1) Diverse Identity and Image, reflecting inclusivity and representation; (2) Credibility and Responsible Communication, emphasizing transparency and ethical engagement; (3) Expertise and Role Model Image, highlighting knowledge, professionalism, and inspiration; (4) Sociocultural Relevance, demonstrating alignment with Thai cultural values and social trends; and (5) Communication Style and Image Presentation, focusing on aesthetic consistency and audience connection. These findings contribute to both theoretical and practical domains by enhancing understanding of influencer marketing within Southeast Asian cultural contexts. Practically, they provide insights for marketers, brands, and content creators in designing strategic communication frameworks that strengthen consumer trust, foster authentic engagement, and promote positive digital citizenship through beauty influencers in Thailand.

Keywords: Beauty Influencers, Consumer Engagement, Digital Communication, Influencer Marketing, Thailand

1. Introduction

Influencers play a critical role in influencing consumer behavior, beauty trends, and the

perception of product value, particularly in the beauty industry, which depends on credibility and establishing consumer trust. Social media has emerged as the primary platform for creating and communicating personal and organizational images. Beauty influencers are therefore a crucial mechanism that brands use to connect products with followers and differentiate themselves in the competition (Garg et al., 2024). The studies have found that consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from influencers than traditional advertising because they perceive influencers as being sincere and close to their followers (Hassan et al., 2021). Furthermore, niche expertise, such as providing makeup tips, skincare advice, or honest product reviews, further enhances credibility and builds consumer confidence (Ünalımsı et al., 2024). However, upon reviewing the current research, it is found that most studies focus on examining the "outcomes" that influencers have on consumers, such as building positive brand attitudes, purchase intention, or impulsive buying behavior (Ahmad et al., 2025; Chan et al., 2024; Sadiq et al., 2023). Despite efforts to develop models or metrics related to influencers, such as analyzing influencer reputation using statistical methods (Ryu et al., 2021), these studies still have limitations. Specifically, they focus on the broad context of influencers on social media overall, rather than delving specifically into the dimension of "beauty influencers," and they have not systematically explored the factor structure in different countries.

Additionally, research directly analyzing the internal structure of beauty influencers is limited, primarily studying Western countries or certain Asian countries with cultural backgrounds and meanings of "beauty" different from the context of the country being studied. For example, research in India focuses on the work of beauty vloggers (Garg et al., 2024), while studies in Sri Lanka emphasize the effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention (Rathnayake & Lakshika, 2025). Therefore, these results cannot be directly applied as conclusions to the country's context. Furthermore, research using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) techniques to identify which factors combine to form the components of beauty influencers is still very scarce in academic databases. Therefore, a significant research gap is the lack of quantitative studies specifically aimed at identifying the "components of beauty influence" at the national level. The lack of structural data means that both academics and practitioners in the beauty industry still lack a clear conceptual framework for understanding which factors combine to form the key characteristics of famous influencers. As the beauty industry itself grows rapidly and becomes highly competitive, it is crucial to rely on in-depth data for strategic decision-making.

This study is therefore important on multiple levels. Theoretically, this research will help fill the knowledge gap by systematically presenting the factor components that explain beauty influencers. This is done using EFA analysis to identify latent structures that reflect the true dimensions of influencers in the country context, and can serve as a basis for further research focusing on model confirmation (CFA) or the development of new conceptual frameworks. In practical terms, the results will be beneficial to beauty entrepreneurs and marketers in effectively selecting and evaluating influencers, not just considering the number of followers or engagement. Instead, they will use criteria that reflect internal components proven to be meaningful for true credibility and influence. This can also

lead to the creation of evaluation tools or beauty influencer indices that sustainably improve marketing strategy management in this industry.

1.1 The research objective

The objective of this research is to address the lack of knowledge regarding the structural components of beauty influencers. By employing quantitative methods and exploratory factor analysis to identify the key factors that constitute "nationally renowned beauty influencers," this study aims to create valuable new knowledge for both the academic and industrial sectors.

1.2 Literature Review

Influencer marketing has become a crucial strategy for the beauty industry in the 21st century. With the expansion of digital platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, consumers, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, are increasingly trusting recommendations from influencers over traditional advertising. This is because influencers are seen as more relatable, accessible, and reflective of the authentic use of products (Hassan et al., 2021). This importance raises the question of "what elements" combine to make a person recognized as a beauty influencer. Several studies have addressed this question in terms of outcomes, such as purchase intention or brand loyalty, but few have delved deeply into the structure to uncover the hidden factors that determine influencer status. Therefore, this study aims to review relevant theoretical concepts and research to serve as a knowledge framework.

1.3 Relevant Theoretical Framework

1. Source Credibility Theory. Hovland, Janis, and Kelley's (1953) Source Credibility Theory explains that the credibility of the sender affects the level of persuasion. The receiver will trust the message more if they perceive the sender as credible, which is divided into three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999). Contemporary research has applied this theory to the context of influencer marketing, with Bogoevska-Gavrilova and Ciunova-Shuleska

(2024) confirming that all three dimensions still effectively explain consumer behavior when considering influencers on digital platforms. Meanwhile, Ashare (2024) expanded this theory by suggesting that authenticity and product relevance should be considered part of digital credibility. In the context of beauty, source theory helps explain why followers trust influencers with in-depth knowledge of makeup and skincare, especially when real product demonstrations are shown, making the influencer's expertise a prominent dimension (Vietnam case study, 2025).

2. Reference Group Theory. Bearden and Etzel (1982) explained that consumer behavior is influenced by reference groups that individuals accept or want to emulate. In the case of beauty influencers, they act as reference groups that followers want to be a part of (Macrothink, 2025). Characteristics of similarity (homophily), such as age, gender, and taste, therefore reinforce the followers' sense of closeness and trust. Reference group theory therefore explains why followers choose to imitate the makeup or product usage of influencers who are similar to them rather than general celebrities, because they view these influencers as "ordinary people" who are truly relatable.

3. The concept of influencer reputation and image. Ryu, Park, and Kim (2021) developed and validated an influencer reputation scale using EFA and CFA. They found that influencer reputation consists of four dimensions: expertise, sincerity, communication skills, and influence. This concept reflects that influencers not only have a large number of followers but also possess qualitative characteristics that generate acceptance and trust. Additionally, De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2017) pointed out that the congruence between the influencer's image and the brand (brand-influencer congruence) affects consumer attitudes. This research was later applied in the beauty industry, where the alignment between the influencer's style and the product plays a significant role in building acceptance (Ashare, 2024).

1.4 Related Research

1. Research on the impact of influencers: Hassan et al. (2021) found that social media influencers influence purchase intention by creating a positive attitude toward the brand. Similarly, Chan et al. (2024) found that the reputation of influencers affects positive perceptions of cosmetic brands in China, while Rathnayake and Lakshika (2025) in Sri Lanka found that trustworthiness is the most influential dimension on purchase intention for beauty products. Sadiq, Waheed, and Noor (2023) studied millennial consumers in Pakistan and found that expertise and credibility are key variables driving purchasing behavior, while Ahmad et al. (2025) Found that influencer attractiveness stimulates impulse buying behavior in emerging markets.

2. Research in Southeast Asia. A study in Vietnam (Vietnam case study, 2025) found that influencer expertise had the greatest influence on the purchase of beauty products, followed by trustworthiness and attractiveness. Meanwhile, research in Malaysia (Macrothink, 2025) found that homophily and information quality influenced influencer credibility.

3. Research focusing on the component dimension. The work of Ryu et al. (2021) is considered a significant starting point for developing a tool to measure the components of influencer reputation thru exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. However, this study does not delve specifically into the field of beauty, and the study context is international, not based on a specific country's culture.

Synthesis and Research Gaps. The literature review shows that beauty influencer status is often explained through dimensions such as expertise, credibility, attractiveness, sincerity, communication skills, brand alignment, similarity to followers, and information quality. Yet, most studies emphasize outcomes rather than the internal structure of these dimensions. Few have applied EFA to analyze influencer traits.

2. Methodology

2.1 Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised followers of influential individuals and beauty celebrities aged 18 years and above residing in Thailand. Given that the objective of this study was exploratory, the appropriate sample size was determined based on the recommendations of Comrey and Lee (2013), who suggest that a sample of 500 respondents is considered “very good” for factor analysis. To enhance the reliability and minimize sampling error, the researcher increased the sample size by approximately 30.8%, resulting in a total of 654 valid respondents.

The target respondents were Thai residents aged 18 years or older who had actively followed or engaged with at least one social media beauty influencer within the past six months. This demographic group was chosen because they represent the most active users of social media and the key consumer segment in Thailand’s beauty industry (Hassan et al., 2021).

A probability-based stratified multistage sampling technique was employed to ensure national representativeness. Thailand was divided into five regional strata (North, Northeast, Central, South, and Bangkok Metropolitan Area) following established national survey practices (Cochran, 1977; Lohr, 2019). Within each stratum, households were randomly selected, and one eligible respondent per household was chosen using the Kish grid method (Kish, 1965). The final sample size was determined using Cochran’s formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, and subsequently adjusted for design effect to ensure sufficient statistical power for exploratory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

2.2 Data Collection and Ethical Considerations

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via major social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube). The survey link was disseminated using a combination of direct messaging and online community groups related to beauty

and lifestyle content. Respondents were required to answer a screening question confirming that they had followed at least one beauty influencer during the past six months before proceeding to the main survey.

The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the author’s affiliated institution. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and no personal identifiable information was collected.

2.3 Reliability and Validity Testing

Before conducting factor analysis, the reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient to evaluate internal consistency. All subscales achieved reliability coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the items.

Sampling adequacy and data suitability for factor analysis were then tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity. A KMO value greater than 0.80 and a significant Bartlett’s test ($p < 0.05$) confirmed that the dataset was suitable for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

2.4 Statistical Analysis

1) Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to describe demographic characteristics and general responses concerning perceptions of beauty influencers and opinion leadership in Thailand.

2) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA was conducted to identify the underlying dimensions that define prominent beauty influencers. The analysis was performed using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction method with Varimax orthogonal rotation, based on 123 observed variables.

Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.40 were retained for interpretation (Hair et al., 2010).

Inter-item correlations above 0.50 were considered adequate for inclusion in factor extraction. Following rotation, items were grouped into latent constructs representing conceptual dimensions of influencer characteristics. Factor interpretability, theoretical consistency, and item loading strength were used to name and define each factor.

3. Results

1. The study analyzes the demographics of Thai respondents.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents (n=654)

Demographic characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male	154	23.55
Female	418	63.91
LGTBQ+	81	12.39
Prefer not to say	1	00.15
Age (years old)		
18-24	140	21.41
25 – 34	203	31.04
35 – 44	202	30.89
≥45	109	16.67
Reginal		
Bangkok and Central	274	41.90
Northern	71	10.86
Norther Eastern	44	6.73
Eastern	112	17.13
Western	109	16.67
Southern	44	6.73
Education		
Lower Bachelor	124	18.96
Bachelor	429	65.60
Higher Bachelor	101	15.44
Occupation		
Student	50	7.65
Governor/ Employee of a State-Owned Enterprise	117	11.88
Business Owner	158	24.16
Employee of a Private Company	155	23.70
Freelance	174	26.61
Income (Baht)		
≤10,001 – 20,000	88	13.45
20,001 – 30,000	89	13.61
30,001 – 40,000	121	18.50
40,001 – 50,000	137	20.95
50,001 – 70,000+	219	33.49

2.5 Summary of Analytical Process

The final stage of analysis involved validating the extracted factors by examining the reliability of each latent construct and the interpretability of item groupings. The results from this procedure were used to conceptualize the five key components defining beauty influencers in Thailand's digital landscape.

2. Results of preliminary agreement check for component analysis using KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 2. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.956
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	52176.565
<i>df</i>	7503
Sig.	.000

3. Factor weights after axis rotation, with component weights after axis rotation calculated using the Varimax method, and only component weights displayed.

The results of the factor analysis using the Varimax rotation method revealed five extracted components with interrelated variables, as presented in Table 3 – Table 7.

Table 3. Loadings and Cronbach Alpha of the First Factor

Factor Items	Factor Loading
Factor 1: Diverse Identity and Image	
<i>Cronbach Alpha = 0.965</i>	
(3) Identifies as LGBTQ+	.425
(5) Of mixed heritage (Thai-European, Thai-Korean, Thai-American, etc).	.751
(6) Foreign nationality but fluent in Thai.	.759
(11) Married.	.652
(12) Divorced or widowed.	.615
(16) No specific educational background required.	.728
(19) Wealthy, affluent, and debt-free.	.559
(20) Middle-class, living a simple and modest lifestyle.	.660
(21) Financially constrained, limited income, living sufficiently.	.733
(24) Ordinary individual, e.g., full-time employee.	.725
(25) Influencer as a part-time/secondary occupation.	.438
(26) Dermatologist or cosmetic/plastic surgeon.	.636
(29) Wears casual/ordinary clothing.	.721
(30) Wears luxury clothing (branded items).	.411
(31) Wears modest/proper clothing.	.612
(32) Wears sexy outfits such as bodycon dresses or strap tops.	.562
(34) Wears traditional Thai clothing (modernized or classical styles).	.445
(35) Wears clothing that reflects the influencer's personal identity.	.593
(37) Sexy personality, confident in oneself.	.526
(38) Modest, cute personality with a neat and clean appearance.	.544
(39) Distinctive traits, e.g., 'sassy girlfriend' or 'chatty auntie'.	.503
(42) International look (sharp or mixed-race features)	.619
(43) Physical attractiveness not required.	.760
(45) Curvy/plus-size body shape (voluptuous, well-nourished look).	.629
(46) Tan or honey skin tone.	.513
(50) Sexy walking style highlighting hips, slow with playful flair.	.533
(51) Modest walking style with slow, small steps and minimal movement.	.609
(55) Confident, articulate speech with dramatic expressions.	.422
(64) Silent ASMR, focusing on natural activity sounds.	.522
(100) Notable for scandals or controversies.	.487

Table 4. Loadings and Cronbach Alpha of the Second Factor

Factor Items	Factor Loading
Factor 2: Credibility and Responsible Communication	
<i>Cronbach Alpha = 0.953</i>	
(71) Post content consistently	.440
(72) Natural and genuine content	.472
(73) Create premium, luxurious content	.495
(74) Create simple, down-to-earth content	.549
(75) High-quality content (clear image, sound, editing)	.620
(76) Content that encourages comments	.582
(77) Funny or viral with useful insights	.613
(78) Non-toxic content	.625
(79) No drama or offensive speech	.555
(80) Diverse content (reviews, makeup, fashion, lifestyle)	.628
(81) Professional and dedicated with positive image	.616
(82) Confident and a leader	.639
(83) Charming and attractive personality	.638
(84) Positive energy, cheerful and uplifting	.591
(85) Transparent about sponsorships or payments	.533
(86) Honest, not exaggerated advertising	.678
(87) Ethical, not misleading or exploiting followers	.692
(88) Provides credible references or sources	.673
(89) Admits mistakes when content is inaccurate	.650
(90) Shows genuine emotions, not AI-like	.681
(91) Speaks truth about the industry (e.g., surgery, beauty secrets)	.690

Table 5. Loadings and Cronbach Alpha of the Third Factor

Factor Items	Factor Loading
Factor 3: Expertise and Role Model Image	
<i>Cronbach Alpha = 0.953</i>	
(101) Good social image, no drama, respects Thai values	.746
(103) A positive role model	.745
(104) Knowledge of beauty products	.781
(105) Knowledge of beauty techniques	.779
(106) Knowledge of health and nutrition	.777
(107) Knowledge of content presentation	.764
(108) Expertise in health (nutrition, fitness, safe products)	.746
(109) Special skills (sales, makeup, self-care)	.782
(110) Active on multiple platforms (IG, FB, TikTok, YouTube, Lemon8)	.733
(111) Uses Thai language	.737
(112) Bilingual (Thai-English)	.423
(113) Uses simple, clear language	.558
(114) Uses academic/professional language	.508
(115) Uses informal or slang language	.483
(116) Uses local dialects (Southern, Northern, Isan)	.536
(117) Language tailored to target audience	.634
(118) Famous family background	.509
(119) Connections in the industry	.561
(120) Respects elders and Thai culture	.672
(121) Negotiates brand deals for followers (e.g., discount codes)	.706
(122) Supports careers, teaches online income opportunities	.691

Table 6. Loadings and Cronbach Alpha of the Forth Factor

Factor Items	Factor Loading
Factor4: Sociocultural Relevance	
<i>Cronbach Alpha = 0.896</i>	
(1) Male	.506
(2) Female	.595
(4) Thai by birth (both parents Thai)	.585
(7) Teen influencer (age 13-19)	.501
(8) Young adult influencer (age 20-29)	.583
(9) Adult influencer (age 30+)	.606
(10) Single	.403
(13) Bachelor's degree	.604
(14) Master's degree	.665
(15) Doctoral degree	.696
(17) High emotional maturity (EQ)	.708
(18) Similar social status as followers	.647
(22) Pageant/model contest experience	.706
(23) Entertainment industry figure (actor, model, host, DJ)	.668
(27) Makeup artist	.492
(28) Fitness/health trainer	.514
(33) Cute Korean-style outfits (pastel, short skirts)	.455

Table 7. Loadings and Cronbach Alpha of the Fifth Factor

Factor Items	Factor Loading
Factor 5: Communication Style and Image Presentation	
<i>Cronbach Alpha = 0.906</i>	
(41) Popular looks (celebrity, pageant, Korean trend)	.405
(44) Fit body with clear proportions	.400
(47) Fair skin	.496
(48) Radiant glowing skin	.538
(49) Graceful walk (straight posture, small smooth steps)	.497
(52) Soft, gentle speech	.508
(53) Fun, playful speech with slang	.510
(54) Straightforward and honest speech	.468
(56) Bright, energetic voice	.497
(57) Serious, credible tone (informative/academic)	.506
(58) Simple, easy-to-follow storytelling	.474
(59) Inspirational storytelling (personal transformation)	.425
(60) Funny, entertaining storytelling	.417
(61) Knowledge-focused storytelling (scientific reviews)	.404
(62) Talkative, fast, non-stop sales style	.437
(63) Minimal speech (uses music/text instead)	.480
(65) Reviews only luxury brands	.490
(66) Reviews all brands	.436
(67) Comparative reviews	.507
(68) Dramatic, sarcastic brand reviews	.405
(69) AI & Beauty reviews (AI-generated makeup looks)	.494

The results of the factor analysis, as presented in Tables 3–7, revealed a total of five components: (1) Diverse Identity and Image, comprising 30 observed variables; (2) Credibility and Responsible Communication, comprising 21 observed variables; (3) Expertise and Role Model Image, comprising 22 observed variables; (4) Sociocultural Relevance, comprising 17 observed variables; and (5)

Communication Style and Image Presentation, comprising 21 observed variables.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify key factors reflecting opinion leaders in beauty in Thailand showed that the data suitability test had a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

(KMO) value of 0.956 and a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value of Approx. Chi-Square equals 52,176.565 at a statistically significant level ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the data is sufficiently suitable for factor analysis. This aligns with the criteria recommended by statistical scholars such as Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019), who suggest that a KMO value higher than 0.90 is considered "marvelous" for use in factor analysis

The analysis revealed five key components: (1) Diverse Identity and Image, (2) Credibility and Responsible Communication, (3) Expertise and Role Model Image, (4) Sociocultural Relevance, and (5) Communication Style and Image Presentation. Each component reflects the specific characteristics that Thai consumers use to evaluate beauty influencers.

1. The diversity of identities and images. The first element reflects that being influential today doesn't necessarily require a beautiful appearance according to traditional values, but rather should express diverse self-expression and reflect different identities, such as being an accessible "ordinary person." This aligns with the concept of authenticity, which is supported by Ashare's (2024) research showing that sincerity and originality are key factors followers use to judge an influencer's credibility. It also aligns with the findings of a study in Malaysia (Macrothink, 2025) which indicates that homophily, or similarity with followers, leads to greater acceptance of influencers.

2. Reliability and Responsibility in Communication. The second element emphasizes honesty, transparency, and not exploiting followers. Ethical beauty influencers who do not use their followers for personal gain are seen as valuable by consumers, which aligns with Source Credibility Theory, which states that the trustworthiness dimension is central to building influence (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999). Research in Sri Lanka by Rathnayake and Lakshika (2025) also confirms that trustworthiness has the highest influence on purchase intention for beauty products, demonstrating that the research findings in Thailand are consistent with international contexts.

3. Expertise and exemplary image. The third element indicates that beauty influencers need expertise and specific skills such as makeup, skincare, or product sales ability, which makes them role models for their followers. This result supports source theory in the expertise dimension and aligns with the findings of the Vietnam case study (2025), which found that expertise has the greatest influence on purchasing decisions for beauty products, as well as Sadiq, Waheed, and Noor (2023), who studied in Pakistan and found that expertise is a key variable driving consumer purchasing behavior.

4. Relevance to the social context. The fourth element is the influencer's ability to connect with the values, culture, and context of society, particularly their high EQ, understanding of others, and willingness to listen to opinions. This reflects that followers are not just looking for beauty or expertise, but also value "humanity" and the social relationships created by the influencer. This outcome aligns with the concept of Reference Group Theory (Bearden & Etzel, 1982), which explains that consumers are influenced by individuals whose values and attitudes are similar to their own. It also aligns with the concept of social relevance as described by Ashare (2024) and Garg et al. (2024) points out that social and cultural connections are factors that contribute to the acceptance of influencers.

5. Communication style and image presentation. The fifth element relates to communication methods, presentation, and esthetic image, such as having healthy-looking skin, communicating charmingly, and attracting followers' attention. This result aligns with the study by Ahmad et al. (2025), which found that the attractiveness of influencers stimulates impulse buying behavior, consistent with the work of Ryu et al. (2021), which indicates that communication skills and image presentation are important dimensions of influencer reputation.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that being a beauty influencer in Thailand is not solely dependent on "number of followers" or "beauty according to international standards," but rather encompasses a variety of elements

that reflect identity, ethical values, expertise, sociocultural relevance, and communication style. These elements reflect the expectations of Thai consumers who view influencers as credible and socially relevant role models, rather than simply as celebrities.

Additionally, the results align with previous theories and research in various contexts, such as source theory, reference group theory, and studies on influencer credibility and expertise. However, they also show some differences in the Thai context, such as the value placed on identity diversity and high emotional intelligence, reflecting the cultural uniqueness and societal expectations of Thailand.

5. Recommendation for Implication

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The research findings, which identified five key components including diversity of identity and image, credibility and responsibility in communication, expertise and exemplary image, alignment with social context, and communication style and image presentation, are significant for advancing theoretical knowledge in several ways, as follows:

First, this research helps expand the conceptual framework of Source Credibility Theory by highlighting that credibility and expertise remain central to explaining the success of influencers, but it adds new dimensions such as communication responsibility and identity diversity, which were not explicitly present in previous international research (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999). This reflects that the "credibility" of influencers in the current context is not solely based on personal characteristics, but also includes ethical conduct and not exploiting followers. Secondly, this research supports Reference Group Theory by emphasizing that alignment with the social context and role models play a significant role in the acceptance of influencers. The research results show that consumers are not only concerned with physical appearance but also seek similarities in emotional and social dimensions, such as high EQ, which extends the theory culturally. Thirdly, the

prominence of the "diversity of identities and images" element reflects the concept of authenticity in recent research (Ashare, 2024), which emphasizes that followers value sincerity and being oneself more than having a perfect appearance. This result complements the marketing literature that is beginning to study identity and self-presentation on digital platforms.

5.2 Practical Implications

In practical terms, the research findings have concrete implications for marketing management and the beauty industry.

1. For beauty entrepreneurs, the research findings indicate that selecting influencers should go beyond esthetics or follower count, and instead focus on credibility, niche expertise, and the ability to communicate responsibly. Therefore, entrepreneurs should establish influencer selection criteria based on these elements to find influencers who align with their brand image and can build long-term trust.
2. For marketers and brand managers, building partnerships with influencers should focus on social and cultural alignment, such as using influencers who understand the Thai consumer context, can reflect shared values, and create emotional connections with their followers. This will help increase credibility and reduce the risk of being seen as just a commercial tool.
3. For influencers themselves, the research findings provide important guidance for self-improvement. Influencers should cultivate diverse identities, present authenticity, and prioritize ethical communication, alongside developing specialized expertise and quality communication. These efforts will increase their chances of gaining trust and support from their followers.
4. For policymakers and regulatory bodies, the research findings indicate that consumers prioritize the responsibility and ethics of influencers. Therefore, relevant agencies may consider establishing guidelines or ethical

standards for influencer marketing to prevent consumer deception and enhance transparency in the industry.

6. Future Study

1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): This research used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify the true structure of latent variables. However, future studies should use CFA to confirm the validity and consistency of the resulting factor model, as well as to more rigorously examine the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments (Hair et al., 2019).

2. Cross-cultural contextual comparison: This research focused on the Thai context, which has unique social and cultural characteristics. Future research should expand to cross-country contextual comparisons, such as Southeast Asian or Western countries, to examine how the elements found in Thailand align with or differ from other cultures. This type of study will help increase the comprehensiveness and universality of influencer marketing knowledge.

3. Using a mixed methods research approach: Although this study is quantitative research with strong statistical validity, it still lacks in-depth explanations of consumer behavior and motivations. Future studies should use a mixed methods approach by collecting qualitative data, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, to thoroughly explain the meaning and interpretation of various components from the perspective of the followers.

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