

**The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Attitude towards Influencers in
Repurchase Intentions: Perspective from Malaysia**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this dissertation was conducted in full compliance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Except where proper acknowledgment is given, this work is solely the effort of the author. This dissertation has not been accepted for the award of any other degree and is not being **concurrently** submitted for any other academic qualification.

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The Effect of Influencer Credibility on Attitude towards Influencers in Repurchase Intentions: Perspective from Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the mobile gaming industry, focusing on influencers' credibility, players' attitudes towards the influencers, and repurchase intention for In-App Purchases (IAPs) among Malaysian Genshin Impact players. It aims to assess which influencer credibility factors affect spenders' attitudes towards influencers, the relationship between players' attitudes towards influencers and their repurchase intention for IAPs, and the moderating effect of players' gender on this relationship. In particular, the study employed a quantitative approach, surveying 230 respondents and analysing the data with SmartPLS 4.0. Results indicate that the credibility dimensions, attractiveness, and similarity, were found to significantly and positively influence attitude towards influencers. Moreover, a significant and positive relationship was observed between attitude and repurchase intention, suggesting that players with a positive attitude towards influencers are more willing to repurchase IAPs. The results also demonstrated a significant moderating effect of player gender, with male players' attitudes and repurchase intentions more likely to be affected. Additionally, this study provides insights for the mobile game industry on identifying influencers viewed as attractive and trustworthy to partner with and promote their games, and on stimulating repurchases to sustain the company's revenue. For influencers, being perceived as attractive and trustworthy increases their chances of being selected by game companies for influencer marketing campaigns in Malaysia. The findings also extend the use of Source Credibility Theory in the Malaysian mobile gaming industry, with social identity theory's player gender playing a significant moderating role. Concurrently, this study helps to improve understanding within the mobile gaming industry and enhance customer willingness to repurchase IAPs. Nevertheless, future research could explore the framework's use in other geographical contexts, including additional factors such as parasocial interactions or attitudes towards the brand or product, and analyse the role of gender across the entire framework using Multi-Group Analysis (MGA).

Keywords: Mobile gaming industry, influencer marketing, attitude towards influencers, repurchase intention, source credibility

Kesan Ciri Kredibiliti terhadap Sikap Terhadap Pempengaruh dalam Kemahuan Pembelian Semula: Perspektif dari Malaysia

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menyelidiki industri permainan mudah alih, dengan fokus terhadap ciri kredibiliti pempengaruh, sikap pemain terhadap pempengaruh, dan kemahuan pembelian balik pembelian dalam aplikasi pemain-pemain Genshin Impact di Malaysia. Kajian ini bertujuan menilai faktor kredibiliti pempengaruh yang mempengaruhi sikap pemain terhadap pempengaruh, hubungan antara sikap pemain dan niat pembelian balik mereka untuk pembelian dalam aplikasi, dan kesan penyederhanaan jantungina pemain antara sikap dan niat pembelian balik. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, meninjau pandangan 230 responden serta menganalisis data dikumpul menggunakan perisian SmartPLS 4.0. Dimensi kredibiliti seperti daya tarikan dan kebolehpercayaan didapati mempunyai kesan signifikan dan positif terhadap sikap terhadap pempengaruh. Hasil kajian menunjukkan hubungan signifikan dan positif antara sikap dengan kemahuan pembelian semula dalam aplikasi, mencadangkan bahawa pemain yang bersikap positif terhadap pempengaruh lebih bersedia untuk membeli balik pembelian dalam aplikasi. Kesan signifikan juga didapati oleh penyederhanaan jantungina pemain, di mana kemahuan pembelian balik pemain lelaki lebih cenderung terjejas. Kajian ini memberikan cadangan untuk industri permainan mudah alih bagi mengenalpasti pempengaruh yang disifatkan menarik dan boleh dipercayai untuk bekerjasama dan mempromosikan permainan mereka, serta merangsangkan pembelian balik untuk mengekalkan pendapatan Syarikat. Bagi pempengaruh, dianggap menarik and dipercayai akan memberi peluang tinggi untuk dipilih oleh syarikat permainan yang ingin melakukan kempen pemasaran pempengaruh di Malaysia. Penemuan ini juga menyumbang kepada perluasan penggunaan teori kredibiliti sumber dalam industri permainan mudah alih, dan meningkatkan kesediaan pelanggan untuk membeli balik pembelian dalam aplikasi. Penyelidikan masa depan boleh meneroka penggunaan rangka kerja dalam konteks geografi yang lain, memasukkan faktor tambahan seperti interaksi parasocial atau sikap terhadap jenama atau produk, dan menganalisis peranan jantungina merentasi keseluruhan rangka kerja menggunakan analisis berbilang kumpulan (MGA).

Kata Kunci: *Industri permainan mudah alih, pemasaran pempengaruh, sikap terhadap pempengaruh, kemahuan pembelian semula, ciri kredibiliti*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AoV	Arena of Valor
ARPU	Average Revenue Per User
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
B2B	Business to Business
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CMB	Common Method Bias
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CR	Composite Reliability
DOSM	Department of Statistics Malaysia
E-Sports	Electronic Sports
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait
IAP	In-App Purchases
MDEC	Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation
MGA	Multi-Group Analysis
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
OMG APAC	Omnicom Media Group Asia Pacific
PC	Personal Computer
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
ROI	Return on Investment
RPG	Role Playing Game
SEA	South East Asia
Smart PLS	Software with Graphical User Interface for Variance-Based Structural Equation Modelling
US\$	United States Dollar
UTAUT	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Source Credibility Theory (Munnukka et al., 2016) defines an influencer's credibility in terms of four variables: attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. While past studies have examined the importance of influencers across industries such as fashion and cosmetics, the role of influencers in the mobile gaming industry, and whether influencers' credibility affects mobile gamers' repurchase intentions, these topics have not yet been studied.

This chapter provides an overview of the study. First, a general overview and background discussion will be provided. This is followed by the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, the significance and scope of the study, definitions of key terms, the organisation of the study, and the chapter conclusion.

1.2 Background of Study

Mobile games are video games played on portable, wireless devices such as smartphones and tablets (Cai et al., 2022). This method is one of the three leading platforms for playing video games (Morris, 2023), alongside dedicated consoles (devices connected to a monitor or Television (TV) that use controllers to play games) and Personal Computers (PCs). All three types of gaming share the same objective: encouraging continuous play and eventual spending by their players (Syvertsen et al., 2022).

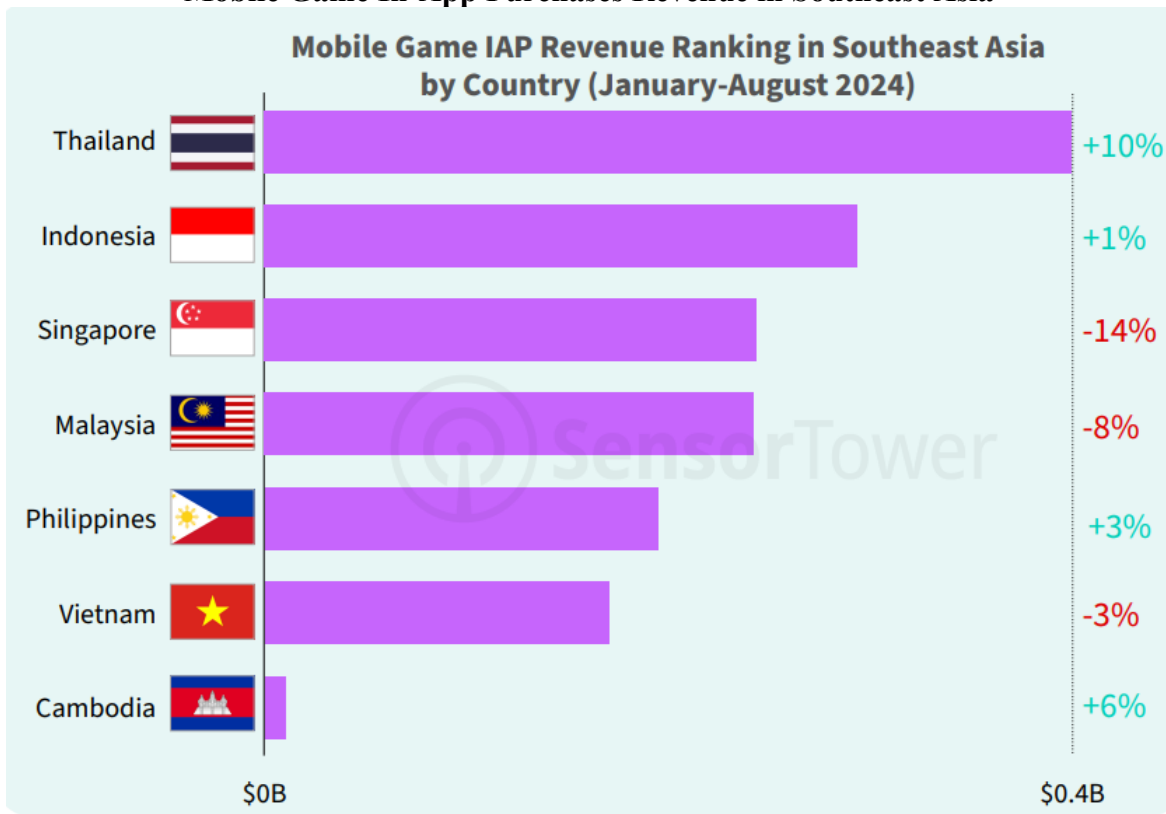
The global mobile games market has been growing rapidly since 2022. It is expected to reach an industry value of US\$126.10 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2024f). Over the period

2025 to 2029, the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of this global market is forecast to be 5.56%, reaching US\$156.60 billion by 2029.

In Malaysia, the mobile games industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.46% over the same forecast period, exceeding the global CAGR. This growth is increasingly driven by community-oriented mobile games that allow players to play with their friends (Chandy, 2024a; Statista, 2023a). These are also known as multiplayer or cooperative mobile games. One of the main challenges will be for developers to ensure user satisfaction and enjoyment and to retain loyal players, which could lead to the purchase of virtual items in mobile games (Lee et al., 2024). Furthermore, the purchase of these virtual items is known as microtransactions (Rita et al., 2024). It is one of three business models for online mobile games to earn revenue.

In the first three quarters of 2024, Malaysia ranked fourth in Southeast Asia in revenue from In-App Purchases (IAPs), bringing in around US\$250 million (Lu et al., 2024). While this represents an 8% year-over-year drop (Figure 1-1), Malaysians are still spending more on average (RM121) than Indonesian and Filipino players at RM114 and RM65, respectively (Hisham, 2023). In addition, female gamers in Malaysia were observed to spend, on average, RM127, compared to male players, who spent only RM54 (Coda, 2023).

**Figure 1-1:
Mobile Game In-App Purchases Revenue in Southeast Asia**



Source: Sensor Tower (2024)

Mobile games can be further broken down into various genres or categories, namely action, adventure, arcade, board, card, casino, casual, educational, music, puzzle, racing, Role-Playing Game (RPG), simulation, sports, strategy, trivia, and word games (Google, 2025). Similarly, there are also additional niche genres such as battle royale and Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) games (Apptamin, 2022). While these two genres are not considered to be an official game genre in both Apple’s App Store and Google’s Play Store, the top two highest-grossing mobile games globally for 2024 were a Chinese-developed MOBA game, Honor of Kings, with an estimated revenue of US\$1.8 million. This is followed by MONOPOLY GO! with a revenue of US\$1.5 million in player spending (Clement, 2025).

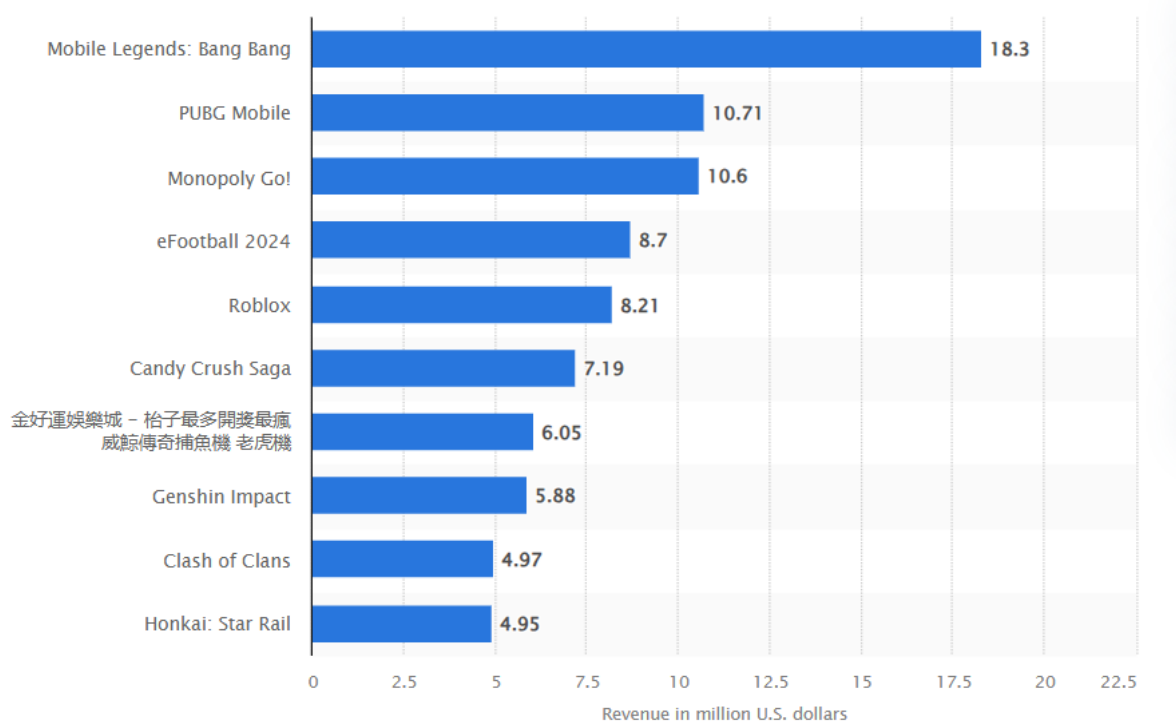
According to Salehudin and Alpert (2021), 70% of all IAPs made by a mobile app’s users originate from only the top 10% of the paying users. Meanwhile, Guo et al. (2022) reported that freemium apps tend to have moderate conversion rates of 1% to 10%. However, when players spend money and make at least one IAP in the mobile games they play, the

likelihood of removing the game from their daily cycle decreases drastically (Boghe et al., 2020).

Subsequently, when players continue to use their mobile games after spending money, they are more likely to spend even more on those games than the average new player (Lakić et al., 2023). This scenario, also referred to as the sunk cost fallacy in mobile gaming, provides insights to the game developers, companies, and marketers. This is due to the fact that when players make the initial payment for virtual items, they perceive themselves as having invested in the mobile game they play. Consequently, it would be challenging for them to stop playing the game, as they have already invested real-life resources into it (Zendle et al., 2020).

In Malaysia, the top five most popular game genres in 2024 were action, casual, strategy, sports, and adventure (Farid, 2024). This contrasts with the findings based on mobile game revenue in Malaysia, where the top three most profitable mobile games were Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB, MOBA genre), PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds Mobile (PUBG, battle royale genre), and MONOPOLY GO! (board genre) (Siddharta, 2024b), as displayed in Figure 1-2. This echoes the most profitable game genres globally. Concurrently, this implies that while many gamers in Malaysia might download a mobile game and play it, which can make the game and its genre popular, this does not necessarily translate into actual spending on IAPs, as evidenced by mobile game revenue figures.

**Figure 1-2:
Top 10 Mobile Games in Malaysia Based on Revenue in 2023**



Source: Siddharta (2024b)

This represents an opportunity for mobile game companies targeting the Malaysian market, which has a CAGR of 7.46% compared to the global rate of 5.56%. In Malaysia, younger audiences aged 18 to 24 prefer Instagram and TikTok as their social media platforms for connecting with other community members. Moreover, a vast majority of players aged 18 to 44 were reported to search for gaming updates and news through gaming publishers, via content creators for the game, and through word of mouth from their peers (Omnicom Media Group Asia Pacific (OMG APAC), 2024). Hence, to increase revenue from mobile games through IAPs, mobile game businesses and marketers should consider using influencers and content creators in marketing campaigns targeting gamers in this age range (Devarajan, 2024).

Genshin Impact is an open-world adventure RPG developed by the Chinese company MiHoYo/HoYoverse (Genshin Impact, 2025). This mobile game uses a free-to-play model, unlike conventional mobile games that require an upfront purchase to play. Free-to-play games are available for download and play for free, with revenue generated through in-game advertising and microtransactions (Lassila, 2022).

Hamari et al. (2020) argued that the free-to-play business model can be equated with the freemium model in the mobile games industry, where the core game is offered to players at no charge and revenue is derived from the sale of premium services and additional products. This is attributed to the fact that the developers of these mobile games and apps do not charge upfront for downloading and using the software (Numminen et al., 2022). Therefore, revenue must be generated from either in-game advertising (Enache et al., 2023) or IAPs for additional features or advantages.

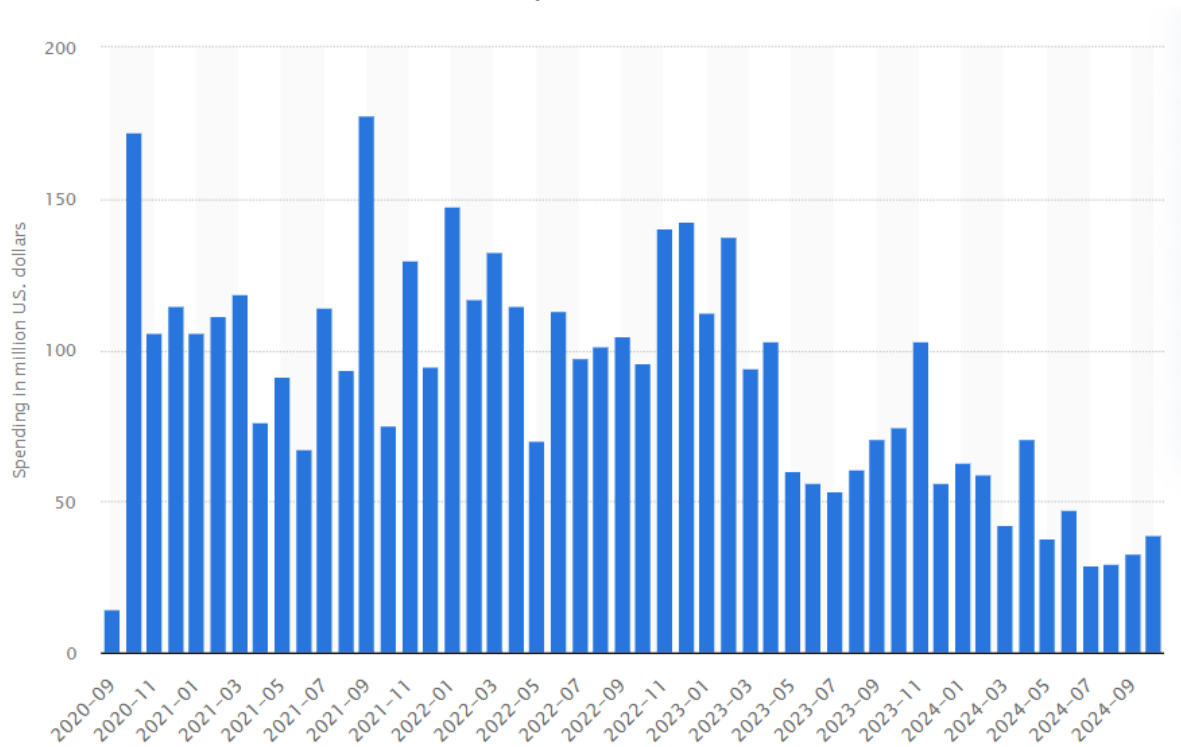
These IAPs, also known as microtransactions, allow players to pay for additional features or virtual items. These virtual items can further be classified into two general categories: decorative or cosmetic items that only affect in-game appearances (Brooks & Clark, 2023) and functional items that affect players' gameplay experience (Petrovskaya & Zendle, 2021). Among these microtransactions, there are also various ways to obtain the virtual items after payment. The first method is through a fixed-reward microtransaction, where the items are guaranteed upon making an IAP (Neely, 2021). Meanwhile, the second method is through loot box mechanics, also known as gachas, chests, or crates (Montiel et al., 2022), in which players spend money for a chance to obtain virtual items (Spicer et al., 2022).

Industry reports have highlighted that IAPs are among the most common ways developers generate revenue, and that 79% of mobile game users use them (Tafradzhiyski, 2024). According to Warden and Zendle (2021), most of the top-grossing mobile games generate their revenue through loot box mechanics. Nevertheless, it is challenging to encourage players or gamers to make their first purchase, and developers typically charge an average of US\$35.42 to help them make their first IAP (Grguric, 2024). In addition, only 5% of total app users were reported to make IAPs (Kostopoulos et al., 2023; Salehudin & Alpert, 2021). Therefore, for developers who have made their mobile games free to download and play, such as Genshin Impact, it is crucial for the game's sustainability that players are willing to spend money on IAPs.

For Genshin Impact, the mobile game generated approximately US\$5 billion in lifetime gross revenue from IAPs in mainland China alone since its launch in 2020, with revenue from countries outside China estimated at US\$4 billion (Astle, 2024). This indicates that China alone accounts for more than 55% of total revenue from IAPs in the mobile game.

The game also won the Apple App Store Best of 2020 and Google Play Best Game of 2020 awards (Takahashi, 2020). At the same time, it was the fastest mobile game app to reach US\$5 billion in global revenue, achieving it in only 40 months since launch (Clement, 2024b).

**Figure 1-3:
Estimated Revenue for Genshin Impact Globally from September 2020 to October 2024**



Source: Clement (2024a)

Nonetheless, the mobile game has been experiencing a steady revenue decline over the past few years. Figure 1-3 illustrates the estimated global game revenue for Genshin Impact from September 2020 to October 2024, reflecting a downward trend. The mobile game's final peak revenue occurred between 2022 and 2023, when revenue reached almost US\$150 million. This coincides with the time period when the game was the number one mobile game that players in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines were reported to spend their money on (Bashir, 2022). In addition, Genshin Impact was the most tweeted-about mobile game in both Malaysia and Singapore on Twitter in 2022 (Marketing Interactive, 2022). This reflects the popularity of the mobile game on social media platforms, where players, gaming communities, and gaming influencers can be observed.

1.3 Social Media Influencers

According to Makki et al. (2025), influencer marketing is more effective than conventional marketing tools in boosting the visibility of mobile games. The contribution of influencer marketing is not limited to introducing a brand-new mobile game to a broader audience. In line with this, Bakach et al. (2024) suggested that gaming influencers on social media platforms can leverage their social influence to drive user engagement with mobile games. This implies that followers who trust and value the opinions of the influencers they follow are more likely to engage positively with a mobile game endorsed by those influencers, and vice versa.

Globally, younger demographics, such as Generation Z (individuals born between 1997 and 2012), are using social media platforms to follow gaming content creators and consume their posts and videos. Notably, 21% of social media users aged 18 to 24 reported following gaming influencers, followed by 15% of users aged 25 to 34 (Clement, 2021). With the global gaming influencer industry estimated to reach US\$4.6 billion by 2025 (Haryacha, 2024), mobile game developers and marketers should leverage the broad reach of these influencers across various social media platforms to promote and endorse their mobile games to their audiences. Simultaneously, marketing campaigns can also be run on social media platforms to encourage users to try new games. For example, the TikTok marketing campaign hashtag #TikTokMadeMePlayIt has generated more than 9,000 posts on the platform, with more than 161 million views globally (Influencer, 2024).

Past studies have defined influencer types based on the total number of their followers, ranging from nano- to mega-influencers. According to Conde and Casais (2023), mega influencers are defined as those with more than 1 million followers, who are globally recognised, and can reach and potentially create global trends (Leban et al., 2021). However, it also poses the risk of reduced engagement with their followers due to the sheer size of their follower base, as well as charging premium prices for endorsements. Subsequently, macro influencers are defined as having followers ranging from 100,000 to 1 million, a more diverse audience, and a specific niche that brands might find appealing (Kay et al., 2020). They also charge more than micro influencers.

The third influencer category is micro-influencers, defined as those with a follower count between 1,000 and 100,000. This results in them having a strong relationship with their loyal audience and thus being viewed as highly credible, and having an engaged community around their specialised areas of interest, such as gaming (Park et al., 2021). Despite these, it has the disadvantage of having lower visibility and reach compared to macro- and mega influencers. Lastly, Şenyapar (2024) defined nano influencers as having a follower count of 1,000-10,000 and high levels of engagement with their followers, driven by genuine experiences that create meaningful and substantial impact (Macalik, 2021). This includes having the ability to influence purchasing decisions within their small community (Harshitha et al., 2021), though with the disadvantage of having the smallest visibility and reach compared to other tiers of influencers. For mobile game companies and marketers seeking to reach a global audience promptly, partnering with macro or mega influencers can help achieve that objective. However, for developers who wish to foster a small yet closely knit community, nano influencers could be their preferred choice. Moreover, the identification and selection of gaming influencers depend on the marketing objectives set by the mobile game developers and their marketing department. Table 1-1 summarises the four types of influencers.

**Table 1-1:
Summary of the Four Types of Influencer**

Types	Nano	Micro	Macro	Mega
Followers	1,000 – 10,000	1,000 – 100,000	100,000 – 1,000,000	> 1,000,000
Advantages	High levels of engagement due to genuine experiences	Engaged community within their specialized area	Has diverse audience with specific niche	Can potentially create global trends
Disadvantages	Very limited visibility and reach	Lower visibility than macro- and mega influencers	Charge more than micro influencers	Less follower engagement, premium rates for endorsements

When the influencer successfully blends the organisation’s brand with their personal branding, a mutually beneficial relationship can be created (Nascimento et al., 2020). This relationship must be presented to the audience to create high levels of authentic engagement, as followers who perceive the influencer and their content as trustworthy and credible are more likely to be persuaded by their opinions (Scott, 2022). In essence, having high levels

of trust and personal engagement makes their endorsements more impactful than conventional advertising methods (Nafees et al., 2020).

1.3.1 Malaysian Influencer Industry

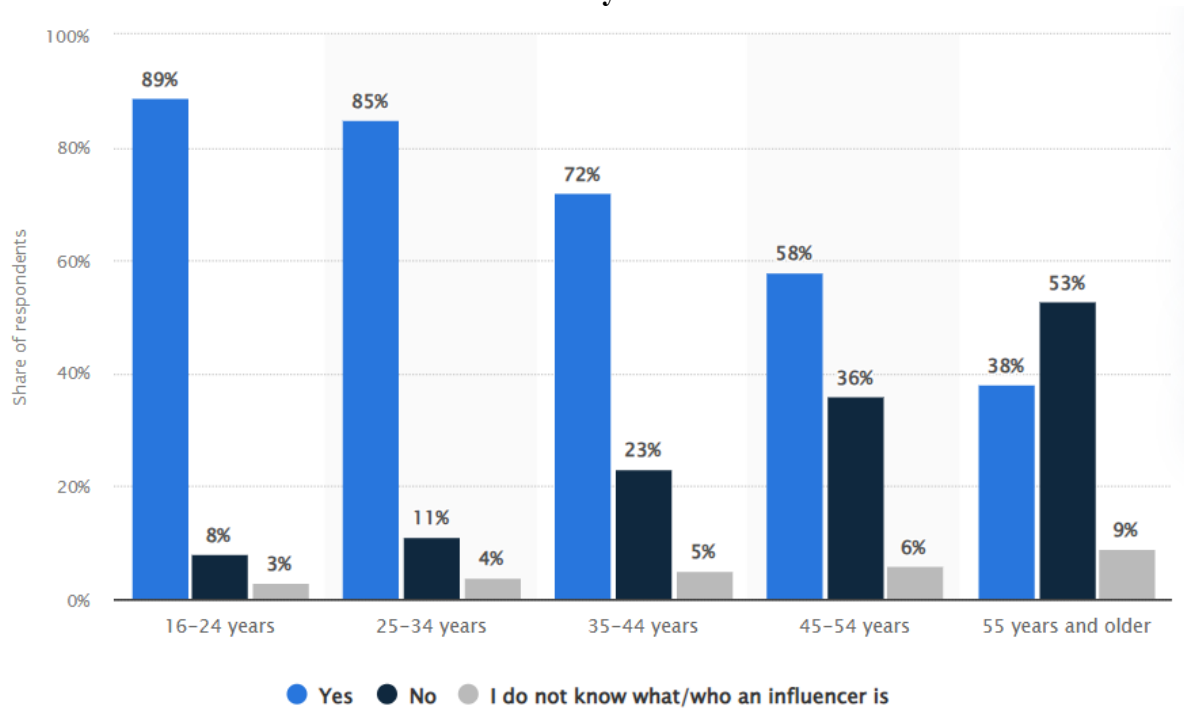
The influencer industry reached \$16.4 billion in net worth in 2022 (Leung et al., 2022) and is forecast to exceed \$22 billion in 2025 (Statista, 2024d). In Malaysia, the influencer marketing industry is projected to grow by 10.79% from 2024 to 2028, with a market value of US\$102.30 million by 2028 (Taslaud, 2024). It was also forecast that spending on influencer advertising would reach US\$77.03 million by 2025 and US\$110.80 million by 2029 (Statista, 2024e). This reflects an annual growth rate of 9.51% between 2025 and 2029. Nevertheless, Malaysian consumers' purchasing decisions were reported to be less influenced than those in other Southeast Asian (SEA) countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, or Indonesia. 53% of respondents in Malaysia stated that recommendations from influencers positively influenced their purchase decisions, compared with 69% in Thailand (Cube Asia, 2024).

Nonetheless, mega influencers were highlighted to significantly influence Malaysian consumers' purchasing decisions (BERNAMA, 2024), with 61% of respondents stating they would be willing to purchase a product based on endorsements from the influencers they follow. This percentage is exceptionally high among the younger generations aged 16 to 34. Figure 1-4 depicts the percentage of internet users who have followed influencers on various social media platforms in Malaysia by age group. In terms of gaming influencers, Muhd Faris bin Zakaria, also known as "SoloZ" on his social media platforms, boasts 1.85 million YouTube subscribers and has garnered 583 million total views across all his uploaded videos. In 2024, he achieved the MLBB Streamer of the Year award at the MLBB Creator Awards event (Salim, 2024a). Meanwhile, gaming content creator Muhammad Shafiq, under his online username "kingshahx," also won the Gaming Creator of the Year award at the TikTok Awards Malaysia 2024 (Ang, 2024). These achievements demonstrate the recognition Malaysian gaming influencers have received on the global stage.

With a large majority of internet users aged 16 to 34 having followed at least one influencer, this suggests that businesses targeting Malaysian consumers can leverage influencer marketing to promote their brands, products, or services. On a similar note, young

consumers in Malaysia who perceive online influencers as more authentic and credible than conventional celebrities also report trusting influencers' opinions more for low-involvement product categories (Li & Chan, 2024). Conversely, for extravagant brands targeting older consumers, the impact of traditional celebrities was more definite than that of online influencers.

**Figure 1-4:
Percentage of Users Following influencers on Social Media Platforms by Age Group in Malaysia**



Source: Statista (2023b)

This provides insight for businesses and marketing departments of firms that wish to target the millennial and Generation Z populations and influence their buying behaviour. For instance, brands whose products or services target younger individuals could partner with social media influencers who fit the specific industry and are trusted by their followers and communities. Particularly for Gen Z consumers, the characteristics of social media influencers, such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and similarity, are essential factors in their decision to purchase (Sharipudin et al., 2023). Comparable to global consumers, Malaysian social media users also prefer trustworthy influencers who promote products or services in which they have expertise and competence (Ahmad et al., 2023), rather than solely relying on the physical presence of these spokespersons.

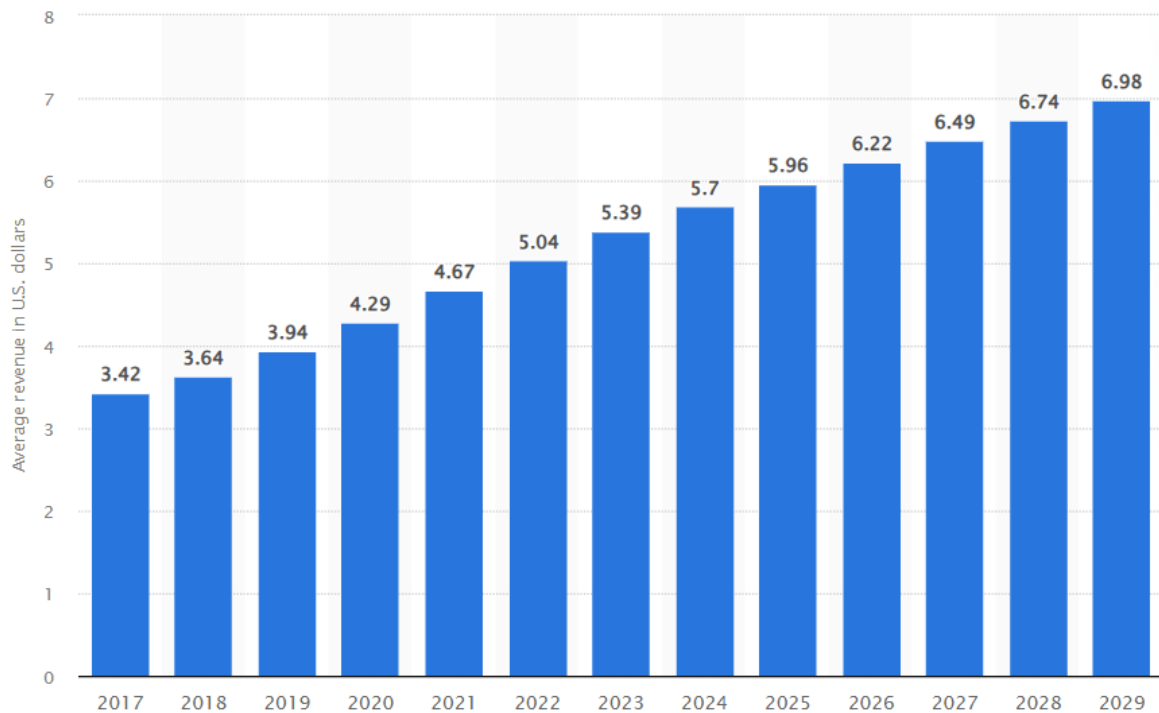
1.4 Malaysian Mobile Gaming Industry

As of February 2024, the number of active social media users in Malaysia accounted for 83.1% of the total population (Statista, 2024a), or 28.33 million out of an estimated 34.1 million in 2024. The number of mobile gamers in Malaysia is also estimated at 6.8 million (Mordor Intelligence, 2024), which is 19.9% of the total Malaysian population in 2024. Interestingly, this number is forecasted to grow to 9.5 million players by 2027 (Farid, 2024).

According to Statista, the mobile games market in Malaysia is predicted to generate US\$338.60 million in revenue for 2025 (Statista, 2023a). The mobile gaming market has experienced significant growth since the COVID-19 pandemic, with industry profits expected to reach US\$451.60 million by 2029. At the same time, the Average Revenue per User (ARPU) of Malaysian mobile gamers is also forecast to be US\$38.49 in 2025. This is a significant difference compared to the ARPU of the general online gaming market in the same period, which was only US\$5.96 (Figure 1-5). This disparity can be attributed to Malaysian respondents' fondness for electronic wallet transactions, with Malaysia leading the world in electronic wallet usage at 63% respondents using this method for their transactions (Adyen, 2024).

In 2024, the Malaysian government allocated RM30 million to develop and grow e-sports (electronic sports) in the country (BERNAMA, 2023), with an additional RM20 million allocated for 2025 (Salim, 2024b). In addition, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) approved 60 projects totalling RM36.7 million to develop various categories of games, including computer, console, and mobile platforms (Ministry of Digital, 2024). This depicts the government's commitment to enhancing the growth of video games in general and e-sports for all gamers, including mobile gaming.

**Figure 1-5:
Predicted Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) of Online Games Market in Malaysia
(2017-2029)**



Source: Statista (2024c)

Malaysia has dramatically advanced its esports and mobile gaming industries despite a lack of private-sector investment. This is evident in the Malaysian team's achievement of its first e-sports silver medal in the mobile game Arena of Valor (AoV) at the Hangzhou Asian Games in China in 2023 (Hui, 2024; Peter, 2023). The country had also hosted the very first MLBB international tournament, known as the M1 World Championship, in 2019 in Kuala Lumpur at the Axiata Arena (Marges, 2019). The sixth edition of this global tournament, the M6 World Championship, was also held at the Axiata Arena in 2024 (Elona, 2024), where the Malaysian team Selangor Red Giants (SRG) won a bronze medal among 23 international teams. This illustrates Malaysia's ability and potential to continue investing in the mobile gaming scene for future growth, whether from the government or private businesses and firms.

In the Malaysian online video games industry in 2022, 52% of gamers surveyed were male, while 48% were female (Deloitte, 2023). While there are no specific demographic breakdowns for mobile gamers, it is notable that the average Malaysian still spends more

over a three-month survey period than Indonesian and Filipino mobile gamers. In addition, female mobile gamers were reported to be more willing to spend, on average per user, than male gamers, at RM127 compared to RM54 (Lim, 2023). At the same time, Malaysian mobile gamers were also revealed to be more willing to try a new mobile game based on recommendations and word-of-mouth from peers and family, including influencers they view as peers (FreeMalaysiaToday, 2023). Subsequently, this study aims to identify the role of influencers' credibility characteristics in shaping Malaysian mobile gamers' attitudes towards themselves, and how these attitudes impact repurchase intention for IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact in Malaysia.

1.5 Problem Statement

More than 75% of Malaysian consumers reportedly rely on influencers to solve their problems and increase their product knowledge. One example is the online games top-up website Codashop, which partnered with Malaysian gaming influencers such as Soloz, Daddy Hood, and Obot Gaming (Hashim, 2021), and was forecast to attract 7.5 million followers across their social media platforms interested in using the online top-up service. When partnering with influencers who are the right fit for the brand being promoted, higher levels of trust in the brand (GRIN, 2023) and a positive attitude towards it are created.

In Malaysia, mobile game trends have shifted mainly toward freemium models due to limited marketing budgets and reliance on government grants to grow their companies (theSun, 2024). Notably, existing influencer marketing campaigns for mobile games tend to be short-term promotions, resulting in an initial spike in downloads without fostering long-term player loyalty or repurchase behaviour. This often fails to translate into sustainable revenue growth (The Game Marketer, 2024), with in-game retention rates dropping from 29.46% at day 1 to only 3.21% at day 30 (D'Souza, 2025). Consequently, this exacerbates the issues of rising customer acquisition costs and low customer lifetime value (Videbaek et al., 2024) in a US\$350 billion industry. One key concern is that when players do not play a mobile game long enough to spend money on it, the high development and operating costs of game development pose a challenge for local developers (Musthafa, 2024) to recoup their financial investments and make a profit (Wong, 2024).

In Southeast Asia, almost one-third of surveyed gamers rely on gaming content creators for gaming-related information. At the same time, partnerships with select few influencers have resulted in a 90% increase in revenue for the mobile game Genshin Impact in Malaysia in December 2022 (Niko Partners, 2022). Genshin Impact is the first mobile game to win both Apple App Store Best of 2020 and Google Play Best Game of 2020 in the same year. In 2022, it was also the number one mobile game that players in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines would spend their money on. More recently, the game has also won the “Best Mobile Game” award at Gamescom 2024 (Hoyoverse, 2024) and the “Excellence Award” by PlayStation (PlayStation, 2024). This reflects the game’s strong and enduring position among mobile gamers since its launch in 2020. According to Musthafa (2024), partnering with streamers and influencers is advantageous for marketing a game to the public and their audiences. The effectiveness of an influencer marketing strategy relies on the credibility, trust, and niche alignment of these influencers with the promoted brand (Lukashuk, 2023), though most Genshin Impact influencers are from the Western community.

Influencer credibility, which consists of expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity, has been found to influence attitude significantly and behavioural engagement of consumers (Pan et al., 2024) in other industries such as food (Añaña & Barbosa, 2023), cosmetics (Saini & Bansal, 2024), and tourism (Najar et al., 2024). Despite its contributions across industries, the application of Source Credibility Theory in mobile gaming, particularly within specific ecosystems such as Genshin Impact, remains limited. Existing research was asserted to favour theories such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Abdullah et al., 2024) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Ramadhan et al., 2024), or to lack a theory (Nabella et al., 2023). However, studies using Source Credibility Theory yield inconsistent findings. For example, a study by Chekima et al. (2020) noted that influencer attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness positively influenced consumer attitudes.

Nevertheless, Crespo and Tille (2024) discovered that influencer trustworthiness does not influence consumers’ perceptions of influencers or their subsequent purchase intention. Similarly, Pham et al. (2021) emphasised that influencer trustworthiness and expertise do not significantly impact the purchasing behaviour of Vietnamese youth; instead,

they prefer the attractiveness factor. In contrast, Magano et al. (2022) established that influencer expertise influenced attitudes towards influencers, which, in turn, affected consumers' purchase intentions. The study also suggested that cultural differences played a role in this relationship.

Additionally, Niloy et al. (2023) reported that influencer or endorser credibility does not significantly influence consumers' attitude towards the influencer. Meanwhile, Febriane et al. (2023) argued that influencer expertise did not significantly impact consumer attitude and purchase intentions. The empirical gap here is the conflicting results regarding which influencer credibility factors influence consumer behaviour. Past studies also generally use the original three-component source credibility framework proposed by Ohanian (1990) rather than the extended four-component framework by Munnukka et al. (2016), which accounts for the influencer's role as an endorser. This presents another gap: most studies using Source Credibility Theory focus only on the tri-component framework, rather than the updated four-component framework. This, in turn, indicates the growing role of social media influencers as a medium between companies and consumers.

Furthermore, attitude may play an important role in the mobile gaming context, influencing their willingness to make purchases. A positive or negative attitude towards the influencer may influence the player's intention to repurchase IAPs over the long term (Foroudi et al., 2021). Furthermore, Hussain et al. (2024) reported that attitude influences consumer repurchase intentions. This ties into the first novelty of this study, which is to extend and confirm the use of the extended Source Credibility Theory in the Malaysian mobile gaming industry, specifically for the mobile game Genshin Impact.

Past mobile gaming studies have focused only on the overall antecedents of players' purchase of IAPs across general mobile games (Buzulukova & Kobets, 2022; Ma & He, 2024). A study by Aprianingsih et al. (2024) examined other factors affecting repurchase intention for IAPs in MLBB. Nonetheless, it did not examine the role of an influencer as a middleman. In addition, Putratama (2025) suggested that future studies investigating how influencers affect gamers' purchase intention could include credibility variables (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise).

In Malaysia, a study by Che Wel et al. (2024) on local influencers found that long-term, positive relationships, such as trust, drive consumer purchase intentions. Moreover, Tamsir et al. (2023) mentioned that consumers' purchase intention is also affected by influencers' credibility. In the same study, the authors suggested the need to research factors that could positively or negatively affect consumers' purchasing perceptions and behaviour. This highlights a gap in the literature: the question of which influencer credibility factors would affect their attitude towards influencers as middlemen (Munnukka et al., 2016) and how the consumer's subsequent repurchasing intention would be affected has not yet been answered. Thus, the second novelty of this research aims to examine the role of influencers as middlemen between companies and players by investigating which influencer credibility factors affect players' attitudes towards influencers.

Gender may also moderate the relationship between attitude and repurchase intention. Social identity theory suggests that individuals define themselves in terms of their group memberships, such as nationality and gender (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Vemuri (2025) suggested that male and female consumers analyse information and risks differently and thus respond differently to different influencer marketing campaigns. Despite this, the lack of research on specific consumer gender in the mobile game literature limits game companies' ability to optimise campaigns that generate sustainable revenue through repeat purchases. Past studies have asserted that gender significantly influences consumer purchase decisions, including repurchasing (Suhartanto et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2024). Awal et al. (2023) posited that female consumers' positive attitudes significantly and positively influenced their future purchase intentions, more so than those of male consumers.

Similarly, Hesham et al. 2021 also found that female respondents were more affected by external factors, such as COVID-19, and thus their intention to purchase was reduced. Conversely, Hasim and Mahbob (2025) stated that male users rely on influencers for informative guidance, such as factual content and expertise. In line with this, Dash et al. (2025) suggested that future studies investigating determinants of repurchase intention use socio-demographic factors, such as gender, as moderator variables. In this context, past studies tend to treat gender as a moderating variable without specifying a particular gender in their hypotheses or research questions (Aziz & Khan, 2024; Yap & Ismail, 2022). Despite these studies in other industries, there is an empirical gap regarding the moderating role of

gender in the mobile gaming industry, which this study hopes to address. In essence, this ties in with the third novelty of this study, which is to examine the influence of player gender on attitude and repurchase intention in influencer marketing within a mobile gaming context.

This study aims to provide insights from a developing-country perspective for Malaysian mobile game developers and game companies that wish to expand into Malaysia in the future. This includes capitalising on the country's number four ranking in revenue from IAPs in Southeast Asia. By gaining perspective from both male and female spenders in a once-hugely profitable mobile game, companies can further optimise their influencer marketing campaigns to reach a wider audience of both genders and maximise their marketing returns. In addition, by extending the usage of Source Credibility Theory to a mobile gaming context, this research aims to address empirical gaps in the literature. Concurrently, it provides actionable strategies to help mobile game companies develop gender-sensitive, long-term influencer marketing strategies suitable for their diverse player base, increase player engagement, and maximise return on investment.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research question aims to provide a deeper understanding of how Malaysian Genshin Impact players perceive influencer credibility, how this perception influences their attitude towards the influencer, and how this attitude boosts repurchase intention for IAPs, with a focus on player gender as a moderating factor. The findings will help mobile game companies shape their influencer marketing strategies to foster a positive attitude towards partnered influencers through influencer credibility and to drive repurchases of IAPs.

- i. What are the source credibility factors (influencer attractiveness, influencer expertise, influencer trustworthiness, influencer similarity) that influence spending players' attitude towards the influencers in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?
- ii. What is the relationship between attitude towards influencers and the repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?

- iii. What is the moderating effect of player gender between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?

1.7 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to assess how influencer credibility affects players' attitudes towards influencers and how these attitudes translate into repurchase intentions, while player gender moderates these effects. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To assess the influence of social media influencers' credibility factors (influencer attractiveness, influencer expertise, influencer trustworthiness, influencer similarity) on the attitude towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia.
- ii. To determine the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intentions for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia.
- iii. To examine the moderating impact of player gender between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The current study aims to address gaps in the literature regarding social media influencer credibility and its influence on spending behaviour among players in the context of mobile gaming. The significance of this study is to help the mobile gaming industry and companies better identify influencers with the identified credibility factors to partner with and promote their mobile games more successfully, thereby enhancing their revenue. This will help game companies overcome their most significant issue: not having sufficient players to keep spending and repurchasing IAPs to sustain their mobile games. For influencers, they can also determine which factors most influence their viewers' attitudes towards them, and learning to project and display those factors would increase their reputation among viewers and convince mobile game companies to seek them out for future influencer marketing campaigns. As a result, a positive feedback loop is created in which

both mobile game companies and influencers generate revenue from each other, sustaining the mobile games that define their content.

The examination of attitudes towards influencers and their correlation with repurchase intention for IAPs in the mobile gaming industry also helps address theoretical gaps in the mobile gaming literature, which are discussed in the following sections. Additionally, this study adopts a novel approach by introducing the moderating role of player gender in the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in a mobile gaming context.

1.8.1 Contribution to Source Credibility Theory

Firstly, this study extends the use of Source Credibility Theory in the mobile gaming industry, which has remained limited. Past studies have used the tri-component source credibility framework in various industries. By focusing on how the four-component influencers' credibility framework influences players' attitudes towards the influencers' role as middlemen and, eventually, their repurchase intentions, this study will help test the usability of the extended framework in a new and highly valued sector. In addition, this study could offer insights into a specific demographic that helps generate sustained repurchase intentions, which could be generalised to other mobile game companies in the industry. By exploring the relationships among influencer credibility, attitude towards influencers, and repurchase intention in a mobile gaming context, this study may uncover the viability and realistic motivations for implementing such marketing strategies in mobile game businesses.

Secondly, conventional uses of Source Credibility Theory examine only its direct impact on consumers' purchase intention, even across other industries. Past studies have generally reported that attitudes are significant predictors of consumers' behavioural intentions. This study adopts a different approach by adding a new variable measuring attitude towards influencers and examining how credibility might influence consumers' repurchase intentions, rather than focusing solely on initial purchase intention. By exploring the role of social media influencers as middlemen between the company and the consumer, this could uncover a different interpretation of this relationship and introduce new depths to the conventional source credibility literature. This has previously been unexplored in the mobile gaming industry.

Overall, the findings of this research will provide actionable strategies for mobile game companies to enhance their influencer marketing campaigns. By better understanding how influencer credibility influences attitudes towards influencers and subsequently, repurchase intention among spending players in Genshin Impact in Malaysia, businesses can design more effective campaigns that drive long-term player engagement and loyalty via high credibility. This includes enhancing both non-spending and spending players' attitudes towards a partnered influencer and translating it into higher repurchase intentions.

1.8.2 Contribution to Social Identity Theory

Past studies have demonstrated that male and female consumers process information and react differently. Nevertheless, these findings come from other industries, where research on the moderating role of player gender in the mobile gaming industry remains limited. Hence, by introducing the moderating role of player gender, this study acknowledges differences in player gender in marketing. In particular, it aims to understand how it moderates the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention in a mobile gaming context. Furthermore, exploring player gender as a moderating variable can help companies ensure that different sections of their player base resonate well with influencers and their marketing campaigns. The findings of this study could help mobile game companies better understand how to maximise returns from future influencer marketing campaigns based on the gender distribution of their player base.

Generally, this study aims to address theoretical and practical gaps in the source credibility literature regarding attitude towards influencers and repurchase intentions, with a focus on how player gender affects this relationship.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study investigated the relationship between source credibility factors and the factors influencing spending players' attitudes towards influencers, which, in turn, impacted repurchase intention among spending players of the mobile game Genshin Impact in Malaysia. The study covered various aspects of source credibility, including attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. This study used an online survey, and the data were

collected from Malaysian players of the mobile game Genshin Impact who have also followed or consumed influencers' content.

1.10 Definition of the Key Terms

To ensure consistency and clarity in future discussions, it is important to establish the key definitions for the terms used in this study. This section provides definitions of key terms throughout the study, including IAPs, source attractiveness, source expertise, source trustworthiness, source similarity, attitude towards influencers, and repurchase intention. By providing clear explanations of these terms, a solid foundation for future discussions can be established, and readers will have a clear, thorough understanding of the concepts examined in this study.

1.10.1 Mobile Game

Digital games that are designed for and to be played on mobile devices, including tablets, smartphones, and feature phones (Abdullah et al., 2024).

1.10.2 Genshin Impact

A free-to-play action role-playing, open-world mobile game produced by MiHoYo/HoYoverse (MiHoYo, 2025).

1.10.3 Influencer

Individuals who have dedicated and significant followings on social media platforms, and uses appealing content to exert influence over their followers (Engel et al., 2024). These individuals usually base their contents around their own particular niche, such as cooking, fashion, and gaming.

1.10.4 Source Credibility Theory

A theory that suggests that credibility of a source is influenced by three initial constructs, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). Initially

developed to identify if magazine readers' opinions changes would be influenced by sources or writers perceived to be "trustworthy" or otherwise; then extended by Munnukka et al. (2016) to include similarity as the fourth construct in determining credibility of a source.

1.10.5 In-app purchases (IAP)

A form of monetary transaction that occurs within mobile games that allows the players to purchase premium features, additional virtual items, or extra content within the mobile games (Firdaus & Rahadi, 2021). IAPs can generally be classified into two categories, fixed-reward purchases or chance-based/loot box purchases.

1.10.6 Attractiveness

Attractiveness is a characteristic commonly associated by individuals towards another individual that they follow or take note of, and is often defined as the physical attractiveness of the source (Mir & Salo, 2024), in this case the social media influencer. For the purposes of this study, attractiveness is also referred to as influencer attractiveness.

1.10.7 Expertise

The levels of perceived skills, knowledge, and understanding of the influencer or endorser among their followers, and which amplifies the reliability and precision of the information provided by these influencers (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024). For the purposes of this study, expertise is also referred to as influencer expertise.

1.10.8 Influencer Trustworthiness

The way the followers perceive the measure of genuineness and believability of the influencers that they are a fan of (Farivar et al., 2021). For the purposes of this study, trustworthiness is also referred to as influencer trustworthiness.

1.10.9 Influencer Similarity

Similarity, also known as homophily, is explained as the similarity of perceived characteristics shared between the individual communicator and their audience such as demographics, values, or beliefs, or the consumer's preference for similarity (Astle et al., 2023). For the purposes of this study, similarity is also referred to as influencer similarity.

1.10.10 Attitude towards Influencers

The attitude that the players have towards the influencers who are creating content for the mobile game that they play. A positive attitude would influence their intentions to purchase the products being endorsed (Magano et al., 2022).

1.10.11 Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is defined as a positive response coming from consumers towards products or services who are willing to return and make purchases again in the future at the same company. Repurchase intentions were found to be dependent on past positive behaviours or attitudes (Chatzoglou et al., 2022).

1.10.12 Gender

The gender of players is used as the moderator variable and is defined as the state of being either male or female (Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, 2025).

1.11 Organization of the Study

This report will be divided into five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Results (Analysis and Evaluation), Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations.

The first chapter provides an overview of the study, including the background, problem statement, research questions and objectives, significance, scope, definitions of key terms, and the overall organisation.

The second chapter reviews existing and past literature, relevant underlying theories, research gaps, conceptual frameworks, and the study's hypotheses.

The third chapter discusses the research design in detail, the population sampling and design, sample selection, questionnaire and items development, pre-testing and actual data collection, and the statistical analyses to be performed.

The fourth chapter presents and analyses the study's results, discusses the implications for the study's hypotheses, and examines the moderator variable of player gender.

The fifth chapter summarises the study's findings, reviews their implications in both practical and theoretical perspectives, and presents the limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the empirical literature related to the variables used in this study. Following this, the development of the hypothesis will be examined. The underpinning theories will then be discussed. Next, the conceptual framework for this study will be presented.

2.2 Source Credibility Theory

The source credibility framework applies not only to brand-related endorsements by influencers but also to tangible products and intangible services. In the context of social media platforms and peer influencers, the four dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity positively influenced consumers' attitudes towards the endorsed brand and its accompanying advertisement (Bogoevska-Gavrilova & Ciunova-Shuleska, 2022; Munnukka et al., 2016). Due to the updated framework's suitability and versatility across various social media contexts, this four-dimensional source credibility framework has been used in subsequent studies on source credibility (Lou & Kim, 2019; Mahmood et al., 2023). The sections below discuss the four variables in source credibility theory: influencer attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity.

2.2.1 Attractiveness

Attractiveness refers to the influencer's appeal. According to Kim and Park (2023), an influencer's attractiveness is defined by physical factors and social factors. Their study argued that an influencer's attractiveness depends on both their physical appearance and their ability to build relationships with their audience. This contrasts with the original tri-

component standardised by Ohanian (1990), in which the attractiveness scale consists solely of the influencer's or spokesperson's physical attributes. In addition, the four-component framework was extended by Munnukka et al. (2016), who defined attractiveness as the physical beauty of the public endorser. Despite this difference in definition, the studies conclude that an influencer's attractiveness strongly affects consumers' positive attitudes towards the product or brand being promoted.

Recent studies in influencer marketing have commonly defined attractiveness as the influencer's physical appearance, such as stylish, sexy, elegant, beautiful, or good-looking (Ki et al., 2020; Mir & Salo, 2024). By using physical attractiveness as the measurement construct, Chekima et al. (2020) established its significance in shaping consumers' attitudes towards the advertisement, the advertised product, and the consumer's purchase intention. Similarly, Ki and Kim (2019) found that influencer attractiveness significantly and positively affected the consumers' attitudes towards the influencer. When influencers possess high levels of attractiveness, such as being handsome or sexy, followers and consumers experience visual enjoyment, which leads to a more positive and favourable attitude towards the influencers (Li & Peng, 2021). Kim and Kim (2021) further expand on the effect of physical attractiveness, finding that the physical aspects of the influencer are only relevant in initial judgments. This means that consumers and followers of the influencer do not view the influencer's physical attractiveness as a crucial foundation for building trust on social media platforms over the long term.

In a Malaysian context, physical attractiveness has been found to positively influence the creation of a favourable impression of the influencer (Lee et al., 2023). Social media influencers perceived as highly attractive also influenced their viewers and consumers to be more willing to make impulse purchases online (Koay et al., 2021). This is because influencers who are viewed as having elegant or beautiful physical features have been argued to have a significant and positive relationship with the consumers' attitudes towards influencers, whereby influencers who are more beautiful, elegant, or handsome can exert influence over the individuals' attitude formations (Hariningsih et al., 2024), which can also be referred to as the "halo effect."

2.2.1.1 Empirical Gap

Nonetheless, Magano et al. (2022) found that influencer attractiveness did not affect consumers' purchase intention when mediated by attitude towards influencers. Their study revealed that subjective aspects of the influencer, such as attractiveness and likeability, were less considered by respondents than objective aspects, such as trustworthiness, expertise, and similarity, when influencing purchasing intentions. Dhun and Dangi (2022) also reported similar findings, in which the influencers' attractiveness dimension had no significant relationship with consumers' attitudes and subsequent behavioural intentions. The authors argued that the attractiveness dimension is more prevalent for conventional celebrities, enabling them to influence consumers through charm and beauty. In contrast, social media influencers are often perceived as peers or of the same social status, so attractiveness does not play a significant role in their attitudes and behavioural intentions.

Additionally, Durau et al. (2024) found that attractiveness significantly influenced positive attitudes towards the influencer in the fitness industry, but only among female consumers, not male consumers. Therefore, this study aims to address an empirical gap by determining whether influencer attractiveness influences players' attitudes towards influencers in the mobile gaming industry, while also contributing to an understanding of behavioural differences between male and female players. Table 2-1 below provides a brief summary of past studies on the influencer attractiveness variable.

**Table 2-1:
Summary of Past Research for Influencer Attractiveness variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Trust me, trust me not: A nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media	Kim, D. Y., & Kim, H.-Y.	Physical attractiveness only effective for initial judgment of influencer, not long-term trust.
2	The effect of social media influencers (SMIs) on consumers' purchase intention	Lee, P. X., Yeap, J. A., Ooi, S. K., & Li, C.	Influencer's physical attractiveness is a critical factor in determining a positive impact towards the influencer's trustworthiness.
3	Decoding Influencer Marketing Effectiveness: Examining Impacts of Attractiveness and Netizen Comments	Hariningsih, E., Haryanto, B., Sugiarto, C., & Wahyudi, L.	A positive relationship is established between physical attractiveness and the consumers' attitude formation.
4	Attitudes toward Fashion Influencers as a Mediator of Purchase Intention	Magano, J., Oliveira, M. A.-Y., Walter, C. E., & Leite, A. M.	Influencer attractiveness has no influence on purchase intention of consumers even when mediated by attitude towards influencers.
5	Influencer Marketing: Role of Influencer Credibility and Congruence on Brand Attitude and eWOM	Dhun, & Dangi, H. K.	Influencer attractiveness has no significant relationship with consumer attitude and behavioural intention.

2.2.2 Expertise

Expertise is commonly defined as the degree to which the public speaker, or more specifically the influencer, is perceived as a reliable source of information (Hovland et al., 1953; Munnukka et al., 2016). Past studies have shown that expertise plays a key role in building credibility for influencers and, subsequently, in fostering credibility among their viewers and followers towards the brand and product (Joshi et al., 2023; Kapitan et al., 2021). Influencers perceived by consumers as experts in their field are more likely to publish detailed, professional content. This leads them to be seen as more persuasive and for consumers to have greater satisfaction with the influencer (Li & Peng, 2021).

In influencer marketing, these influencers, who have high levels of expertise, can shift opinions and consumer attitudes when used effectively in marketing communications (Kim & Kim, 2021b). This is particularly effective for consumers or long-term followers who have followed the social media influencer for a long time, who acknowledge the influencer's expertise and assertions as reliable and valid, and have come to rely on their expert opinions and judgment. By focusing on a specific field, domain, or product category (e.g., fashion, food, travel, gaming), influencers can build domain expertise, thereby creating greater functional value or promoting products (Hudders et al., 2021). This means that

influencers who are seen as having high expertise in their niche can better promote the brand or product to their audience than conventional celebrities, if the brand or product fits their current niche. The more influencers build expertise in their domain, the better they can distinguish themselves from others in similar industries (Hudders & Lou, 2022). Companies and brands aiming to use influencer marketing should focus on influencers whose expertise closely aligns with the brand, products, or services they promote. The credibility and expertise of the influencer will then help ensure that the promoted subject is more readily accepted by their audience and increase followers' positive perceptions and attitudes towards the influencer (Feng et al., 2020).

In Malaysia, consumers are more likely to trust influencers they perceive as experts in their field. The professional endorsements and advice provided by influencers can significantly influence Malaysian consumers' purchasing decisions by building confidence and trust in the promoted products (Mohamed & Gadiman, 2024). Rahim et al. (2021) also found that Malaysian Muslim millennial consumers prefer to obtain information and opinions from social media influencers rather than traditional celebrities. Nevertheless, they still prefer influencers with high expertise in the Halal product category. For brands and organisations, influencers' expertise plays an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviours (Azhar et al., 2024), which can lead to long-term loyalty and trust in the brands.

2.2.2.1 Empirical Gap

However, contrasting findings by Febriane et al. (2023) depicted that influencer expertise does not have a significant influence on the consumers' attitudes and subsequent purchase intentions. Similarly, Kim and Yoon (2023) reported that an influencer's expertise was not a significant factor in shaping followers' positive attitudes towards them, and that their subsequent behavioural intention was not affected either. In addition, Immanuel and Bianda (2021) reported that influencers' perceived expertise has an insignificant, negative influence on Indonesian fashion customers' attitudes towards influencers. The authors argued that, as consumers have individual preferences for brands, products, and influencers, the expertise of the influencer whose content they watch or follow is not emphasised. These studies show that there is still a gap in the findings on the influencers' attractiveness dimension, as they are inconsistent across industries and regions. Thus, this study aims to

further the research and usage of Source Credibility Theory in a different industry, which is the mobile gaming industry, to examine the role of influencer attractiveness in influencing the individual consumer or players' attitude towards them. Table 2-2 below provides a brief summary of past studies on the influencer expertise variable.

**Table 2-2:
Summary of Past Research for Influencer Expertise variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Trust me, trust me not: A nuanced view of influencer marketing on social media	Kim, D. Y., & Kim, H.-Y.	Influencer expertise positively affected the consumers' attitude of trust towards the influencer.
2	The Effects of Social Media Influencer towards Factors of Muslim Millennial Generation's Attitude into Halal Food Product Purchase in Malaysia	Rahim, H. A., Rasool, M. S. A., Rusli, N. R. L., & Ani, N.	Malaysian Muslims' attitude is positively and significantly affected by influencer expertise.
3	The Influences of Perceived Credibility and Consumer Attitude Towards Purchase Intention of Some by Mi's YouTube User Generated Content	Febriane, R., Wibowo, W., & Agrippina, Y. R.	Influencer expertise has an insignificant influence on consumers' attitude.
4	The effectiveness of influencer endorsements for smart technology products: the role of follower number, expertise domain and trust propensity	Kim, T., Yoon, H. J.	Influencer expertise was not a significant factor in influencing the followers to have a positive attitude towards the influencer.
5	The Impact of Using Influencer on Consumer Purchase Intention with Attitude Towards Influencer and Brand Attitude as Mediator	Immanuel, D. M., & Bianda, A. H. S.	Perceived expertise has insignificant and negative influence on attitude towards influencers.

2.2.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was initially defined as the degree of confidence in the speakers' intention to communicate their most valid assertions (Hovland et al., 1953). Public sources that were viewed as "trustworthy" were able to significantly alter the opinions of the respondents in the direction as intended by the communicator, compared to sources that were viewed as "untrustworthy." In recent studies, trustworthiness refers to the extent to which followers perceive influencers as honest, believable, and of integrity (Fernandes et al., 2022). In terms of peer endorsements, trustworthiness, along with similarity, has been argued to have the most significant influence on the effectiveness of an advertisement (Munnukka et al., 2016). Conventionally, these endorsers are perceived as trustworthy by their audiences because they tend to recommend a brand, product, or service only after using it themselves (Leite & Baptista, 2021).

According to Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2021), attractiveness and trustworthiness are the two crucial qualities that social media influencers should possess. This would ensure their credibility and persuasiveness in convincing their followers and audience to purchase the product or service they have been promoting. On social media platforms such as TikTok, businesses that want to encourage consumers' greater willingness to purchase a promoted brand or product should collaborate with influencers who are seen as trustworthy by the general public and their followers (Al Kurdi et al., 2022). A similar result was found by Shamim and Islam (2022), where the more followers trust the influencer, the greater their urge to make impulsive purchases. This is because influencers are perceived as more trustworthy than conventional celebrities on social media platforms, making it easier for followers to develop a more positive attitude towards the endorsed subject (Kapitan et al., 2021). Therefore, when these trustworthy influencers convey a message to their audiences, the likelihood of the message being accepted positively and influencing their purchasing behaviour increases as well (Pick, 2021).

In Malaysia, a study found that Instagram users were more likely to purchase a promoted product or service if the influencer endorser was perceived as very trustworthy by their followers (Koay et al., 2021). This is because the follower's trust in the influencer and the brand or product being promoted plays a significant role in driving further actions towards purchase (Khair, 2023). For example, actions such as actively searching for relevant product information online or participating in online discussions with other consumers. Malaysian consumers also view the influencer's trustworthiness as a crucial component in fostering long-term relationships among themselves, influencers, and the organisational brand (Mohamed & Gadiman, 2024). For specialised categories such as Halal food products, the trustworthiness of the influencer becomes even more important to consumers, who rely on influencers to share accurate information about products that are safe for Malaysian Muslim consumers to consume (Rahim et al., 2021). Koay et al. (2022) also discovered that social media influencers' trustworthiness can significantly predict their followers' willingness to purchase the promoted products or brand. This shows that when influencers provide truthful information to their audience based on their knowledge and expertise, consumers will trust them more, thereby enhancing the influencer's credibility (Hassan et al., 2021). An influencer with high credibility would also drive higher engagement among

their followers on social media posts, thereby increasing awareness of the brand or product they promote (Atiq et al., 2022).

2.2.3.1 Empirical Gap

Nonetheless, Crespo and Tille (2024) contrasted the above findings, reporting that influencers' trustworthiness does not affect individual consumers' perceptions of them. Pham et al. (2021) also concluded that, in Vietnam, the youth reported that the influencer's trustworthiness will not significantly influence their purchasing behaviour. Similarly, Dhun and Dangi (2022) found that trustworthiness was unrelated to consumer attitude, citing the possibility that viewers are doubtful of influencers' motives and content. In the Indonesian context, Lina and Permatasari (2020) found that trustworthiness does not significantly and positively affect consumers' attitudes towards influencers and, subsequently, their purchase intentions. Based on these contrasting findings, this study aims to investigate the influence of influencer trustworthiness on the attitudes towards influencers of Genshin Impact spenders in Malaysia and to address the inconsistent findings of past studies in a local context. Table 2-3 below provides a brief summary of past studies on the influencer trustworthiness variable.

**Table 2-3:
Summary of Past Studies for Influencer Expertise variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Influencer Marketing and Authenticity in Content Creation	Kapitan, S., van Esch, P., Soma, V., & Kietzmann, J.	When influencers are perceived as trustworthy, followers will easily generate a positive attitude.
2	The Influence of YouTube Influencer Credibility on Consumer Purchase Intention of Cosmetic Products in Malaysia	Mohamed, N. N., & Gadiman, N. S.	Influencer trustworthiness plays a significant role for Malaysian consumers in generating a positive attitude of trust towards the influencer.
3	Examining the role of perceived source credibility on social media influencer's ascribed opinion leadership.	Crespo, C. F., Tille, M.	Trustworthiness of the influencer does not influence the followers' perceptions towards them.
4	Influencer Marketing: Role of Influencer Credibility and Congruence on Brand Attitude and eWOM	Dhun, & Dangi, H. K.	Influencer trustworthiness had no significant relationship with consumer attitude.
5	Social Media Capabilities dalam Adopsi Media Sosial Guna Meningkatkan Kinerja UMKM	Lina, L., Permatasari, B.	Influencer trustworthiness does not significantly and positively influence the consumers' attitude towards the influencers.

2.2.4 Similarity

Similarity can be defined as the perceived resemblance in terms of demographic or ideological factors between the source and its recipient (Munnukka et al., 2016). More recently, similarity has been defined as the perception of resemblance between influencers and their audiences, particularly regarding shared preferences, interests, tastes, or values (Mir & Salo, 2024). Munnukka et al. (2016) introduced the fourth construct of similarity into the original tri-component source credibility framework standardised by Ohanian (1990), suggesting that high similarity between the peer endorser and their audience would lead to more positive attitudes towards the promoted brand and, therefore, higher advertising effectiveness. In addition, their study found that perceived attractiveness, along with the perceived similarity of the endorser, can strongly influence the attitudes of consumers and the audience.

Consumers are more likely to follow individuals or influencers they perceive share similar interests or tastes, which enhances their positive association and feelings towards the influencers (Li & Peng, 2021). A similar result was found by Munnukka et al. (2016) and Dhun and Dangi (2023), who discovered a strong relationship between perceived similarity of the individual consumer and their attitude formation. This is because players perceive that they might share specific characteristics, interests, or behaviours with the public endorser. Influencers on social media tend to address their viewers directly in their posts, unlike traditional celebrities on radio or Television (TV), which leads followers to feel closer to influencers and to see them as more approachable and relatable (Schouten et al., 2021). In some instances, high perceived similarity between the follower and the influencer leads to greater trustworthiness, which in turn positively affects subsequent intentions to continue following the influencer (Naderer et al., 2021). In the influencer marketing industry, when followers perceive influencers as close and relatable, they are more willing to follow them on social media. This is because followers are attracted to the idea that they can do things similar to the influencer (Jhavar et al., 2023).

In Malaysia, Azhar et al. (2024) similarly proposed that if consumers perceive themselves as similar to an influencer's image or reputation, they will be more willing to buy from the promoted brand or its products. According to Chan et al. (2021), a study on influencer marketing found that Malaysian consumers were significantly and positively

influenced by perceived similarity with the chosen celebrity, which also enhanced the product's brand image. Furthermore, Malaysian consumers were also found to be more willing to accept product recommendations from influencers whom they perceive as similar to themselves, and thus more willing to purchase products that align with their values and beliefs (Koay et al., 2023). This shows the influence that social media influencers have over their followers globally, including in a developing country such as Malaysia. This finding is consistent with the suggestions provided by Al Jaeed and Badghish (2021) for future studies to examine other characteristics of influencers, such as similarity, and how these characteristics affect consumers' behavioural intentions.

2.2.4.1 Empirical Gap

However, Durau et al. (2024) reported that, for female consumers, the attitude towards the influencer was not significantly affected by perceived similarity, but only by perceived attractiveness. Similarly, Gupta et al. (2022) found that perceived similarity with a female influencer significantly affects the level of influence over viewers, whereas for male influencers, perceived similarity plays an equal role alongside attractiveness and product-match in influencing viewers. Additionally, Elsharnouby et al. (2025) reported similar findings, describing the role of perceived similarity as having a greater impact on viewers' self-identification with the influencer than their perspective on the influencer's credibility. The authors stated that consumers would accept influencers' opinions and endorsements as valid only when they align with the influencers' values, thereby acting as genuine representations of consumers' own interests and views. Moreover, Jhawar et al. (2023) also agreed on the inclusion of perceived influencer similarity as a variable in future influencer marketing studies that use Source Credibility Theory. Therefore, this study aims to address inconsistent findings across past studies and determine whether perceived influencer similarity affects players' attitudes towards influencers in the mobile gaming industry. Table 2-4 below provides a simple summary of past studies on the influencer similarity variable.

**Table 2-4:
Summary of Past Studies for Influencer Similarity variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Influencer Marketing: Role of Influencer Credibility and Congruence on Brand Attitude and eWOM	Dhun, & Dangi, H. K.	Perceived similarity has a positive relationship with consumer attitude.

Table 2-4 continued

2	Influencer marketing: purchase intention and its antecedents	Li, Y., & Peng, Y.	Influencer similarity positively affects the consumers' attitudes of trust towards the influencer.
3	The influence of celebrity endorser characteristics on brand image: A case study of Vivo	Chan, T.-J., Selvakumaran, D., Idris, I., & Adzharuddin, N. A	Endorser trustworthiness has a significant and positive influence on their attitude towards a brand.
4	Working (out) with fitness influencers - benefits for the fitness influencer, user health, and the endorsed brand: Key factors and the role of gender and brand familiarity	Durau, J., Diehl, S., & Terlutter, R.	Perceived similarity did not significantly affect attitude towards the influencer for female consumers.
5	Boosting brand image through influencers: Investigating the role of influencer credibility and consumer–influencer similarity	Elsharnouby, T. H., Shaalan, A., Elsharnouby, M. H., & Elbedweihy, A. M.	Influencer similarity has a significant impact on self-identification of the viewer towards the influencer, and does not affect the consumers' attitude towards brand-influencer collaboration.

2.3 Attitude Towards Influencers

Attitude is viewed in psychology as the extent to which an individual supports or opposes performing a specific behaviour, based on its consequences (Fishman et al., 2021). If a person perceives that doing something can lead to positive consequences, they will have a more positive attitude towards acting. Conversely, if one believes that performing a particular behaviour has negative consequences, then their attitude would not be in favour of repeating that behaviour. It can be said that an individual's attitude towards a behaviour is then defined as the extent to which the person has a positive versus negative assessment of carrying out the behaviour in question (Fishman et al., 2021).

In marketing, consumers who have a positive experience while interacting with a brand will develop stronger connections to that brand (Thürridl et al., 2020). When consumers have a stronger attachment to the brand, it results in a long-lasting relationship in which they are more committed and remain loyal. This remains true not only for physical brands, but also for fictitious ones. Sustained loyalty among consumers towards a brand, product, or service can be achieved when they are satisfied and have a positive attitude towards it (Smith, 2020). When this happens, customers will find it easier to decide to purchase the products or services offered by businesses (Shanbhogue & Ranjith, 2024). This

is because consumers' motivation to use the products being promoted increases when they feel positively about using them in their daily lives (Nazir & Tian, 2022). This motivation will be a positive force in changing consumers' purchasing habits toward the advertised products.

Businesses that want to encourage their customers to purchase more of their products or services should place greater emphasis on fostering a positive attitude towards their brand (Wang et al., 2023). This is because a company's long-term success depends in part on its consumers having a strong, positive attitude and trust in it. Marketers can more easily influence consumers who already have a positive attitude towards a brand or product to make purchases than those with a negative attitude (Mustaphi, 2024). For physical products, studies have shown that attitudes are significantly associated with purchase intentions, including for green food products (Witek & Kuźniar, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). This allows marketers to better tailor their marketing campaigns, especially for niche products, to achieve higher market penetration and ensure their marketing message reaches their target audience more easily (Wongsaichia et al., 2022).

For intangible services, Borges-Tiago et al. (2024) also found a strong connection between users' attitudes and their willingness to pay for green services. Similar to physical products, a consumer with higher levels of positivity towards a service is more likely to use it (Makanyeza et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Even for modern trends such as sustainability, having a positive attitude towards sustainable consumption is a significant influence, enough to change an individual's sustainable behaviours (Szulc-Obłóza & Żurek, 2024). Even for newer businesses that emphasise sustainability in their business models, customer attitudes were found to positively influence purchase decisions (Banytè et al., 2023; Jia et al., 2023; Rana et al., 2024). This means that, regardless of brand, product, or service, businesses and marketers should ensure their consumers have a positive attitude, as this will influence future purchasing intentions and behaviour.

In the field of influencer marketing, Ramdani and Belgiawan (2023) found that consumer purchase intention is significantly influenced by consumers' positive attitudes towards influencers' advertisements. Their research also found that the consumer's attitude is the most influential factor in purchase behaviour. According to Thuy et al. (2024), social media users with a favourable attitude towards the key opinion leaders are more likely to

engage in purchasing behaviour towards the products being promoted. This shows the importance of finding a suitable influencer who can foster a positive relationship between their audience and the brand or product being promoted, as consumers with a negative attitude towards the influencer are more likely to have lower purchase intentions (Belanche et al., 2021). Moreover, the influencer and the brand being promoted must work together to positively influence their audience's purchase behaviour (Prajapati, 2023), rather than businesses and marketers relying solely on influencers' efforts.

According to Zhao et al. (2024), influencers' credibility is significantly related to consumers' brand attitudes. Specifically, their research found that the influencer attractiveness factor significantly affects consumers' attitudes towards the brand being promoted, which contrasts with the findings of Filieri et al. (2023), who suggested that the influencer's attractiveness did not affect brand attitude. While Taillon et al. (2020) found that attractiveness positively predicted attitudes towards the influencer, other studies found that other credibility factors had a more prominent effect. This is similar to the findings of Singco et al. (2023), who found that only influencer expertise and trustworthiness were influential in predicting consumers' brand attitudes. In contrast, influencer attractiveness had a statistically insignificant negative impact. Similar results were reported by Kim and Park (2023), who found that influencers' attractiveness was not directly associated with consumers' purchase intentions. However, this study found that the relationship was instead mediated by brand attachment and moderated by product-endorser suitability. By ensuring that influencers can enhance customers' positive perceptions of brand advertisements, customers will be more willing to trust these influencers and make purchases based on their suggestions.

Additionally, the study by Al-Mu'ani et al. (2023) chose to leave out influencer attractiveness as a factor, but still discovered that influencers who are perceived as being an expert and trustworthy by their audience will have a higher chance of generating a positive attitude towards the brand being promoted, which leads to increased purchase intentions. This reflects the role of attitude in the relationship between influencer credibility factors and consumers' intention to purchase a brand, product, or service promoted by the influencer.

In addition, consumers who share similarities with and have a good fit with the influencers they follow or watch will also develop a positive attitude towards the influencer

(De Cicco et al., 2020), as well as towards the products they endorse (Breves et al., 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021a). According to Leite et al. (2024), influencers need to ensure their endorsed content aligns with their area of expertise to enhance credibility with their audience and drive behavioural change. Influencers who share personal experiences or stories allow their audiences to feel more connected to and similar to them, thereby creating an emotional bond that may substantially influence consumers' purchasing behaviours (Ahmed et al., 2024).

This positive attitude towards influencers, which is also influenced by expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity, has been established in past studies as significantly determining consumers' purchase intention (Magano et al., 2022). Hariningsih et al. (2024) found a significantly positive relationship between consumers' attitudes towards influencers and their purchase intentions for the products and brands being promoted. Naderer et al. (2021) have argued that consumers are more likely to perceive influencers as having high credibility, are more inclined to adopt a positive attitude, and are more likely to purchase products endorsed by these influencers, as influencers can foster an impression of high similarity with their audiences. This is because when consumers perceive an endorser as similar to themselves, the endorser is perceived as more persuasive and trustworthy.

Despite this, influencer credibility was found to have a significant impact on consumers' attitudes towards the promoted brand (Mohammad et al., 2023). Consumers who perceive the influencers promoting a brand, service, or product as being credible would still have a positive attitude towards them. This is especially true in industries such as cosmetics, where influencer expertise and endorsements from influencers perceived as credible can help reduce customer uncertainty (Mohamed & Gadiman, 2024).

In addition, multiple studies have shown that a positive attitude significantly increases customers' desire to repurchase (Loh & Hassan, 2022; Situmorang et al., 2021). Even in specialised industries such as the halal cosmetics industry, consumer attitudes towards products had a similar positive effect on repurchase intention (Hussain et al., 2024). This is because it is the role of these influencers on social media to create content that can generate and shape attitudes and also influence their behavioural intentions. Marketing campaigns by businesses could potentially leverage the various visual content as well as appealing narratives created by the influencers on social media platforms to make their

brand, product, or service appear more attractive and appealing to regular consumers who would otherwise be indifferent or sceptical of the promoted object (Hu et al., 2024).

A study by Vanwesenbeeck et al. (2017) found that children who had positive experiences and more positive attitudes towards the games they were playing were more likely to report increased purchase intentions for those games. This is similar to the findings of Muhammad and Hidayanto (2023), who found that players with a positive attitude towards virtual goods in mobile games strongly and positively influenced their willingness to purchase these items.

When players have a positive attitude towards the games they play, they are more inclined to remain loyal to them. This loyalty also positively influences purchase intention for In-App Purchases (IAPs) in mobile games (Rusli & Berlianto, 2022). A study by Muqarrabin et al. (2021) also found that mobile game developers should focus on building player loyalty to stimulate higher levels of mobile spending on IAPs. When the players have high levels of satisfaction and loyalty towards the mobile games that they play, their willingness to pay for IAPs also increases (Loa & Berlianto, 2022). This is because when the players are feeling a pleasant and entertaining experience when playing mobile games, the likelihood of these players spending money on virtual products or services will increase (Goli & Vemuri, 2023; Zhang et al., 2021) as the action of playing the games that they are loyal to is bringing them happy and positive experiences.

According to Hsiao et al. (2022), a significant, direct, and positive relationship was found between attitudes towards games and players' online purchase intention. The players' positive attitude towards in-game advertisements also significantly influences their in-game purchase intention (Akhan & Özdemir, 2022). This is consistent with the findings of Hussein and Abd Wahid (2018), who established that players' positive attitudes significantly influenced the purchase intention for the advertised brand. This is because when players see ads while playing their games, direct exposure to the brand names leads them to associate the brand with the positive experience of playing. As in past marketing studies, a positive brand attitude towards a brand, game, or in-app service is equally important for influencing players' purchase intentions for IAPs.

2.3.1 Empirical Gap

Nevertheless, in terms of attitudes towards influencers, there is still a lack of studies on the credibility factors that influence consumers' perceptions of influencers and whether this attitude would impact subsequent repurchase intentions. Within the context of this study, players' spending attitudes towards influencers are also influenced by factors such as attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. To ensure a positive attitude and enhance repurchase intentions among these spending players, mobile game companies should first ensure that the influencers they identify fulfil their spending players' expectations. Table 2-5 below provides a simple summary of past studies on the attitude towards the influencer variable.

**Table 2-5:
Summary of Past Studies for Attitude Towards Influencers variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	The moderating effects of involvement on the relationships between key opinion leaders, customer's attitude and purchase intention on social media	Thuy, D. C., Ngoc, Q. N., Huong, L. T., Phuong, N. T.	Social media users' that have a favourable attitude towards influencers that they follow have a higher purchase intention.
2	Consumers' attitudes, perceived risks and perceived benefits towards repurchase intention of food truck products	Loh, Z., & Hassan, S. H.	A positive attitude significantly influences the willingness and desire of the customers to repurchase the food truck products.
3	Attitude, repurchase intention and brand loyalty toward halal cosmetics	Hussain, K., Fayyaz, M. S., Shamim, A., Abbasi, A. Z., Malik, S. J., & Abid, M. F.	The millennial Muslim female consumers' repurchase intention is influenced by their attitude towards the product.
4	Antecedents of Satisfaction and Loyalty Towards In-App Purchase Intention for Indonesian Genshin Impact Players	Rusli, M. G., & Berlianto, M. P.	Satisfaction of Indonesian Genshin Impact players did not result in a direct impact on purchase intention for in-app purchases.
5	Advergame For Purchase Intention Via Game and Brand Attitudes from Antecedents of System Design, Psychological State, and Game Content: Interactive Role of Brand Bamiliarity	Hsiao, W.-H., Lin, Y.-H., & Wu, I.-L.	A positive consumer attitude is important and has a direct effect on the purchase intention in the advergames played.

2.4 Repurchase Intention

According to Suzuki et al. (2019), the intention to repurchase is defined as the individual's judgment towards repurchasing products or services from the same business in the future. When consumers like the item or service they are buying, they are more likely to continue using and buying it in the future because of their satisfaction with it. They are more likely to become loyal customers of the brand, product, or service.

Customer repurchase intentions can be derived from feelings of satisfaction stemming from factors such as consistently fulfilling customer expectations. This satisfaction not only results in consumers consistently choosing to use the products or services but may also lead them to recommend them to others (Nabila et al., 2023). Studies have shown that customer satisfaction is one of the antecedents of customer repurchase intentions. When customers are satisfied with what the brand, product, or service offers them throughout their use, their intention to repurchase increases (Putri & Sukawati, 2020).

In the e-commerce industry, Pandiangan et al. (2021) found that students' satisfaction with the e-commerce platform Shopee had a significant and positive effect on their intentions to repurchase products on the platform. Additionally, users who are highly satisfied with online service quality also show a high level of repurchase intention (Fared et al., 2021). This means that, regardless of whether they offer physical products or intangible services, businesses should strive to fulfil customer needs and expectations to ensure higher levels of satisfaction and customers' continuous intentions to repurchase from them in the future.

When customers consistently purchase and repurchase from the same brand, product, or service, even when competitors offer alternatives, this is called brand loyalty (Amazon, 2024). Subsequently, customer loyalty is among the most significant predictors of consumer repurchase intentions (Cunningham & De Meyer-Heydenrych, 2021). This shows the importance for business managers and marketers to ensure that their products and services continuously fulfil customer needs and maximise customer satisfaction with their companies, which in turn will generate long-term loyalty and ultimately revenue from sustained repurchases.

Lau et al. (2020) noted that product attributes were the most significant predictors of customer repurchase intentions for tofu products. Fulfilling and consistently maintaining

customer satisfaction is one of the biggest challenges for businesses, as it helps keep customers loyal and returning to make future purchases. Even for brands that fail to satisfy customers' demands, positive reviews from influencers about product attributes can counteract consumers' negative feelings toward the brand (Suri et al., 2023). When this happens, the customer will be less inclined to share negative reviews about the product with their social circle.

Increasingly, businesses are turning to influencers across social media platforms to promote their brands and generate positive feelings among global audiences. Due to their perceived status as trusted key opinion leaders, a strategic partnership between influencers' existing personalities and values and a brand's values can ensure the brand's message resonates positively with influencers' followers. According to Galdón-Salvador et al. (2024), a significant relationship was detected between social media influencers and online repurchase intentions. Their study also suggested that brands and marketers should consider investing in long-term partnerships with suitable influencers rather than relying on one-off campaigns. This helps increase the likelihood of long-term success and benefits such as brand trust and sustained willingness to repurchase.

Nonetheless, Vemuri et al. (2023) found that although individuals agreed that influencer marketing has a positive impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour, they did not prefer to repurchase products promoted by influencers. This is more pronounced when the influencer promotes multiple product categories rather than brands that fit their audience. Kato (2023) found that the credibility of the endorser decreases, negatively affecting the audience's attitude towards the promoted product when a single celebrity is appointed as an endorser across different product ranges.

Therefore, for businesses and marketers seeking to leverage influencer marketing to promote their brands, one priority is to ensure a high level of brand-influencer fit, as this will shape consumers' attitudes towards the brands (Che et al., 2025). When consumers perceive the influencer as being strategically paired with the brand, they will display a more favourable attitude towards the brand being promoted. This helps create repurchase intentions compared to non-brand-influencer fit partnerships.

According to Tiwari et al. (2024), customers were more likely to purchase fashion products endorsed by fashion influencers if they trusted the influencer and had a positive attitude towards them. This is similar to the findings of Macheka et al. (2024), who also suggested that the beauty industry should enhance the effectiveness and use of beauty influencers and positive word of mouth to attract better female consumers to purchase beauty products. The same study also found that influencers perceived as highly credible significantly increase female consumers' purchasing intentions.

As mentioned, companies that wish to use influencer marketing should partner with credible, established influencers whose values and target audiences align with the brand's positioning. For followers and audiences of influencers, trusting the influencers they follow and the content or brand they promote leads to greater trust in those influencers, which, in turn, results in a greater inclination to purchase the endorsed product (Schouten et al., 2020). An influencer perceived as trustworthy is therefore one of the most important criteria companies and brands should consider when identifying potential influencers for promotional partnerships. This is because trust can also mediate the relationship between perceived similarities with the influencer and their choices to purchase certain kinds of food products (Verma et al., 2024).

According to Rofiah et al. (2024), consumer repurchase intentions can also be enhanced by a positive attitude towards products. Similarly, when consumers have a positive attitude towards the products they purchase virtually, their intention to purchase will be higher (Shelstad, 2022). Customers who are satisfied with product or service offerings tend to have a positive attitude, which enhances their willingness to repurchase. For gamers, user satisfaction was also found to influence their repurchase intention for virtual items (Nghah et al., 2024), regardless of whether they were console or mobile players. This is consistent with the findings of Ardhiyansyah et al. (2021), who stated that satisfied players are more likely to repurchase premium items in the games they play.

These findings are similar to those of a study by Hsu (2023), which found that customer engagement significantly and positively affects repurchase intention. In Indonesia's e-commerce industry, Maschudah et al. (2023) found that e-commerce platforms that successfully adopted gamification components alongside promotional campaigns increased buyers' willingness to repurchase on the platform. When carried out correctly,

users would feel that accomplishing the game missions within the platform is rewarding and engaging, which helps drive their intention to continue purchasing on the platform. When the gamification features can provide the users with satisfaction via a reward points system, badges, and competition leaderboards, the e-commerce users were more likely to perceive that shopping on e-commerce platforms is as fun and rewarding as playing a game and will want to repurchase products on the platform more frequently (Sitthipon et al., 2022).

While these studies found that gamification aspects also influenced repurchase behaviour, Susilo (2022) reported that gamification did not affect Gen Z's repurchase intention in an e-commerce context. Instead, their intention to repurchase was influenced by perceived usefulness and ease of use of the platform. However, this contrasts with another study's findings in a different context, in which players of the mobile game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) reported that perceived usefulness did not influence their intentions to repurchase virtual skins and items within the game. The players instead stated that one of their reasons for purchasing the virtual items was for self-enjoyment and satisfaction purposes.

In the mobile gaming industry, Zein et al. (2023) found that players' repurchase intention was influenced by the virtual communities they were in, with the role of achievement moderating this relationship. In this context, players who have a positive relationship with other members of the gaming community will be more likely to repurchase virtual products due to a shared sense of security, comfort, and togetherness. This shared interest leads to greater involvement with their mobile games, which, in turn, increases players' intentions to repurchase (Lee et al., 2021).

This is similar to the findings of Jiao et al. (2022), who suggested that players who played mobile games with their friends more within one week were more likely to continue playing and make more IAPs in the following week. This indicates the importance of the social factor in online mobile games, where a game's community can be a driving influence for players to start spending. The longer a community can encourage other members to keep playing a mobile game, the greater the likelihood that players will eventually spend and become more willing to spend on IAPs (Pangaribuan et al., 2021). Therefore, mobile game companies should also put effort into fostering a welcoming, positive online community for

their mobile games across various social media platforms where players are likely to gather, thereby increasing players' purchase and repurchase intentions.

According to Yuliana and Azizah (2024), players of the mobile game MLBB in Indonesia reported that their willingness to repurchase IAPs is influenced by the levels of satisfaction that they experience while playing the game. The satisfaction players obtain in mobile games can be driven by internal or external factors and depends on the types of games being investigated. For example, a study by Wuryandari et al. (2021) found that aspects of social interaction and gratification are not significant predictors of purchase intentions for the mobile game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG), despite each match bringing together up to 100 players. The study suggested that while players derive satisfaction, enjoyment, and value from interacting with other members of the gaming community, this was not an influential factor in their decisions to repurchase in-game purchases, as the purchasing and repurchasing of these virtual items could stem from personal reasons.

2.4.1 Empirical Gap

Based on past studies, it can be argued that a variety of antecedents affect consumers' repurchase intentions, depending on the industry context in which the study is conducted. Even in the mobile gaming industry, there is a wide range of factors that could influence a player's decision to repurchase IAPs. This represents an empirical gap that this study aims to address. Despite findings that attitude plays a significant role in influencing a consumer's subsequent behavioural intentions, this has not yet been empirically studied. Therefore, this study aims to address this by examining the influence of attitude towards influencers as middlemen on players' repurchase intention in the Malaysian context. Table 2-6 below summarises past studies on the antecedents of repurchase intention.

**Table 2-6:
Summary of Past Studies for Repurchase Intention variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Effect of E-Satisfaction on Repurchase Intention in Shopee User Students	Pandiangan, S. M., Resmawa, I. N., Simantujak, O. D., Sitompul, P. N., & Jefri, R.	Consumer satisfaction has a significant and positive influence on repurchase intention on Shopee among students in Medan.

Table 2-6 continued

2	Effect of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Brand Engagement and its Implications on Business Decision Making	Galdón-Salvador, J.-L., Gil-Pechuán, I., Alfraihat, S.-F.A., Tarabieh, S.	Social media factors of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness has a significant and positive influence on the online repurchase intention of users.
3	Future behavioural of console gamers and mobile gamers: are they differ?	Ngah, S., Rahi, S., Long, F., Gabarre, C., Rashid, A., & Ngah, A. H.	User satisfaction of gamers was established to influence repurchase intention for virtual items in the games, regardless of console or mobile player.
4	The Effect Of Functional Value, Emotional Value, Value For Money On Repurchase Intention Through Customer Satisfaction As An Intervening Variable In Purchasing Virtual Items For Online Games Mobile Legends: Bang-Bang (Study On Mobile Online Game Users Le	Yuliana, Y., & Azizah, N.	The levels of satisfaction of Indonesian players in Mobile Legends: Bang Bang influenced their willingness to repurchase in-app purchases.
5	Uses and Gratification on Virtual Purchase Behavior of Mobile Game Items: An Alternative Approach	Wuryandari, N. E., Abdullah, M. A., & Rahmadiansyah, F. A.	Player satisfaction, enjoyment, and value were not significant influencing factors to repurchase in-app purchases.

2.5 Attitude towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention is an individual consumer's intention to purchase products or services from the same brand following past positive experiences (Tufahati et al., 2021). The likelihood of a customer repurchasing from the same brand when satisfied with the products or services provided is higher (Mazhar et al., 2022).

However, it can be difficult for businesses to determine whether their customers are satisfied or not. This is because customers who have a problem with a business will remain silent and choose not to buy from it again (Arslan, 2020). This is similar to the findings of Zhao et al. (2021), who found that, even though there are many factors a business must fulfil to satisfy a customer, there is still no guarantee that the customer will purchase its products or services. Nevertheless, businesses should strive to ensure their customers remain satisfied with their offerings and have a positive attitude towards the business, which will influence their repurchase intentions (Chatzoglou et al., 2022).

According to Park and Namkung (2024), a positive attitude towards a food product among consumers is critical to the formation of repurchase intentions. This is because the

customers are actively involved in the process of searching, selecting, and paying for the products themselves. Regardless of whether the product is physical or a virtual service, when customers perceive it as important to them, they will be more invested in the purchase, which could help generate repeat purchases for businesses (Merlo et al., 2013). Thus, businesses and marketers need to generate favourable attitudes among customers towards their products, services, or brands to increase customers' willingness to pay (Kim et al., 2021).

Consumer repurchase intention can be generated in various ways. For services, businesses can aim to enhance service quality, price suitability, and online service facilities to encourage customers to become repeat customers (Yunus et al., 2023). Ensuring the timeliness of delivery and the high quality of services to customers in the services industry is vital to a business's long-term success. In addition, customers' repurchase intentions can also be positively influenced by customer loyalty. When customer loyalty is high, customers tend to support the business through their behaviour, such as purchasing and repurchasing the products or services offered (Laparojkit & Suttipin, 2022; Wijarnoko et al., 2023).

In the mobile shopping industry, a study by Nurcholis and Ferdianto (2021) found that customers' attitudes towards mobile shopping significantly influence their repurchase intentions. The perceived risk a customer feels while mobile shopping can be mediated by their attitudes towards mobile shopping, and a negative attitude will negatively impact their intentions to repurchase. This provides insight not only to business management teams but also to information technology (IT) and technical department staff, enabling them to take proactive steps to safeguard their customers' information during transactions. Even for Generation Y consumers, individuals who are born between the 1980s and mid-1990s (Zelazko, 2024) and are considered the first digital generation, their willingness to continue making purchases through online shopping decreases when perceived risk increases (Trivedi & Yadav, 2020). This study shows that, even for consumers who have grown up with technology that is constantly evolving, their purchasing behaviour remains grounded in established foundations, such as their attitudes (Klaiklung et al., 2022).

More recently, in the context of social media influencers, research has found that the credibility of the promoted brand significantly influences influencers' impact on customers' shopping behaviours (Afzal et al., 2024). This study suggested that collaborating with influencers who align with the brand image will help boost brand credibility and maximise

promotional impact. Vice versa, influencers should also seek to collaborate with brands that align with their values to enhance their followers' positive attitudes towards them and their content (Belanche et al., 2021; Pandit et al., 2025). A suitable influencer who can generate positive attitudes among their followers towards the promoted brand, product, or service will influence their repurchase intentions for the promoted subject (Azhari and Adiwijaya, 2023).

Aside from studying the consumers' internal attitudes, past studies in other industries have primarily focused on the factor of attitude in terms of attitude towards brand (Amperawati et al., 2024; Carissa et al., 2021; Chiquita et al., 2021) and attitude towards advertisements (Astuti & Risqiani, 2020; Avrillia et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2023).

According to Ilieva et al. (2024), attitudes towards influencers did not predict purchase intention. In the context of their study, this was explained by Bulgarians having cultural and historical distrust and scepticism towards the unknown, compared to people in countries with high levels of individualism and consumer culture. Similarly, Özkan and Yerezhep (2023) found that several dimensions of attitude towards influencers did not affect purchase intention, while Avrillia et al. (2023) also stated that their results show attitude towards the influencer did not have a direct significant impact on purchase intention of consumers, instead it was mediated fully by attitude towards brand as well as attitude towards advertisements. This means that companies and marketers should not focus solely on identifying the right influencer to promote their brand, product, or services. Instead, they would also need to place similar emphasis on ensuring that their brand and their advertisements do not, by accident, generate negative attitudes among their target audience, such as perceived annoyance or irritation.

These results contrast with those of Niloy et al. (2023), who found that attitudes towards food influencers positively and significantly influenced consumers' purchase intentions in the food industry. This result implies that influencers can affect not only consumer attitudes but also generate purchase intentions. Another study by Ramos (2024) also found that attitudes towards influencers were significantly related to consumers' repurchase intention in the tourism industry. Their results indicated that attitudes towards video bloggers' endorsements had a significant, positive impact on consumers' intentions to repurchase products featured in the videos.

2.5.1 Empirical Gap

Anshu et al. (2022) found that attitude has a significant positive relationship with consumers' online repurchase intentions. A positive consumer attitude, such as high trust, would directly influence their decision to repurchase the products in the future (Saeed & Mohy-Ud-Din, 2026). Similarly, consumers' attitudes were found to have an indirect effect on repurchase intention in the cosmetics industry in Indonesia (Haruni & Albari, 2025). In the Indonesian skincare industry, attitude was also found to positively and significantly impact consumers' repurchase intention (Wijaya & Berlianto, 2025). Therefore, it can be said that attitude plays a very significant role in predicting consumers' repurchase intention. However, the empirical gap is the lack of research confirming whether the results can also be applied to the mobile gaming industry, where Malaysia is among the top three countries in Southeast Asia in terms of revenue. Thus, this study aims to address this gap by investigating whether players' attitudes towards the influencer as a middleman influence their repurchase intentions for IAPs in Genshin Impact. Table 2-7 below provides a summary of past studies on consumers' attitudes and purchase or repurchase intentions.

**Table 2-7:
Summary of Past Studies for Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Precursors of Consumer Attitude towards Vlogger Recommendations and its Impact on Purchase Intention	Ramos, W.	Attitude towards tourism influencers/vloggers has a significant relationship with repurchase intention.
2	Influencer Marketing: Factors Influencing A Customer's Purchase Intention	Niloy, A. C., Alam, J. B., & Alom, M. S.	Attitude towards influencer positively and significantly affects consumer purchase intention in the food industry.
3	Impact of customer experience on attitude and repurchase intention in online grocery retailing: A moderation mechanism of value Co-creation	Anshu, K., Gaur, L., & Singh, G.	Online repurchase intentions of the customer is significantly and positively affected by consumer attitude.
4	Consumers' attitude, and loyalty towards halal cosmetics: Moderated mediation effect of repurchase intention by gender	Saeed, M., & Mohy-Ud-Din, K.	A positive attitude by the consumers, such as having high level of trust, positively and directly influences their repurchase intentions of Halal products.
5	The Impact of Celebrity Influencers and Online Customer Reviews on Repurchase Intentions: The Mediating Role of Consumer Attitudes and Brand Loyalty	Haruni, C. M., & Albari, A.	Consumer attitude significantly and positively influenced repurchase intention indirectly via brand loyalty.

2.6 Gender as Moderating Variable

Gender research is a well-established topic in marketing, especially in the advertising industry (Peñaloza et al., 2023; Sandhu, 2021). Studies have been carried out to identify how different genders would influence their marketing research objectives from different perspectives, such as the gender of the consumer (Abuhashesh et al., 2021; Kanwal et al., 2022) and the gender of the public spokesperson, endorser, or influencer (Hudders & De Jans, 2022; Leung et al., 2022). Male consumers tend to be more analytical and are more likely to post negative-affective content than female consumers (Ravula et al., 2023), which may lead their published content to be perceived as more persuasive by other consumers.

Social identity theory states that individuals define themselves in terms of their group membership as nationality, religion, or gender (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People will aim to improve their self-esteem by identifying themselves with groups that are relevant to them, and thus their behaviour changes according to which group they identify with. In influencer marketing, the impact of the influencer's gender on the consumer's behavioural intention has also been researched. Cui et al. (2025) found that consumers are more willing to believe and trust the influencer when they are perceived as more masculine for men and more feminine for women. This is because masculine men are seen as highly competent in their field. In contrast, feminine women are seen as warm and welcoming (Wen et al., 2020). This stereotype extends not only to the influencers' facial attributes but also to their vocal attributes. Public male figures with masculine, low-pitched voices are perceived as more competent for stereotypically male occupations (Cartei et al., 2021).

When consumers perceive the influencer or endorser as competent in their field, they are more willing to trust their opinions (Shamim & Azam, 2024) and hold a more favourable opinion of them (Belanche et al., 2021; Hartanto et al., 2022). Businesses and marketers have relied on this stereotype to market their products, services, and brands to global consumers by using male public figures and influencers for conventionally masculine, male-competent topics such as home improvement, and female public figures for traditionally feminine topics such as cosmetics (Farci & Scarcelli, 2024).

Within the gaming industry, research on the influence of gender has been limited. This is because the industry is argued to differ from traditional sports, where male players

usually have a physical advantage over female players. Rogstad (2022) argued that the physical attributes of players are not correlated with high performance in the electronic sports industry, which allows both male and female players to participate in and compete in the same events. Despite Martucci et al. (2023) claiming that male players were more likely to participate in competitive gaming than their female counterparts, who were more likely to play games only for social purposes, these motivations vary by region. Female players were found to be more inclined to engage in gaming for competitive reasons in Europe and the United States. In contrast, male players played games as part of their coping mechanisms (Gisbert-Pérez et al., 2024).

Similar findings by Kordyaka et al. (2023) showed that female players were more motivated to play games for achievement purposes and thus more eager to prove their skills and abilities in competitive games than male players. This scenario is also reflected in one mobile gaming study (Rodriguez-Barcenilla & Ortega-Mohedano, 2022), in which almost half of the respondents (49%) were women who reported spending more than 5 hours gaming per week. Even within the mobile gaming platform, female Honor of Kings players were found to have higher achievement motivation than male players (Li et al., 2024). For mobile game companies and marketers, player demographics are an important factor in attracting players to download and play, and then converting them into paying players.

2.6.1 Empirical Gap

Gender has been used as a moderator to examine the impact of antecedent variables on consumer repurchase intentions (Wijarnoko et al., 2023). Ong (2024) found that gender played a significant moderating role in the repurchase intentions of male and female consumers towards new energy vehicles, with female consumers more likely to repurchase due to their higher levels of environmental awareness than their male counterparts. This is consistent with the findings of Ali et al. (2023), who found that delighted female consumers were more likely to repurchase from the same organisation than male consumers. Conversely, Sharif et al. (2023) found that male consumers' repurchase intention was significantly and positively influenced by their perceptions. This difference in decision-making processes between male and female consumers has a significant impact on purchase intention (Yi et al., 2024). Nonetheless, Dash et al. (2022) reported that gender did not

moderate the repurchase intention of learning app users during COVID-19. Despite this, there is a lack of research examining the influence of gender as a moderator in mobile game contexts to determine whether there is a difference in repurchase behaviour between male and female players, as predicted by social identity theory.

Within the mobile gaming industry in particular, differences in male and female players' purchasing behaviour need to be further recognised in line with social identity theory. This would allow the marketing campaigns not only to attract more players to play, but also to convince players of both genders to start spending money and eventually continue spending even more in the mobile games they play. Thus, this study aims to address the gap in examining the role of player gender as a moderator of the relationship between consumer attitudes and subsequent repurchasing behaviour. Table 2-8 presents a simple summary of past studies on gender as a moderator variable.

**Table 2-8:
Summary of Past Studies for Gender as a Moderator variable**

No.	Study Title	Author(s)	Findings
1	Assessing Repurchase Intention of Learning Apps during COVID-19	Dash, G., Chakraborty, D., & Alhathal, F.	Gender has no moderating effect on repurchase intention of learning apps users.
2	Consumer quality management for beverage food products: analyzing consumer' perceptions toward repurchase intention	Sharif, S., Rehman, S. U., Ahmad, Z., Albadry, O. M., & Zeeshan, M.	Male consumers' repurchase intentions were significantly and positively affected by their individual perceptions.
3	The impact of sustainable consumption psychology on NEV repurchase intention: The moderating effect of gender differences	Wang, Z., Ong, C. H., & Liu, Z.	In terms of repurchase intention for new energy vehicles, gender has a significant moderating impact. Female consumers viewed environmental awareness as the greater influence of their repurchase intention more than male consumers, who viewed social responsibility as their factor.
4	Does service recovery matter? Relationships among perceived recovery justice, recovery satisfaction and customer affection and repurchase intentions: the moderating role of gender	Ali, M. A., Ting, D. H., Isha, A. S. N., Ahmad-Ur-Rehman, M., & Ali, S.	Gender has a moderating effect on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention, with a larger effect seen in female customers than males.
5	Understanding the self-perceived customer experience and repurchase intention in live streaming shopping: evidence from China	Yi, M., Chen, M., & Yang, J.	Gender differences as moderator variable among the respondents in China had a significant influence on their repurchase intentions.

2.7 Literature and Empirical Gap

The existing literature gap indicates that numerous studies have examined which influencer source credibility factors affect consumers' purchase intentions. Extensive studies have also been carried out to examine the correlation between attitudes towards the influencer and the purchase intentions of consumers in the social media context, as evidenced by studies conducted by Chetioui et al. (2020), Immanuel and Bianda (2021), Niloy et al. (2023), and Tiwari et al. (2024). Despite this, there are still inconsistencies in terms of contrasting findings in past studies for all four credibility variables used for this study, such as attractiveness (Dhun & Dangi, 2022; Magano et al., 2022), expertise (Immanuel & Bianda, 2021; Kim & Yoon, 2023), trustworthiness (Crespo & Tille, 2024; Lina & Permatasari, 2020), and similarity (Durau et al., 2024; Elsharnouby et al., 2025). Therefore, this study aims to determine which source credibility factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards influencers can be extended to the Malaysian mobile gaming industry, an area that has not yet been examined.

Additionally, while past studies have examined the relationship between attitude towards influencers and customers' purchase or repurchase intentions, findings are mixed, with some supporting (Loh & Hassan, 2022; Thuy et al., 2024) and others contradicting (Rusli & Berlianto, 2022). Furthermore, past studies using consumer gender as a moderator have also revealed mixed and inconsistent results, with findings that show either no moderating impact (Dash et al., 2022), a moderating impact is present but more prevalent for male consumers (Sharif et al., 2023), or female consumers (Ali et al., 2023). This represents another literature and empirical gap for this study to address: whether the attitude of Malaysian Genshin Impact spenders would influence their attitude towards influencers in the mobile gaming industry, and whether players' gender would moderate this relationship.

Most studies carried out in the context of mobile games, specifically regarding IAPs purchasing behaviour, have also only focused on a wide range of antecedents influencing their intentions to purchase IAPs (Abdullah et al., 2024; Galdón-Salvador et al., 2024; Jiao et al., 2022; Rusli & Berlianto, 2022). The literature and empirical gaps are that there has been limited research specifically focused on the role of influencers, and that the players' attitude towards influencers, hypothesised to be predicted by influencer credibility factors, is an antecedent to repurchase intention for IAPs.

This highlights a research gap in understanding the relationship between influencer credibility factors and attitude towards influencers, and the subsequent repurchase intention within the Malaysian mobile gaming landscape, and whether player gender moderates this relationship. With 83.1% of the Malaysian population being active social media users (Siddharta, 2024a), distinguishing and assessing which factors are most influential among mobile gamers can help determine their influence on attitude towards influencers and subsequent repurchase intentions.

Therefore, this research aims to explore how credibility factors influence players' attitudes towards influencers and how these attitudes, moderated by players' gender, impact their repurchase intentions. This specific context has been less explored, so this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of this knowledge and to address the literature and empirical gaps that exist.

2.8 Underpinning Theories

2.8.1 Source Credibility Theory

In this digitalised world, businesses are increasingly turning to digital marketing to promote their brands, products, or services to the general public, thereby improving their revenues (Rayburn et al., 2021). This includes social media marketing, where businesses and marketers use platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to reach, engage, and interact directly with customers, and to market their products (Antczak, 2024; Jamil et al., 2022). Since then, the emergence and development of influencer marketing have led firms to identify and partner with online key opinion leaders, or influencers, to promote their brands, services, or products to their followers on social media platforms (Leung et al., 2022). These influencers effectively serve as independent intermediaries between businesses and their target audiences. This means that for these organisations, it is important to understand the influence of influencers in shaping consumer behaviours and attitudes (Vrontis et al., 2021) and how they can help spread positive word-of-mouth and create a positive image for businesses and brands (Shrivastava & Jain, 2022).

To ensure influencer marketing campaigns are successful, businesses should pay attention to the credibility of the influencers they partner with. This is because influencers with high credibility are more likely to have a stronger influence on their followers' purchasing decisions, leading to higher brand engagement and conversion rates (Maryati et al., 2023). The importance of credibility, as perceived by the influencer's followers, must be highlighted, as these followers represent the large number of potential customers the business or firms hope to attract and convert into paying customers. If the followers view the influencer as reputable and credible, they will be more inclined to listen to the influencer's opinions and pay attention to the content that they post on their social media platforms. For businesses, this means that a credible influencer can generate positive attitudes towards the influencer and the brand involved (Belanche et al., 2021; Schouten et al., 2020).

The credibility of an influencer can be based on various characteristics, but was initially composed of three fundamental dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). This tri-component, 15-item scale was initially developed to measure the perceived characteristics of conventional celebrity endorsers. The framework later added the dimension of similarity and was used to measure the credibility of peer endorsers rather than regular celebrities (Munnukka et al., 2016), and to examine its impact on creating positive brand attitudes among potential customers. The difference between conventional celebrities and social media influencers is that celebrities are usually well-known through traditional media such as newspapers and magazines.

In contrast, social media influencers are considered "regular individuals" who have become "online celebrities" by generating and publishing content on social media platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019). These influencers generally specialise in a niche or field, such as beauty, technology, or even gaming. It is therefore imperative for influencers to be perceived as a very high credibility peer compared to others. This would allow them to influence their followers to adopt positive attitudes towards them or the brands they endorse (Stoddard et al., 2023). For businesses, an effective influencer partnership and marketing campaign can yield Returns on Investment (ROI) that are comparable to or exceed those from other marketing channels (Mehra, 2022).

The source credibility framework can be used in various industries and fields where a speaker or public figure would be communicating a message, even in politics, religion, or crisis communication (Dominic et al., 2023), such as during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kukafka et al., 2022; Serman & Sims, 2023; Shah & Wei, 2022). This has sparked significant interest among academics, industry experts, and business leaders in the need for public speakers to be perceived as highly credible. Particularly in influencer marketing, where a business organisation sponsors an influencer to represent the brand, product, or service to a broader audience, the influencer's credibility is vital to enhance the persuasiveness of their messages and positively influence purchasing or repurchasing behaviour (von Hohenberg & Guess, 2023).

The contribution of Ohanian (1990) was to operationalise and standardise a valid and reliable scale of items for measuring the credibility of a source or speaker. While perceived credibility is derived from the audience's subjective perceptions (Tikochinski & Babad, 2022), it can be increased by ensuring that the influencer identified should at least be either attractive physically, an expert in their field, or have a track record of being authentic and trustworthy in the eyes of their followers. Fulfilling these criteria would lead to a favourable situation for both the influencer and the business, as higher credibility tends to foster a positive attitude towards the influencer and, subsequently, purchase intention among consumers (Koay et al., 2022).

For businesses and marketers, as well as scholars across various industries, evaluating a source's credibility is of significant value. Nevertheless, social media users and consumers face challenges in evaluating the credibility of influencers and public figures due to differences in racial, cultural, and even educational backgrounds (Divjak et al., 2022; Finn et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2021). While the dimensions provided by Ohanian (1990) represent a foundation for source credibility research to base its framework upon, individuals from differing cultures may react differently to the dimensions of credibility, such as attractiveness (Attar et al., 2021).

In addition to individual consumers from varying backgrounds, businesses should also consider the gender of customers when planning or executing influencer marketing campaigns. Sun et al. (2021) found that female followers were more likely to be directly influenced by their favourite social media influencer and were more likely to have a positive

attitude towards them. Conversely, male followers were less likely to be influenced by this. Nevertheless, they were more interested in specific contextual posts from the influencers they follow. Their findings are consistent with the categorisation of females as relational processors of information while males were categorised as item-specific processors of information (Putrevu, 2004; El Haj et al., 2023).

In advertising, Spasova and Taneva (2021) reported that women responded positively to advertisements with emotional contexts, whereas information-rich, direct-message, and functional-solution advertisements elicited the same response from men. This implies that female social media users and followers are more easily influenced by endorsements from their favourite influencers than their male counterparts (Marhaeni et al., 2022). It depicts the differences in consumer gender and how they would impact the effectiveness of any influencer marketing campaign run by businesses and marketers. This issue is particularly significant within the mobile gaming industry, where almost 49% to 50% of mobile gamers globally are reported to be females (Ahmad, 2024; Knezovic, 2025).

Empirical studies have argued that digital influencers are potentially more trustworthy, credible, and effective than traditional celebrities in marketing campaigns aimed at influencing consumer behaviour (Atiq et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2022; Kapitan et al., 2021). This means that for these influencers, their level of credibility is one of the most crucial reasons they earn their living (Colcol, 2020; Singhal, 2024). Influencers who are perceived as credible usually have a strong sense of closeness with their audience, which leads them to be treated as role models or sources of inspiration. This relationship is a vital factor in determining the success of an influencer marketing campaign (Zniva et al., 2023). An influencer who is credible tends to be more effective in their endorsements of brands, products, or services they promote to their audience (Asan, 2022; Lim & Lee, 2023). For businesses across industries that want to utilise influencer marketing, the credibility of influencers is therefore paramount to the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns (Vilkaite-Vaitone, 2024).

On social media platforms such as Instagram, a study found that influencers who promote products that align with topics they have or usually cover, as perceived by their followers, are seen as a more credible source of information (Belanche et al., 2021; Kim & Kim, 2021a). When followers view the influencers they follow as credible, they are more

likely to develop positive attitudes towards them. In China, a similar result was found: the consumer's attitude towards the endorser depends on their fit with the promoted product (Park & Lin, 2020). These studies show the established field of influencer marketing campaigns, where the bare minimum that companies and firms should do when identifying suitable influencers is to ensure that the influencer in question matches the brand, product, or service they would be endorsing. For mobile gaming companies and marketers, this means that gaming influencers should be their ideal partnership targets, rather than regular social media influencers with no correlation or connections to gaming. This will increase the effectiveness of their influencer marketing campaign, targeting their own players to repurchase more IAPs.

However, today, these businesses in the industry must also consider other characteristics of influencers, including perceived similarities between the player and the influencer. While previous empirical studies have shown that the various combinations of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are influential in affecting the consumers' attitudes towards the influencer or public endorser (Ahsan & Senarath, 2023), similarity between the source and their audience is now important as well in creating trust between the followers and the influencers (Kim & Kim, 2021b; Shrivastava et al., 2021). In the highly saturated mobile gaming market, the effectiveness of an influencer marketing campaign on social media to compete for users' attention and cut through the noise relies on the influencer's credibility (Gerrath et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2021). Mobile game companies need to better understand their player base's demographics to run an effective influencer marketing campaign that encourages repurchases.

In a Malaysian context, Sitorus et al. (2024) recently used this framework to examine the relationship between the four dimensions of source credibility and their impact on consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and subsequent purchase intention. A similar framework was also used by Ahsan and Senarath (2023) in their study within the beauty and personal care products industry, and found that all four dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, similarity, and trustworthiness were able to have a positive impact on the consumers' attitude towards the social media influencer and their purchase intention of beauty products as a result.

2.8.1.1 Gaming Industry Context

In the gaming industry, source credibility is an important virtue for influencers and content creators, shaping their followers' behaviour. According to Kubat Dokumacı (2024), the attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of video game streamers significantly impact the purchase intention and willingness to spend money on online games of their audience. The effect of having a large number of followers is not necessarily a key factor in achieving greater visibility for any endorsements or promotions made (Wies et al., 2023). Instead, when influencers are perceived as credible, their content is also seen as trustworthy by their followers, thereby generating positive attitudes towards the brands they promote (Benevento et al., 2025). This means that influencers who are recognised as key opinion leaders by their peers exhibit a stronger ability to influence those around them (Casaló et al., 2020). Therefore, businesses and marketers in the gaming industry should focus on identifying influencers perceived as opinion leaders and credible within the game genre in which they wish to run influencer marketing campaigns.

In the Indonesian mobile gaming industry, Nabella et al. (2023) also reported similar conclusions, finding a significantly positive relationship between an influencer's content delivery effectiveness and players' purchase intention for IAPs in MLBB. The content and information delivered should also be kept up to date and consistently refreshed to ensure effectiveness. This is because while the effects of a successful influencer marketing campaign can initially provide huge revenue boosts to mobile game companies, this effect diminishes quickly over time (Jiang et al., 2020). For businesses and marketers in the industry, this implies that longer-term partnerships with suitable influencers can yield long-term benefits for both parties. The businesses can ensure a sustainable source of revenue by having players repeatedly purchase IAPs, while the influencers would continue to receive sponsorship money from mobile game companies, while also increasing their credibility among their audience.

In the Malaysian mobile gaming industry, there are other ways to increase Gen-Y mobile gamers' purchase intention. One of the suggested key drivers for their intention to purchase IAPs in mobile games is their perceived value of these virtual items. Studies have shown that perceived value influences the purchase intention of Malaysian consumers (Appanaidu, 2022; Zahari et al., 2023). Additionally, social influence and cultural norms

were suggested to be influential in increasing purchase intention for IAPs in mobile games in Malaysia (Abdullah et al., 2024). Notably, these studies did not account for the role of social media influencers and their impact on the purchase and repurchase intentions of Malaysian mobile gamers towards IAPs. This is despite three in four Malaysians reporting that they make purchases based on influencers' recommendations (Cube Asia, 2024), with 65% of purchases in the fashion industry influenced by social media influencers (BERNAMA, 2024).

The source credibility framework is one of the most crucial aspects of influencer marketing literature. This is because social media influencers can directly influence the consumer's behaviour towards not only the brand being promoted, but also the influencers themselves (Joshi et al., 2023). Businesses and firms across industries seeking to leverage influencer marketing strategies should ensure influencers are authentic, credible, and transparent with their target audiences. This will allow a more positive attitude towards influencers to form, as well as the followers' subsequent purchasing and repurchasing behaviour. To achieve this, businesses should not only identify and select a suitable influencer but also assess the influencer's reach on their platforms (Alipour et al., 2024).

2.8.2 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory, initially proposed by Tafel and Turner (1979), holds that individuals obtain self-esteem from membership in different social groups. The authors state that people would seek validation and entertainment from other "in-group" individuals while taking steps to distinguish themselves from "out-group" individuals. These definitions are explained as social categorisation, social identification, and social comparison; where the individuals would first classify people as "us" (in-groups) and "them" (out-groups), then adopting and identifying themselves as members of the "in-groups" which they feel they belong to, then comparing their group against other "out-groups" to obtain positive validation and self-esteem.

Since its inception, numerous studies have been carried out to contribute to a better academic understanding of how the theory can be applied in real-life situations. In a sporting context, Evans et al. (2024) reported that athletes' social identity was a significant factor in team cohesion, efficacy, and overall performance across a full season. From an online retail

perspective, the social identity of female Korean consumers was found to influence their purchase intentions directly positively (Kim et al., 2025). Nevertheless, their study focused only on female fashion customers and suggested that future studies could include other genders and analyse how consumers' virtual demographics would affect their behaviour across other industries. A study by Acar et al. (2024) found that, in general, consumers who identified with a brand as their “in-group” had significantly higher satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Their findings also indicated that male respondents' repurchase intentions were less susceptible to family member influence.

In contrast, female respondents were more influenced by peers and family members regarding repurchase intentions. Similarly, Wahyuningsih et al. (2022) reported that male consumers were more rational than female respondents, whose decisions were more rooted in emotion. Their findings show that male consumers had higher repurchase intentions only after feeling satisfied. In contrast, female consumers' repurchase intentions were significantly influenced by their consumption values, including emotional value. This illustrates one of the factors in social identity theory: male consumers display behaviours belonging to their “in-group” of male genders, and female consumers do as well.

Conversely, Suhartanto et al. (2021) found no difference between male and female respondents in green repurchase intentions among young consumers in Indonesia. One of the possible reasons is that, since students in the country study in co-educational schools, their exposure, development, and experience regarding their intention to repurchase green products are similar, resulting in similar attitudes and perceptions towards green products. Similarly, Silintowe and Sukresna (2023) found no significant difference in green purchasing behaviour between male and female respondents in Indonesia, and concluded that respondents with green self-identities have stronger attitudes and intentions to purchase green products.

In Malaysia, the differences in consumer gender were also reported. According to Teo et al. (2025), repurchase intentions among male consumers on an e-commerce platform were more strongly influenced by trust and customer service. In contrast, among female consumers, intentions to repurchase were influenced by self-fulfilment and platform design. This means that for businesses whose primary target audience is male, providing high levels of customer service and demonstrating trustworthy behaviour would make customers more

willing to return and repurchase products or services from the business. Regarding green purchasing behaviours, Alam et al. (2025) found that consumers with a high pro-environmental self-identity also exhibit high levels of sustainable purchasing behaviour. Their study argues that amplifying the individual's self-identity would translate into long-term identity-driven purchasing behaviour in Malaysia.

Particularly in a digital era of social media, where virtual identities are more fluid and influenced by members of other "in-group" online communities, other demographic factors such as race and gender should be studied to determine changes in modern social identity (Khadka, 2024). A similar suggestion was made by Isa et al. (2024), who argued that businesses should partner with influencers and leverage social media platforms to better cater to value-aligned consumers and enhance their repurchase intentions.

2.8.2.1 Gaming Industry Context

Within the gaming industry, it has also been found that gamers' self-identification with their virtual avatars significantly affects their behavioural intention to play a game (Duan & Jeong, 2024). Similarly, a study conducted by Ngah et al. (2024) among two social groups of console and mobile gamers found that satisfaction has a positive impact on both groups' repurchase intention for virtual items. Nonetheless, upon deeper explanation, it was stated that a stronger effect was observed among console gamers than among mobile gamers. This means that even within the same gaming context, console gamers were considered to be more willing to repurchase the virtual items in the games that they play based on the game's aesthetic design, the players' self-perceived value, as well as their satisfaction with the games. Mobile game developers should still take into account future demands regarding game aesthetics and player gameplay satisfaction, and address these demands, which in turn will lead to a higher willingness to continue repurchasing IAPs.

According to Cwil and Howe (2020), individuals who identify themselves as gamers were reported to spend a larger amount of time playing online games compared to individuals who did not identify as gamers, concluding that the characteristic of spending long hours playing games online belongs to the identity of a gamer in both Poland and the United States. A similar scenario was reported by Tene et al. (2024) among Indonesian Generation Z players of MLBB, where players who wanted to improve their social status within the game by

joining the “in-group” of the strongest or wealthiest players were more willing to spend money to purchase the virtual products. This shows that even in a virtual setting where physical demographic attributes such as race, age, or gender are not displayed, individual consumers would still identify and classify themselves virtually with the group they wish to participate in; therefore, their purchasing behaviours would be influenced by how they identify themselves.

However, the empirical gap exists, as a country with more than 20 million active gamers, or more than 60% of the country’s population (Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), 2025), no study has attempted to study the impact of player gender on the repurchase intention of game players in Malaysia. This is despite the country having national policies that can help stimulate the gaming industry, such as Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDIGITAL) and the New Industrial Master Plan (NIMP) 2030. Therefore, this study aims to address and overcome this gap by examining the role of player gender as a moderating variable between players' attitudes towards influencers and their subsequent repurchase intention.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research, as depicted in Figure 2-1 and based on the hypotheses development, will use the four source credibility dimensions, namely attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity, as independent variables. These independent variables influence players’ attitudes towards influencers and their repurchase intentions, while player gender moderates these effects.

The source credibility factors, acting as the independent variables in this research, measure credibility and integrity through dimensions such as attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. These dimensions, functioning as the independent variables in this research, are perceived as influential antecedents that could shape Malaysian Genshin Impact players’ attitudes towards influencers and, subsequently, their repurchase intention for IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact.

Many of the studies conducted on the mobile gaming industry are focused on identifying the factors that would influence the purchase intention for IAPs of the gamers

using different factors such as perceived value (Hsiao et al., 2022; Hsu & Lin, 2016), the experience by the customer (Liao et al., 2020), social interaction and play frequency (Jang et al., 2019), and even player loyalty (Purnami & Agus, 2020). Most of these studies are focused on the relationship between players and the games. In contrast, nowadays mobile game companies are increasingly seeking influencers to partner with and promote their brands, such as the developer of mobile game *Among Us*, InnerSloth Limited Liability Company (LLC), which partnered with YouTube influencer PewDiePie to play and promote the game when it launched in 2020 (GameInfluencer, 2023).

The role of influencers in shaping repurchase intentions among players should be viewed as a new critical factor. The combination of influencer marketing with other online marketing tactics, such as word-of-mouth advertising, in the mobile game industry will not only help mobile games reach a wider audience but also reduce uninstall rates while increasing revenue (Makki et al., 2025). Jiang et al. (2020) found that influencer marketing in the context of mobile games can directly influence viewers' purchase intention and indirectly increase non-viewers' willingness to make virtual purchases through brand awareness and visibility. This shows the positive impact of using influencer marketing on the revenue of the mobile game companies.

A study by Bakach et al. (2024) found that while perceived similarity between the influencer and players is an essential construct, gamers may be swayed by external social factors, such as public influencers. Nabella et al. (2023) shared a similar view, stating that mobile game developers should pay closer attention to influencers who consistently create engaging content to help players keep playing and spend money on virtual items. Lehtonen et al. (2023) had also found that content creators who were able to elicit positive responses from their followers through their content were able to have an immediate impact on the game's profits. The more positive attitude the player has toward the mobile game they play, the more willing they are to purchase and repurchase IAPs (Kostopoulos et al., 2023). In addition, the study by Ma and He (2024) suggests that individual characteristics of mobile game players, such as gender, should be used as variables to investigate their influence on players' intentions to make more IAPs in the mobile games they play. A similar suggestion was made by Yolanda Putra et al. (2024) to include gender differences as a construct in future studies on mobile games.

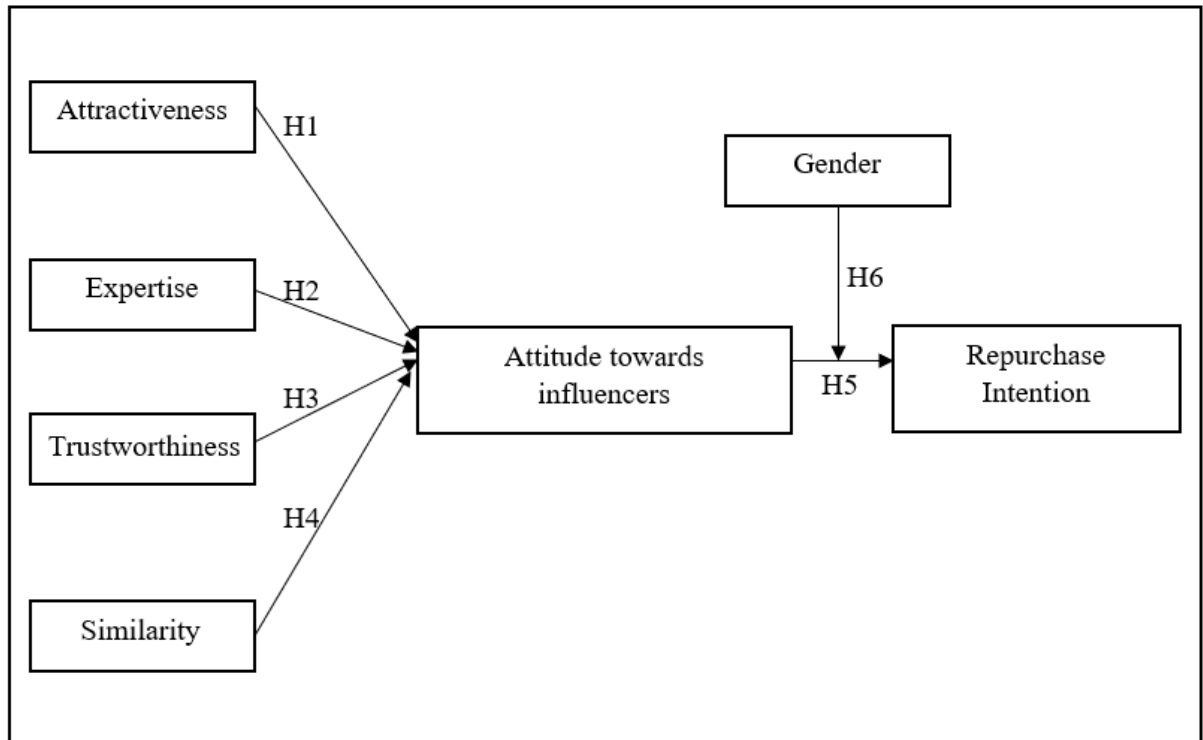
According to Immanuel and Bianda (2021), credibility factors such as trust and attractiveness had a positive, significant effect on consumers' attitudes towards the influencer. Moreover, Iqbal et al. (2023) showed that influencers' perceived attractiveness, expertise, and credibility also significantly and positively impacted consumers' attitudes towards influencers, which then had a positive, significant mediating effect on purchase intention.

Attitude towards influencers is the dependent variable in this framework, followed by repurchase intention as the outcome variable. The relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention of players is predicted to be moderated by players' gender. The dependent variable measures the extent to which players perceive influencers' characteristics as affecting their attitudes towards influencers, which, in turn, affects their intentions to repurchase IAPs in Genshin Impact. Players' attitudes towards influencers will be influenced by influencer attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity as perceived by spending players.

The player's gender serves as a moderating variable in this framework. It is used to measure players' subjective opinions on whether being male or female would impact their intentions to repurchase IAPs or otherwise. It is expected that male players would be more influenced if the influencer has the required levels of expertise and skills.

The outcome variable, repurchase intention, reflects players' intentions to return and continue purchasing IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact. This variable is predicted to be influenced by players' attitudes towards influencers and their perceived credibility, and moderated by gender.

**Figure 2-1:
Conceptual Framework**



2.9.1 Justification of Proposed Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is needed to provide direction for research, to describe the understanding of the main concepts under investigation, and to articulate the relationships among the concepts through written descriptions and/or visual representations (Luft et al., 2022). In the proposed framework, four independent variables, namely attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity, are predicted to have an impact on both the spending players' attitude towards influencers and the subsequent repurchase intention, with gender functioning as a moderator. The four independent variables are derived from the source credibility model, which has been tested and recognised as a credible and reliable framework for social media influencer attributes (Mohamed & Jaafar, 2023). To accomplish the objectives of this research, which is to obtain a deeper understanding of the credibility dimensions influencing attitudes towards influencers as well as repurchase intention within the mobile gaming industry context, these four source credibility constructs will be integrated into the conceptual framework and serve as the main independent variables for this study.

In this framework, the attitude towards influencers does not serve as a mediating variable, as the framework by Munnukka et al. (2016) had only investigated the direct impact of the four-item source credibility dimensions on the consumers' attitudes towards advertisements. Ramayah et al. (2017) stated that any mediation effect depends on strong theoretical support; however, Hovland and Weiss's (1951) original theoretical framework confirmed the impact of source credibility only on the individual's opinions. Sitorus et al. (2024) also examined the influence of the four-item source credibility constructs on attitude towards advertisements in a Malaysian context, while Ilieva et al. (2024) confirmed the significant impact of source credibility dimensions on attitude towards influencers. Therefore, the initial Source Credibility Theory is argued to show that attitude towards influencers serves as the dependent variable for the source credibility dimensions, followed by an assessment of the attitude towards influencers' impact on repurchase intentions.

The source credibility model, as initially developed by Ohanian (1990) and later advanced by Munnukka et al. (2016), is a widely used four-dimensional construct for assessing source credibility. Their framework operates under the assumption that their source credibility dimensions are used to evaluate peer-endorser credibility and its effect on attitudes towards the advertisement and the brand being promoted. In their framework, source credibility is evaluated based on four dimensions: trustworthiness (perceived honesty and sincerity of the source), expertness (perceived competence of the source), similarity (perceived similarity of the source to the target recipient), and attractiveness (physical appearance of the source). Therefore, based on this extended source credibility framework, the four variables proposed by Munnukka et al. (2016) will serve as the main independent variables in the study's conceptual framework. In addition, based on these dimensions, the source credibility model offers a better understanding of the use of peer endorsers in marketing, allowing organisations and marketers to strengthen an endorser's credibility and maximise the effectiveness of an advertisement.

Within this proposed conceptual framework, gender will function as a moderator variable. A moderator is a variable that increases, decreases, cancels, or modifies the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Hefner, 2017). Based on a past study by Purnami and Agus (2020), gender differences between male and female players can create differences in their purchasing behaviour. In the context of this study, it is proposed

that player gender influences the relationship between the two dependent variables, attitudes towards influencers, and repurchase intention.

The gender of the consumer can moderate the relationship between perceived similarity and physical attractiveness towards influencers among female social media followers (Chetioui et al., 2023). Conversely, for male followers, it is predicted that the gender of the influencer plays no role in their attitude towards the brand or their engagement with the content posted by the influencer (Hudders & De Jans, 2022). Therefore, integrating the player's gender into the proposed framework will allow for a better understanding of how gender influences attitudes towards influencers and repurchase intention in the mobile gaming industry.

The proposed conceptual framework, consisting of six hypotheses derived from independent and dependent variables, is structured to evaluate the influence of influencer credibility dimensions on their attitude towards the influencer and subsequent repurchase intentions among spending players in Genshin Impact in Malaysia. This framework aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on the antecedents of these dependent variables and to explain the hypothesised relationships among them. By proposing and evaluating hypotheses, this study provides fresh perspectives for mobile game organisations and marketers to enhance their marketing campaigns. By utilising influencer marketing, it is hoped that their spending players will be more inclined to behave more positively towards the game and thus more willing to repurchase IAPs.

2.9.2 Description of Variables

The proposed conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 2-1, comprises the independent variable, the dependent variable, the outcome variable, and the moderator variable. The independent variables consist of the four source credibility dimensions: attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. These items had been discussed in Section 2.2. The dependent variable is attitude towards influencers, while repurchase intention is the outcome. These items were discussed in Sections 2.3 and 2.4, respectively.

Attractiveness is defined as the ability of an influencer to stimulate their followers and generate positive responses through their personal charisma and facial features (Akhtar

et al., 2024). In the context of mobile games, attractiveness is defined as whether the influencer is perceived as attractive to a particular group of people (Fitriani et al., 2023) and can sway viewers to make IAPs in the mobile games they play.

Expertise refers to the skills, experience, or knowledge that an influencer has and must use to influence their target audience (Supriyanto et al., 2023). In the context of mobile games, this refers to influencers' status as both engaged and dedicated players, and their knowledge of creating content that fits their game audience well (Medium, 2024), which makes them strong promoters of the games they play.

Trustworthiness denotes how followers perceive influencers as honest and authentic in the information they provide (Weismueller et al., 2020). In the context of mobile games, the level of trust an influencer has among their audience can increase exposure, downloads, and user engagement when a mobile game is advocated or promoted. This is because an influencer who is transparent with their followers can endorse a brand, product, or service more effectively (Balaban et al., 2022).

Similarity refers to followers' perceptions that influencers are similar to them in terms of visual resemblance, shared attitudes, and social background (Stein et al., 2022). Followers or viewers who perceive themselves as similar to the influencer are more inclined to have a positive attitude towards the subject being promoted (Zhafira et al., 2022). In the context of mobile games, this means influencers who are already playing and enjoying games in a similar genre and have created content well accepted by a majority of their audience (Xsolla, 2022).

Attitude towards influencers is defined as the general assessment of an influencer along a positive-to-negative continuum (Lee & Eastin, 2021). A favourable view of the endorser can directly and indirectly improve perceptions of a product being promoted (Szymkowiak & Antoniak, 2024). In the context of mobile gaming, this means the general attitude viewers and followers have towards the influencer creating content for Genshin Impact.

Gender refers to the gender of players in the mobile game Genshin Impact.

Repurchase intention is defined as an individual's decision to repurchase a product or service at least twice (Febriani & Ardani, 2021). Behavioural researchers commonly use this to predict consumers' purchasing behaviours (Lee et al., 2021). In the context of mobile gaming, this refers to the intention or willingness of spending players to repurchase IAPs in Genshin Impact.

2.10 Hypothesis Development

Each hypotheses will be discussed in the following subsections, before being concluded in Table 2-9.

2.10.1 Attractiveness and Attitude Towards Influencers

Munnukka et al. (2016)'s study found that attractiveness positively affected consumers' attitudes and subsequent behaviour. Their study argued that the regular appearance of the endorsers or influencers could strengthen the credibility of the relationship between the endorser and the audience as a whole. According to Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2021), most research has defined attractiveness as the physical attractiveness of the individual endorser and the extent to which this endorser's facial features are perceived as pleasing to look at. When the endorser or communicator is perceived as attractive, their credibility increases, and the audience may be more willing to accept their message favourably (Kim & Kim, 2021b). Especially on social media platforms, the attractiveness of influencers increases the appeal of their messages and, consequently, the likelihood that followers will make a purchase (Tarabieh et al., 2024).

Margom and Amar (2023) suggested that physical attractiveness positively influences consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions for a product, but negatively affects their self-esteem and psychological well-being. This is similar to the findings of Rathnayake and Lakshika (2022), who stated that influencers perceived as highly attractive were more likely to positively influence their followers' purchase intention towards the advertised brand. An attractive influencer would be more popular, and thus their messages to their audience would be more persuasive and impactful. This implies that the endorsers' physical

attractiveness is a vital factor in enhancing consumers' purchase intention for the promoted brand, product, or service.

In Malaysia, influencers' attractiveness was found to affect consumers' purchase intention in the cosmetics industry positively (Chekima et al., 2020). Additionally, influencers who are perceived as attractive and well-aligned with the brand's values and identity significantly influence customers' purchase intentions (Rahim et al., 2023). Particularly for female consumers, the attractiveness of influencers significantly increases their willingness to purchase pet products (Wei et al., 2021). This indicates that the influence of the levels of physical attractiveness of the influencer is not limited to only the beauty or cosmetics industry for female customers (Abdullah et al., 2023), but could also be applied to the overall influencer marketing promotions for daily products or services as well when recommended by attractive influencers (Tamsir et al., 2023).

According to Niloy et al. (2023), the attractiveness of the source was found to significantly and positively influence consumers' attitudes towards influencers, which subsequently had a similar effect on purchase intention for food products. An attractive influencer is more likely to elicit positive feelings among their followers towards the influencer, which in turn can help generate purchase intentions among the target audience (Immanuel & Bianda, 2021). For businesses and marketers, this indicates that consumers are more willing to adopt a positive attitude towards the influencer when the influencer is perceived as highly attractive. This positive attitude will further influence their intentions to purchase (Iqbal et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.

2.10.2 Expertise and Attitude Towards Influencers

According to a study by Munnukka et al. (2016), expertise had a weak but significant influence on consumers' attitudes and subsequent behaviour. Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2021) suggested that consumers were more likely to agree with the opinions of experts or individuals perceived as experts than with those of non-experts. This is a suitable metric to assess an influencer's impact, as influencers are generally individuals who create

and share information and content related to their specific field of expertise on social media platforms (Immanuel & Bianda, 2021). An influencer with high levels of competency, knowledge, and skills, as perceived by their followers, will have greater influence over the positive acceptance of their assertions (Rayasam & Khattri, 2022).

Supriyanto et al. (2023) found that perceived expertise was an antecedent of attitudes towards influencers, which positively impacted customers' purchase intention in Indonesia. When influencers constantly improve their knowledge and skills in their domain, their audience tends to trust them even more, believing they can provide valuable information (Hartono et al., 2023).

In Malaysia, social media influencers' expertise was found to be the foremost factor that businesses and marketers should prioritise to influence Malaysian Muslim Gen Z consumers to purchase halal products (Rizal Putri et al., 2023). This might be because the target audience has strong existing opinions about halal products and services and is not easily swayed by the popularity of social media influencers.

Iqbal et al. (2023) found that perceived expertise displayed by influencers generally increased followers' positive attitudes towards the influencer and, consequently, their purchase intentions. By doing due diligence and research to stay up to date with the latest information in their fields, influencers' audiences will see them as even more qualified experts and have a positive attitude towards the influencers they follow (Candra, 2023).

According to Carissa et al. (2021), the levels of perceived expertise displayed by influencers are the most critical factor in shaping consumer attitudes towards influencers. They found that in the beauty industry, influencers who are perceived as having exceptional expertise in beauty products and services can positively influence their audience's attitudes towards them and create repurchase intentions. This shows that the influencer's expertise plays an important role in shaping not only their credibility but also their followers' attitudes towards them. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: Expertise has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.

2.10.3 Trustworthiness and Attitude Towards Influencers

According to Hovland and Weiss (1951), a source perceived as trustworthy can significantly affect opinions to a greater extent than an untrustworthy source. Using their developed 4-construct source credibility model, Munnukka et al. (2016) found that trustworthiness is one of the key constructs with the most decisive influence on consumers' attitudes. If an individual consumer trusts an influencer who expresses a liking for a particular brand, product, or service, then the consumer is presumed also to like that brand, product, or service (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2021). This is because the perceived trustworthiness of an influencer has been argued to be one of the main factors that influences the consumer's subsequent behaviour (Balaban et al., 2022; Magano et al., 2022). Influencers who are transparent and honest with their audience about the content they create, such as only endorsing products they have used daily, will be viewed as more trustworthy (Audrezet et al., 2020). Compared to influencers who promote brands, products, or services they do not personally use, followers are more trusting of those who do and speak from personal experience, viewing them as authentic and sincere (Zafar et al., 2021).

For influencers on social media platforms, it is important to consistently grow their large communities of followers who trust and value their opinions (Balaban et al., 2020). Thus, transparency with their audience is one of the most vital actions an influencer can take to ensure their audience continues to engage with them and trust them. In terms of sponsored content, such as posts or videos created in partnership with businesses, it has been suggested that customers are more willing to trust influencers who disclose the nature of their sponsored content than those who do not (Kay et al., 2020). This means that individual consumers will also have a higher purchase intention for the sponsored products if the influencer had been transparent about sponsorships. As long as the influencer is honest with their audience and stays true to their personal values, their followers will still trust them (Aggad & Ahmad, 2021).

In Malaysia, it has been reported that credible, honest influencers elicit a favourable attitude from their followers (Ooi et al., 2023). Especially in the context of social media marketing, individual consumers will be more trusting of an influencer with an honest demeanour. They would believe that the information provided by these influencers is reliable (Lee & Eastin, 2020). According to Immanuel and Bianda (2021), influencers who are

perceived as trustworthy by their audience are more likely to generate a positive attitude towards the influencers themselves. When their followers view the influencer as trustworthy and honest, their audience tends to develop a more positive attitude towards them because this characteristic is central to some consumers (Durau et al., 2022). A similar result was reported in the fashion industry, where consumers' attitudes towards fashion influencers were positively influenced by perceived trust levels (Tiwari et al., 2024). Taking these empirical studies into consideration, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: Trustworthiness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.

2.10.4 Similarity and Attitude Towards Influencers

Munnukka et al. (2016) initially introduced the similarity dimension as one of the top constructs that significantly and strongly affected consumers' attitudes, together with trustworthiness. Similarity, used interchangeably with homophily, is the extent to which different individuals and consumers gather together based on their values, personal beliefs, or other aspects (Magano et al., 2022). In this context, this refers to the similarities between the consumer and the influencer that they follow in terms of values, attitudes, and backgrounds (Ladhari et al., 2020). If consumers perceive the influencer's image as similar to their ideal images of themselves, the effectiveness of the influencer's endorsements increases (Shan et al., 2020). Similar studies conducted in the context of product-influencer fit found that high levels of similarity between the product type and the influencer's specialty led to a more positive attitude (Ku & Lou, 2022), especially a higher intention to purchase the promoted product (Janssen et al., 2022). Qamar et al. (2023) found that individual consumers were more likely to remain loyal and continue engaging with an influencer who promotes brands, ideas, products, or services that they agree with.

On social media platforms, users have reported that leaving comments on an influencer's content increases the sense of similarity between them and the influencer (Schouten et al., 2020). This is because the more someone connects well with another individual, the higher their inclination to be persuaded by what that individual says or does. In this case, if the follower perceives the influencer as being similar to them, for example, in terms of demographic or lifestyle, the influencer will tend to be seen as being more "ordinary,

real, accessible,” which helps generate positive feelings towards the influencer (Rani et al., 2023). This also makes followers more willing to adopt the influencer’s actions and behaviour when they are seen as regular, everyday, relatable humans or peers, rather than someone of higher social standing than themselves.

Niloy et al. (2023) suggested that source familiarity was the strongest factor influencing consumers’ attitudes towards influencers. When the influencer is considered well-known to their audience, followers are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards the endorser. According to Tsarashafa and Qastharin (2021), consumers’ feelings of having something in common with the influencer are the strongest factor in shaping their attitude towards the influencer, as well as their subsequent intentions to purchase the fashion products endorsed. In their context, users would perceive themselves as having a similar fashion style or taste to the fashion influencer, which increases their positive perceptions of the influencer. The stronger this sense of similarity between the consumer and the influencer, the greater the likelihood that the consumer will be influenced by the influencer (Santiago et al., 2020). This means that smaller influencers would be viewed as more realistic and have relatable opinions compared to larger influencers with over 1 million followers; therefore, they would be trusted more (Candra, 2023). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: Similarity has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.

2.10.5 Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention

Influencers with high levels of likeability are more likely to influence their followers to buy the same brand, product, or service recommended by the influencer (Taillon et al., 2020). Consumers who have a positive impression of the influencer that they follow or whose content that they consume will result in the influencer’s message being easier to be accepted by the audience. This is useful for when the influencer wishes to generate the willingness to purchase the items being promoted among their followers who already have positive attitudes towards their opinions and content (Zhafira et al., 2022). The more consumers feel positively about an influencer’s opinions and content, the greater their intention to purchase the brand, service, or products advertised when sponsored (Azkiah & Hartono, 2023). According to Chetioui et al. (2023), consumers’ attitudes towards

influencers positively influence their intentions to purchase the food products and the brands being promoted.

Customers will be more willing to purchase the brand, product, or service if they have a good impression of the influencer (Niloy et al., 2023). Particularly within the fashion industry, it is important for businesses to maintain a positive perception of influencers, as favourable endorsements by them can lead to higher purchase intentions among their followers (Iqbal et al., 2023). A similar result was reported in the beauty products industry, where the presence of influencers with likable characteristics who provided updated product information led to higher consumer intention to purchase (Candra, 2023).

Consumers who have a positive attitude towards the influencers that they follow or whose content they watch on social media are more likely to repurchase products that have been endorsed (Carissa et al., 2021). Businesses and marketers should focus on ensuring their target audience has a positive attitude towards the influencers who will promote their brand, service, or product. This is to ensure consumers are willing to return and repurchase from the business or brand in the future after consuming content created by the influencer. Therefore, based on the current literature on attitudes towards influencers and their impact only on purchase intention, as well as the literature gap regarding their impact on repurchase intentions, especially in the mobile gaming industry context, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5: Attitude towards influencers has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.

2.10.6 Gender As Moderator Variable

According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), consumers of different genders analyse information differently based on their social identity groups (Vemuri V. P., 2025). A study by Hudders and De Jans (2022) found that gender plays a moderating role among female consumers, as they perceived themselves as more similar to female influencers, which positively affected their attitude towards the promoted brand. Amperawati et al. (2024) also suggested that gender moderated the effectiveness of influencer marketing for male and female consumers across different contexts. Similar

results were reported by Li et al. (2024), who found that male consumers would resist male endorsers when trying to stimulate purchase intention among their viewers. Conversely, male consumers were said to be more likely to have a positive attitude towards attractive endorsers than females (Chetioui et al., 2023), while female consumers would typically also form positive attitudes towards influencers they perceive as experts (Li et al., 2024). Based on the literature above, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H6: Gender moderates the relationship for male players between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention.

**Table 2-9:
Summary of Hypotheses**

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Hypothesis
1. How does credibility factors influence spending players' attitude towards the influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia?	To assess the influence of social media influencers' credibility factors on the attitude towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia	H1: Attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers. H2: Expertise has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers. H3: Trustworthiness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers. H4: Similarity has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.
2. To what extent does attitude towards influencers affect the repurchase intention for in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?	To determine the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intentions for in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in Malaysia.	H5: Attitude towards influencer has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.
3. Will player gender moderate the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?	To examine the moderating impact of player gender between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in Malaysia.	H6: Gender moderates the relationship for male players between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention.

2.11 Conclusion

The literature review for the theory used, the variables of the framework, the conceptual framework, as well as the hypotheses developed based on the framework has been described in Chapter 2. The methodologies used to carry out the research will be described in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study, including the research design, sample selection, and procedures. This chapter will further explain the process of data collection, the formulation of research questionnaire items and measurements, followed by the pre-test procedures. Then, the choice of statistical analyses for this study was discussed and justified, and the study was concluded.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Research paradigm is defined as a set of assumptions, beliefs, practices, and values that act as a guide and advise how research is carried out within a discipline or field (Gamage, 2025). A paradigm differs from a theory in that theories aim to explain, whereas a paradigm serves as a framework for viewing scenarios and things (Panya & Nyarwath, 2022). Generally, there are three major paradigms: positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The chosen paradigm then serves as a guiding tool for the researcher's investigative work, such as data collection and analysis procedures.

This study has adopted a positivist research paradigm, in which hypotheses are proposed regarding a relationship between phenomena, and empirical evidence is gathered, analysed, and used to explain the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). This research paradigm is also suitable for use, as it relies on hypothesis testing and inference, which can then serve as guidelines for how other mobile game companies in the industry should act (Arif et al., 2023). This is also in line with one of the research objectives of this study, which was to test the developed hypotheses aimed at determining the influence of source credibility factors on attitude towards influencers, then towards repurchase intention. The results of a positivist research paradigm

can lead to the creation of an idea on how companies and businesses in the mobile game industry should act in regard to tailoring their social media influencer marketing campaigns to acquire more players, improve retention, so the players will eventually spend money on In-App Purchases (IAPs) and generate sufficient revenue.

In addition, the positivist research paradigm also explains that research is carried out to develop statements that explain a situation or describe a causal relationship between variables (Creswell, 2014). This also aligned with the research's aims, which are to identify the credibility factors (predictors) that influence attitude towards influencers (outcome) and repurchase intention (outcome).

3.3 Research Approach

For this study, the research approach was a quantitative approach. According to Taherdoost (2022), the quantitative approach addresses a research problem by collecting and analysing quantifiable data. This allows potential relationships between a predictor variable and the outcome to be predicted. Creswell (2017) had also stated that the quantitative approach is suitable for investigating factors influencing a specific phenomenon. As this research aims to determine the influence of influencer credibility factors (predictor) on attitude towards influencers (outcome) and repurchase intention (outcome), a quantitative research approach is chosen for this research. This will also allow a quantifiable relationship between the predictor and outcome variables to be analysed and interpreted in the context of Malaysian Genshin Impact spending players.

According to Barroga et al. (2023), the deductive research approach is used when seeking to test or disprove hypotheses developed in quantitative research. Under this approach, there are nine steps to be taken. Researchers must first make observations about a new or unclear phenomenon, investigate the theory surrounding it, and generate potential hypotheses to explain these observations. Next, researchers predict the outcomes based on the hypotheses generated, formulate steps to test the predictions, and collect the required data before analysing and processing it. Lastly, researchers will verify the results obtained, draw conclusions, and present their findings. The approaches mentioned above served as a rough guideline for this research and are similar to the steps taken by the researcher.

3.4 Research Design

This study aimed to determine how social media influencer credibility factors influence consumers' attitudes towards the influencers they follow and, subsequently, repurchase intention, while being moderated by player gender among Malaysian players of the mobile game Genshin Impact. As this study was conducted at a specific point in time (May – July 2025) and aimed to provide information to better understand the phenomenon regarding the usage of influencer marketing in the mobile games industry (Slater & Hasson, 2024), a cross-sectional research design was used to collect data from a group of respondents using questionnaires (Schmidt & Brown, 2019).

3.4.1 Sampling Technique

The research design employed two non-probability sampling methods: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The first method of sampling involves the researcher identifying respondents who can provide the best perspective on a phenomenon of interest (Staller, 2021), and the population with the desired characteristic of units is deemed very rare (Frey, 2018). Specifically, the type of purposive sampling to be used is criterion sampling, where participants who fulfil the predetermined, specific criteria will be selected to participate in the study (Memon et al., 2025). Since the research objective of this study is to identify the perceptions of Malaysian Genshin Impact spenders and those who have followed or watched influencers' content, the use of criterion purposive sampling allows qualified respondents to contribute directly to answering the research objectives (Andrade, 2021).

Next, the snowball sampling method is used when researching hard-to-reach populations, and participants can refer other individuals who also meet the predetermined criteria to participate in the study (Ahmed S. K., 2024), creating a chain of referrals (Hair et al., 2019). Similar to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was used due to the challenges in directly contacting the spenders of Malaysian Genshin Impact players (Ting et al., 2025).

Establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria is also the first step in conducting snowball sampling via purposive sampling (Ting et al., 2025). For this study, the inclusion criteria for purposive sampling will be three: Malaysian Genshin Impact players who are

following a Genshin Impact influencer or watching their content on social media, and who have spent money on IAPs in Genshin Impact in the past six months, regardless of the amount spent. These inclusion criteria fulfil the research objectives, which aim to identify how influencers' credibility characteristics are perceived by Malaysian Genshin Impact spenders. Conversely, the exclusion criteria will be non-Malaysian Genshin Impact players, players who have not spent any money on IAPs in the past six months, and players who are not following or watching any influencers' content on social media platforms. Players who do not meet the inclusion criteria will be filtered out at the first stage of the questionnaire, which is the Preliminary Questions stage. By combining snowball sampling, which leverages respondents' social networks, with purposive sampling, the scalability and focus of a study can be ensured; subsequently, this approach is argued to be significantly effective in obtaining data for quantitative studies researching niche sectors (Memon et al., 2025).

As the study focuses on Malaysian Genshin Impact players who are following or consuming an influencer's content, and also spending money within the game on IAPs, within the past six months, purposive sampling and snowball sampling together will be suitable to recruit respondents from the population. Both methods are useful for reaching hard-to-reach participants, who are the target respondents for this study, as there are no publicly available lists of spenders in Genshin Impact in Malaysia. By also utilizing Preliminary Questions such as "Have you spent any money on IAPs in Genshin Impact in the past six (6) months?" to filter out ineligible participants who might dilute the findings of the study, the combination of purposive sampling with snowball sampling can help ensure the respondents have the qualifications to contribute meaningful and relevant data (Memon et al., 2025).

This process involved distributing a cross-sectional survey questionnaire via the Google Forms platform on various social media platforms where online communities of Malaysian Genshin Impact players can be found, such as Facebook (Genshin Impact (Malaysia)) and Discord (HoYoMY Community). The researcher published messages to the community containing the link to the online questionnaire, a call to action, and the inclusion criteria for initial filtering of qualified respondents. This helped ensure that community members could read the message and consider participating if they met the inclusion criteria. This method also allowed data to be collected at a single point in time and to determine

relationships between variables (Maier et al., 2023). While it is acknowledged that these online communities may not represent every individual spender of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the snowball sampling technique used in conjunction with purposive sampling helped enhance the study's access to respondents (Ting et al., 2025) who were otherwise not available in the aforementioned online communities.

Google Forms was chosen as the primary method for distributing questionnaires due to its simplicity and ease of use, and it was also found to have a more mobile-friendly design than the other methods, such as Microsoft Forms (Prasetya & Sofiani, 2025). In addition, the use of online questionnaires instead of physical questionnaires is that platforms such as Google Forms allow for the moderation and collection of responses from a large number of participants in a short time with greater ease (Singh & Sagar, 2021; Zimba & Gasparyan, 2023). Furthermore, asynchronous data collection in Google Forms also allowed for greater breadth and depth of data collection than synchronised data collection (Uleanya & Yu, 2023). Based on the empirical evidence above, the online questionnaire method via Google Forms was suitable for the purposes of this study, as Genshin Impact is a mobile game played on smartphones; therefore, the mobile-friendly design of Google Forms was chosen.

By using a structured questionnaire, this study aims to achieve high validity and reliability in assessing constructs such as source attractiveness, source expertise, source trustworthiness, source similarity, attitude towards the influencer, as well as repurchase intentions.

3.4.2 Unit of Analysis

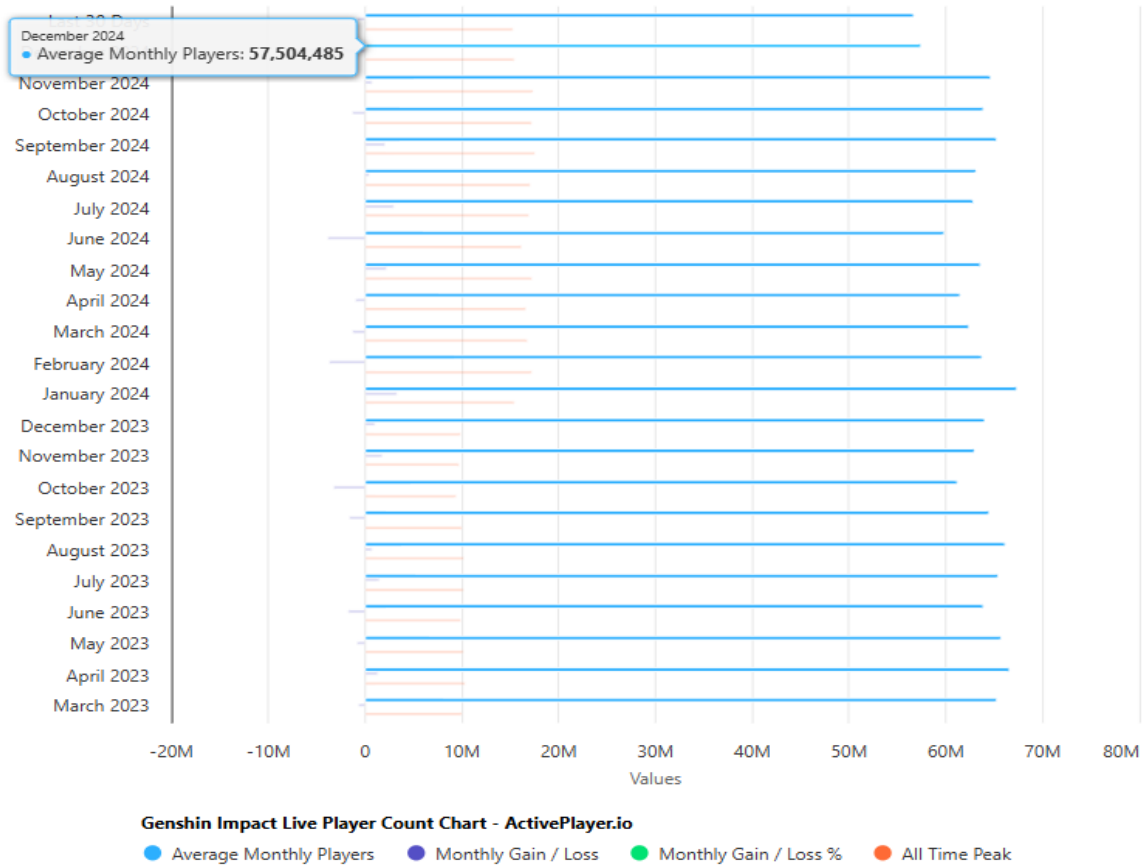
This study used the individual as the unit of analysis, focusing specifically on Malaysian players of Genshin Impact who are spending money on IAPs. The target respondents were Malaysian Genshin Impact players who have made IAPs within the past six (6) months in the game and are following or consuming content from the influencers they follow.

3.4.3 Study Population

The study population refers to the group of individuals who fulfil the criteria for the study. For this study, the population consisted of Malaysian players of Genshin Impact, specifically those who had made IAPs in the mobile game. The estimated total population of Genshin Impact players globally over the past 30 days, as of December 2024, is 57,504,485 across all servers (ActivePlayer, 2025). Figure 3-1 below provides information on the average monthly players, monthly player gain or loss, and the daily all-time peak number of players.

Regarding Malaysian players who play Genshin Impact, no population estimates were provided or made available on any online website or by the game developers themselves. Due to the research objectives of this study, which were to determine whether social media influencers' credibility factors influence spenders' attitudes towards them and whether this attitude influences spenders' repurchase intention, an a priori power analysis to determine the required sample sizes was carried out (Uttley, 2019). Additionally, conducting a power analysis requires three items: the alpha level, the power level, and the effect size. This study employed the settings recommended by Memon et al. (2020), and the sample size was calculated using statistical software such as G*Power (Erdfelder et al., 1996). Thus, G*Power software was used to calculate the minimum sample size needed via power analysis.

**Figure 3-1:
Number of Average Monthly Genshin Impact Players**



Source: ActivePlayer (2025)

3.4.4 Sample Size

According to Hair et al. (2022), the statistical power of estimates is an important factor that needs to be considered when determining the minimum sample size required for a study. Roscoe’s rule of thumb states that a sample size between 30 and 500 is sufficient for the majority of behavioural studies (Roscoe et al., 1975) and that a sample size larger than 500 would result in a Type 2 error (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Hair et al. (2013) had also argued for a ratio of ten-to-one to be an acceptable ratio to calculate the sample size needed according to the maximum number of structural paths pointing to a single variable in the model (Hair et al., 2017; Kock & Hadaya, 2018), which means 40 respondents based on this study.

The statistical software G*Power was used to determine the minimum sample size required for this study. This is because G*Power software is commonly used for social and

behavioural studies (Faul. et al., 2009). This method allows a direct estimate of the numbers needed compared with manual calculation using a formula, which may pose complexities for researchers who are not statistical experts (Serdar et al., 2020). The ideal power of a research is traditionally considered to be 0.8 or 80% (Hintze, 2008), despite claims that this value is considered to be rather low (Brysbaert, 2019). According to Memon et al. (2020), the G*Power software of power analysis is typically the most preferred choice for business and social science studies. In addition, G*Power software is considered easy to use for calculating sample sizes and performing power analyses, compared to other methods that might require a broad knowledge of statistics and/or software programming (Kang, 2021).

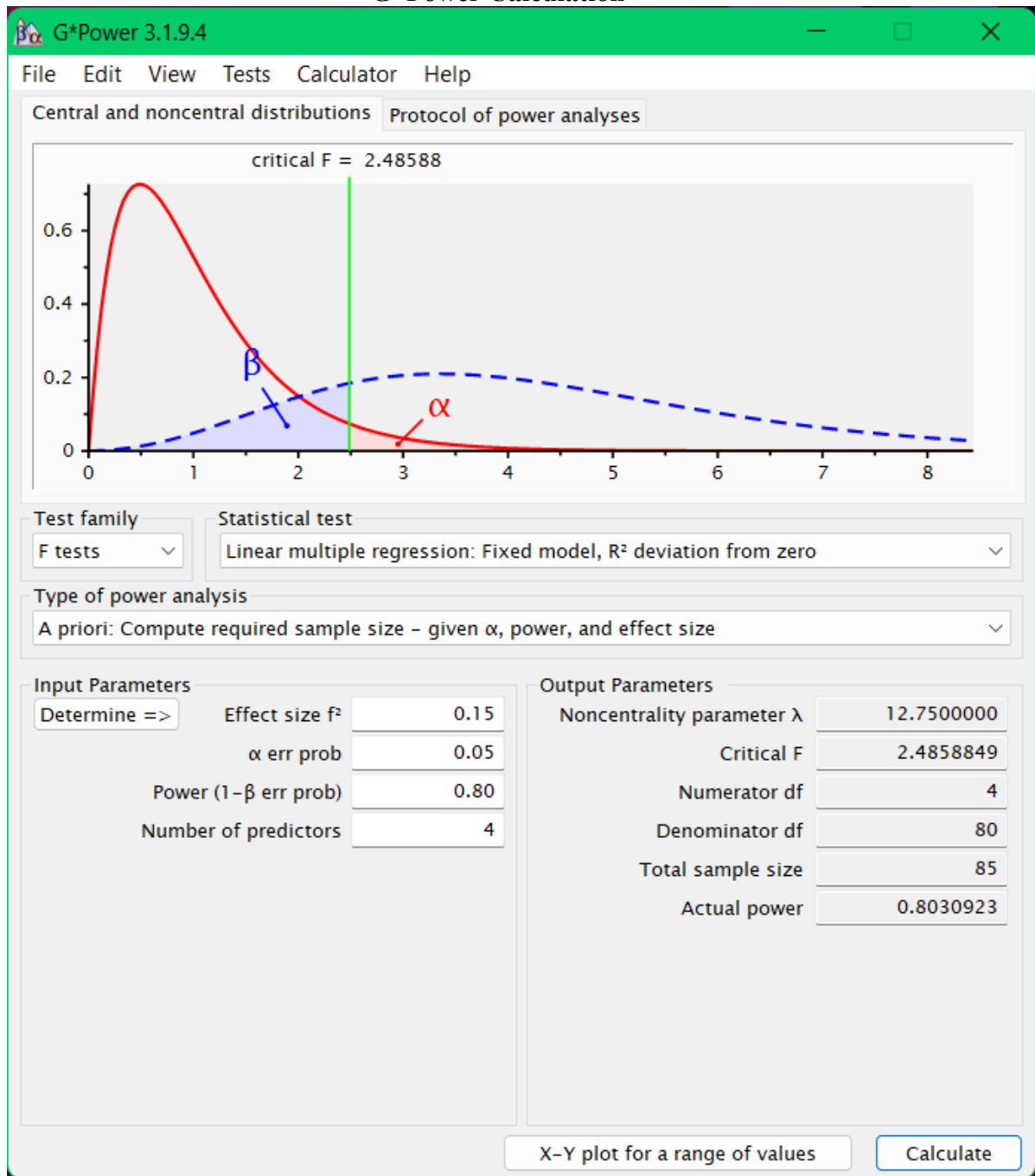
This study used the commonly recommended settings suggested by Memon et al. (2020) to determine the sample size. The selected analytical tests chosen are “F tests”, followed by “Linear multiple regression fixed model R², deviation from zero”. Then, the power analysis must be configured to be “A-priori: Compute required sample-size – given α , power, and effect size”. Next, the effect size was set at 0.15, indicating a medium effect, and the level of significance was set at 0.05. The ideal power size for this study was set at 0.80, as suggested by the most common setting for business and social science research (Hair et al., 2017), as well as for influencer marketing studies (Mya et al., 2025). The rule of thumb by Memon et al. (2020) suggested that the number of predictors is defined as the total maximum number of arrows pointing towards a single variable, which in this case will be 4 based on the conceptual framework proposed. As a result, a minimum of 85 samples was deemed necessary for this study, as shown in Figure 3-2.

Aguinis et al. (2020) argued that, besides performing a power analysis to identify the appropriate sample size, any potential attrition that might occur should be addressed by increasing the number of respondents by +15%. This is because a larger sample would increase the likelihood that the sample’s results generalise to the larger population. Thus, the minimum was increased to 98 samples, then rounded up to 100 as the minimum sample size, to reduce the risks mentioned. Furthermore, according to Hair et al. (2009), a sample size between 200 and 500 is sufficient for multivariate data analysis.

In addition, a study by Ericaska et al. (2022) used a sample size of 100, while Zhao et al. (2022) used a sample size of 490. In Malaysia, Hakim and Ismail (2022) had a sample size of 383. Thus, based on the G*Power analysis in Figure 3.2, the rule of thumb, and past

literature on mobile gaming, for the purposes of this study, a minimum of 200 questionnaires were distributed by the researcher via purposive and snowball sampling. According to Ting et al. (2025), by supplementing the snowball sampling technique with other sampling methods, such as purposive sampling, the validity and reliability of the collected data can be further enhanced.

**Figure 3-2:
G*Power Calculation**



3.5 Development of Questionnaire

A questionnaire survey was developed to obtain information on the components of social media influencers' credibility that lead to an impact on attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention among Malaysian players who have made IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact in the past six (6) months. The questionnaire was prepared in English and translated into Bahasa Malaysia using only Google Translate, with no controlled back-to-back translation procedures, and consisted of closed-ended questions with predetermined options or scales to choose from for each question.

There will be a total of 40 closed-ended questions in the questionnaire, and these questions were divided into their own sections, producing Sections A to 7. Section A outlined the preliminary questions to filter out qualified respondents, and Section 1 collected respondents' demographic information. Sections 2 to 5 then required respondents to report their perceptions of the social media influencer's credibility they were following or watching, based on the Source Credibility Theory dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity. Section 6 asked about the dependent variable, which is the respondents' attitude towards the influencers. In contrast, Section 7 asked about the outcome, which is their intention to repurchase the IAPs while playing Genshin Impact. A total of 30 questions were distributed across Sections 2 to 7.

3.5.1 Rating Scale

This study employed a 7-point Likert scale to measure all the independent variables used in this study, including the four credibility factors of influencer attractiveness, influencer expertise, influencer trustworthiness, and influencer similarity. Similarly, the dependent variables of the study, attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention, were also measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The use of a 7-point Likert scale has been shown to improve respondents' comprehension and enhance the accuracy of data collected on their attitudes and perceptions (Joshi et al., 2015; Krosnick & Presser, 2010). Finstad (2010) also found that a 7-point Likert scale is more appropriate for electronically distributed, unsupervised questionnaires.

3.5.2 Measurement of Constructs

The questionnaire items were adapted from existing research. Questions for influencer attractiveness were adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024). The items for influencer expertise were adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024), and Lou and Kim (2019), and the items for influencer trustworthiness were adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024). The items for influencer similarity were adapted from Filieri et al. (2023), Filieri et al. (2018), and Lou and Kim (2019).

Attitude towards influencer items was adapted from Magano et al. (2022) and Ooi et al. (2023), and finally, repurchase intention items were adapted from Alvarez-Risco et al. (2022), Ananda et al. (2023), Ding et al. (2022), and Setiawardani and Riyanto (2023). The total of 40 questions to be used for this research, the purpose, and measurement items are summarised in Table 3-1, and are explained in detail in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-1:
Summary of the Questionnaire's Sections**

Section	Purpose	No. of Measurement Items	Source
A	Preliminary Questions	3	-
1	Demographic Profile	7	-
2	Attractiveness	5	Garg & Bakshi (2024)
3	Expertise	5	Garg & Bakshi (2024); Lou & Kim (2019)
4	Trustworthiness	5	Garg & Bakshi (2024)
5	Similarity	5	Filieri et al. (2023); Filieri et al. (2018); Lou & Kim (2019)
6	Attitude towards Influencers	5	Magano et al. (2022); Ooi et al. (2023)
7	Repurchase Intention	5	Alvarez-Risco et al. (2022); Ananda et al. (2023); Ding et al. (2022); Setiawardani and Riyanto (2023)

3.5.3 Preliminary Questions and Demographic Variables

Section A of the questionnaire acts as the preliminary questions for the respondents. This section served as a filter, allowing respondents to proceed to the questionnaire. Questions such as citizenship in Malaysia, whether the players are following or watching an influencer's Genshin Impact content, and whether the players have made IAPs in the mobile game in the past six months.

Section 1 of the questionnaire focused on respondents' demographic information, including gender, age group, employment status, spending frequency, total spending range over the past six months, and monthly income range. Respondents were informed that the information collected is solely for analytical and academic purposes. By collecting this data, the researcher was able to easily explore and summarise demographic information, gain a clearer understanding of the respondents' characteristics, and facilitate a detailed analysis of the findings of this study.

3.6 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire consists of eight sections, namely the preliminary questions section (Section A), demographic questions (Section 1), four independent variables (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, similarity) (Sections 2 – 5), the dependent variable attitude towards influencers (Section 6), and the outcome variable of repurchase intention (Section 7). Table 3-2 depicts the full questionnaire and its items. The details of each variable are explained in the following sub-section.

**Table 3-2:
Measurement of items, constructs, and sources of references**

Section	Dimension	No. of Items	Code	Description	Sources	Rating Scale
A	Preliminary	3	1	Are you a Malaysian Genshin Impact player?	-	1 = Yes, 2 = No
			2	Are you currently following or watching a Genshin Impact influencer's content on social media platforms?		
			3	Have you spent money on in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in the past six (6) months?		
1	Demographic	7	1	Gender	-	-
			2	Age Group		
			3	Employment Status		
			4	Spending Frequency		
			5	Spending Range (in RM)		
			6	Income Range (in RM)		
			7	Platform to follow influencer		
2	Attractiveness	5	A1	I think this influencer is handsome/pretty.	Garg & Bakshi (2024)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			A2	The influencer that I follow has an attractive personality		
			A3	The influencer that I follow has a classy personality.		
			A4	The influencer has a unique charisma.		
			A5	The influencer's physical appearance in their content is visually-appealing.		
3	Expertise	5	E1	I feel this influencer knows a lot.	Garg & Bakshi (2024); Lou & Kim (2019)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			E2	I consider this influencer an expert in their area.		
			E3	This influencer has enough knowledge about the brands that they are promoting.		
			E4	This influencers' performance is professional in terms of providing factual infographics and statistics.		
			E5	When looking at their content, I think this influencer is qualified enough to give professional opinion.		
4	Trustworthiness	5	T1	The content provided by the influencer is dependable.	Garg & Bakshi (2024)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			T2	The influencer I follow is honest in making their content.		
			T3	The content is provided by an influencer with integrity.		
			T4	This influencer is sincere in making content		
			T5	This influencer is trustworthy.		

Table 3-2 continued

5	Similarity	5	S1	I can easily identify with this influencer.	Filieri et al. (2023); Filieri et al. (2018); Lou & Kim (2019)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			S2	This influencer and I have a lot in common.		
			S3	This influencer shares my values.		
			S4	This influencer has the same preferences as me.		
			S5	This influencer behaves like me.		
6	Attitude Towards Influencers	5	ATI1	I consider this influencer interesting	Magano et al. (2022); Ooi et al. (2023)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			ATI2	I consider this influencer pleasant.		
			ATI3	I consider this influencer likeable.		
			ATI4	I believe this influencer presents interesting content for Genshin Impact.		
			ATI5	I consider this influencer as a reliable source of information and news for Genshin Impact.		
7	Repurchase Intention	5	RI1	I intend to keep buying more in-app purchases in the future.	Alvarez-Risco et al. (2022); Ananda et al. (2023); Ding et al. (2022); Setiawardani and Riyanto (2023)	1 = Strongly agree and 7 = Strongly disagree
			RI2	I will recommend my friends/family/acquaintances to purchase in-app purchases in Genshin Impact.		
			RI3	I will find out about the Genshin Impact experience through people closest to me (family/friends/etc.) who have bought in-app purchases before.		
			RI4	The in-app purchases of Genshin Impact are worth buying.		
			RI5	I will give priority to Genshin Impact for my next in-app purchase.		

3.6.1 Attractiveness (IV-1)

The measurement items for attractiveness are adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024) and consist of five (5) items as listed in Table 3-3. This independent variable was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of the dimensions is shown in Table 3-3.

**Table 3-3:
Attractiveness measurement (IV-1)**

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
A1	My favourite beauty vlogger is beautiful.	I think this influencer is handsome/pretty.
A2	The beauty vlogger I follow has an attractive personality.	The influencer that I follow has an attractive personality
A3	The beauty vlogger that I follow has a classy personality.	The influencer that I follow has a classy personality.
A4	The beauty vloggers have unique charisma.	The influencer has a unique charisma.
A5	My favourite beauty vlogger is visually appealing.	The influencer is visually-appealing.

3.6.2 Expertise (IV-2)

The measurement items for expertise are adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024) and Lou and Kim (2019) and consist of five (5) items, as listed in Table 3-4. This independent variable was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of the dimensions is shown in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4:
Expertise measurement (IV-2)**

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
E1	I feel he/she knows a lot.	I feel this influencer knows a lot.
E2	I consider he/she as an expert on his/her area.	I consider this influencer an expert in their area.
E3	The beauty vlogger has enough knowledge about the products/brands that he/she endorses.	This influencer has enough knowledge about the brands that they are promoting.
E4	My favourite beauty vlogger's performance is professional.	This influencers' performance is professional.
E5	When looking at beauty vlogger's content, I think he/she is qualified enough to give professional opinion on the products/brands he/she uses.	When looking at their content, I think this influencer is qualified enough to give professional opinion.

3.6.3 Trustworthiness (IV-3)

The measurement items for trustworthiness are adapted from Garg and Bakshi (2024) and consist of five (5) items, as listed in Table 3-5. This independent variable was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of the dimensions is shown in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5:
Trustworthiness measurement (IV-3)

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
T1	The content provided by the beauty vlogger is dependable.	The content provided by the influencer is dependable.
T2	The beauty vlogger you follow is honest in making his/her content.	The influencer I follow is honest in making their content.
T3	The content provided by the beauty vlogger is reliable.	The content provided by this influencer is reliable.
T4	My favourite beauty vlogger is sincere in making content.	This influencer is sincere in making content
T5	My favourite beauty vlogger is trustworthy.	This influencer is trustworthy.

3.6.4 Similarity (IV-4)

The items for similarity are adapted from Filieri et al. (2023); Filieri et al. (2018); and Lou and Kim (2019), and consists of five (5) items as listed in Table 3-6. This independent variable was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of dimensions are shown in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6:
Similarity measurement (IV-4)

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
S1	I can easily identify with he/she.	I can easily identify with this influencer.
S2	He/she and I have a lot in common.	This influencer and I have a lot in common.
S3	Have the same values as I do.	This influencer shares my values.
S4	Have the same preferences as I do.	This influencer has the same preferences as me.
S5	This YouTube vlogger behaves like me.	This influencer behaves like me.

3.6.5 Attitude towards Influencers (DV)

The items for attitude towards influencers are adapted from Magano et al. (2022) and Ooi et al. (2023) and consists of five (5) items as listed in Table 3-7. This dependent variable

was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of dimensions are shown in Table 3-7.

**Table 3-7:
Attitude towards influencers (DV)**

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
ATI1	I consider the social media influencer interesting.	I consider this influencer interesting.
ATI2	I consider the social media influencer pleasant.	I consider this influencer pleasant.
ATI3	I consider the social media influencer likeable.	I consider this influencer likeable.
ATI4	I do believe that fashion influencers present interesting content.	I believe this influencer presents interesting content for Genshin Impact.
ATI5	I do consider fashion influencers as a reliable source of information and discovery.	I consider this influencer as a reliable source of information and news for Genshin Impact.

3.6.6 Repurchase Intention (Outcome)

The items for repurchase intention are adapted from Alvarez-Risco et al. (2022), Ananda et al. (2023), Ding et al. (2022), and Setiawardani and Riyanto (2023) and consists of five (5) items as listed in Table 3-8. The original and adapted items for RI2 and RI3 were amended to reflect the expert’s feedback after pre-testing. This outcome variable was measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree), and the measurement of dimensions are shown in Table 3-8.

**Table 3-8:
Repurchase Intention (Outcome)**

Code	Original Items	Adapted Items
RI1	I intend to continue purchasing products from this retailer in the future.	I intend to keep buying more in-app purchases in the future.
RI2	When the quarantine ends, I will recommend my friends/family/acquaintances make online purchases.	I will recommend my friends/family/acquaintances to purchase in-app purchases in Genshin Impact.
RI3	I will find out about the Bukalapak user experience through people closest to me (family/friends/etc.) who have shopped at Bukalapak.	I will find out about the Genshin Impact experience through people closest to me (family/friends/etc.) who have bought in-app purchases before.
RI4	The products of this e-commerce platform are worth buying.	The products of Genshin Impact are worth buying.
RI5	I will give priority to this e-commerce platform for my next purchase.	I will give priority to Genshin Impact for my next in-app purchase.

3.6.7 Data Collection Procedure

This study used a quantitative method to collect the required data, and a questionnaire survey tool was used to obtain information from Malaysian Genshin Impact players. The data will be gathered through various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Discord, and Reddit, to directly solicit responses from respondents. To design the questionnaire survey, Google Forms was used. This method helped filter for respondents who must fulfil the criteria of being Malaysian, having made IAPs in Genshin Impact within the past six months, and having followed an influencer or watched their content on social media platforms in the same time period to ensure consistency. Any responses that did not fulfil the requirements were rejected at Section A of the preliminary questions stage.

The questionnaire was distributed to respondents for two weeks, and respondents were given a time frame to complete it. The researcher also regularly monitored the response rate to ensure the minimum sample size was met. If the number of responses is low, another post will be made on social media to raise awareness among the target population again. If the minimum number of responses is still not fulfilled after two weeks, the survey will be extended for another two weeks before being closed. Once the survey is closed, the data will be processed and analysed.

The survey was pre-tested with experts from the academic and marketing industries. The feedback from the pre-testers was used to amend and refine the questionnaire items to improve clarity and reduce confusion. Then, the amended questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 individuals from the representative sample to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. Subsequently, the questionnaire was sent to national online groups and social media platforms to ensure a wider coverage of respondents and to accurately capture respondents in Malaysia. The internal reliability of the constructs was also assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values higher than 0.7 indicating reliability is ensured (Bonett & Wright, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

3.6.8 Pre-Test

The questionnaires were initially pre-tested with two experts from academia and the marketing industry. The experts were selected based on their experience and expertise in the

related field, and the questionnaire items were amended based on their comments. The pre-test is needed to ensure no ambiguity among the questionnaire items and that respondents understand the items as intended and designed (Sekaran, 2003). A pre-test will also help to identify any ambiguous or biased questions (Zikmund et al., 2010). The objective of these tests being carried out is to ensure content validity. Content validity is conducted to determine whether the measurement constructs are sufficiently representative of the scenario being measured (Sürücü & Maslakçı, 2020).

The pre-test was carried out in June 2025, before the pilot test and the actual data collection process. Pre-testing is one of the stages in using a questionnaire to determine how well it works (Hunt et al., 1982). The main objective of conducting a pre-test is to ensure that the chosen representatives of the population can understand the wording of the questions and that the instructions are sufficient and clear (Kumar et al., 2013). Thus, each item in the questionnaire will be pre-tested to avoid ambiguity or confusion (Zikmund et al., 2010) and to obtain validated questions. Conducting a pre-test with industry and academic experts helped ensure that respondents understood the questionnaire items as intended and designed (Memon et al., 2017). The rectified questionnaire constructs would then reduce biases (Sekaran, 2003) when distributed to the sample.

The experts' feedback from the pre-testing was then used to improve the questionnaire and to reduce or eliminate any ambiguity. While pre-testing requires no statistical analysis of its results (Memon et al., 2017), the feedback obtained from the pre-test enabled the researcher to determine if any questions are deemed irrelevant or repetitive. The final version of the questionnaire was amended and presented in Table 3-9 before submission to the supervisor for approval. Once the questionnaire was approved, it was sent out for pilot testing. This next step helped ensure the reliability and validity of all items and constructs in the questionnaire for the actual data collection process.

**Table 3-9:
Pre-test feedback and amendments**

Item	Before Expert's Feedback	After Expert's Feedback
A5	The influencer is visually-appealing.	The influencer's physical appearance in their content is visually-appealing.
E4	This influencers' performance is professional.	This influencers' performance is professional in terms of providing factual infographics and statistics.

Table 3-9 continued

T3	The content provided by this influencer is reliable.	The content is provided by an influencer with integrity.
RI2	It is likely that I will continue buying in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in the future.	I will recommend my friends/family/acquaintances to purchase in-app purchases in Genshin Impact.
RI3	If I could, I would continue buying in-app purchases in Genshin Impact.	I will find out about the Genshin Impact experience through people closest to me (family/friends/etc.) who have bought in-app purchases before.

3.6.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study can be considered a trial run or a smaller-scale version of a study, and is an important step to ensure that a full-fledged study can be carried out with a high success rate (Memon et al., 2017). According to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), one objective of conducting a pilot study is to collect preliminary data and assess the adequacy of the testing of the research instruments. While Cooper and Schindler (2011) suggest between 25 and 100 individuals are suitable for a pilot study, Hill (1998) suggests a range between 10 and 30 individuals instead. Bujang et al. (2024) recommended a sample size of 30 respondents to be sufficient to evaluate the questionnaire's construct reliability, while accounting for a non-response rate of 20%. A similar finding was reported by Memon et al. (2017), who suggested a pilot study with a sample of 30 individuals.

A pilot study was carried out not only to assess the data collection tools for understandability, but also to evaluate the feasibility of processes during the main data collection period, including recruitment and participation retention rates (Kunselman, 2024). In the context of gamified mobile apps, a study by Doğan-Südaş et al. (2023) carried out their pilot test with 20 individuals. Specifically, a past mobile gaming contextual study by Yang and Gong (2021) conducted their pilot study among 30 players, which is the same common number as utilised by other studies conducted in the mobile gaming context (Chaiworn & Tantasanee, 2024; Pangaribuan et al., 2021; Yang, J., 2025). Additionally, a study conducted in the Malaysian mobile gaming context also conducted a pilot test with 30 individual respondents (Abdullah et al., 2024). Therefore, for this study, 30 paying Malaysian players of Genshin Impact who are following or watching the content of social media influencers were also sourced from social media platforms to participate in the survey.

After the pilot test, a reliability test was recommended (Bujang et al., 2024; Memon et al., 2019). Traditionally, the coefficient alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire constructs (Memon et al., 2017), while items that did not meet the criterion of a score of 0.7 or higher were trimmed from the final version of the questionnaire. Based on the analysis carried out on the pilot test data, all of the constructs had coefficient alpha score of more than 0.7, specifically attractiveness ($\alpha = 0.789$), expertise ($\alpha = 0.874$), trustworthiness ($\alpha = 0.810$), similarity ($\alpha = 0.752$), attitude towards influencers ($\alpha = 0.861$), and repurchase intention ($\alpha = 0.702$). Once this is completed, the actual data collection process begins.

3.7 Statistical Analysis

The data collected were analysed using SmartPLS 4.0 software to conduct the required measurement and structural model tests. The data analysis is detailed in the following section.

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

For this study, descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to explore and analyse the respondents' profiles. Descriptive analysis provides a simple summary of the respondents' demographic profile that has been collected or observed (Dong, 2023), allowing the values to be presented in tabular form to provide an overview of the respondents' characteristics. The results grouped respondents by gender, age group, employment status, spending frequency, spending range, and income range.

3.7.2 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

Partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used as the data analysis technique in this study to analyse the data collected from the respondents. According to Hair et al. (2022), PLS-SEM has become the standard approach for analysing complex models and interrelationships among variables, with more flexible data requirements and measurement specifications.

One advantage of using PLS-SEM as a data analysis technique is its ability to focus not only on the predictive power of developed models (Sarstedt et al., 2021) but also on explanation. This strength aligns with the study's objectives to test the applicability of the extended source credibility framework, with emphasis on determining the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Secondly, while there are arguments that PLS-SEM allows small sample sizes to be used for analysis (Chin & Newsted, 1999), Reinartz et al. (2009) reported that PLS-SEM can achieve sufficient statistical power with as few as 100 observations. This criterion is also suitable for this study, as while the minimum sample size calculated by G*Power software was 85 respondents, the minimum number of questionnaires distributed was still 200. Thirdly, the PLS-SEM approach can also be used to explore the complex theoretical extensions of established theories (Hair et al., 2018). This study aims not only to explore the use of Source Credibility Theory in the mobile gaming industry but also to extend Sitorus et al.'s (2024) framework in this context by including a new moderator variable: player gender. Thus, the factors above collectively justified the choice of PLS-SEM as the data analysis technique for this research.

The primary analyses carried out for PLS-SEM are divided into two parts. The first part is the measurement model assessment, which examines the reliability and validity of the data. The second part is the structural model assessment, which consists of criteria such as path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) (Sarstedt et al., 2014).

For the measurement model assessment, both validity and reliability tests were carried out. For the structural model assessment, an inner model test was carried out. The researcher has summarised the tests required to be performed using PLS-SEM in Table 3-10 and Table 3-11 for easier comprehension. This table acts as a checklist throughout the analysis process.

**Table 3-10:
Measurement Model Assessments**

Model Evaluation	Parameter	Rule of thumb
Convergent Validity	Factor Loading	>0.5
	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	≥0.5
Discriminant Validity	Cross Loading	Correlation between indicators and construct is higher than other indicator
	Fornell-Larcker Criterion/HTMT	Loading score > scores in the latent construct itself
Reliability	Composite Reliability Cronbach's alpha	>0.7

**Table 3-11:
Structural Model Assessments**

Model Evaluation	Rule of thumb
Path coefficient	Significant at p-value < 0.05 (Henseler et al., 2009)
T-statistic (bootstrap)	>1.96: Significant; <1.96: Not significant even if relationship is positive
R ²	0.67: Substantial, 0.33: Moderate, 0.19: Low (Chin & Marcoulides, 1998); 0.75: Substantial, 0.50: Moderate, 0.25: Weak (Hair et al., 2017)
f ²	≥0.35: Large; ≥0.15: Medium; ≥0.02: Small (Cohen, 1988)
Predictive relevance/Q ²	Q ² > 0 : Model has predictive relevance; Q ² < 0 : Model lacks predictive relevance (Chin & Marcoulides, 1998)

3.7.3 Measurement Model Assessment

In partial-least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), a measurement model was used to specify the relationship between each latent variable and their indicator variables (Sarstedt et al., 2014). The measurement model allows the construct validity of latent variables to be assessed through the reliability and validity of the constructs used to measure them.

To assess the reliability of the constructs used, this study performed composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha tests. Composite reliability is suitable for SEM-based studies to assess reliability (Cheung et al., 2023), while Cronbach's alpha, by itself, is not sufficient for reliability assessments but is the most commonly reported reliability coefficient in SEM-based studies (Cho, 2016). Both tests were used to measure the internal consistency reliability of the indicators, and the rule of thumb is that values above 0.70 for both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are considered satisfactory or good (Hair et al., 2021).

Several tests were carried out to ensure construct validity, specifically factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), which are classified under convergent validity tests, as well as cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker/HTMT ratio, which are classified under discriminant validity tests. Factor loadings are used to assess indicator reliability (Benitez et al., 2020), and ideally, the value for factor loadings should be between 0.5 and 0.7, preferably higher than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2009). Despite this, factor loadings of > 0.5 are generally considered strong and accepted in most studies (Cheung et al., 2023; Shela et al., 2023). For average variance extracted (AVE), the rule of thumb is that the value should be greater than 0.5 to indicate convergent validity (Fauzi, 2022; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Guenther et al., 2023).

The Fornell-Larcker criterion is able to establish discriminant validity, and the square root of each construct's AVE should have a larger value compared with correlations with other latent constructs (Hair et al., 2022). Lastly, cross-loadings are used to assess the correlation between a latent construct and its indicators; the indicator loading toward its construct should be larger than the correlation with other constructs (Chin & Marcoulides, 1998).

To conclude, the measurement model used in this research was assessed using reliability tests, followed by validity tests that included convergent and discriminant validity.

3.7.4 Structural Model Assessment

In partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), a structural model displays the paths or relationships among the latent constructs in a study (Hair et al., 2021). This model explains how outcomes are related to preferences or other factors in a relationship (Low & Meghir, 2017) and can be assessed using tests such as R-square values, multiple regression, and path coefficient analysis (Harris & Gleason, 2022).

To assess the structural model used in this research, five tests were conducted: path coefficients, t-statistics (bootstrapping), R-square, f-square, and predictive relevance/ Q^2 . Path coefficients are used to explain changes in the dependent variable when the predictor variable changes by one unit (Hair et al., 2021). Values range between -1 and +1, with a value that is closer to +1 symbolizing a strong positive relationship and a value closer to -1

indicating a strong negative relationship. The coefficient of determination, also known as R^2 , is referred to as the predictive power (Rigdon, 2012) and is commonly used as a measure of the explanatory power of the model (Shmueli & Koppius, 2011). The R-square value ranges from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating greater explanatory power. According to Chin and Marcoulides (1998), a value greater than 0.67 indicates that the model has substantial predictive power. Generally, values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate substantial, moderate, and weak predictive power for the relationship (Hair et al., 2017).

For the t-statistic (bootstrapping), a value of 1.96 at the 5% significance level indicates a significant relationship, and a value below 1.96 indicates an insignificant relationship between the variables. Predictive relevance, or Q^2 , indicates whether a model is predictive. A Q^2 value of more than 0 denotes that the model has predictive relevance and that the values are well constructed, while values below 0 indicate a lack of predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2020).

Lastly, the f-square, or effect size, is the measure of the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. In PLS-SEM, when an independent variable is removed from the model, the effect size measures whether the excluded independent variable has a strong or weak effect on the dependent variable. According to Cohen (1988), the impact of the independent variable is considered high if the f^2 value is higher than or equal to 0.35, medium if the f^2 value is greater than or equal to 0.15, and small if the f^2 value is greater than or equal to 0.02.

In terms of the moderation analysis, this study will not employ Multi-Group Analysis (MGA), despite MGA being the preferred approach for categorical moderator variables. This is because the moderator variable used in this study, player gender, does not affect the entire research model (Memon et al., 2019). The purpose of MGA is to examine the influence of the moderator on all relationships within the model (Hair et al., 2014), which is more effective for the identification of relationships between two groups of respondents (Hair et al., 2021). Subsequently, as the player's gender is only expected to influence a specific structural path, which is the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention, a simple moderation analysis is sufficient and appropriate to be performed for the purposes of this study.

3.8 Conclusion

The research methodology used for this research has been described in Chapter 3, including the research approach, overall research design, questionnaire development, data collection procedure, as well as the data analysis techniques used to analyse the collected data. The results are presented, interpreted, and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the respondents' characteristics and discusses and interprets the statistical analysis techniques applied to the collected data. Various tests were carried out to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Descriptive statistical analysis was first performed and cleaned up in Microsoft Excel to derive the demographic profile of the respondents. Then, construct validity and reliability were evaluated through SmartPLS 4.0 software. The proposed hypotheses were also evaluated using software that allows comprehensive research models to be investigated further. This chapter also provides a summary of the outcomes from the structural model analysis.

4.2 Distributions of Questionnaire and Return Rate

Preliminary data analysis is a technique used to scrutinise and correct errors or inaccuracies in the collected dataset. Before performing the data analysis, the researcher manually screened the data set collected from respondents from May to July 2025 to check for any incomplete entries and to code the questionnaire responses into numerical values for analysis. Harman's single-factor test was first used to detect common method bias (CMB). Then, SmartPLS software was used to conduct the preliminary data analyses to assess the demographic information of the respondents. Out of the 250 responses, there were a total of 230 complete entries, which means a response rate of 92%.

Preliminary data analysis involves identifying any missing or incomplete data entries, assessing the presence of any uncommon patterns of response, and verifying the normality of the data set collected from respondents using recognised techniques. The first phase of the preliminary data analysis encompasses the identification of any missing data. As mentioned, of the 250 responses collected, 230 were deemed usable, meaning they had

fulfilled the preliminary criteria and had no missing data. The 230 responses, which translates into a response rate of 92%, were questionnaire entries that were fully filled out and also fulfilled the preliminary inclusion criteria of being a Malaysian citizen, following or watching a Genshin Impact content creator’s content, and having made an In-App Purchase (IAP) within the game in the past six months. This is because these 230 questionnaires were identified as those that could contribute important data to the analysis. In addition, while G*Power had established that a minimum of 85 respondents, rounded up to 100, would be sufficient, this study had assigned a minimum of 200 respondents based on past studies to be sufficient for the purposes of this study. Therefore, the study’s response rate is considered to be satisfactory as it had surpassed both the minimum sample size of G*Power recommendation as well as the one based on past studies in mobile gaming. Table 4-1 depicts the questionnaire distribution and response rate.

**Table 4-1:
Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate**

Questionnaire Returned	250
Questionnaire within criteria without missing data	230
Returned and Usable Questionnaire	230
Response Rate (%)	92.00%

Note: Minimum sample size of G*Power is 85 respondents, minimum sample size based on past mobile gaming studies is 200 respondents; with criteria (must be Malaysian, are following or watching a Genshin Impact content creators’ content, and have made an in-app purchase in the past six months)

4.2.1 Common Method Bias (CMB) Test

As the information for the independent and dependent variables is both obtained within one survey and from the same singular source of respondents, common method bias (CMB) should be tested to ensure the reliability and validity of not only the study items but also the results of the study (Kock et al., 2021). One of the most commonly used tests to detect common method bias is the full collinearity test using variance inflation factors (VIF), which was carried out during the initial data screening process before the detailed data analysis. If the VIF score exceeds 3.3, the data set is likely contaminated by common method bias (Kock, 2021). Conversely, if all VIF scores are 3.3 or lower, the model is considered free of common method bias (Kock, 2015; Pratisto et al., 2023). Table 4-2 shows the VIF scores for the measured items of the study, where the independent and dependent variables

all have VIF values lower than the threshold score of 3.3, which means the data set is free from common method bias, and the next steps of data analysis can be carried out.

**Table 4-2:
Common Method Bias Test Results**

	VIF Values
Attractiveness > Attitude	2.147
Expertise > Attitude	2.448
Trustworthiness > Attitude	2.761
Similarity > Attitude	2.575
Attitude > RepInt	1.004
Gender > RepInt	1.004

4.3 Respondents Profile

The data collected in this study were analysed using SmartPLS 4.0 software to test the proposed hypotheses and assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. A total of 230 valid questionnaires were returned by respondents who met the inclusion criteria for this study.

The data presented in the following sections are the results of an online survey conducted across various demographics, along with the 6 variables used in the study. The survey had gathered data from a total of 230 respondents, where the gender distribution of the sample shows that male respondents make up a majority of the responses, with 137 respondents or 59.56% of the total sample. In contrast, female respondents represent 92 or 40% of the total sample, with only 1 respondent preferring not to choose their gender, at 0.43%. According to Statista (2025), more than 70% of male respondents reported playing online games, compared with around 30% of female respondents. This also mirrors Malaysia's population trend, where there are approximately 111 males for every 100 females as of the first quarter of 2025 (Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), 2025). Similarly, the number of male respondents for this study is slightly more than the number of female respondents. The results, which emphasise the respondents' gender, are important, as this study aims to investigate the moderating impact of player gender in the mobile gaming industry in Malaysia.

In terms of age group, there were 37 respondents aged 18-22 (16.09%), 92 respondents in the age group of 23-27 (40%), 83 respondents aged 28 to 32 (36.09%), and

16 respondents aged between 33 and 37 (6.96%). In contrast, only 2 respondents were aged 37 or over (0.86%).

In terms of employment status, there were 11 unemployed respondents (4.78%), 52 students (22.61%), 22 respondents who were running their own business or are a business owner (9.57%), 38 respondents who are working in the government sector (16.52%), 104 respondents who are reported to be working in the private sector (45.22%), no respondents who were retired, and 3 respondents who are working in other sectors not specified in the questionnaire (1.30%).

In terms of spending frequency, 92 respondents stated that they had spent once in the past six months (40%), 100 respondents stating that they had spent between 2 to 4 times (43.48%), 30 respondents stating that they spent between 5 to 7 times (13.04%), and only 8 respondents spending more than 7 times in the past six months (3.48%).

In terms of spending range, 83 respondents stated that they only spent between RM 1 to 25 (36.09%), 52 respondents had spent between RM 26 to 50 (22.61%), 50 respondents spending between RM 51 to 75 in the past six months (21.74%), 20 respondents spending between RM 76 to 100 in the past six months (8.70%), and 25 respondents stated that they had spent more than RM 100 on Genshin Impact IAPs in the past six months (10.86%).

In terms of income range, 10 respondents reported that they were earning less than RM 2,000 per month (4.35%), followed by 54 respondents reported as earning between RM 2,001 to 3,000 per month (23.48%), 77 respondents stating that they earn between RM 3,001 to 4,000 per month (33.48%), 32 respondents earning between RM 4,001 to 5,000 per month (13.91%), only 2 respondents reportedly earning more than RM 5,000 per month (0.87%), and 51 respondents reported to have no income at the time of answering the questionnaire (22.17%).

For the type of social media platforms that respondents are following or watching the Genshin Impact influencers' content on, 126 respondents stating that they do so on Facebook, 208 respondents reported that they were doing so on YouTube platform, 30 respondents using Instagram to follow or watch Genshin Impact content, 135 respondents following or watching their Genshin Impact content creator or influencers' content on

TikTok, and 60 respondents stating that they use Discord to follow or watch content. For others, there were only 2 respondents who used the Chinese social media platform BiliBili to follow or watch Genshin Impact-related content, and only 3 who used the online streaming platform Twitch to do so. A complete demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 4-3.

**Table 4-3:
Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Demographic Profile	Category	Frequency (N = 230)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	137	59.56
	Female	92	40
	Prefer not to say	1	0.43
Age Group	18 – 22	37	16.09
	23 – 27	92	40
	28 – 32	83	36.09
	33 – 37	16	6.96
	37+	2	0.86
Employment Status	Unemployed	11	4.78
	Student	52	22.61
	Own business/business owner	22	9.57
	Government sector	38	16.52
	Private sector	104	45.22
	Retired	-	-
	Others	3	1.30
Spending Frequency (in the past six months)	Spent once	92	40
	2 – 4 times	100	43.48
	5 – 7 times	30	13.04
	More than 7 times	8	3.48
Spending Range (in RM)	Between RM 1 – 25	83	36.09
	Between RM 26 – 50	52	22.61
	Between RM 51 – 75	50	21.74
	Between RM 76 – 100	20	8.70
	More than RM 100	25	10.86
Income Range (in RM)	< RM 2,000	10	4.35
	Between RM 2,001 – 3,000	54	23.48
	Between RM 3,001 - 4,000	77	33.48
	Between RM 4,001 – 5,000	32	13.91
	More than RM 5,000	2	0.87
	No income	51	22.17
Which social media platform?	Facebook	126	-
	YouTube	208	-
	Instagram	30	-
	TikTok	135	-
	Discord	60	-
	Others	5	-

4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Table 4-4 provides a summarised description of the descriptive statistics of each variable, such as the number of observations (N), mean values, and standard deviations (SD). Based on the analysis, the following observations are depicted:

Attractiveness: Across all five dimensions of attractiveness, the mean scores range between 4.709 and 5.713.

Expertise: Across all five dimensions of expertise, the mean scores range from 5.365 to 5.804, indicating generally very favourable perceptions among respondents regarding the expertise of the Genshin Impact influencer they follow or watch.

Trustworthiness: The mean scores for the trustworthiness construct range from 5.591 to 5.757, indicating a high average positive perception of trustworthiness attributed to the influencer.

Similarity: Across the five dimensions of similarity, the mean scores range from 4.874 to 5.861, reflecting fluctuations and some variability in respondents' perceptions.

Attitude Towards Influencers: The respondents generally have a very favourable perception towards the influencers, with a mean score range between 5.631 and 5.796 across the five dimensions of attitude.

Repurchase Intention: The mean scores across all five repurchase intention dimensions range from 4.174 to 5.630, indicating varying willingness to repurchase IAPs in Genshin Impact. This means that respondents could feel negatively about certain dimensions while still having positive perceptions of others.

The descriptive analysis section provides important insights regarding the distribution and properties of the variables used in the study. These findings serve as the basis for subsequent data analysis, allowing a deeper investigation of relationships between the source credibility factors and their impact on attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention in the Genshin Impact context.

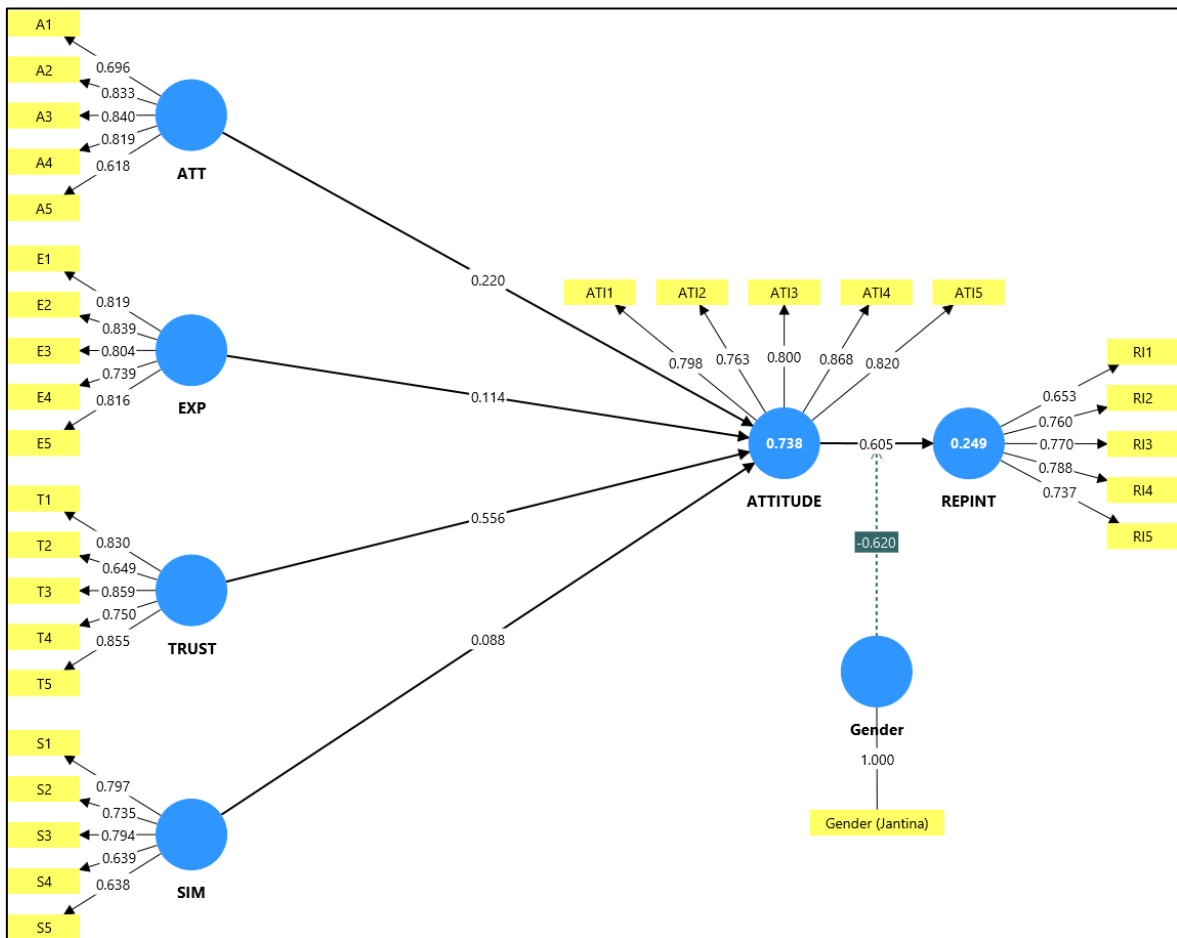
**Table 4-4:
Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Study**

N	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation (SD)
230	Attractiveness 1	4.709	1.098
	Attractiveness 2	5.713	0.783
	Attractiveness 3	5.570	0.798
	Attractiveness 4	5.470	0.714
	Attractiveness 5	4.822	1.197
230	Expertise 1	5.596	0.801
	Expertise 2	5.804	0.786
	Expertise 3	5.526	0.795
	Expertise 4	5.365	0.888
	Expertise 5	5.761	0.802
230	Trustworthiness 1	5.643	0.815
	Trustworthiness 2	5.678	0.729
	Trustworthiness 3	5.757	0.840
	Trustworthiness 4	5.591	0.785
	Trustworthiness 5	5.687	0.773
230	Similarity 1	5.209	0.850
	Similarity 2	4.874	1.066
	Similarity 3	5.448	0.836
	Similarity 4	5.861	0.677
	Similarity 5	4.898	1.145
230	Attitude Towards Influencers 1	5.630	0.733
	Attitude Towards Influencers 2	5.661	0.784
	Attitude Towards Influencers 3	5.661	0.790
	Attitude Towards Influencers 4	5.687	0.790
	Attitude Towards Influencers 5	5.796	0.873
230	Repurchase Intention 1	5.630	0.922
	Repurchase Intention 2	4.552	1.437
	Repurchase Intention 3	4.509	1.444
	Repurchase Intention 4	5.639	0.800
	Repurchase Intention 5	4.174	1.573

4.5 Assessment of Measurement Model

After the descriptive analyses have been carried out, the next phase involves validating the reliability and construct validity of the measurement model before advancing to hypothesis testing in the following phase. Figure 4-1 depicts the measurement model, showing the relationships among the constructs and their respective indicator variables (Hair et al., 2021). For convergent validity, indicator reliability, factor loadings, and average variance extracted (AVE) will be assessed. Then, discriminant validity will be tested using cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the HTMT ratio. Subsequently, the SmartPLS 4.0 software was used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the model.

**Figure 4-1:
Measurement Model**



4.6 Convergent Validity

In this study, the validity of the constructs was first assessed through convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity consists of performing analytical tests such as factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). To assess discriminant validity, tests such as cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and the HTMT ratio will be conducted. The reliability tests will be carried out using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha.

4.6.1 Factor Loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The validity of the indicators was assessed using factor loadings. The suggested validity loadings are greater than 0.5 (Cheung et al., 2023; Shela et al., 2023) or greater than

0.7 (Hair et al., 2009). For this study, factor loadings that possess a score of more than 0.5 were considered to be acceptable, thus confirming the construct's validity.

Table 4-5 shows the item loadings and cross-loadings, which relate each item to its intended construct (loadings) and to other constructs (cross-loadings). According to Table 4-5, the loading values ranged from 0.618 to 0.840 for attractiveness, 0.739 to 0.839 for expertise, 0.649 to 0.859 for trustworthiness, and 0.639 to 0.797 for similarity. For attitude towards influencers, the loading values ranged from 0.769 to 0.868, and for repurchase intention, the loading values ranged from 0.655 to 0.793.

As mentioned in the previous section, a cutoff factor loading value of more than 0.5 will be considered significant (Cheung et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2009). Additionally, cross-loadings were calculated to evaluate potential issues with each item. As shown in Table 4-6, the cross-loadings for all items measuring a construct had surpassed all cross-loadings with other constructs.

Additionally, convergent validity is considered achieved if the average variance extracted (AVE) is equal to or greater than 0.5, as suggested by Fauzi (2022), Fornell and Larcker (1981), and Guenther et al. (2023). An AVE of 0.5 or higher indicates that the construct accounts for more than half of the variance in the associated indicators (Cheung et al., 2023). As shown in Table 4-5, all AVEs exceed the minimum value of 0.5, ranging from 0.525 to 0.657. In combination with the factor loadings, this suggests that the measurement model has high convergent validity in this study.

**Table 4-5:
Factor Loadings, Cronbach Alpha, CR, and AVE**

Construct	Item	Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Convergent Validity	rho A
Attractiveness	A1	0.696	0.835	0.875	0.59	Yes	0.873
	A2	0.833					
	A3	0.840					
	A4	0.819					
	A5	0.618					
Expertise	E1	0.819	0.863	0.901	0.65	Yes	0.867
	E2	0.839					
	E3	0.804					
	E4	0.739					
	E5	0.816					
Trustworthiness	T1	0.830	0.85	0.893	0.63	Yes	0.867
	T2	0.649					
	T3	0.859					
	T4	0.750					
	T5	0.855					
Similarity	S1	0.797	0.777	0.845	0.52	Yes	0.795
	S2	0.735					
	S3	0.794					
	S4	0.639					
	S5	0.638					
Attitude Towards Influencers	ATI1	0.798	0.869	0.905	0.66	Yes	0.872
	ATI2	0.763					
	ATI3	0.800					
	ATI4	0.868					
	ATI5	0.820					
Repurchase Intention	RI1	0.653	0.819	0.860	0.55	Yes	0.813
	RI2	0.760					
	RI3	0.770					
	RI4	0.788					
	RI5	0.737					

Note: Criteria: Composite Reliability > 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021), AVE ≥ 0.5 (Fauzi, 2022; Guenther et al., 2023)

4.6.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity analysis is important to ensure that two measurement constructs are empirically distinguishable from one another (Rönkkö & Cho, 2020). The

construct is considered to have discriminant validity when it measures the specific construct it was intended to measure, rather than any other constructs in the research model. For this section, the discriminant validity tests to be carried out will be the cross-loading, Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

The cross-loading test examines how strongly an indicator or item is loaded onto other constructs within the measurement model. Even though it is considered a basic form of discriminant validity, it can still be established when the indicators load primarily onto their intended constructs and show weak correlations with other constructs. This means that the items are measuring the construct they were supposed to measure more strongly than any other constructs. Table 4-6 presents the cross-loadings of this study. Based on Table 4-6, discriminant validity can be established, as each indicator is correctly and strongly loaded onto the construct it is intended to measure.

**Table 4-6:
Cross-loading Result**

	ATT	ATTITUDE	EXP	GENDER	REPINT	SIM	TRUST
A1	0.696	0.321	0.168	-0.058	0.591	0.576	0.254
A2	0.833	0.589	0.566	-0.041	0.567	0.530	0.433
A3	0.840	0.562	0.506	-0.116	0.521	0.579	0.510
A4	0.819	0.601	0.566	-0.040	0.508	0.586	0.531
A5	0.618	0.221	0.080	-0.034	0.583	0.467	0.188
ATI1	0.548	0.798	0.549	-0.048	0.396	0.537	0.658
ATI2	0.441	0.763	0.543	-0.043	0.270	0.515	0.602
ATI3	0.584	0.800	0.474	-0.110	0.351	0.637	0.633
ATI4	0.552	0.868	0.636	-0.002	0.394	0.539	0.668
ATI5	0.492	0.820	0.648	-0.053	0.162	0.529	0.756
E1	0.517	0.646	0.819	0.002	0.329	0.482	0.650
E2	0.395	0.571	0.839	-0.011	0.190	0.394	0.576
E3	0.463	0.538	0.804	-0.071	0.285	0.526	0.641
E4	0.471	0.527	0.739	-0.036	0.365	0.562	0.574
E5	0.430	0.532	0.816	0.111	0.191	0.370	0.541
RI1	0.410	0.376	0.446	-0.106	0.653	0.344	0.335
RI2	0.497	0.189	0.006	-0.030	0.760	0.478	0.120
RI3	0.504	0.164	-0.027	-0.017	0.770	0.466	0.099
RI4	0.604	0.343	0.437	-0.109	0.788	0.459	0.335
RI5	0.519	0.221	0.027	-0.107	0.737	0.483	0.144
S1	0.603	0.629	0.398	-0.127	0.474	0.797	0.569
S2	0.472	0.358	0.244	-0.153	0.551	0.735	0.332
S3	0.656	0.494	0.434	-0.161	0.394	0.794	0.541
S4	0.357	0.546	0.662	-0.003	0.266	0.639	0.551
S5	0.424	0.292	0.231	-0.064	0.564	0.638	0.290
T1	0.385	0.687	0.638	-0.220	0.156	0.503	0.830
T2	0.463	0.499	0.574	-0.102	0.030	0.503	0.649
T3	0.450	0.730	0.631	-0.027	0.261	0.576	0.859
T4	0.445	0.568	0.476	-0.265	0.384	0.530	0.750
T5	0.432	0.724	0.624	-0.186	0.248	0.546	0.855
Gender (Jantina)	-0.077	-0.063	-0.002	1.000	-0.116	-0.139	-0.198

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion tests whether the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for a construct is greater than the average variance extracted for all other constructs in the model. Discriminant validity is established if the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlations with all the other constructs. Table 4-7 presents the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion of this study. Based on Table 4-7, the square root

of the AVE is greater than all the other constructs below it. This means that discriminant validity is established.

**Table 4-7:
Fornell-Larcker Criterion Results**

	ATT	ATTIDE	EXP	REPIN	SIM	TRUST	Gender
ATT	0.766						
ATTDE	0.648	0.810					
EXP	0.568	0.704	0.804				
REPINT	0.689	0.392	0.339	0.743			
SIM	0.704	0.681	0.580	0.591	0.724		
TRUST	0.542	0.719	0.744	0.330	0.668	0.792	
Gender	-0.077	-0.063	-0.002	-0.116	-0.139	-0.198	1.000

The heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio test evaluates the correlation between indicators across varying constructs (heterotrait) compared to the correlation of the indicators with the same construct (monotrait). Discriminant validity is established if the HTMT scores are smaller than 0.90 (Ringle et al., 2024; Roemer et al., 2021). Table 4-8 below presents the HTMT ratio for this study. Based on Table 4-8, all scores are less than 0.90. This means that the constructs' discriminant validity is established. Therefore, the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs is established. This enhances the validity of the findings.

**Table 4-8:
HTMT Ratio Results**

	ATT	ATTIDE	EXP	REPIN	SIM	TRUST	GENDER
ATT	0.692						
ATTDE	0.581	0.809					
EXP	0.871	0.410	0.384				
REPINT	0.885	0.778	0.664	0.790			
SIM	0.597	0.845	0.868	0.365	0.781		
TRUST	0.081	0.068	0.062	0.107	0.159	0.220	
Gender	0.200	0.640	0.308	0.037	0.397	0.464	1.000

4.6.3 Indicator Reliability

Cronbach's alpha coefficient measures the internal consistency of the measurement items (Zakariya, 2022). Table 4-9 presents the loadings and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the four dimensions: Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Similarity. In addition, the values for Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention were presented as well. It is considered that all indicators were reliable.

In summary, all item loadings exceeded the recommended alpha value of 0.7, as suggested by previous studies (Cheung et al., 2023; Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021). More specifically, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Similarity all range from 0.777 to 0.863, while the values for Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention were 0.869 and 0.819, respectively. This depicts that multiple measurement items of the model were reliable, appropriate, and had acceptable levels of internal consistency.

Additionally, Composite Reliability (CR) is used to assess the scale items' reliability. As suggested by Hair et al. (2021), the CR value should be greater than 0.7 to ensure satisfactory internal reliability. The findings of this reliability test are also depicted in Table 4-9. The results show that all six constructs have CR scores exceeding the 0.7 threshold, with Attractiveness (0.875), Expertise (0.901), Trustworthiness (0.893), Similarity (0.845), Attitude Towards Influencers (0.905), and Repurchase Intention (0.859). Combined with the Cronbach alpha coefficients, the results show and confirm the internal reliability of the measurement model. Thus, the internal consistency reliability of the constructs used in this study can be considered to be acceptable. Therefore, the model has established satisfactory levels of validity and reliability.

**Table 4-9:
Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) Results**

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)
Influencer Attractiveness	0.835	0.875
Influencer Expertise	0.863	0.901
Influencer Trustworthiness	0.850	0.893
Influencer Similarity	0.777	0.845
Attitude Towards Influencers	0.869	0.905
Repurchase Intention	0.819	0.860

4.7 Measurement of Structural Models

After validating the validity and reliability of the components of the measurement model, the structural model assessment can be carried out. The purpose of evaluating the structural model in this study is to test the hypotheses underlying it, thereby helping answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. In addition, structural model assessment allows testing the model's predictive capabilities.

To carry out the structural model analysis process, the researcher will follow the guidelines suggested by Hair et al. (2018) and Subhaktiyasa (2024), first selecting the “calculate” process and the “bootstrapping” option, and running the analysis with 5,000 bootstrap subsamples. In addition, the Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) Bootstrap option was selected before running the calculation. The results will be presented in steps as suggested.

4.7.1 Multicollinearity Check (VIF)

To perform a multicollinearity check, the variance inflation factor (VIF) test was conducted. VIF analysis is a statistical assessment method used to determine if there are any independent variables with a high degree of linear intercorrelation with one another within the model (Park & Mun, 2024). VIF scores less than 1 imply no multicollinearity; VIF scores ranging from 1 to 5 indicate slight multicollinearity; and VIF scores exceeding 5 but still less than 10 indicate moderate multicollinearity (Janizadeh et al., 2023). A common rule of thumb for severe multicollinearity is a VIF score greater than 10 (Jeng, 2023). A VIF analysis was conducted on the research model and all items of the independent, dependent, and outcome variables. The test results show the items have VIF scores ranging from 1.248 to 2.515 on average, with several items displaying slightly higher scores at 3.752 (Attractiveness 1) and 3.490 (Attractiveness 5). However, as these items are still within the cutoff threshold of 10 as the upper limit and 5 as the lower limit of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019), collinearity among the variables and items was not considered as a major problem in this study (Vörösmarty & Dobos, 2020), and the items were kept.

4.7.2 Hypothesis Testing

This study proposed six hypotheses to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Four of these hypotheses (H1–H4) examined the direct relationships between the attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity items and Attitude Towards Influencers (ATI).

The fifth hypothesis (H5) investigated the direct relationship between Attitude Towards Influencers (ATI) and Repurchase Intention (RI). In addition, the moderating effect of player gender, specifically for male players, on the relationship between Attitude Towards Influencers (ATI) and Repurchase Intention (RI) was examined. All hypotheses were tested using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results, including the path coefficients and p-values, are displayed in Table 4-10.

4.7.2.1 *Attractiveness – Attitude Towards Influencers*

H1 (attractiveness > attitude towards influencers) proposed a positive and significant relationship between influencer attractiveness and attitude towards influencers. Based on Table 4.10, the results show a statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.005$), this means a significant influence of attractiveness on attitude towards influencers. A path coefficient of 0.220 indicates a positive relationship between attractiveness and attitude towards influencers, where a one-unit increase in attractiveness is associated with a 0.220-unit increase in the spenders' attitude towards influencers. Therefore, H1 is supported.

4.7.2.2 *Expertise – Attitude Towards Influencers*

H2 (expertise > attitude towards influencers) proposed a positive and significant relationship between influencer expertise and attitude towards influencers. Based on Table 4.10, the results show a statistically insignificant but positive relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.121 ($p > 0.005$), this means an insignificant influence of expertise on attitude towards influencers. A path coefficient of 0.114 still indicates a positive relationship between expertise and attitude towards influencers, where a one-unit increase in expertise will lead to a 0.114-unit increase in the spenders' attitude towards influencers. However, as H2 does not fulfil both criteria of being statistically significant and positive, H2 is not supported.

4.7.2.3 Trustworthiness – Attitude Towards Influencers

H3 (trustworthiness > attitude towards influencers) proposed a positive and significant relationship between influencer trustworthiness and attitude towards influencers. Based on Table 4.10, the results show a statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), this means a significant influence of trustworthiness on attitude towards influencers. A path coefficient of 0.556 indicates a positive relationship between trustworthiness and attitude towards influencers, where a one-unit increase in trustworthiness is associated with a 0.556-unit increase in the spenders' attitude towards influencers. As H3 fulfils both criteria of being statistically significant and positive, H3 is supported.

4.7.2.4 Similarity – Attitude Towards Influencers

H4 (similarity > attitude towards influencers) proposed a positive and significant relationship between influencer similarity and attitude towards influencers. Based on Table 4.10, the results show a statistically insignificant but positive relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.145 ($p > 0.005$), this means an insignificant influence of similarity on attitude towards influencers. A path coefficient of 0.088 still indicates a positive relationship between similarity and attitude towards influencers, where a 1-unit increase in similarity will lead to a 0.088-unit increase in the spenders' attitude towards influencers. However, as H4 does not fulfil both criteria of being statistically significant and positive, H4 is not supported.

4.7.2.5 Attitude Towards Influencers – Repurchase Intention

H5 (attitude towards influencers > repurchase intention) proposed a positive and significant relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention. Based on Table 4.10, the results show a statistically significant, positive relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), this means a significant influence on attitude towards influencers on repurchase intention. A path coefficient of 0.605 indicates a positive relationship between trustworthiness and attitude towards influencers, where a one-unit increase in attitude towards influencers is associated with a 0.605-unit increase in the spenders' repurchase intention. As H5 fulfils both criteria of being statistically significant and positive, H5 is supported.

4.7.2.6 Attitude Towards Influencers – Repurchase Intention

H6 (gender X attitude towards influencers > repurchase intention) proposed a significant moderating effect for male players on the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention. Based on Table 4-10, the results show a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. With a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), this indicates a significant moderating effect of player gender on attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention. A negative path coefficient of 0.620 indicates a stronger moderating effect among male players than among female players. As H6 fulfils the criteria of being statistically significant for male players, H6 is supported.

**Table 4-10:
Summary of Path Coefficients, Standard Deviation, t-statistic, p-value, and Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Std Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Attractiveness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.220	0.068	3.212	0.001*	Supported
H2	Expertise > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.114	0.074	1.550	0.121	Not Supported
H3	Trustworthiness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.556	0.076	7.288	0.000*	Supported
H4	Similarity > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.088	0.061	1.457	0.145	Not Supported
H5	Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	0.605	0.074	8.207	0.000*	Supported
H6	Gender x Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	-0.620	0.148	4.180	0.000*	Supported

Figure 4-2:
Slope Analysis for Moderating Effect
 Gender_D x ATTITUDE

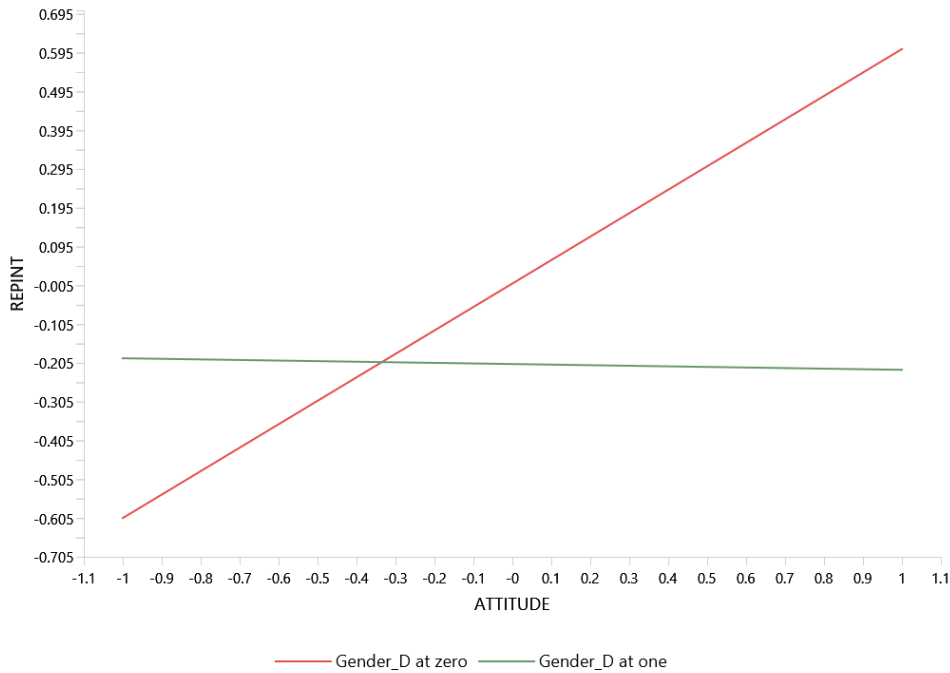


Figure 4-2 revealed a significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention. The plot shows a steeper, positive gradient for Zero (Gender = Male) compared to One (Gender = Female). Thus, this shows that the impact of attitude towards influencers on subsequent repurchase intention is stronger for male respondents than for female respondents.

4.7.3 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

To assess the model's predictive accuracy, the R^2 value (coefficient of determination) is examined. This value quantifies the amount of total variance within an endogenous construct that can be attributed to the associated exogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2018; Subhaktiyasa, 2024). The R^2 values range from 0 to 1, with higher values closer to 1 indicating greater explanatory power and lower values closer to 0 indicating weaker explanatory power. As a general guideline, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered to have strong, moderate, and weak explanatory powers, respectively (Hair et al., 2017).

Based on Table 4-11, the R^2 value of attitude towards influencers is 0.734. This means that 73.4% of the variation in the attitude of players towards influencers can be

explained by the changes in the source credibility factors' items. Based on the rule of thumb above, this indicates a moderate but strong explanatory power of source credibility factors in influencing attitudes towards influencers. Subsequently, the R^2 value for repurchase intention is 0.239, indicating that only 23.9% of the variation in repurchase intention can be explained by changes in attitude towards influencers. Based on the rule of thumb, the explanatory power of attitude towards influencers on repurchase intention is very weak.

**Table 4-11:
Summary of R^2 results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	R^2
H1	Influencer Attractiveness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.734
H2	Influencer Expertise > Attitude Towards Influencers	
H3	Influencer Trustworthiness > Attitude Towards Influencers	
H4	Influencer Similarity > Attitude Towards Influencers	
H5	Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	0.314
H6	Gender x Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	

4.7.4 Effect Size (f^2)

Next, the effect size of the direct relationship is evaluated by quantifying the effect size of the f^2 value. This analysis involves observing the changes in R^2 when specific exogenous constructs are removed from the model. This allows a better understanding of whether the excluded construct would significantly influence the endogenous variable simply by examining the changes in R^2 when the construct is removed.

As a general guideline, the effect size of more than or equal to 0.02 (≥ 0.02) is considered small, more than or equal to 0.15 is medium (≥ 0.15), and more than or equal to 0.35 is considered large (≥ 0.35) (Cohen, 1988). This is similar to the rule of thumb for effect sizes proposed by Hair et al. (2018). For Hypotheses 1 to 6, the results will be presented in Table 4-12. However, for the moderating variable, effect sizes are denoted as values greater than 0.005, 0.01, and 0.025, representing low, moderate, and high effects (Subhaktiyasa, 2024). Notably, trustworthiness exhibits the largest effect size on attitude towards influencers, with an f^2 value of 0.428, indicating that when omitted from the model, it significantly influences the attitude towards influencers variable.

**Table 4-12:
Effect Size Values**

Hypothesis	Relationship	f²	Inference
H1	Attractiveness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.086	Small
H2	Expertise > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.020	Small
H3	Trustworthiness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.428	Large
H4	Similarity > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.012	Small
H5	Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	0.314	Medium
H6	Gender x Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	0.116	Large

4.7.5 Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The evaluation of the model's predictive relevance relies on Stone-Geisser's Q² value (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). This process involves the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS 4.0 software. If the Q² value exceeds zero for a specific construct, it indicates that the construct's structural model has predictive accuracy. According to Chin and Marcoulides (1998), if Q² exceeds zero, the model is predictive. The model is considered to have small, medium, and large predictive relevance when the Q² values are higher than 0.025, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively (Hair et al., 2017). For this study, the confirmation of predictive relevance was established as both the Q² values are greater than zero, with substantial predictive relevance for attitude towards influencers (Q² = 0.724), and medium predictive relevance for repurchase intention (Q² = 0.239). The results of predictive relevance will be presented in Table 4-13. Subsequently, a summary of the structural model assessment will be presented in Table 4-13.

**Table 4-13:
Summary of Path Coefficients, t-value, p-value, R-square, f-square, Q-square, and Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Std Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision	R ²	f ²	Q ²
H1	Attractiveness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.220	0.068	3.212	0.001*	Supported		0.086	
H2	Expertise > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.114	0.074	1.550	0.121	Not Supported		0.020	
H3	Trustworthiness > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.556	0.076	7.288	0.000*	Supported	0.734	0.428	0.724
H4	Similarity > Attitude Towards Influencers	0.088	0.061	1.457	0.145	Not Supported		0.012	
H5	Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	0.605	0.074	8.207	0.000*	Supported	0.239	0.314	0.239
H6	Gender x Attitude Towards Influencers > Repurchase Intention	-0.620	0.148	4.180	0.000*	Supported		0.116	

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents a detailed examination of the data and the research outcomes. A preliminary analysis was conducted to assess and improve the data's usability. SmartPLS 4.0 software was used to perform PLS-SEM analysis in order to interpret and present the results. Additionally, Harman's single-factor test was applied to the data set to detect common method bias (CMB). The assessment model was then analysed via convergent and discriminant validity, as well as indicator reliability. The structural model was analysed via path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2 values. Then, the formulated hypotheses were tested for significance, and the decision to support or not support the hypothesis was presented.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with a presentation of a summary of the research objectives and research questions outlined earlier in the study. Then, a detailed examination, discussion, and interpretation of the research findings are presented in the following section. In addition, this chapter explores the theoretical as well as practical implications that are derived from the study's results. Lastly, the limitations of the study were acknowledged, and recommendations for future studies were also proposed to encourage deeper investigation within this specific industry and ecosystem.

5.2 Recapitulation of Study

The discussion of this study's findings was presented in the order of the research objectives. The first objective of this study was to assess the influence of social media influencers' credibility factors on the attitude towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia. The second objective of this study was to determine the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intentions for In-App Purchases (IAPs) in Genshin Impact in Malaysia. Thirdly, the study aimed to examine the moderating effect of player gender on the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia.

This research, therefore, answers the research questions as follows:

- i. What are the source credibility factors (influencer attractiveness, influencer expertise, influencer trustworthiness, influencer similarity) that influence spending players' attitude towards the influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia?

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the Genshin Impact players of Malaysia consider attractiveness and trustworthiness as the factors that would influence them to have a positive attitude towards the Genshin Impact influencer. This can be seen in the 2 hypotheses that support the attitude towards influencers (H1, H3).

- i. To what extent does attitude towards influencers affect the repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?

This study found that attitude towards influencers influences repurchase intentions for IAPs in the context of Genshin Impact among players in Malaysia. This can be found in the hypothesis that supports this decision (H5), which states that a positive attitude towards influencers would influence their intentions to repurchase IAPs within the mobile game.

- ii. Will player gender moderate the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in Genshin Impact in Malaysia?

This study found that player gender, as a moderator, is supported as a predictor of attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention among Genshin Impact players in Malaysia; specifically, male players moderated the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention. There is a significant moderating effect for male players between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention.

In this study, six hypotheses were proposed to explore the direct relationship between source credibility factors (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity) and attitude towards influencers, which would subsequently lead to repurchase intention among Genshin Impact players in Malaysia. The gender of the player served as the moderating variable between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention.

Through the results of the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis, it was observed that out of the six hypotheses proposed, four hypothesis were found to be supported based on their p-values, which are H1 (attractiveness and attitude towards influencers), H3 (trustworthiness and attitude towards influencers), H5 (attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention), and H6 (gender moderates the relationship for male players between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention).

The remaining two hypotheses, namely H2 (expertise and attitude towards influencers) and H4 (similarity and attitude towards influencers), were not supported. A detailed analysis of the study's findings will be presented below.

5.2.1 On Attractiveness and Attitude Towards Influencers

To answer the initial research question and objective regarding which credibility factors would influence players' attitudes towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the first influencer credibility factor, influencer attractiveness (H1), was analysed and discussed below.

Similar to past studies on influencer marketing in the global and Malaysian contexts, the physical attractiveness of influencers shows a significant positive relationship among the surveyed Malaysian Genshin Impact players with their attitudes towards the influencers they follow or watch. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. This is in line with previous findings that have identified a significant and positive relationship between the social media influencer's attractiveness and respondents' attitudes towards influencers (Lee et al., 2023; Li & Peng, 2021; Niloy et al., 2023; Weismueller et al., 2020).

Attractiveness in this study refers to the physical attributes of the social media influencer for the mobile game Genshin Impact. When viewers and players watching the content perceive the influencer as highly attractive, handsome, or beautiful, they will feel a pleasant feeling towards the influencer, as humans tend to believe that "what is beautiful must be good" (Niimi & Goto, 2023). Therefore, despite perceptions of beauty varying across cultures, races, and ethnicities, having an aesthetically pleasing influencer as the middleman or spokesperson between a business and its target consumers can enhance consumers' positive feelings towards the influencer and, in extension, towards the company.

When the influencers are perceived to be attractive in the viewers' eyes, the product or brand that they are promoting would also be seen as attractive in the eyes of potential customers as well (Immanuel & Bianda, 2021). An influencer who knows how to take care of their looks and presentation can strongly influence the opinions of their audience (Iqbal et al., 2023). Similar to conventional practices of using attractive celebrities as spokespersons or ambassadors for companies, brands, products, or services, the use of

attractive influencers would also influence consumers to adopt a more positive attitude towards the promoted subject.

In Malaysia as well, the physical attractiveness aspect of the influencer was found to generate a positive impact in terms of creating a positive attitude towards the influencers. A study by Abdullah et al. (2023) also found that the attractiveness of social media influencers was a critical factor in positively influencing Malaysian consumers' attitudes towards influencers. The findings from this study align with those of past studies, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1 within the context of this study, which posits that the attractiveness of the influencer will significantly and positively influence players' attitudes towards the influencers for Genshin Impact.

5.2.2 On Influencer Expertise and Attitude Towards Influencers

To answer the initial research question and objective regarding which credibility factors would influence players' attitudes towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the second influencer credibility factor, influencer expertise (H2), was analysed and discussed below.

Contrary to the findings of past studies, the results of this study show no significant relationship among the surveyed Genshin Impact players between the influencer's expertise and their attitude towards the influencers they follow or watch. This means that Hypothesis 2 was not supported. This contradicts past studies that have found a significantly positive relationship between expertise and attitude towards influencers, where a highly competent influencer would strongly influence individuals' attitudes towards them (Carissa et al., 2021; Feng et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2023; Magano et al., 2022).

Expertise has been defined as the perceived level of competence, or having the necessary skills, knowledge, or ability to make assertions. It has been theorised that when influencers are highly knowledgeable about the brands, products, or services they are promoting, and are promoting something viewed as within their specialty niche, customers are more influenced by their opinions and have a more positive attitude towards the promoted subject.

Different consumers have their own brand or product feature preferences; similarly, they have diverse preferences for each individual influencer. This means that consumers are not necessarily always looking for the perceived expertise levels of the influencers they follow or watch; they could be following the influencer for other reasons, such as high entertainment value (Fouzi et al., 2024). Similarly, perceived expertise was found to have an insignificant but negative impact on the attitude towards influencers among women in Surabaya, Indonesia (Immanuel & Bianda, 2021). Additionally, Lu and Chen (2023) also did not identify any influence of expertise on the respondents' attitude towards the influencers that they follow. While expertise might serve as a significant and positive antecedent to other factors, such as direct purchase intention, in the context of this study, the expertise of the influencer did not have any relationship with the attitude towards the influencer. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

5.2.3 On Influencer Trustworthiness and Attitude Towards Influencers

To answer the initial research question and objective regarding which credibility factors would influence players' attitudes towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the third influencer credibility factor, influencer trustworthiness (H3), was analysed and discussed below.

Consistent with past findings, this study also found a significant and positive relationship between the trustworthiness of the influencer and the consumers' attitude towards the influencer. The findings of this study show that Hypothesis 3 is supported. Influencers perceived as trustworthy can exert considerable influence on the attitudes of consumers who follow or watch them (Tiwari et al., 2024). This positive attitude generated by trust could subsequently lead to the purchase intentions of the consumers as well (Abdullah et al., 2023).

When influencers are seen as trustworthy and transparent figures in the industries they specialise in, especially in Malaysia, consumers tend to develop a positive attitude towards them (Ooi et al., 2023). This is consistent with past studies that also established that the followers who are following an influencer's social media accounts are doing so in good faith, and that this good faith has led them to have a favourable attitude towards the influencer that they follow (Hartanto et al., 2022). In addition, Wiedmann and von

Mettenheim (2021) suggested that trustworthiness, together with attractiveness, is the most crucial quality that social media influencers must possess. In Malaysia, for specialised industries such as the Halal food products category, it becomes even more important for consumers to trust influencers to disseminate accurate information about which food products are safe for Muslim consumers to consume (Rahim et al., 2021).

The results of the statistical analysis of this study show a significant, positive relationship between trustworthiness and attitude towards influencers among the surveyed respondents. Therefore, this aligns with previous studies, supporting Hypothesis 3, which proposed that a trustworthy influencer can generate positive attitudes among their followers towards them.

5.2.4 On Influencer Similarity and Attitude Towards Influencers

To answer the initial research question and objective as to what credibility factors would influence the spending players' attitude towards the influencers in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the fourth influencer credibility factor of influencer similarity (H4) was analysed and discussed below.

Similarity has been explained as the perception of sharing similar interests or tastes with another individual. In influencer marketing, a significant and positive relationship has been found between perceived similarity between followers and influencers and attitudes towards influencers (Dhun & Dangi, 2023; Li & Peng, 2021; Munnuka et al., 2021). In addition, when the influencer's specialty and niche are perceived to have a strong fit towards the product, brand, or service being promoted, a more positive attitude would be generated (Ku & Lou, 2022). This positive attitude would also lead followers to remain loyal to the influencer and to the opinions and assertions made by the influencers they follow (Qamar et al., 2023).

However, a study by Karmacharya (2022) did not find a significant relationship between similarity and consumers' attitudes. Influencers who are perceived to be highly similar to followers or players do not necessarily mean they will have a positive attitude towards the influencers, especially when the content published is not seen as useful to the viewers (Rizzo et al., 2024). Similarly, Taillon et al. (2020) found that perceived similarity

had no effect on influencing the attitude towards influencers; instead, they suggested that other factors, such as attractiveness, were more significant in predicting consumers' attitude. Even though consumers can identify potential similarities between themselves and the influencers they follow, this does not necessarily generate a favourable attitude towards the influencer. This is unless the consumers also identify themselves with the influencers psychologically and, crucially, see them as a leadership figure (Elsharnouby et al., 2025).

The results of this study suggest that the relationship between perceived similarity and attitude towards influencers might be more complex than initially proposed. This is because while players and followers might perceive similarity as important in shaping subsequent behaviours, such as purchase intentions or brand attitudes, this might not be the most critical factor in determining their attitude towards the specific influencers. While it is helpful to be perceived as similar and relatable to their followers and viewers, influencers should also focus on other aspects that may play a more influential role, such as being perceived as trustworthy.

The analysis results showed no significant relationship among the surveyed Malaysian Genshin Impact players between similarity and attitude towards influencers in the context of Genshin Impact; thus, Hypothesis 4 is not supported.

5.2.5 On Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention

To answer the second research question and objective as to what extent attitude towards influencers would affect the repurchase intention for IAPs in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention of the players (H5) was analysed and discussed below.

Influencers who can generate positive feelings among their followers can exert greater influence on their willingness to purchase the product, service, or brand being promoted (Azkiah & Hartono, 2023). Customers are more willing to buy the promoted brand, product, or service if they have a favourable attitude towards the influencer who serves as the spokesperson or ambassador (Niloy et al., 2023).

A generally positive attitude among followers of an influencer can serve as a competitive advantage for businesses and companies seeking to partner with specific influencers to promote their products or services. When the followers perceive the influencers favourably, they would also have a positive disposition towards the promoted brands, products, or services when they are endorsed by the influencer that they follow. This shows the need for companies and businesses to ensure that the influencers they partner with can, first and foremost, generate positive feelings among potential customers towards the influencers as spokespersons. The mobile game companies should do their due diligence and ensure that the influencers that they wish to partner with to promote their mobile game or IAPs are perceived to be highly credible by their followers, which would then lead to the creation of a positive attitude towards the influencers and subsequently, the products being promoted.

Similarly, a study by Carissa et al. (2021) found that consumers who have a positive attitude towards the influencers they follow or the content they watch are more likely to repurchase products endorsed by those influencers. Therefore, based on the analysis results of this study, there is a significant, positive relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact among the surveyed respondents. Hypothesis 5 is supported.

5.2.6 On Gender Moderating the Relationship between Attitude Towards Influencers and Repurchase Intention

To answer the third research question and objective, namely whether player gender will moderate the relationship between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention for IAPs in the context of Genshin Impact in Malaysia, the relationship between male player gender as a moderator and attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention (H6) was analysed and discussed below.

Previous research carried out had found a moderating effect of consumer gender on their attitude towards a promoted brand (Hudders & De Jans, 2022). In addition, studies by Li et al. (2024) suggested that female consumers would have more positive attitudes towards influencers whom they perceive as experts. Specifically, Chetioui et al. (2023) found that male consumers were more likely to display a positive and favourable attitude towards

influencers they perceived as attractive than female consumers. Similar to this, the results of this study showed that gender had a moderating effect between attitude towards influencers and the subsequent repurchase intention, with the effect being more pronounced on male consumers. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is supported.

This could be because Malaysian consumers are reported to rely on influencers to inform their purchasing decisions, and this goal-oriented objective would be more evident among male consumers, who often prioritise overcoming a problem, compared to females, who prioritise relationship-oriented objectives such as intimacy (Kim et al., 2024).

**Table 5-1:
Hypothesis and Summary Results**

Hypothesis	Results
H1 – Attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards Influencers.	Supported
H2 – Expertise has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.	Not Supported
H3 – Trustworthiness has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.	Supported
H4 – Similarity has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards influencers.	Not Supported
H5 – Attitude towards influencers has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention.	Supported
H6 – Gender moderates the relationship for male players between attitude towards influencers and repurchase intention.	Supported

5.3 Implications

This study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to the field of source credibility and influencer marketing, specifically within the mobile gaming industry and in the context of a developing country such as Malaysia. It not only offers valuable insights for industry practitioners but also advances academic understanding of the topic.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

The results of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on influencer marketing and source credibility factors in the mobile gaming industry by providing a perspective from Malaysia, a developing country. It offers empirical evidence on the factors influencing Malaysian players' attitudes towards influencers partnered with a mobile game as spokesperson or ambassador, filling a gap in the literature.

The study's findings can also contribute to the further development of theories on influencer marketing, attitudes towards influencers, and players' subsequent repurchase intentions in the mobile gaming industry. It can serve as a foundation for developing new hypotheses and improving existing theories and constructs.

The methods used in this study, such as combining purposive and snowball sampling, can serve as a reference for future studies in the field. It can guide researchers in designing their study methodologies and choosing appropriate data collection and analysis methods.

The source credibility model used, which measures credibility of an influencer or endorser across four dimensions – attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity, can also provide significant theoretical contributions for this study. The study's findings are similar to the purpose of the source credibility model, in that it not only serves as a basis for evaluating a spokesperson's credibility levels, but also extends the model's use to varying contexts, such as the mobile gaming industry among social media influencers. Based on the responses, the surveyed Malaysian Genshin Impact players value the attractiveness and trustworthiness of the influencer, which would positively influence their attitude towards the influencer, suggesting that these dimensions are crucial for generating a positive attitude and encouraging IAPs and repurchasing within the mobile gaming industry.

Conversely, the findings of this study diverge from the Source Credibility Theory model, for example, where expertise and similarity were found to be not significant and thus not supported by the research findings within the context of this study. Thus, this suggests a potential need to amend or revise the model for future studies in this specific context.

The applicability of the source credibility model was further explored by incorporating player gender as a moderating variable. Past studies carried out in other industries, such as e-commerce, have found that consumer gender moderates their attitude towards a promoted brand or product. This study depicts that player gender has a moderating effect between attitude towards influencers and subsequent repurchase intention, suggesting that male players were more prone to be affected compared to female players.

5.3.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this study can help mobile game companies in the industry gain a better understanding of the factors influencing players' attitudes towards influencers and their subsequent repurchase intentions in Malaysia. This can help steer the development of more effective influencer marketing strategies, not only for global but also for local mobile game companies, leading to enhanced customer retention and sustained profitability. When mobile game companies partner with influencers who are attractive or trustworthy, players have a more positive attitude towards them and their content, thereby increasing their willingness to purchase and repurchase IAPs in the mobile games they play. This would then help overcome the core issues faced by mobile game companies in the industry, which are the problems of the players not staying with a mobile game long enough to start spending money on the virtual IAPs, as well as the players not being willing to repurchase more IAPs in the future.

This study also serves as a benchmark for mobile game companies to identify influencers with the preferred credibility attributes to partner with and promote their mobile game, encouraging players to make and remake IAPs. The insights gained from this study are crucial for mobile game companies' influencer marketing efforts to successfully run their campaigns and derive the maximum possible benefits from their limited budgets. Partnering with influencers with the identified factors would enhance the players' and viewers' attitude towards the influencers themselves as middlemen, which will lead to recurring purchases being made more often and with higher frequency among the players, which accomplishes the objectives of the influencer marketing campaigns.

For influencers who are mobile gamers specifically, knowing which attributes viewers prefer when watching their content will help their careers on social media platforms grow further. This is because the more influencers can demonstrate the credibility consumers are looking for, the greater the trust viewers place in them and their content. For example, influencers looking to create content for newer Mihoyo games, or any mobile game, in the future could take note of this study's findings and tailor their public traits to suit what viewers want in a gaming influencer. When consumers or players place great trust in the influencer, who is viewed as a credible source of information within the gaming community, mobile game developers who wish to promote their games and virtual purchases to a larger audience

would also find it easier to decide which influencers to partner with. This is because their trusted standing among viewers and the game community makes it more viable for the developers to partner with the identified influencers for short- and long-term marketing campaigns, generating income for the company and the influencers and creating content that viewers and consumers enjoy.

In terms of the community contribution, the findings of this study would help the mobile game players to understand their own behaviour and consumption patterns better, for example, being able to know why they would listen to the opinions of certain influencers and to follow their advice to make and remake IAPs, but not other influencers in the same gaming community. When the players can comprehend their spending behaviours better, this will help them in terms of controlling their spending habits by knowing what type of influencers and opinions they would be swayed by. This can then help them avoid influencers with the identified behaviours or credibility factors, and, if needed, cut down on their spending on the mobile games they play.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Firstly, this study was carried out within a very limited timeframe. The duration limitation could have influenced the completeness and the complexity of the research. This is because attitudes and repurchase intentions are dynamic, changing rapidly over days or weeks in response to the latest developments within the industry and the community, changing customer preferences, and the marketing strategies of the time. For example, during the COVID-19-enforced Movement Control Order (MCO) lockdown in Malaysia, non-essential employees were confined to their homes, and thus their daily interactions with their mobile phones and, subsequently, with mobile games would be far higher than in normal circumstances. Therefore, while the findings of this study could remain valid during the period covered, they might not be perfectly replicable in a different time period.

Secondly, the study was also carried out in Malaysia, a developing country with its unique cultural, racial, and regulatory environment. As such, these factors could significantly influence the consumer's perceptions and behaviour. For example, while Malaysia does not have any specific regulatory body or laws dedicated to the mobile games environment,

different regions, such as the European Union, have a Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network body, which proposes laws and principles to protect European consumers in video games, especially concerning microtransactions or IAPs (Muhammad I. , 2025). Therefore, the findings of this study might not be replicable in other countries or regions as well.

Thirdly, this study focused only on the mobile gaming industry within a specific mobile game context. While this specific area of focus would allow for a better understanding of influencer marketing and how the Source Credibility Theory would work in influencing the players' attitudes towards influencers as middleman and their subsequent repurchase intentions, this also severely limits the applicability of this study's findings to other industries and, more importantly, to other mobile games as well. Different mobile games offer wildly different types of IAP packages, ranging from cosmetics to premium in-game currency to quality-of-life improvements to virtual items that allow players to overcome current challenges in the mobile game. The repurchase intention of players is influenced by various external factors, some of which might be unique to each mobile game itself as well.

Lastly, this study was unable to control for external factors that would influence its outcome, such as technological advancements, current economic conditions, and changes in consumer behaviour. These external factors could significantly alter players' perceptions and attitudes towards influencers and their repurchase intentions for IAPs in Genshin Impact. These exclusions would then limit the explanatory power of this study's findings.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on the dynamic characteristics of consumer attitudes as well as repurchase intentions, future studies can be suggested to be carried out on a longitudinal period basis. This extended period will allow future researchers to identify changes over time in the constructs mentioned and to better establish a strong causal relationship among the variables in their study. A longitudinal perspective would also provide insight into how players' attitudes and repurchase intentions change and evolve over a longer period, particularly in response to shifts in global market trends, evolving customer preferences, or unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 global lockdown.

Next, to expand the validity of this study's findings, future researchers can explore the source credibility factors and how they influence the players' attitude towards influencers and their subsequent repurchase intentions in different geographical contexts (Tripopsakul & Hoonsopon, 2025; V I De Araujo et al., 2025). Replicating the study in other countries and regions would provide better insight into how different regulatory, economic, and cultural contexts influence the perceptions and behaviours of mobile game players. This would also allow comparisons across different countries or regions to be drawn up based on the findings.

In addition, future researchers could also include other factors such as parasocial interactions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Tripopsakul & Hoonsopon, 2025) and attitude towards the brand or product, game-centric factors such as aesthetic design, user experience (UX) or user interface (UI) (Inan et al., 2022; Walter, 2024) of the mobile game, and outward factors such as regulatory laws, economic conditions, or unforeseen disasters into future study designs. Additionally, based on the literature and the empirical gaps identified, future studies could examine respondents' actual purchasing or repurchasing behaviour rather than focusing solely on their intentions. Future researchers could also study whether consumer gender would play a significant role in moderating and influencing the consumers' behaviour in other industries in Malaysia, with a better understanding that could be achieved by analysing the impact of gender across the entire framework using the Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) method instead of simple moderation analysis as well. This would provide a wider, more complete perspective on the factors that influence players' attitudes towards influencers as ambassadors and their subsequent repurchase intentions for IAPs in the specific mobile games they play. This would also boost the explanatory power of future studies' research models.

Furthermore, future researchers could seek to overcome the methodological restrictions in this study by expanding data collection methods, using both qualitative and quantitative tools, obtaining a larger sample size to better represent their respective mobile game communities, and utilising the best-validated statistical analysis techniques. This can improve the reliability and validity of the findings from future studies.

While this study provided valuable insights into Malaysian players' attitudes towards influencers based on source credibility factors and their repurchase intentions for IAPs in the

mobile game Genshin Impact, there are ample opportunities for improvement in future studies. By identifying the limitations of this study and integrating some of the suggestions above, future studies could contribute even more theoretical and practical knowledge and provide deeper insights into players' attitudes and intentions to repurchase IAPs in the mobile games they play.

5.5 Conclusion

This study was conducted among Malaysian players of the mobile game Genshin Impact, focusing on their perspectives and how source credibility factors influenced their attitudes towards influencers and repurchase intentions. The research had identified four source credibility factors, namely influencer attractiveness, influencer expertise, influencer trustworthiness, and influencer similarity, that would significantly influence their attitude and intentions. Of the six hypotheses tested, two (attractiveness and trustworthiness) were found to significantly predict attitude towards influencers, and attitude towards influencers was found to significantly and positively affect repurchase intention, with male player gender moderating this effect.

Intriguingly, the study found that the influencer's perceived expertise and perceived similarity, which had a significant and positive impact on consumer attitude in past studies, did not have a significant impact on Malaysian Genshin Impact players' attitude towards the influencers they follow or watch. This implies that the players might place more emphasis on other credibility factors used in this study, namely attractiveness and trustworthiness, as well as on factors not included in this study.

The findings recommend that mobile game companies identify influencers with the aforementioned characteristics, which can help enhance positive feelings and attitudes towards themselves, the brand, and the product they are promoting, and encourage further repurchases of IAPs. Accordingly, companies can increase player loyalty, sustain players' interest in the mobile game, and encourage players to continually make and remake IAPs in the mobile games they play. This would help ensure the survival of their mobile game in a highly competitive global industry by leveraging the growing trend of influencer partnerships.

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Appendix 1: Online Questionnaire

The Effect of Source Credibility on Attitude towards Influencers in Repurchase Intention of In-App Repurchases: Perspective from Malaysia

* Indicates required question

Hello travellers, and ad astra abyssosque! First of all, thank you for spending your time taking part in this survey. The main purpose of this academic survey is to assess the role of social media influencers' credibility in boosting the repurchases of IAPs in the mobile game Genshin Impact.

This survey is carried out as part of my dissertation research, and is a school-related survey which will be used for DBA research at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FEB), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Please ensure you fulfill the following criteria:

1. Are **MALAYSIAN**;
2. Are **following/watching/consuming** content made by social media influencers;
3. Have **made in-app purchases in the past SIX (6) months** in Genshin Impact.

This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete and is strictly voluntary. Your feedback and data collected will remain strictly confidential and will be used for the analysis of this academic study ONLY, and no personal details will be required for the purpose of this survey. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

BEFORE YOU START:

Please think of **ONE** social media influencer whose content you watch for **Genshin Impact** before proceeding.

Preliminary Questions

Please ensure you fulfill the following criteria:

1. 1. Are you a Malaysian Genshin Impact player? *

(Adakah kamu pemain Genshin Impact Malaysia?)

Mark only one oval.

- Yes (Ya)
 No (Tidak)

2. 2. Are you currently following or watching a Genshin Impact influencers' content on *
social media platforms? (TikTok, Facebook, Youtube, etc)

Please keep this influencer in mind to answer the next sections.

(Adakah kamu sedang mengikuti atau menonton konten pempengaruh Genshin Impact di laman sosial media?)

Sila menggunakan pempengaruh ini untuk menjawab soalan seterusnya.

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

3. 3. Have you spent money on in-app purchases in Genshin Impact in the past SIX (6) *
months?

(Adakah kamu berbelanja wang untuk pembelian dalam-aplikasi dalam Genshin Impact dalam tempoh enam (6) bulan yang lalu?)

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

This section will ask about the demographics of respondents, including information such as frequency of spending as well as amount spent in the mobile games that you play.

4. Gender (*Jantina*) *

Mark only one oval.

- Male (Lelaki)
- Female (Perempuan)
- Prefer not to say (Lebih suka untuk tidak berkata)

5. Age Group (*Kumpulan Umur*) *

Mark only one oval.

- 18-22
- 23-27
- 28-32
- 33-37
- 37+

6. Employment Status (*Status Pekerjaan*) *

Mark only one oval.

- Unemployed
- Student
- Own business/business owner
- Government sector
- Private sector
- Retired
- Others (please specify):

7. Spending Frequency (no. of transactions in the last 6 months) *

(Kekerapan Perbelanjaan; bilangan transaksi dalam tempoh 6 bulan yang lalu)

Mark only one oval.

- Spent once
- 2 - 4 times
- 5 - 7 times
- More than 7 times

8. Spending Range (total, in RM) *(Julat Perbelanjaan; jumlah dalam RM)* *

Mark only one oval.

- Between RM 1 - 25
- Between RM 26 - 50
- Between RM 51 - 75
- Between RM 76 - 100
- More than RM 100

9. Income Range (in RM) *(Julat Pendapatan, dalam RM)* *

Mark only one oval.

- < RM 2,000
- Between RM 2,001 - 3,000
- Between RM 3,001 - 4,000
- Between RM 4,001 - 5,000
- More than RM 5,000
- No income

10. Which social media platform are you following or watching their content on? *

(Laman sosial media yang manakah anda mengikuti atau menonton kontennya?)

Tick all that apply.

- Facebook
- YouTube
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Discord
- Other: _____

SECTION B: SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER CHARACTERISTICS

This section will ask about the qualities of **ONE social media influencer whose content you follow, watch, or consume for Genshin Impact**, which means using one sole influencer to represent your answers below. There will be THREE (3) subsections with FIVE (5) items each. Please choose ONE answer for each item.

Attractiveness		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A1	I think this influencer is handsome/pretty.							
A2	The influencer that I follow has an attractive personality							
A3	The influencer that I follow has a classy personality.							
A4	The influencer has a unique charisma.							
A5	The influencer's physical appearance in their content is visually-appealing.							
Expertise								
E1	I feel this influencer knows a lot.							
E2	I consider this influencer an expert in their area.							
E3	This influencer has enough knowledge about the brands that they are promoting.							
E4	This influencers' performance is professional in terms of providing factual infographics and statistics.							
E5	When looking at their content, I think this influencer is qualified enough to give professional opinion.							
Trustworthiness								
T1	The content provided by the influencer is dependable.							
T2	The influencer I follow is honest in making their content.							
T3	The content is provided by an influencer with integrity.							
T4	This influencer is sincere in making content							
T5	This influencer is trustworthy.							
Similarity								
S1	I can easily identify with this influencer.							
S2	This influencer and I have a lot in common.							
S3	This influencer shares my values.							
S4	This influencer has the same preferences as me.							
S5	This influencer behaves like me.							

Attitude Towards Influencers								
ATI1	I consider this influencer interesting							
ATI2	I consider this influencer pleasant.							
ATI3	I consider this influencer likeable.							
ATI4	I believe this influencer presents interesting content for Genshin Impact.							
ATI5	I consider this influencer as a reliable source of information and news for Genshin Impact.							
Repurchase Intention								
RI1	I intend to keep buying more in-app purchases in the future.							
RI2	I will recommend my friends/family/acquaintances to purchase in-app purchases in Genshin Impact.							
RI3	I will find out about the Genshin Impact experience through people closest to me (family/friends/etc.) who have bought in-app purchases before.							
RI4	The in-app purchases of Genshin Impact are worth buying.							
RI5	I will give priority to Genshin Impact for my next in-app purchase.							

Thank you for your time and effort! TERIMA KASIH BANYAK BANYAK!

Now go forth, swipe harder, and win that next 50/50!



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Google Forms

Appendix 2: Expert Validation Feedback

Appendix B: Expert Validation Rubric

Questionnaire Validation Rubric for Expert Panel

“The Effect of Source Credibility on Attitude towards Influencers in Repurchase Intention of In-App Purchases: Perspective from Malaysia”

Criteria	Operational Definition	Score				Questions NOT meeting standard (if any) <i>Please use comments section to recommend revisions.</i>
		1	2	3	4	
		1 = Not acceptable (major modifications needed), 2 = Below Expectations (some modifications needed), 3 = Meets Expectations (no modifications, can be improved with minor changes), 4 = Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)				
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are direct and specific. Only one question asked at a time. Participants understand what is being asked. No double-barrelled questions (two questions in one). 				/	
Wordiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No unnecessary words. Questions are concise. 				/	
Negative Wording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are asked in affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking “Which methods are not used?”, the researcher asks, “Which methods <i>are</i> used?”) 				/	
Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are unbiased. Questions are asked in a neutral tone. 				/	
User of Jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms used are understandable by the target population. 				/	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No hyperbole or cliches in the wording of questions. 					
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately. Choices apply to all situations/offer a way to respond with unique situations. 				/	
Use of Technical Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of technical language is minimal. All acronyms, if any, are defined. 				/	

Criteria	Operational Definition	Score				Questions NOT meeting standard (if any) <i>Please use comments section to recommend revisions</i>
		1	2	3	4	
		1 = Not acceptable (major modifications needed), 2 = Below Expectations (some modifications needed), 3 = Meets Expectations (no modifications, can be improved with minor changes), 4 = Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)				
Measure of Construct: Attractiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey adequately measures this construct. <i>*Attractiveness refers to the physical beauty of the influencer, and if this influencer is perceived as attractive to look at by the players (Fitriani et al., 2024; Lee et al. 2023)</i> 				/	
Measure of Construct: Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey adequately measures this construct. <i>*Expertise refers to the perceived experience and knowledge the influencer has in their domain, and if this influencer produces content that fits their game</i> 				/	

