

# Factors influencing female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Applying the information adoption model (IAM), this study aimed to determine the factors influencing female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content into their beauty-product purchase decisions. In this study, digital nomad consumers refer to individuals who leverage digital platforms to execute some or all of the stages of their consumer decision-making process remotely.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The IAM was extended to include perceived expertise. Data were collected from a purposive sample of 340 Generation Y females in South Africa and analyzed using confirmatory factor and path analysis.

**Findings** – The perceived credibility and quality of information provided in YouTube beauty vlogs significantly predicted female Generation Y consumers' perceived utility of such vlogs' information content, with their perceptions of beauty vloggers' expertise having a significant effect on that perceived credibility. In turn, their perceived usefulness of YouTube beauty vlog information content was a significant predictor of their adoption of that information into their beauty-product purchase decisions.

**Originality/value** – This study extends the IAM by including perceived expertise as a predictor of the perceived credibility of information content and applies it in the new context of social media influencer marketing, with specific reference to the under-researched YouTube platform. The findings attest to Generation Y being digital nomad consumers and provide practical recommendations for beauty-product influencers and marketers on how best to engage with Generation Y digital nomad consumers.

**Keywords** Information adoption model (IAM), YouTube, Beauty vlogs, Female Generation Y digital nomad consumers

**Paper type** Research paper

**Factores que influyen en la adopción del contenido informativo de los vlogs de belleza en YouTube por las consumidoras nómadas digitales de la Generación Y**

## Resumen

**Objetivo** – Aplicando el modelo de adopción de información (IAM), este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar los factores que influyen en la adopción, por parte de consumidoras nómadas digitales de la Generación Y, del contenido informativo de los beauty vlogs de YouTube en sus decisiones de compra de productos de belleza. En este estudio, las consumidoras nómadas digitales se refieren a aquellas personas que aprovechan las plataformas digitales para ejecutar a distancia algunas o todas las etapas de su proceso de decisión de compra.



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**Diseño/metodología/enfoque** – El IAM se amplió para incluir la experiencia percibida. Se recopiló una muestra intencional de 340 mujeres de la Generación Y en Sudáfrica y se analizaron mediante análisis factorial confirmatorio y path análisis.

**Resultados** – La credibilidad y la calidad de la información proporcionada en los beauty vlogs de YouTube predijeron significativamente la percepción de utilidad del contenido informativo por parte de las consumidoras de la Generación Y, y sus percepciones sobre la experiencia de las vloggers de belleza tuvieron un efecto significativo sobre esa credibilidad percibida. A su vez, la utilidad percibida del contenido informativo de los vlogs de belleza en YouTube fue un predictor significativo de su adopción en las decisiones de compra de productos de belleza.

**Originalidad/valor** – Este estudio amplía el IAM al incluir la experiencia percibida como un predictor de la credibilidad percibida del contenido informativo y lo aplica en el nuevo contexto del influencer marketing en redes sociales, con referencia específica a la plataforma YouTube, poco investigada. Los hallazgos confirman que la Generación Y actúa como consumidores nómadas digitales y ofrecen recomendaciones prácticas para influencers y profesionales del marketing de productos de belleza sobre cómo interactuar de manera más efectiva con las consumidoras nómadas digitales de la Generación Y.

**Palabras clave** Modelo de adopción de información (IAM), YouTube, Beauty vlogs, Consumidoras nómadas digitales de la Generación Y

**Tipo de artículo** Trabajo de investigación

## Y影响Y世代女性数字游民消费者采纳YouTube美妆视频信息内容的因素研究

### 摘要

**研究目的** – 本研究基于信息采纳模型 (Information Adoption Model, IAM), 旨在探讨影响Y世代女性数字游民消费者在购买美妆产品决策中采纳YouTube美妆视频信息内容的因素。在本研究中, “数字游民消费者”指利用数字平台远程执行部分或全部消费决策过程的个体。

**研究设计/方法** – 本研究在IAM模型的基础上引入了“感知专业性”变量。通过目的性抽样, 共收集了南非340名Y世代女性的数据, 并采用验证性因素分析和路径分析进行统计处理。

**研究结果** – YouTube美妆视频中信息的感知可信度与感知质量显著影响Y世代女性消费者对该信息内容实用性的认知, 而美妆博主的感知专业性则显著影响其对信息可信度的认知。进一步分析表明, 消费者对YouTube美妆视频信息内容的感知有用性是在其购买美妆产品决策中采纳该信息的重要预测因素。

**研究原创性/价值** – 本研究通过将“感知专业性”纳入IAM模型, 扩展了其在信息可信度预测中的应用, 并将模型引入社交媒体影响者营销的新语境, 特别关注以往研究较少的YouTube平台。研究结果证实了Y世代消费者的数字游民特征, 并为美妆产品的社交媒体影响者及营销人员如何有效与Y世代数字游民消费者互动提供了实践建议。

**关键词** 信息采纳模型 (iam), YouTube, 美妆视频博客, Y世代女性数字游民消费者

**文章类型** 研究型论文

## 1. Introduction

The beauty industry, which includes fragrances, cosmetics, skincare, personal care and beauty technology products, is a significant contributor to the global economy and is projected to generate US\$648.60bn in revenue in 2024 – 35% of which is forecasted to come from online sales (Statista et al., 2024). Despite the dampening effect of the global financial crisis (Petruzzi et al., 2024), the industry is still forecasted to enjoy an annual growth rate of 3.11% between 2024 and 2029 (Statista et al., 2024). Much of this growth is attributed to Generation Y consumers, who represent a significant driver of the beauty market (Petruzzi et al., 2024). This generation makes up a substantial share of the world's population (Perera et al., 2023) and has considerable purchasing power (Susic et al., 2023), thereby making them, particularly their female members, a lucrative target market for the beauty industry (Hassan et al., 2021).

Following the premise of generations spanning 20 years (Erikson *et al.*, 1950; Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Howe and Strauss, 2007), this study adopts Markert's *et al.* (2004) categorization of Generation Y as encompassing people born 1986–2005, which aligns with several marketing-related studies focusing specifically on this generation (Eastman and Liu, 2012; van Deventer, 2022; Selemela *et al.*, 2024; Sharp and Synodinos, 2024). Generation Y individuals have been profoundly shaped by factors such as the digital revolution, globalization and geo-political events, which have influenced their consumption behaviors and preferences (Bevan-Dye *et al.*, 2021). Members of this generation spend a significant portion of their day online, utilizing smartphones, tablets, laptops, social media and e-commerce platforms to interact with brands and make purchasing decisions (Haan and Watts, 2024). Increasingly, Generation Y consumers are using the Internet and social media not only as a source of shopping inspiration but also to gather consumption-related information, view reviews of their peers' experiences with products, evaluate brands, make purchase decisions and, often, even implement those purchase decisions (Barska *et al.*, 2023; Fairlie *et al.*, 2024). Liu *et al.* (2020) add that not only do consumers often share their post-purchase experiences online but also that their exposure to other consumers' online reviews influences their post-purchase evaluations. These actions are taking place remotely, independent of physical formal and informal sources of consumption-related information, products or retail outlets (Romanchuk *et al.*, 2024), effectively rendering them digital nomad consumers – a trend that underscores the salience of business organizations maintaining a strong digital presence and innovating continuously in their digital marketing strategies. The term “digital nomad consumers” put forward in this study is defined as individuals who leverage digital platforms to execute some or all of the stages of their consumer decision-making process remotely, including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, purchase action and/or post-purchase evaluation.

Much like marketers in other industries, beauty-product marketers grapple with how best to engage with Generation Y consumers given their known distrust of traditional advertising methods, strong desire for authenticity when engaging with brands (Perera *et al.*, 2023) and digital nomad consumer status. The combined effect of these factors has prompted marketers, including beauty-product marketers, to seek new approaches to engage with these digital nomad consumers, where partnering with social media influencers is fast proving to be the more popular approach (Joshi *et al.*, 2023; Fairlie *et al.*, 2024). These influencers are self-proclaimed gurus within a specific product category who create content in the form of product tutorials, reviews and recommendations, thereby providing shopping inspiration, creating brand awareness, setting trends and influencing the brand choices of their followers on one or more social media platforms (De Veirman *et al.*, 2017; Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019).

While the general influence of social media influencers on consumer behavior is well-documented, more focused research is needed that explores the nuances of the influencer impact within a specific social media platform context, amongst a delineated target audience, within a specific industry using a specific theory. A review of social media influencer research between 2011 and 2020 indicates that only a limited number of theoretical frameworks have been applied in the influencer-marketing literature, only 39% of those studies were industry specific and only 65% indicated a specific social media platform; 62% of which focused on Instagram (Tanwar *et al.*, 2024). These findings echo the systematic review of influencer marketing conducted by Vrontis *et al.* (2021), who also indicate that social media influencer research is heavily skewed toward the Instagram platform and lacks a coherent theoretical underpinning. Vrontis *et al.* (2021) conclude by highlighting the need to move beyond Instagram in influencer marketing research and focus on other social media

platforms and to do so in relation to specific product categories, delineated market segments and in the context of emerging and developing economies.

In light of these limitations and given the importance of the female Generation Y segment to the beauty industry and their digital nomad consumer attributes, this study aimed at applying an extended adaptation of the information adoption model (IAM) to ascertain the factors influencing female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content, in terms of the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions in the emerging market context of South Africa.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 YouTube beauty vloggers

Beauty vloggers are digital content creators who use video-sharing social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok to share beauty-related tutorials, reviews, product recommendations and personal experiences with their followers (Hou *et al.*, 2019). Generally, YouTube is the preferred social media platform for both beauty enthusiasts and beauty influencers (Cezim *et al.*, 2023), with beauty-related vlogger content being amongst the most viewed content on the platform (Ceci *et al.*, 2023). The reason for YouTube being the preferred platform for beauty influencer content is that it allows for substantially longer videos, thereby making it ideal for instructional or more detailed content, such as how-to videos and in-depth product reviews (Baker *et al.*, 2023). These content creators build their personal brand around their self-proclaimed expertise in beauty, often blending elements of entertainment and education in their content (Ladhari *et al.*, 2020). What sets beauty vloggers apart from traditional beauty experts is their accessibility and relatability; they are often perceived as "real people" who provide honest and practical advice, making them more trustworthy to their audience than traditional media figures (Ladhari *et al.*, 2020; Schwarz *et al.*, 2022). The beauty industry was one of the first industries to recognize the potential power of beauty vloggers as key opinion leaders (Schwarz *et al.*, 2022), with beauty-product marketers increasingly collaborating with such vloggers (Vrontis *et al.*, 2021). These partnerships have become a critical component of their brand strategy, enabling beauty-product marketers to tap into the vlogger's established audience and enhance their credibility (Ladhari *et al.*, 2020).

As with other industry and social media contexts, beauty-product marketers' motivation to partner with beauty vloggers on YouTube should be informed by the extent to which their key target audiences adopt the informational content presented within such vlogs; that is, the extent to which that content influences their beauty brand purchase decisions (Miranda *et al.*, 2021). The well-established IAM offers an ideal theoretical model to apply to understanding the factors influencing female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content, in terms of the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions.

### 2.2 Information adoption model (IAM)

The IAM originated from Sussman and Siegal (2003), who sought to provide a theoretical framework for predicting individuals' adoption of information in a digitally-mediated environment; in their case, knowledge workers' adoption of information contained in work emails. Since its publication in 2003, the model, as well as its subsequent adaptations and extensions, has been applied to predict information adoption in a variety of digitally-mediated contexts, thereby attesting to the model's robustness and adaptability. These studies include both general and product-category specific electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication (Cheung *et al.*, 2008; Zhu *et al.*, 2016; Erkan and Evans, 2016; Tien *et al.*, 2019; Rahaman *et al.*, 2022;

Akoglu and Özbek, 2024), online consumer-generated product reviews (Arora and Lata, 2020; Lata and Rana, 2021; Bevan-Dye, 2022; Bao and Zhu, 2023) and social media influencer product reviews (Miranda *et al.*, 2021).

The IAM includes source credibility, information quality, information usefulness and information adoption intentions, where usefulness mediates the influence of source credibility and information quality on information adoption intentions (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). The model is derived from the technology acceptance model (Davis *et al.*, 1986; Davis *et al.*, 1989) and the dual process model of informational influence, namely, the elaboration likelihood model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). The technology acceptance model focuses on users' adoption of new information systems. The model comprises the two main predictor variables of perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, with perceived usefulness being the direct predictor of intentions to adopt such systems, as well as the mediator between perceived ease of use and adoption (Davis *et al.*, 1986). In contrast, the elaboration likelihood model focuses on how individuals receive and process information. According to the model, information recipients are influenced through two pathways – the central route, which focuses on the core content of the message and the peripheral route, which pertains to aspects indirectly related to the core message (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). In the central route, individuals consider the quality, accuracy and relevance of the information received, whereas in the peripheral route, they focus on the expertise and credibility of the information source (Teng *et al.*, 2015); that is, information quality represents the central route and source expertise and credibility, the peripheral route of persuasion.

In the original IAM, expertise was applied as a moderator variable and explained as the message receivers' prior knowledge and comprehension, which was predicted to affect their ability to process the information in the message (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). In contrast, Tien *et al.* (2019) view expertise as the message recipients' perceptions of the source's expertise, which they propose to be a positive predictor of the perceived credibility of the information contained in the message. In this sense, expertise refers to the source's perceived competence and knowledge (McGinnies and Ward, 1980) as a manifestation of such factors as the source's training, experience and ability (Birnbaum and Stegner, 1979) or, in the case of consumption-related opinion leaders, the source's perceived superior product category knowledge and experience (Flynn *et al.*, 1996). In the case of social media influencers, this tends to be self-acclaimed expertise in a domain-specific area (Tian and Li, 2022), such as beauty. Given that these social media influencers, including YouTube beauty vloggers, are amateurs, typically lacking formal credentials, much of their perceived expertise is derived from the social proof that they have attained in terms of their volume of followers and number of likes (Schaefer *et al.*, 2012). Several studies conclude that a source's perceived expertise is an important predictor of the perceived credibility of information. Tien *et al.* (2019) found source expertise to be a significant positive predictor of skincare eWOM credibility on social networking sites. Similarly, in a qualitative study, Al-Emadi and Yahia (2020) highlight perceived expertise as an important facet of the perceived credibility of the information shared by social media influencers. Both Manchanda *et al.* (2022) and Filieri *et al.* (2023) found expertise to be a significant predictor of followers' perceived credibility of the product information provided by YouTube vloggers. Drawing on the findings reported in these studies, this research theorizes that:

- H1. YouTube beauty vloggers' perceived expertise positively predicts female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived credibility of the information in such vlogs.

The credibility of information refers to the extent to which it is trustworthy, believable, honest, sincere and reliable (Ohanian *et al.*, 1990). When individuals perceive received information as being credible, they are likely to have more confidence in that information and, thus, are more likely to act on that information (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). Social media influencer followers are more likely to trust an influencer's product/brand opinions and recommendations if they perceive them as being motivated by a genuine desire to offer unbiased advice based on actual experience with the product/brand (Tian and Li, 2022). This suggests that a failure to disclose the receipt of monetary incentives or free products for showcasing a particular brand may damage the credibility of social media influencers' product opinions and recommendations (Hou *et al.*, 2019; De Cicco *et al.*, 2021) and highlights the importance of only promoting products they actually use and genuinely believe in (Collins *et al.*, 2023). In this regard, the congruency between the influencer's image and the brands he/she is reviewing serves to enhance the believability of the beauty information they provide (De Cicco *et al.*, 2021). Despite information credibility being acknowledged as a salient contributor to the perceived usefulness of communicated information, several studies report that it had a non-significant effect on usefulness (Tien *et al.*, 2019; Arora and Lata, 2020; Miranda *et al.*, 2021). Nonetheless, other studies report information credibility as having a significant influence on the perceived usefulness of information. For example, Abedi *et al.* (2020) found information credibility to be a significant predictor of the information usefulness of eWOM information in mobile social networks. Park *et al.* (2020) reported it as a significant predictor of the perceived usefulness of eWOM information on social media. Song *et al.* (2021) report information credibility as a significant predictor of young consumers' perceived utility of online consumer travel reviews. Akoglu and Özbek (2024) also report information credibility as a significant predictor of the perceived usefulness of eWOM information about sports goods. Drawing on the findings reported in these studies, this research theorizes that:

- H2. YouTube beauty vlog information credibility positively predicts female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived information usefulness of such vlogs.

Sussman and Siegal (2003) operationalize argument or information quality as the extent to which a message's content is complete, accurate and consistent, which they, with reference to the elaboration likelihood model, identify as a critical predictor of informational influence under high elaboration likelihood conditions represented by the central route to persuasion. Studies on consumption-related information in the online environment, such as online consumer reviews and eWOM, conceptualize information quality as the relevance, timeliness and completeness of the information provided (Cheung *et al.*, 2008; Zhang *et al.*, 2014; Tien *et al.*, 2019). Several studies highlight the importance of information quality in persuasive communication. For example, Hendijani Fard and Marvi (2020) found information quality to be the strongest predictor of the perceived usefulness of virally-marketed mobile applications. In addition, a number of studies pertaining to the adoption of eWOM information on social media platforms report information quality as a significant positive predictor of the perceived usefulness of that information (Tien *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al.*, 2020; Leong *et al.*, 2022; Rahaman *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, this information quality has been found to be an important predictor of the perceived usefulness of online consumer reviews (Lata and Rana, 2021; Bevan-Dye, 2022; Bao and Zhu, 2023). Aligned to the current study, Miranda *et al.* (2021) report information quality as a statistically positive predictor of the perceived usefulness of YouTuber-generated-content. Drawing on the findings reported in these studies, this research theorizes that:

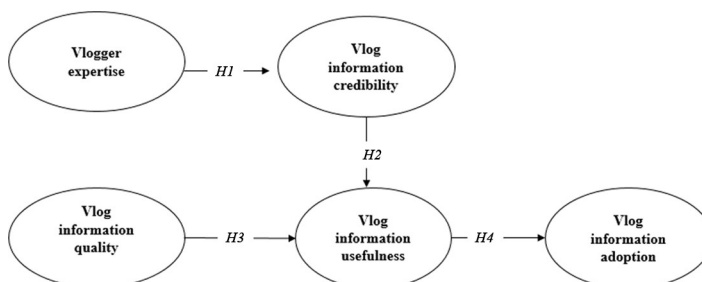
*H3.* YouTube beauty vlog information quality positively predicts female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived information usefulness of such vlogs.

In the technology acceptance model, perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which a system increases productivity and job performance (Davis *et al.*, 1989). In the evaluation of information context, Sussman and Siegal (2003) explain this usefulness as a recipient's evaluation of the information content of a message as being valuable, informative and helpful in resolving an issue. In terms of the evaluation of consumption-related information, it is the extent to which they perceive that information as helping them to make better purchase decisions and improving their usage of a product (Park and Lee, 2009). Studies that have applied the IAM typically report perceived information usefulness as a significant positive predictor of information adoption. These include studies on eWOM communication (Cheung *et al.*, 2008; Erkan and Evans, 2016; Tien *et al.*, 2019; Abedi *et al.*, 2020; Akoglu and Özbek, 2024) and online product reviews (Arora and Lata, 2020; Song *et al.*, 2021). Drawing on the findings reported in these studies, this research theorizes that:

*H4.* YouTube beauty vlog perceived information usefulness positively predicts female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of such vlogs' informational content, in terms of the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions.

The IAM theorizes that individuals' intentions to adopt information in the form of an opinion or recommendation depend on their cognitive assessment of the consequences of adopting that information, which predicts their inclination to act on that information (Sussman and Siegal, 2003). In the case of the adoption of informal consumption-related information, this would be receivers' behavioral intentions to act on the product/brand opinions and recommendations to which they are exposed when making a purchase decision (Cabeza-Ramírez *et al.*, 2022; Magano *et al.*, 2022). Given that behavioral intentions typically mediate overt behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1972), purchase intentions are obviously of great interest to marketers, as the formation of such intentions is believed to predict purchase behavior (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2019). Concerning YouTube beauty vlogs, this information adoption would constitute the extent to which followers internalize the opinions and recommendations shared during such vlogs to form purchase intentions toward the beauty brands featured; that is, the extent to which such vlogs influence their beauty-product purchase decisions.

The hypothesized model is depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Hypothesized model

3. Methodology

An explanatory research design was followed to explore causal relationships in the quantitative data set. Purposive sampling was employed with the target population delineated as females, born from 1986 to 2005, residing in South Africa, who consult YouTube beauty vlogs. A commercial marketing research firm was employed to gather the required data from its panel sample. The firm administered an online survey to recruit participants who met the specified criteria. Owing to budgetary constraints, the sample size was capped at 400 respondents. This sample size is deemed adequate for structural equation modeling, as models with seven or fewer latent factors generally necessitate a minimum sample size of 300 (Hair *et al.*, 2018). The structured electronic questionnaire used for the online survey included a cover letter, demographic questions and adapted scales from published studies. As per South Africa’s protection of personal information legal requirements, the cover letter explained the purpose of the study and detailed respondents’ assurances of anonymity, what the data would be used for, where it would be stored and who would have access to the data set. In addition, the cover letter included an informed consent statement. The requested demographic information included age and province of residence. Scaled-response items were scored on six-point Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). The adapted scales used in the study included a three-item information quality scale (Zhang *et al.*, 2014; Tien *et al.*, 2019), a five-item source expertise scale, a five-item information credibility scale (Ohanian *et al.*, 1990), a four-item perceived usefulness scale and a three-item purchase influence scale (Park and Lee, 2009). Scale items were reworded to reflect this study’s focus on YouTube beauty vlogs. The study was granted ethics clearance by the North-West University’s Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) (Ethics clearance number: NWU-00568–20-A4). Data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS, version 29.

4. Findings

The online data collection process yielded 340 complete questionnaires and, given the target sample size of 400, a response rate of 85%. As the hypothesized structural model comprised fewer than seven factors, a final sample size of 340 was deemed adequate for conducting structural equation modeling (Hair *et al.*, 2018). Table 1 furnishes a description of the sample’s demographics.

Table 1 shows that the sample included more of the older female Generation Y participants, with the 31- to 36-year old age band making up 55% of the sample, the 25- to 30-year old age band 30% and the 18- to 25-year old band the least at 15% of the sample.

Table 1. Sample demographics

| Age   | Frequency | %  | Province      | Frequency | %    |
|-------|-----------|----|---------------|-----------|------|
| 18–24 | 51        | 15 | Eastern Cape  | 17        | 5.0  |
| 25–30 | 101       | 30 | Northern Cape | 16        | 4.7  |
| 31–36 | 188       | 55 | Gauteng       | 190       | 55.9 |
|       |           |    | KwaZulu Natal | 22        | 6.5  |
|       |           |    | Limpopo       | 13        | 3.8  |
|       |           |    | Mpumalanga    | 13        | 3.8  |
|       |           |    | Free state    | 15        | 4.4  |
|       |           |    | North west    | 10        | 2.9  |
|       |           |    | Western Cape  | 44        | 12.9 |

Each of South Africa's nine provinces was represented in the sample, with most of the respondents indicating that they live in Gauteng (56%) and the fewest in North West (3%).

Common method bias was tested using Harman's one-factor test. The total variance accounted for by the one factor extracted during factor analysis was 49%, which, while marginally elevated, is still below the 50% threshold (Fuller *et al.*, 2016), thus ruling out significant common method bias. Data normality was tested in AMOS. The univariate skewness values were all within the  $\pm 2$  range, ranging from  $-1.257$  to  $-0.382$ , with an overall mean univariate skewness value of  $-0.808$  and were all smaller than their critical ratio values. The univariate kurtosis values, which ranged from  $-0.484$  to  $3.320$ , with an overall average univariate kurtosis value of  $1.19$ , were below  $7$  in magnitude and were all smaller than their respective critical ratios. Therefore, the data exhibits univariate normality (Byrne *et al.*, 2010). However, a significant Mardia's normalized estimate of multivariate kurtosis of  $75.603$  was returned, signaling a departure from multivariate normality (Kline *et al.*, 2011) and prompting the bootstrapping of the results of the path analysis (Byrne *et al.*, 2010). Collinearity diagnostics were run to rule out multi-collinearity issues. Tolerance values ranging from  $0.42$  to  $0.48$  and variance inflation factor values ranging from  $1.79$  to  $2.38$  were returned, indicating negligible multi-collinearity (Pallant *et al.*, 2020).

Following this, the descriptive statistics of the latent factors were computed, namely the means and the standard deviations (SDs). Table 2 reports the measurement items used in the questionnaire, together with the latent factor means and standard deviations.

As shown in Table 2, on the six-point Likert scale, relatively high means were recorded. The highest mean was recorded for vlog information usefulness (mean =  $4.89$ ), followed by vlog information quality (mean =  $4.78$ ), vlogger expertise (mean =  $4.64$ ), vlog information credibility (mean =  $4.63$ ) and vlog information adoption (mean =  $4.34$ ).

Confirmatory factor analysis, using the maximum likelihood method, was then run on the five-factor measurement model. These results are given in Tables 3 and Table 4.

As reported in Table 3, the fit indices listed show acceptable-to-good model fit, with badness-of-fit indices below  $0.08$  and goodness-of-fit indices far greater than  $0.90$  (Malhotra *et al.*, 2020). In terms of the reliability measures reported in Table 3, the Cronbach alphas ( $\alpha$ ) for the five latent factors range from  $0.847$  to  $0.924$ , which substantially exceeds the guide threshold level of  $0.70$  (Nunnally *et al.*, 1978), thereby affirming the internal consistency of these factors. Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) values exceed the suggested minimum level of  $0.70$  significantly, indicating that the variance shared by the indicators in each factor was robust (Malhotra *et al.*, 2020). Concerning convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed  $0.50$  and each of the loading estimates are higher than  $0.70$ , thus showing satisfactory convergent validity (Table 3). In addition, as shown in Table 4, the square root of those AVE values ( $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ ) exceeds their corresponding correlations (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and each of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratios was well below  $0.85$  (Voorhees *et al.*, 2016), thus indicating acceptable discriminant validity. In line with the literature on the IAM, there is a statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) positive correlation between each of the pairs of latent factors (Table 4), which provides evidence of the measurement model's nomological validity (Hair *et al.*, 2018).

To evaluate the hypotheses, path analysis was carried out. Owing to the identified departure from multivariate normality, bootstrapping was also undertaken on  $5,000$  samples using the maximum likelihood estimator to compute bias-corrected confidence intervals (CIs) for each of the parameter bootstrap estimates at the  $95\%$  confidence level. The outcomes of the path analysis, together with the lower confidence intervals (LCI) and upper confidence intervals (UCI), are reported in Table 5.

**Table 2.** Measurement items, means and standard deviations (SDs)

| Measurement items                                                                                                                     | Means | SDs   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| <i>Vlogger expertise (F1) Adapted from Ohanian et al. (1990)</i>                                                                      | 4.64  | 0.834 |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers are experts on beauty products”                                                          |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers have a great deal of experience with beauty products”                                    |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers are knowledgeable about beauty products”                                                 |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers are qualified to give advice about beauty products”                                      |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers are skilled in the use of beauty products”                                               |       |       |
| <i>Vlog information credibility (F2) Adapted from Ohanian et al. (1990)</i>                                                           | 4.63  | 0.811 |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers’ beauty product reviews are trustworthy”                                                 |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers’ beauty product reviews are honest”                                                      |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers’ beauty product reviews are reliable”                                                    |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers’ beauty product reviews are sincere”                                                     |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube beauty product vloggers’ beauty product reviews are dependable”                                                  |       |       |
| <i>Vlog information quality (F3) Adapted from Zhang et al. (2014) and Tien et al. (2019)</i>                                          | 4.78  | 0.817 |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews supply relevant beauty product information”                                     |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews provide timely beauty product information”                                      |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews supply complete beauty product information”                                     |       |       |
| <i>Vlog information usefulness (F4) Adapted from Park and Lee (2009)</i>                                                              | 4.89  | 0.757 |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews are useful as they teach me how best to choose beauty products suitable for me” |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews make beauty product purchasing decisions easier”                                |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews make me a smarter beauty product shopper”                                       |       |       |
| “My favorite YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews are beneficial as they teach me how best to apply/use beauty products”          |       |       |
| <i>Vlog information adoption (F5) Adapted from Park and Lee (2009)</i>                                                                | 4.34  | 1.173 |
| “I am influenced by YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews when I choose a beauty product”                                          |       |       |
| “I rely on YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews when I purchase beauty products”                                                  |       |       |
| “YouTube vloggers’ beauty product reviews crucially influence my choice of beauty products”                                           |       |       |

The fit indices provided in Table 5 demonstrate a structural model with acceptable model fit. Each of the hypothesized paths tested are positive and statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Furthermore, the 95% bias-corrected CIs computed do not contain a zero and each of the paths remains significant at  $p \leq 0.01$ . The standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) estimates indicate that beauty vloggers’ perceived expertise significantly influences female Generation Y digital nomad consumers’ perceived credibility of the information provided in those vlogs ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , CI: 0.686, 0.844), which, in turn, is a significant predictor of their perceived utility of that beauty information ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , CI: 0.288, 0.659). Therefore,  $H1$  and  $H2$  are supported. Similarly, the perceived quality of the information provided in beauty vlogs

**Table 3.** Reliability and convergent validity results

| Latent factors                                | Standardized loading estimates                                     | R <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Vlogger expertise (F1)                        | 0.798                                                              | 0.636          |
| ( <i>a</i> = 0.898, CR = 0.898, AVE = 0.637)  | 0.797                                                              | 0.635          |
|                                               | 0.823                                                              | 0.677          |
|                                               | 0.812                                                              | 0.659          |
|                                               | 0.760                                                              | 0.578          |
| Vlog information credibility (F2)             | 0.762                                                              | 0.581          |
| ( <i>a</i> = 0.924, CR = 0.925, AVE = 0.712)  | 0.863                                                              | 0.744          |
|                                               | 0.859                                                              | 0.737          |
|                                               | 0.852                                                              | 0.726          |
|                                               | 0.877                                                              | 0.769          |
| Vlog information quality (F3)                 | 0.816                                                              | 0.666          |
| ( <i>a</i> = 0.847, CR = 0.849, AVE = 0.652)  | 0.821                                                              | 0.674          |
|                                               | 0.784                                                              | 0.615          |
| Vlog information usefulness (F4)              | 0.732                                                              | 0.536          |
| ( <i>a</i> = 0.869, CR = 0.871, AVE = 0.6305) | 0.833                                                              | 0.694          |
|                                               | 0.887                                                              | 0.787          |
|                                               | 0.709                                                              | 0.503          |
| Vlog information adoption (F5)                | 0.870                                                              | 0.757          |
| ( <i>a</i> = 0.911, CR = 0.912, AVE = 0.775)  | 0.899                                                              | 0.809          |
|                                               | 0.871                                                              | 0.757          |
| Fit indices                                   | IFI = 0.949, TLI = 0.939, CFI = 0.949, SRMR = 0.047, RMSEA = 0.069 |                |

**Table 4.** Discriminant and nomological validity results

| Latent factors                    | F1             | F2             | F3             | F4             | F5           |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Vlogger expertise (F1)            | <i>0.798</i>   |                |                |                |              |
| Vlog information credibility (F2) | <i>(0.683)</i> | <i>0.844</i>   |                |                |              |
|                                   | 0.745          |                |                |                |              |
| Vlog information quality (F3)     | <i>(0.539)</i> | <i>(0.584)</i> | <i>0.807</i>   |                |              |
|                                   | 0.609          | 0.640          |                |                |              |
| Vlog information usefulness (F4)  | <i>(0.653)</i> | <i>(0.619)</i> | <i>(0.538)</i> | <i>0.794</i>   |              |
|                                   | 0.738          | 0.673          | 0.620          |                |              |
| Vlog information adoption (F5)    | <i>(0.597)</i> | <i>(0.548)</i> | <i>(0.547)</i> | <i>(0.662)</i> | <i>0.880</i> |
|                                   | 0.662          | 0.587          | 0.614          | 0.749          |              |

**Note(s):** Values on the diagonal (*italic*) represent the  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$  values; values in parentheses (*italics*) represent the HTMT ratios; values below the HTMT ratios represent the correlation coefficients

**Table 5.** Results of the path analysis and bootstrap

| Hypothesized paths                                                              | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> - and <i>p</i> -values | LCI   | UCI   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| H1: vlogger expertise → vlog information credibility                            | 0.774   | 11.74*                          | 0.686 | 0.844 |
| H2: vlog information credibility → vlog information usefulness                  | 0.481   | 8.25*                           | 0.288 | 0.659 |
| H3: vlog information quality → vlog information usefulness                      | 0.387   | 6.73*                           | 0.176 | 0.580 |
| H4: vlog information usefulness → vlog information adoption                     | 0.767   | 14.35*                          | 0.700 | 0.822 |
| Fit indices: IFI = 0.934, TLI = 0.924, CFI = 0.934, SRMR = 0.073, RMSEA = 0.078 |         |                                 |       |       |

**Note(s):** \*Significant at  $p \leq 0.01$ ,  $\beta$  = standardized beta

significantly influences their perceptions of the usefulness of the information presented in those vlogs ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , CI: 0.176, 0.580); therefore, *H3* is supported. The perceived usefulness of beauty vlog information is a significant positive predictor of female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of the information provided in those vlogs ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , CI: 0.700, 0.822); that is, the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions. As such, *H4* is supported. Importantly, vlogger expertise explains 60% ( $R^2 = 0.599$ ) of the variance in female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived credibility of the information presented in YouTube beauty vlogs, which together with their perceptions of the quality of the information, explains 57% ( $R^2 = 0.571$ ) of the variance in their perceived utility of such vlogs. Collectively, the four exogenous latent factors explain a noteworthy 59% ( $R^2 = 0.588$ ) of the variance in female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlog information.

## 5. Discussion

This study applied an extended adaptation of the IAM to determine the factors influencing female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content, in terms of the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions. The relatively high means computed suggest that female Generation Y digital nomad consumers perceive YouTube beauty vlogs as providing them with useful information that is of a high quality. In addition, the means infer that they view their favorite YouTube beauty vloggers as being beauty experts who provide credible beauty product reviews and that this information influences their beauty-product purchase decisions; that is, their adoption of YouTube beauty vlog information into their beauty-product decision-making process. Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out and the results substantiated a five-factor model that demonstrated reliability, construct validity and acceptable-to-good model fit.

A path analysis was subsequently conducted to evaluate the four hypotheses proposed in the study. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) values recorded on the endogenous factors of beauty vlog information credibility, beauty vlog information usefulness and beauty vlog information adoption provided evidence of the predictive power of this model (Schroer and Hertel, 2009) when applied to female Generation Y digital nomad consumers.

Beauty vlogger expertise was a strong significant predictor of female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived credibility of YouTube beauty vlog information (*H1*). This infers that YouTube beauty vlog followers have more trust in and give greater credence to the opinions and recommendations shared by beauty vloggers who they perceive as having superior knowledge of and experience with beauty products and, thus, who are seen as being capable of making legitimate beauty assertions. The findings of several prior studies confirm the importance of source expertise in predicting information credibility (Tien *et al.*, 2019; Manchanda *et al.*, 2022; Filieri *et al.*, 2023).

The hypothesized path from beauty vlog information credibility to beauty vlog information usefulness (*H2*) was also statistically significant. This signifies that female Generation Y digital nomad consumers value authentic and honest opinions about beauty products made by beauty vloggers who actually use and genuinely believe in the products that they promote. This finding aligns with those reported in previous studies on eWOM (Abedi *et al.*, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2020; Akoglu and Özbek, 2024) and online consumer product reviews (Song *et al.*, 2021).

The proposed relationship between beauty vlog information quality and information usefulness (*H3*) was found to be statistically significant, signifying that female Generation Y digital nomad consumers perceive beauty information that is relevant, timely and complete as being useful. This finding is consistent with earlier studies on the perceived usefulness of

eWOM (Tien *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al.*, 2020; Leong *et al.*, 2022; Rahaman *et al.*, 2022), online consumer reviews (Lata and Rana, 2021; Bevan-Dye, 2022; Bao and Zhu, 2023) and YouTube-generated-content about travel destinations (Arora and Lata, 2020; Miranda *et al.*, 2021).

As expected, the perceived usefulness of YouTube beauty vlogs had a strong significant influence on female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of that information (*H4*). This suggests that female Generation Y digital nomad consumers believe that YouTube beauty vlogs help them make better beauty-product purchase decisions and achieve the maximum benefit from using those purchased products. This belief leads them to internalize the opinions and recommendations shared during YouTube beauty vlogs to form purchase intentions toward the beauty brands featured; that is, these vlogs shape their beauty-product purchase decisions. This finding echoes that of prior studies on eWOM (Cheung *et al.*, 2008; Erkan and Evans, 2016; Tien *et al.*, 2019; Abedi *et al.*, 2020; Akoglu and Özbek, 2024) and online product reviews (Arora and Lata, 2020; Song *et al.*, 2021).

## 6. Theoretical and practical implications

### 6.1 Theoretical implications

Theoretically, this study makes several important contributions. First, this study extends the IAM by including source expertise and validates the theory in the new context of social media influencer marketing. The psychometric properties, model fit indices and coefficients of determination reflect a reliable and valid research instrument that can be applied in future research. Second, the findings of this study contribute to the literature on social media influencer marketing by applying an adaptation of the IAM to explain the antecedents of female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' adoption of YouTube beauty vlogs' informational content, in terms of the influence such vlogs have on their beauty-product purchase decisions. Thirdly, the study identifies Generation Y consumers as digital nomad consumers and the findings of the study attest to the reality that these consumers are increasingly formulating their product purchase decisions remotely using social media. This digital nomad consumer characteristic of Generation Y and their younger counterparts stresses the need for more research into the digitally-enabled consumer decision-making process and into digital marketing strategies.

### 6.2 Practical implications

The findings of the study have a number of important implications applicable to both YouTube beauty vloggers and beauty-product marketers seeking to partner with these social media influencers. The overriding implication of the study is that female Generation Y consumers are incorporating information gleaned from watching YouTube beauty vlogs into their beauty-product purchase decision-making process, underscoring the need for beauty-product marketers to incorporate beauty vlogs into their digital marketing strategies.

The perceived expertise of YouTube beauty vloggers was a salient predictor of the perceived credibility of the information they supply in their vlogs. This finding emphasizes the importance of beauty vloggers encouraging Generation Y females to subscribe to their YouTube channel, like there uploads and provide real-life testimonials about how they have benefited from recommendations made in the vlog to boost their social proof. In addition to this social proof, there are several strategies that beauty vloggers can employ to demonstrate their expertise in the domain-specific area of beauty products. For example, explaining the science behind popular beauty-product ingredients and their effects and addressing common beauty concerns. Furthermore, expertise can be developed by up-skilling through attending courses and watching online tutorials, reading up on products, brands and their purported

benefits, as well as practicing using the products regularly to develop professional skills and build beauty knowledge. For their part, beauty-product marketers can enhance their selected beauty vlogger's perceived expertise by providing them with information concerning the science behind their products' ingredients and how those products address common beauty concerns. Offering short courses and online tutorials designed to demonstrate how best to apply and use their beauty brand may also serve to support these beauty vloggers and encourage them to showcase specific beauty brands.

In addition to enhancing their perceived expertise, YouTube beauty vloggers need to boost their perceived credibility by being transparent about any sponsorships or free products that they receive for their vlogs, refraining from using beauty filters and only promoting products they actually use and genuinely believe in. Beauty marketers, in turn, should seek to partner with the type of YouTube beauty vlogger whose image is congruent with that of the beauty brand's image, as this will serve to enhance the credibility of any positive reviews of their brand in such vlogs.

Given the importance female Generation Y digital nomads attach to receiving quality information from watching YouTube beauty vlogs, beauty vloggers need to keep up to date on new beauty-product launches, techniques and trends by reading beauty publications and beauty blogs and attending beauty industry events. They should also pay attention to the beauty needs and concerns of their followers by reading their questions and comments. In addition, they need to provide in-depth explanations of techniques, product usage and skincare/haircare routines, as well as detailed information on beauty-product features, ingredients and prices. Beauty-product marketers can aid in this regard by inviting beauty vloggers to industry events and supplying them with salient beauty-product information.

Female Generation Y digital nomad consumers view YouTube beauty vlogs as useful, meaning that watching such vlogs aids in reducing their cognitive dissonance concerning beauty-product purchase decisions. This utility leads them to internalize the opinions and recommendations shared during YouTube beauty vlogs to form purchase intentions toward the beauty brands featured. As such, it would be most unwise for beauty-product marketers to ignore the potential of these powerful opinion leaders.

## 6. Conclusions, limitations and future research

The findings of this study ascertained that when female Generation Y digital nomad consumers perceive YouTube beauty vlogs as useful, they internalize the opinions and recommendations shared during such vlogs to form purchase intentions toward the beauty brands featured therein. As per the results of the study, the factors identified as being significant predictors of female Generation Y digital nomad consumers' perceived usefulness of YouTube beauty vlogs include the beauty vlog information quality, together with the vlogger expertise and consequent beauty vlog information credibility. The main conclusions and the implications for YouTube beauty vloggers and beauty-product marketers targeting female Generation Y digital nomad consumers are summarized in [Table 6](#).

Despite increased academic interest in social media influencer marketing, there is still a dearth of reported research that applies established theoretical models focused specifically on the YouTube platform in a specific industry amongst a delineated segment. WoM communication has long been viewed as a fascinating and essential element of the consumer decision-making process ([Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2019](#)). However, the phenomenon of social media influencer marketing elevates the concept of WoM communication to a whole new level. More research is required to comprehend fully the role that social media influencer marketing plays in the consumer decision-making process, particularly in relation to digital nomad consumers. For example, this study only focused on female Generation Y

**Table 6.** Summary of main conclusions and implications

| Conclusions                                                                       | Implications                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vlogger expertise significantly influences vlog information credibility           | Vloggers: boost social proof by encouraging followers to subscribe to channel, like uploads and provide testimonials<br>Marketers: provide vloggers with information concerning the science behind products' ingredients and how those products address common beauty concerns |
| Vlog information credibility significantly influences vlog information usefulness | Vloggers: be transparent about sponsorships and only promote products you believe in<br>Marketers: partner with vloggers whose image is congruent with that of the beauty brand's image                                                                                        |
| Vlog information quality significantly influences vlog information usefulness     | Vloggers: stay abreast of new beauty-product launches, techniques and trends. Marketers: supply vloggers with salient beauty-product news                                                                                                                                      |
| Vlog information usefulness significantly influences vlog information adoption    | Vloggers: build a reputation as a credible beauty expert and deliver high quality useful beauty content<br>Marketers: seek partnerships with vloggers who have a significant following amongst female Generation Y consumers                                                   |

digital nomad consumers in the emerging market of South Africa. A study including male and female Generation Y digital nomad consumers from developing and developed markets would serve well in establishing a generalizable theory of these consumers' adoption of social media influencers' opinions and recommendations. Furthermore, the study only added one extra predictor to the IAM, namely influencer expertise. The inclusion of additional variables may increase the predictive power of the model. Possible variables to consider include influencer-follower congruency and frequency of exposure to YouTube vlogs.

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