EXAMINING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP OF UNDERGRADUATES AWARENESS OF THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 1999 IN RELATION TO INFLUENCER MARKETING

LIM JIA YU

BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
(HONOURS)

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

FACULTY OF ACCOUNTANCY AND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

DECEMBER 2025

EXAMINING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP OF UNDERGRADUATES AWARENESS OF THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT 1999 IN RELATION TO INFLUENCER MARKETING

BY

LIM JIA YU

A final year project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS (HONOURS)

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

FACULTY OF ACCOUNTANCY AND MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

DECEMBER 2025

© 2025 Lim Jia Yu. All rights reserved.

This final year project report is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of International Business at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). This final year project report represents the work of the author, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text. No part of this final year project may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, whether electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author or UTAR, in accordance with UTAR's Intellectual Property Policy.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

(1) This undergraduate FYP is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the references to ALL sources of information be they printed, electronic, or personal.

(2) No portion of this FYP has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.

(3) Sole contribution has been made by me in completing the FYP.

(4) The word count of this research report is 14,343 words.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) for providing the opportunity, resources and academic environment that enabled the completion of this research.

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr Tan Pei Meng for her continuous guidance, constructive feedback and her unwavering support throughout this research. Her expertise and supervision have been invaluable, and it has been a privilege to conduct my research under her mentorship.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to Ms Winnie Er Pek Hoon, my second examiner, for her insightful suggestions and feedback that have contributed significantly to enhance the quality of my research.

My sincere thanks also extended to all interviewees for their time and valuable input in my research. Their contributions were essential to the successful completion of this research.

Lastly, I would like to express my heartful gratitude to my family and friends for their continuous encouragement and support throughout the entirety of this research.

DEDICATION

To my late father – thank you for inspiring me, supporting me, and believing in my potential. Your strength, kindness and support remains in my heart, and I hope this accomplishment makes you proud, as everything I do carry a part of you.

Table of Contents

Copyright Page ……..ii

Declaration ……iii

Acknowledgement ……iv

Dedication ……v

Table of Contents ……...vi

List of Tables ……vii

List of Figures ……...viii

List of Abbreviations ……ix

List of Appendices ……x

Preface ……...xi

Abstract ……..xiii

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION…..……1

1.1 Research Background ……1

1.2 Research Problems ……..2

1.2.1 Rapid Growth of Influencer Career and Its Influence on Youth Aspirations ……....2

1.2.2 Legal and Ethical Concerns in Influencer Marketing ...…...3

1.2.3 The Knowledge Gap Among Undergraduates Regarding Consumer Protection Laws ……..……3

1.3 Research Objectives & Research Questions ……3

1.3.1 Research Objectives ……...3

1.3.2 Research Questions ……4

1.4 Research Significance ……..……..4

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW ……..……....6

2.1 Influencer Marketing ……...6

2.2 Consumer Protection Act 1999 (CPA 1999) ……....8

2.3 Tribunal for Consumer Claims (TCC) and Legal Remedies ……...10
2.4 Legal Literacy among Malaysian Consumers …….11
2.5 Knowledge Gap and Its Factors Contributing to Consumer Awareness ..13
2.5.1 Socioeconomic Status ……..14
2.5.2 Age ……...15
2.5.3 Education …….16
2.5.4 Customer Experience ……..16
2.5.5 Media Exposure ……...17
2.5.6 Influencer Trust ……....18
2.6 Consumer Ability to Identify Misleading Influencer Marketing Practices …….19
2.7 Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Theory ……..20
2.8 Theoretical Framework ……...21
Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY …..……..23
3.0 Introduction …….23
3.1 Exploratory Research ……..23
3.2 Qualitative Research …..……24
3.3 Data Collection ……25
3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews ……..25
3.3.2 Academic Journals ……26
3.4 Research Sampling ……..26
3.5 Development of Interview Protocol ……28
3.6 Interview Process ……...…….31
3.7 Data Analysis ……...……...31
3.8 Conclusion ……...……...34
Chapter 4 DATA ANALYSIS ……35
4.0 Introduction …….35
4.1 Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 19……36
4.1.1 General Familiarity …..……...37

4.1.2 Specific Knowledge on Section 9 and 10 ...…….39
4.1.3 Perceived Relevance of The Act ...……...39
4.1.4 Understanding of Enforcement Mechanisms……....40
4.2 Perceptions of Misleading Content and Influencer Accountability 41
4.2.1 Definition of "Misleading Content" …...…….41
4.2.2 Ability to Recognise Violation …….....42
4.2.3 Trust levels with Influencers ……43
4.2.4 Responsibility Attribution ……43
4.3 Knowledge Gap – Factors influencing legal awareness …….....44
4.3.1 Sources of Information ……44
4.3.2 Interviewees' confidence in consumer rights awareness 45
4.3.3 Social Influence on Awareness ……..…….46
4.3.4 Barriers to Accessing Legal Knowledge …….....46
Chapter 5 FINDINGS, DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION ……47
5.0 Introduction …….....47
5.1 Findings ……...47
5.2 Discussion in Findings ……49
5.3 Limitations in Research ……...…….....50
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research ……..……....51
5.5 Conclusion ……...…….....51
References …….....53
Appendix ……...65

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 3.4: Sample Profile of Interviewees 23

Table 3.5: Research Questions, Sections and Interview Questions 24

Table 4.0: Demographics of the Respondents 30

Table 4.1: Themes and Sub Themes 31

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 2.1: Arwind Kumar's Instagram 5

Figure 2.8: Proposed Theoretical Framework 19

LIST OF APPENDICES

Page

Appendix 2.1: Arwind Kumar's Instagram 64

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
APU	Asia Pacific University
CEI	Consumer Empowerment Index
CMD	Consumerism Movement Division
CPA	Consumer Protection Act
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MCMC	Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission
RQ	Research Questions
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
TCC	Tribunal for Consumer Claims
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UM	Universiti Malaya
UN	United Nations
UTAR	Univerisiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

PREFACE

As the person behind the project, I'm excited to offer an analysis of undergraduates' understanding of consumer rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999, particularly in relation to influencer marketing. This research journey has been intriguing, shedding light on important legal knowledge-related issues in an increasingly digital consumer world.

Due to the rapid expansion of social media and the growing influence of online celebrities, influencer marketing is now an effective strategy for influencing consumer behavior, especially among young adults. In this regard, assessing undergraduates' knowledge of their legal rights and safety measures is becoming more and more important. The goal of this research is to find out how undergraduates perceive influencer marketing tactics and the challenges they face in identifying potential legal problems.

Using qualitative semi-structured interviews, academic journals, and relevant legal sources, this research seeks to precisely portray undergraduates' awareness and the factors causing current knowledge gaps. By drawing attention to these issues, this research seeks to significantly contribute to discussions regarding consumer education and legal compliance in digital marketing strategies.

The findings of this research are intended to be a useful resource for educators, legislators, and other pertinent stakeholders in order to increase consumer protection awareness and promote more moral influencer marketing strategies in Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of influencer marketing on social media platforms has significantly shaped consumer behaviour, particularly among undergraduates who are active digital consumers. Despite this development, awareness of consumer rights under the Consumer Protection Act 1999 remains uncertain. This study aims to examine the knowledge gap among undergraduates regarding consumer protection in the context of influencer marketing in Malaysia.

A qualitative research approach was adopted using semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students from selected universities. The data collected were analysed thematically to explore participants' understanding of consumer rights, perceptions of influencer marketing practices, and awareness of legal responsibilities and protections. The findings reveal varying levels of awareness among undergraduates, with notable gaps in understanding legal obligations, misleading advertising practices, and available consumer remedies.

This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the need for improved consumer education and clearer dissemination of legal information related to influencer marketing. The findings provide useful insights for educators, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders in strengthening consumer protection awareness and promoting more compliant digital marketing practices in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, the growing popularity of social media has allowed businesses to utilize them in terms of marketing, leading to the rise of influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy where a business would hire online influencers to help boost their online sales (Leung et al, 2022). For example, a collaboration between Google and Samsung Galaxy S22 launched back in 2022 with the help of TikTok and Instagram influencers like Addison Rae who has a following of over 88 million on TikTok (Minocha, 2023). This helps to further promote the smartphone on TikTok especially to the followers of those influencers. As a result, the collaboration was a success, with their video promotion gaining over 1.7 million views on Instagram, leading to a 29% engagement rate. This example highlights how influencer marketing is able to significantly improve brand exposure which businesses strive to achieve.

With the growing use of influencer marketing, consumers are increasingly exposed to many persuasive advertisements where consumers are unsure if the contents are genuine or paid. If the contents are paid, there are certain responsibilities that influencers are to follow. One of their responsibilities is that they are to disclose any sponsored content. Under the Malaysian Code of Advertising Practice, it states that all sponsored contents done by influencers are to be disclosed in a transparent and open manner (WinMendy, n.d). Therefore, consumers are vulnerable to what they see in advertisements, especially when well-known influencers promote the product as the decision to purchase lies with the consumers. This is where the Consumer Protection Act 1999, a law in Malaysia steps in, with their main objective being to offer customers more protection (Consumers' Association of Penang, n.d).This Act is also designed to protect consumers against misleading advertising becomes significant particularly in this context as it includes products or services that are promoted through social media using influencer marketing.

Statistics have shown that there are over 25 million active social media users in Malaysia as of January 2025 where among the users, 23.1 million users are aged 18 and above, occupying 87% of Malaysia's total population that are aged 18 and above (Kemp, 2025). With 83% of the population using social media, a significant percentage of the public, especially undergraduates, is active on these platforms (Fatin et al, 2023). Therefore, undergraduates are more likely to be exposed to influencer contents in social media, making it a suitable population to conduct this study. However, exposure does not necessarily mean awareness, especially when it comes to understanding the legal boundaries and consumer rights that are under the Consumer Protection Act 1999. Therefore, this suggests that there is a knowledge gap among undergraduates when it comes to recognizing misleading content and their rights as consumers. There are various factors contributing to the gap, such as general lack of interest in legal matters, or high levels of trust in influencers (Matin et al, 2022). As a result, addressing and understanding this gap is necessary to ensure that undergraduates are equipped with any necessary knowledge when making informed decisions online.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Rapid Growth of Influencer Career and Its Influence on Youth Aspirations

One of United Nations (UN)'s Sustainable Development Goals is to have quality education where Malaysia is to ensure that proper education have been given to students throughout Malaysia (Mahdi et al, 2022). However, in recent years, statistics have shown that 18% of students who have attended government schools have dropped out (FMT Reporters, 2024). Not just that but it has been reported that about 10,000 students have skipped Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), with one of the main reasons being their belief of becoming an influencer requires no education (Renushara, 2024). It is no doubt that becoming an influencer has rapidly become a popular career path for students due to the rise of social media. However, many

students believe that influencers' success can be achieved easily by promoting products to a large online audience however they are prone to some drawbacks.

1.2.2 Legal and Ethical Concerns in Influencer Marketing

In a recent case regarding a skincare product that have been advertised and sold by a Malaysian influencer, where more than 40 women have suffered from adverse side effects after using the recommended product. Some customers have stated that the product has affected their pregnancies whereby their babies suffered the consequences of having skin problems, although the influencer has claimed that the product is 100% natural and safe to use while pregnant. Further investigation has found that the product indeed contained mercury which is prohibited in Malaysia (Gunapalan, 2025). This case highlights a serious problem where many consumers are not sure what to do as they may not fully understand their rights and they may usually consult a lawyer then only they know what to do next. However, some people may choose not to consult a lawyer due to high cost and time consuming.

1.2.3 The Knowledge Gap Among Undergraduates Regarding Consumer Protection Laws

Therefore, this helps to express a concern on the knowledge gap among undergraduates about the Consumer Protection Act 1999, especially in the context of influencer marketing. It remains unknown whether undergraduates are able to identify misleading content and understand the legal regulations around influencer marketing. 87% of Malaysians at the age of 18 and above are usually the main targets of the influencer marketing, which makes them highly vulnerable and easily exploited. A research that was conducted in New York has found that out of 202 respondents, 104 individuals have made a purchase that have been promoted by an influencer (Kutz et al, 2024).

Conclusion: Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act, examine undergraduates' ability to identify misleading content and legal violations as well as to determine the factors affecting the knowledge gap.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

1.3.1 Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 in relation to influencers marketing
2. To examine undergraduates' ability to identify misleading content and legal violations arising from influencer marketing practices
3. To determine the factors affecting the knowledge gap among undergraduates of their legal awareness of influencer marketing under the Consumer Protection Act 1999

1.3.2 Research Questions

1. What is the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 in relation to influencers marketing?
2. How do undergraduates identify misleading content and legal violations in influencer marketing practices?
3. What are the factors that contribute to the knowledge gap among undergraduates of their legal awareness of influencer marketing under the Consumer Protection Act 1999?

1.4 Research Significance

This research is valuable in examining **undergraduates'** ability to identify misleading content and legal violations in influencer marketing. As technology is evolving consistently, it is essential for undergraduates to be aware of their rights as consumers due to them being constantly exposed to influencer content and are active in social media. Therefore, results of this research allow the undergraduates to be more cautious and responsible consumers by increasing their understanding and awareness of digital marketing tactics, especially influencer marketing as well as knowing their rights under the Consumer Protection Act 1999. By addressing the knowledge gap, the research aims to promote greater digital literacy as well as critical thinking skills among youths.

Both **businesses** and influencers play an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions along with the market trends. Statistics have shown that 63.8% of the brands confirms to partner up with influencers in 2025 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2025). This suggests that influencer marketing is slowly overtaking the traditional marketing strategies, one of the reasons would be that it builds consumer trust and credibility. As companies use influencer marketing, they are to have ethical responsibilities. This research highlights the importances of having ethical conduct when it comes to promotional advertising, especially with influencer marketing. Not only to have ethical conduct but as well as to comply with the legal requirements. Therefore, by knowing how undergraduates respond to misleading promotions, this would allow the business to better align their marketing practices with ethical standards as well as the legal requirements under the Consumer Protection Act 1999, fostering better consumer trust and accountability in the digital marketplace.

While this study mainly focuses on undergraduates, findings in this study can be also applicable to **general consumers** as well. 64.7% of the world's population are social media users and promotional content does not shy away from them (Datareportal, 2025). Many consumers unknowingly become a victim of misleading advertisements, especially when they are being promoted by a 'trusted' influencer. Even though there might be reviews for the product, the possibility of having fake reviews is high. Records have shown that there are roughly 49% fake reviews on Amazon, 40% on Facebook, 38% on Google and many other platforms

(Ross, 2020). Therefore, this research stresses how important it is to have legal awareness along with ethical marketing for all consumers. Not only that, but the research also helps to raise awareness of the risks that the general public may encounter therefore it can serve as a need for public awareness efforts to help improve legal literacy.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Influencer Marketing

Influencer can be defined as someone who inspires others' action just by influencing them through world-of-marketing (WOM) or even just by seeing the promotions (Marketing, (2012). They are everywhere around the world as it increases every day where an estimation of 2.4% social media users across all platforms have considered them as an influencer which can reach a total of 127 million influencers worldwide (StoryBox, 2024). Malaysia too has their fair share of influencers, one of the top 20 Malaysian influencers would be Arwind Kumar with 322k followers on Instagram, who is well-known for his several personas such as Makcik Rosmah and frequently help to promote several business products, services and also events (Chin, n.d).

With the huge followers, it can be an advantage for the business as words can spread through the influencers' followings which can result in genuine connections (goes, 2025). Businesses in Malaysia are more interested in paid social media efforts where brands will partner up with nano-influencers (1,000-4,999 followers), one of the reasons would be that it is way cheaper compared to hiring a celebrity to advertise. Nano-influencers charge brands between RM100 to RM300 per post while macro creators charge between RM5,000 to RM6,000 (Taslaud, 2023). In doing so, the company can redirect its spending to more essential aspects. Not only that, but it has

also been said that influencers tend to perform better than celebrities in terms of advertising due to the way they communicate with their audience, having reciprocal interactions as well as sharing personal details online such as incorporating the products they use in their routine in video contents (Ao et al., 2023). This would allow their audience to feel that they are able to relate to them and may consider trying the products that they use.

With the connections built with their followers, the followers tend to be more influenced and are tempted to purchase the products that they used (Chen et al., 2024). Compared to traditional advertising strategies, influencer marketing has slowly made its way to becoming the most effective method. Studies have shown that 93% of the business in the UK currently use influencers to market their products and services while 66% of business plan to use influencer marketing in the following year (Belanche, 2021). Forbes have predicted the future of influencer marketing where all companies would have an influencer strategy where they will introduce an employee influencer program, an example would be Walmart where they have launched Spotlight with the aim to turn employees to small-scale influencers on platforms such as TikTok where they can advocate for and on behalf of the business (YEC, 2024).

However, there is a dark side to influencer marketing, one major problem would be in terms of questioning the authenticity and credibility of the influencers' advertising (Xu, 2023). A real-life situation would be where TikTokers claim to be able to have a 'quick fix' on serious or life-threatening illnesses. One video has mentioned to take dewormer for dogs or horses are able to 'get rid' of cancer. Michael Baah, a cancer rehab coach, was shocked to see such remedies and advised patients to consult their doctors before trying such remedies (Davies, 2025). Despite to the growing use of influencer marketing, there is a lack of research on how Malaysian consumers understand their rights as consumers when engaging with content promoted by influencers. This led to a knowledge gap, particularly in relation to the Consumer Protection Act 1999.

2.2 Consumer Protection Act 1999 (CPA 1999)

The National Consumer Advisory Council and the Tribunal for Consumer Claims were established by the Consumer Protection Act 1999, which was also passed in order to protect consumer rights and offer prompt, reasonably priced dispute resolution and compensation procedures when necessary (Chatterjee, 2009). The purpose of the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 was to safeguard consumers, create the National Consumer Advisory Council and the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, and help to address related issues.

The Act went into effect on November 15, 1999, after undergoing a number of revisions over time, which have extended its application of electronic commerce. Its scope is only limited to transactions that involves a seller or a supplier acting in a business transaction with a consumer. The CPA 1999 defines a consumer as an individual who purchases or utilizes products or services typically meant for domestic, household, or personal use. Under Section 3, supplier is being defined as a person who, in the course of trade or business, supplies goods or services to consumers and this includes manufacturers, distributors and retailers who make products or services available for consumer use. Also, under Section 3, trade is defined as any trade, business, industry, profession, occupation, activity of commerce or undertaking relating to the supply or acquisition of goods and services.

According to Ghapa et al. (2021), consumers are entitled to four basic rights: the right to safety, the right to be heard, the right to adequate and accurate information, and the right to make an informed decision. Key aspects including Part II: Consumer Rights and Part III: False and Misleading Representations are covered by the Act's 14 sections. However, this Act does not includes every transaction as it is not useful for transactions that are related to securities, future contracts, contracts made before the date what the Act have take action, in relation to land or interests in land, services that is provided by professionals along with healthcare services provided or to be provided by healthcare professionals or healthcare facilities.

Regarding influencer marketing, Section 10 outlaws making false or misleading claims about the nature or quality of products and services, while Section 9 forbids deceptive or misleading conduct in commerce (CPA 1999). Although influencer credibility and trust have a significant impact on consumer views, consumers should exercise caution because deceptive marketing that influencers advocate may undermine trust and expose audiences to false advertising (Belanche et al., 2021). Chen et al. highlight that customers, especially undergraduates, frequently struggle to assess if influencer content is deceptive or violates the law. Therefore, these two studies highlight how consumer susceptibility may be increased when people lack sufficient legal literacy and awareness, even if trust in influencers can be a significant driver of marketing effectiveness.

However, there are legal penalties for breaking these regulations. Under Section 26 of the CPA 1999, it has been stated that for the first offence, individuals will be fine up to RM100,000 while body corporate will be fine up to RM250,000 along with an imprisonment up to 3 years. Section 27 of the CPA 1999 consist of emphasising that if there is a second or subsequent offence found, individuals are to be fine up to RM250,000 while body corporate will be fine up to RM500,000 as well as imprisonment up to a total of 6 years. In addition, Section 29 of the CPA 1999 highlights the daily fine for continuing such offence for individuals will be RM1,000 per day while bodies corporate will be RM2,000 per day. Therefore, these branches will lead to penalties along with jail time emphasized above will lead to the establishment of an ethical foundation for moral business conduct. In a case back in 2020, it has been reported that a direct selling agent have been fined for RM50,000 as she was caught promoting bracelets that can help prevent Covid-19 as Datuk Iskandar Halim Sulaiman have claimed that her actions have breached Section 10(1)(h) as she promoted the products by providing misleading statements to consumers (Mail, 2020).

The CPA 1999 was further reinforced by the Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2010, which gives courts and tribunals the power to evaluate and declare unfair contract terms illegal. Sections 24C and 24D of this Act address both substantive and procedural unfairness (Meng, 2019). In Che Mohd Hashim Abdullah v. AirAsia X Sdn Bhd (no:

TTPM-WPPJ-(P)-10-2011), the Tribunal for Consumer Claims declared a flight cancellation clause imbalanced in favor of the airline and gave the customer compensation, demonstrating this validity.

The Act does, however, have certain restrictions. In the case of Telekom Malaysia Bhd v Tribunal Tuntutan Pengguna [2007] 1 CLJ 300, a customer disputed an RM98 bill that was apparently the result of online hacking. The High Court identified flaws in the Act's original coverage when it decided that the case was covered by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 rather than the CPA 1999. Therefore, this suggests that there are some limitations in terms of the Consumer Protection Act 1999's coverage hence the amendment in 2007 (Zakuan et al., 2019).

2.3 Tribunal for Consumer Claims (TCC) and Legal Remedies

To give customers an adequate redress approach, the Tribunal for Consumer Claims (TCC) was founded. It functions as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism under the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living. It embodies the key components of ADR by providing procedures and methods that are not available through the conventional court system (Safei & Abdullah, 2023). Its main goal is to give customers another avenue for easily, affordably, and effectively pursuing redress against sellers or merchants of products and services (Ismail et al., 2019).

The Consumer Protection Act of 1999, which establishes the legal foundation for resolving disputes, governs the operations of the Tribunal for Consumer Claims (TCC). Instead of going via regular courts, all claims are heard in an open court, and, with few exceptions, neither party may hire legal counsel. Although the goal is to streamline the process, individuals who are not familiar with legal procedures may encounter difficulties. The TCC may help both parties come to a negotiated solution under Section

107 of the Act. Should such a settlement be reached, it will be formally documented and enforceable as a Tribunal award. But in the event that talks break down, the Tribunal decides the matter, with the President assisting both sides all the way through (Ismail et al., 2019).

The Su Tiang Joo v. Tribunal for Consumer Claims & Anor [2019] MLJU 373 serves as an example of the Tribunal for Consumer Claims. The plaintiff used judicial review to contest the TCC's award, and the issue centered on the Tribunal's jurisdiction and decision-making power. The court emphasized that although the TCC's goal is to give customers an easily accessible and reasonably priced channel for redress, its rulings are nonetheless subject to legal review in situations involving procedural or jurisdictional concerns. In the digital marketplace, where customers may increasingly seek restitution for false promises made by influencers or online vendors, this is especially pertinent.

The Tribunal's function is becoming increasingly important in the context of influencer marketing, even if most cases it hears concern conventional disputes. According to Nawi and Faizol (2019; 2021), many Malaysian influencers do not reveal their brand affiliations, which can deceive customers and constitute unfair business practices. The TCC may have jurisdiction over disputes resulting from misleading or hidden endorsements since influencer credibility and transparency play a crucial role in determining consumer trust and purchasing behavior. To protect consumers from the dangers of influencer marketing in Malaysia, the Tribunal offers a crucial redress mechanism in this respect.

2.4 Legal Literacy among Malaysian Consumers

Legal literacy is the willingness of consumers to comprehend their rights and use those rights while making purchases, allowing them to seek redress when needed (Samsudin et al., 2020). Its goals include educating people about the fundamentals of law and

interacting with the public to help them identify their complaints and offer legal answers (Changmai, n.d).

Consumer awareness increases the effectiveness of consumer protection laws by ensuring that consumers are informed of their rights, obligations, and accessible protections (Ishak & M. Zabil, 2012). Madugu Vijay Kumar points out that a greater degree of consumer awareness might lessen the exploitation of goods and services, meaning that customers who are informed about their purchases are less likely to be deceived by irresponsible retailers (Othman et al., 2017). According to a BERNAMA research (2019), the number of online fraud cases worldwide rose by 30% in 2017 compared to 2016 (Nurazim et al., 2021), emphasizing the need of consumer knowledge. Therefore, reducing such risks calls for raising consumer awareness.

A legal framework protecting Malaysian consumers' rights in traditional and digital marketplaces is in place. The Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998, in addition to the Consumer Protection Act of 1999, is crucial since it regulates internet content and makes sure that ads, including those from influencers, are truthful and not deceptive. For instance, Section 233 deals with the inappropriate use of network facilities and services, including the online distribution of false or misleading information, Section 211 forbids the publication of anything that is indecent, vulgar, false, intimidating, or insulting. Furthermore, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is empowered by Sections 95 and 99 to enforce adherence to registered industry rules, like the Content Code, which sets standards for marketing and advertising communications (CMA 1998).

According to a survey conducted by Samsudin et al. which consist of 157 people have shown that 64.3% of the respondents thought they knew a reasonable amount about their rights as consumers, 30.5% thought they knew very little, and the remaining respondents said they knew very little or nothing about their rights. Regarding post-purchase behavior, a different survey revealed that 38.3% of participants believed that their primary duty was to file complaints or reports with the appropriate authorities in

the event of problems like fraud, defective items, or price anomalies. Less emphasis was placed on other duties, such as making sure their issues were addressed (4.86%), being aware of and expressing their rights as consumers (4.9%), being responsible citizens (2.7%), and keeping up with current affairs that impact consumers (1.5%) (Haron & Masud, 2012).

Many customers are not aware of how to exercise their rights or use procedures like the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, which suggests a disconnect between law enforcement and consumer awareness, according to the stats above. This lack of awareness makes exploitation more likely, especially at a time when influencer marketing and internet transactions are common. To combat this, government programs like MDTCA have been implemented, and universities and non-governmental organizations like FOMCA have worked to raise knowledge of consumer rights. Students, who are frequently the main target of internet advertising and influencer promotions, are particularly significant to such activities because, if they are not sufficiently aware, they may be more susceptible to deceptive claims and legal dangers.

2.5 The Knowledge Gap and Its Factors Contributing to Consumer Awareness

When three well-known researchers—Philip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue, and Clarice N. Olien—saw an imbalance between people from lower and higher socioeconomic backgrounds in connection to the introduction of information from the mass media into society, they first developed the concept of the knowledge gap. They suggested that when new information spreads through the system, the knowledge gap widens rather than narrows (Gaziano, 2016). According to this definition, the knowledge gap is the unequal distribution of knowledge among individuals according to their socioeconomic standing (Johnston, 2003). According to a Malaysian study, despite the safeguards offered by the Consumer Protection Act of 1999, many students

lack the information necessary to recognize sponsored content shared by influencers, leaving them open to deceptive advertising (Nurdayana et al., 2023).

According to Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, the imbalance would widen as media attention increased because people with higher socioeconomic status can learn more quickly than those with lower status because of factors such as communication skills, prior knowledge, and resource availability (Hwang et al., 2009). There are several reasons for the knowledge gap. According to a study, consumer awareness is significantly influenced by monthly income and education level, especially when it comes to the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 (Ishak & Zabil, 2012; Haron & Masud, 2012).

2.5.1 Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status is one of the key determinants of consumer awareness of the Consumer Protection Act of 1999. According to Baker (2014), socioeconomic status is a measure of one's combined social and economic standing. According to Sharma et al. (2024), those who earn more money are more likely to access, process, and act upon consumer-related information. On the other hand, those with lesser incomes might not have as much access to consumer education and fewer chances to improve their legal literacy. As a result, socioeconomic status has a direct impact on how people perceive and utilize their rights under the 1999 Consumer Protection Act.

This aspect can also be referred to as the "digital divide," which refers to differences in how people, households, enterprises, and geographic areas use and have access to information and communication technology (ICT), which contributes to the knowledge gap (Soh et al., 2012). Children from middle- and upper-class homes are more likely to have access to multiple access points and

private broadband than children from lower-income families, according to study on youth internet usage by gender, age, and socioeconomic position (Mohamed et al., 2012). These differences show how socioeconomic class and digital access can have a big impact on customers' knowledge of their rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999.

2.5.2 Age

Age would be another important determinant. According to a 2016 poll by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, people between the ages of 20 and 24 made up the biggest percentage of internet users (21.4%), followed by people between the ages of 25 and 29 (16.7%). This suggests that because younger consumers use social media sites more frequently, they are more exposed to influencer marketing. On the other hand, elderly consumers are less likely to be exposed to digital influencer content since they are more inclined to rely on conventional media, like television. Young adults between the ages of 18 and 34, however, continue to be the major target of influencer marketing, making them a crucial demographic that has to be better informed about the law and their rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 (Febrianty et al., 2025).

Younger customers may be more susceptible to deceptive content even though they are more active online. According to research, young persons between the ages of 18 and 20 have a relatively low level of legal literacy when it comes to consumer rights (Dol et al., 2015). This shows that younger customers are more vulnerable to misleading claims than older consumers, who could have more life experience and be better able to spot unfair tactics. Therefore, though age has a favorable correlation with digital exposure, it also shows that younger undergraduates, who are the ones that use online influencer promotions the most, lack legal literacy (Dol et al., 2015).

2.5.3. Education

Education also has a significant role in determining how well customers understand and use their rights. A significant obstacle is the law's language, which is frequently filled with jargon and technical words. Because of its complexity, it can be difficult for those with less knowledge to completely comprehend and apply legal concepts in practical settings. White (1982) asserts that legal literacy is more than just reading comprehension; it also entails total mastery of legal principles and their application. Undergraduates may therefore have a harder time evaluating misleading ads in the context of influencer marketing, especially when violations are hidden under vague or subtle language.

Education level has a significant impact on consumer awareness of rights in addition to language obstacles. Higher educational attainment increases the likelihood that people will obtain, analyze, and act upon consumer-related information, enhancing their ability to spot unethical behavior, according to research by Ishak and Zabil (2012). Conversely, people with less knowledge frequently find it difficult to understand their rights and continue to be more susceptible to fraud and deception online. Since educational awareness campaigns and activities have been demonstrated to improve students' legal literacy and capacity to handle consumer issues, formal education aids in closing this gap in influencer marketing (Bashri & Abu Bakar, 2022).

2.5.4 Customer Experience

In addition to socioeconomic and demographic factors, customer experiences have a big impact on how well-known the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 is. Research indicates that previous encounters with businesses have a significant impact on complaint behavior. Consumers are more likely to claim their rights under the Act when they have had favorable experiences, such as having their complaints recognized and resolved (Mat et al., 2014). According to this, consumers who are treated fairly are more likely to be aware of and take advantage of their rights, whereas those who have unpleasant encounters may choose not to utilize the system completely. Thus, the choice to make a complaint or not might be interpreted as a reflection of how well-informed consumers are about the Consumer Protection Act of 1999.

Customers' understanding of their rights can also be shaped by their interactions with customers and how complaints are handled, which can serve as an informal kind of consumer education. Effective service recovery not only boosts customer happiness but also enhances the likelihood to use the complaint system, according to a study by Attia et al. (2020) (Ali et al., 2020). Positive customer experiences also boost trust and engagement, according to Mazhar et al. (2015), who also show that undergraduates are more likely to understand and exercise their consumer rights when they experience fair complaint handling or transparent influencer promotions. On the other hand, bad encounters such as unanswered complaints or dishonest business practices may discourage customers from pursuing legal action, making them more susceptible to violations in the scope of the Consumer Protection Act of 1999.

2.5.5 Media Exposure

In addition to the previously listed factors, media exposure and influencer trust also play a role in the consumer awareness knowledge gap. Customers are more likely to use their rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 if they

regularly interact with consumer-related content on social media platforms. By giving access to information, peer validation, and increased confidence to act, social media consumption communities have been demonstrated to improve consumer empowerment (Ben Yahia & El Ferci, 2015).

However, media exposure does not necessarily have a favorable impact because it can increase undergraduates' exposure to deceptive advertisements and content. Young consumers frequently have a high degree of trust in influencers because they believe their material to be trustworthy and genuine, which lowers their skepticism of commercial messaging, according to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017). Similar to this, Evans et al. (2017) believe that because influencer marketing mostly depends on relationships based on trust, it is more challenging for customers to assess sponsored material objectively. Thus, even while media exposure can raise awareness, undergraduates' capacity to recognize deceptive marketing may be simultaneously weakened by the high level of trust placed in influencers, highlighting the need for improved disclosure procedures and legal literacy.

2.5.6 Influencer Trust

Influencer trust is another important determinant of consumer awareness. Perceived honesty, integrity, and transparency are frequently the foundations of influencer trust. Consumers who follow reliable influencers are more likely to obtain accurate information, according to research, while exposure to less reliable content increases the likelihood of confusion and false information (Alkan & Ulas, 2023). This dynamic implies that trust can have two unintended consequences: although it can provide customers with valuable information, misplaced trust can increase the lack of knowledge about their rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999.

However, putting too much trust on influencers can make it harder for customers to assess content objectively. One-sided emotional ties between followers and influencers increase persuasiveness while decreasing skepticism about possible online fraud, according to Lou and Yuan (2019). This trust further raises the possibility that students may take endorsements at face value, particularly in cases where sponsorships are not revealed, since they frequently view influencers as relevant role models (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Customers are therefore particularly susceptible to deceptive advertising and exploitation when influencer trust is not counterbalanced by sufficient media and legal literacy, underscoring the significance of more stringent disclosure procedures and focused awareness campaigns.

2.6 Consumer Ability to Identify Misleading Influencer Marketing Practices

According to White (1982), legal literacy is the ability of both writers and readers to fully comprehend legal discourse. It involves the capacity to recognize false information, identify situations in which influencers omit sponsorship disclosures, and notice possible legal violations in the context of this study. But according to research conducted by Samsudin et al., many consumers especially undergraduates, do not fully understand their rights, which makes it challenging for them to assess influencer content critically. Influencer trust can increase marketing efficacy, but when consumers lack legal literacy, this trust can also increase their susceptibility (Belanche et al., 2021).

A lack of legal literacy poses serious challenges. Compared to consumers who are legally educated, those who lack sufficient information are more susceptible to cybercrime. For instance, 35,368 fraud incidents totaling RM1.6 billion in financial losses were reported by the Royal Malaysia Police's Commercial Crime Investigation Department in 2024 (Dr. Beh May Ting, 2025). According to a similar survey that is conducted by Ahmed, half of participants were unaware of how the law protects them

or how to report infractions, putting them at danger when they encounter dishonest business practices. These results show that undergraduates are still quite susceptible to exploitation and find it difficult to protect their rights or pursue legal action against deceptive advertising and online fraud.

The Consumer Protection Act 1999 (CPA 1999) establishes a benchmark for evaluating the fairness and openness of marketing strategies by emphasizing that customers must not be duped by advertising. Thus, this benchmark can be used to assess undergraduates' capacity to identify deceptive sponsorships or untrue statements. Universities and governmental organizations are essential in helping to bridge the legal literacy gap that many undergraduates experience. For example, by enhancing protections through policy, education, and advisory services backed by the CPA 1999, the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living's Consumerism Movement Division (CMD) seeks to create a society that is more consumer-friendly (supportSEiSB, 2024).

2.7 Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Theory

In examining undergraduates' awareness of legal risks in influencer marketing, Cognitive Theory can help to explain how individuals are actively processing, storing and recalling information which can help them in decision making. Ulric Neisser defined cognitive as "all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used" as it suggests that other than being passive receivers of sensory information, humans are actually "active selectors" of information, making several assumptions about their own perceptions based on experience (Graham & Griffin, 2024). By applying influencer marketing into this theory, undergraduates can interpret and internalize messages differently based on their cognitive capacity which will affect how they interpret disclosures and assess product claims. Further research demonstrates that consumers' decision-making in digital contexts is influenced by cognitive processing, as they use perception, memory, and attention to assess the veracity of endorsements (Vázquez et al., 2020). Therefore, the way that students

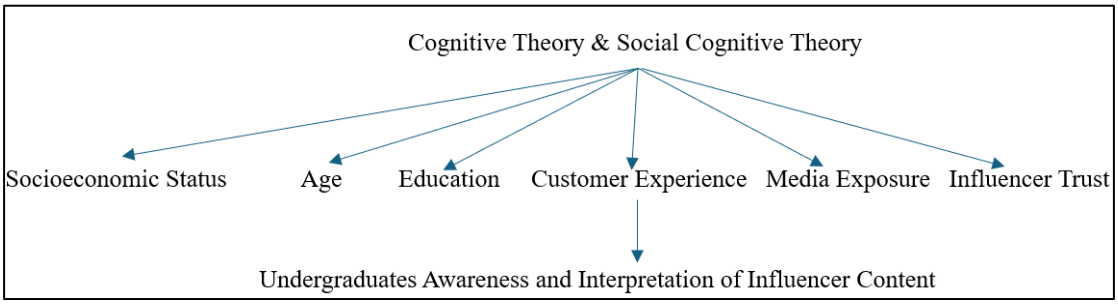
understand influencer content and how it affects their knowledge of legal threats is explained by cognitive theory.

The Social Cognitive Theory is especially relevant since it highlights how human behavior and learning happen through social contact. People gain information, abilities, tactics, and beliefs through these encounters, in addition to an awareness of the suitability, utility, and effects of various actions (Schunk et al., 2012). According to Albert Bandura (2001), the theory is a model of emergent interactive agency, emphasizing the significance of self-efficacy—the conviction that one can carry out the necessary steps to accomplish a goal—which inspires people to act and endure hardships (Graham et al., 2024). Therefore, self-efficacy plays a role in shaping undergraduates' legal awareness of consumer rights in influencer marketing, which suggests that students with high self-efficacy are more likely to be confident in understanding along with applying the Consumer Protection Act 1999 when making purchase decisions.

Combining the two theories makes it clear that undergraduates' understanding of consumer protection is influenced by social interactions and observed behaviors in addition to their cognitive processing of marketing information. For example, students may assess influencer disclosures or claims cognitively, but peer learning and self-efficacy boost their confidence in acting on this information. The theories are complementary in describing students' behavior, as this integration shows that awareness of legal dangers in influencer marketing depends on both internal information processing such as monthly income and age and external social reinforcement such as customer experience, media exposure and influencer trust.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This research is led by 2 main theories which are Cognitive Theory and Social Cognitive Theory that are further supported by the legal framework: the Consumer Protection Act 1999 (CPA 1999). A combination of all these theories can help explain how undergraduates interpret influencer marketing, why such disparities in legal awareness occur and lastly, how such interpretations can be related to misleading advertisement regulations.



(Figure 2.8: Proposed Theoretical Framework)

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research objectives of this study are: (a) to evaluate the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 in relation to influencer marketing, (b) to examine undergraduates' ability to identify misleading content and legal violations arising from influencer marketing practices and (c) to determine the factors affecting the knowledge gap among undergraduates about their legal awareness of influencer marketing under the Consumer Protection Act 1999.

In order to guarantee the reliability and validity of study results, methodology is essential. It is impossible to successfully accomplish the objectives of research without a well-defined methodological strategy. According to Goundar (2012), research is the logical and methodical search for latest and practical information on a given subject, assisting in the objective and methodical study of social and scientific issues.

To better understand undergraduates' awareness of legal concerns in influencer marketing, this study uses both exploratory and qualitative research methods. These approaches are especially appropriate since they enable the investigation of perceptions, experiences, and awareness levels in a field that has received little study.

3.1 Exploratory Research

One kind of qualitative research that tackles the question of "what is happening" is exploratory research, which looks deeper for fresh perspectives and evaluates

phenomena from an alternative viewpoint (Saka et al., 2023). Researchers that utilize this method are frequently adaptable in their data collecting and driven by curiosity, which is regarded as an advantageous trait, since insights can originate from a variety of sources (Stevens et al., 2013). In addition to qualitative techniques like focus groups and interviews, exploratory research usually uses secondary data, such as examining previously published reports and literature (Goundar, 2012).

Exploratory research is used in this study because it provides a deeper understanding of undergraduates' awareness of the legal risks associated with influencer marketing. Finding out how students view and comprehend their rights as consumers is helpful, but it also highlights the dangers that deceptive influencer marketing tactics under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 may pose to them. Consequently, it offers valuable information about their level of awareness and possible remedies.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Through the collection of participant experiences, attitudes, and behaviors, qualitative research investigates issues and offers deeper insights, assisting in the solution to the how and why questions (Tenny et al., 2017). In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research does not rely on statistical processes; rather, it analyzes and interprets meanings from people's ideas in order to identify the underlying causes of problems (Baskarada, 2014). Another difference is that, even if qualitative data is hard to measure, it is crucial to maintain the narrative and context of participants' experiences (Tenny et al., 2017).

In order to investigate undergraduates' perspectives and experiences as well as assess their degree of understanding of their rights under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999, this study takes a qualitative method. Numerous techniques, including focus groups and interviews, can be used in qualitative research; semi-structured interviews are used in

this study to gather in-depth information for additional analysis. By combining pre-planned questions with the freedom to dig further into participants' responses, semi-structured interviews offer a flexible framework that enables the collection of rich, nuanced data (George, 2022). Additionally, because they provide significant insights into people's lived experiences and viewpoints that surveys or quantitative methods could miss, interviews are highly regarded in qualitative research (Hecker & Kalpokas, 2024).

3.3 Data Collection

In research, gathering data is crucial since it serves as the foundation for demonstrating the validity and impact of the study. Choosing the best approach before gathering data requires careful consideration of a number of criteria, since using the wrong methods might result in inaccurate findings and conclusions and eventually lower the research's efficacy (Mwita, 2022). Thus, semi-structured interviews will be used as the primary data collection method in this project, which will also use secondary data. Mwita (2022) defines primary data as information gathered directly from original sources by the researcher for the goal of the study. Methods like surveys, interviews, and observations can be used to gather it (Mazhar et al., 2021).

3.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Since semi-structured interviews are better suited when the researcher's primary goal is to obtain an in-depth understanding of participants' viewpoints rather than a broad overview of a situation, they will be used in this research (Adeoye-Olatunde et al., 2021). Semi-structured interviews are especially suitable for this study since they enable investigation of undergraduates' views about the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 across several universities. This approach

offers "the best of both worlds," combining the freedom of unstructured interviews with the consistency of structured ones. This is one of its main benefits. This provides richer and more complex insights by offering trustworthy data as well as the flexibility to dig deeper when needed (George, 2022). The interviews will be conducted online or in-person, depending on the convenience of the participants. The responses will be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

3.3.2 Academic Journals

Academic journals will be used as secondary data in this study, which will combine primary and secondary sources. Analyzing secondary sources involves reviewing information that was not initially gathered by the researchers but can be utilized to reinforce and validate the study's conclusions (Church, 2002). Generalization, synthesis, interpretation, commentary, and evaluation are common examples of these sources, all of which seek to offer critical viewpoints that raise the research's credibility (University of New South Wales, 2025). One of the main advantages of using academic journals is that they give researchers access to a larger and more varied collection of data, which results in a more useful sample than if they were only looking at one person. Additionally, after results are analyzed, scholarly publications provide insightful information and point out potential external variables that may influence future research (Cowton, 1998).

3.4 Research Sampling

Purposive sampling is the sample technique used in this study. Using this method, examples that are particularly informed or acquainted with a phenomenon of interest

are identified and chosen (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where participants are specifically chosen by the researcher according to specified criteria, including their familiarity with the research topic or their desire to take part (Jupp, 2006). Purposive selection, according to Jenson (1955), is a technique for selecting groups of units in such a way that the groups as a whole match as closely as feasible the average or percentage of the entire population in terms of known attributes.

Because the study focuses on consumers' understanding of legal risks under the Consumer Protection Act of 1999, students are the targeted interviewees in this research. According to surveys, 55.43% of undergraduates spend between 2 and 6 hours a day on social media, while 27.17% spend between 6 and 12 hours (Nordin, 2025), making them suitable responses. This suggests that undergraduates are a significant population to study since they are more likely to be exposed to influencer marketing.

Social media platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp as well as university student networks will be used to recruit respondents. For semi-structured interviews, ten to fifteen undergraduates will be chosen in total, as this quantity has been determined to be adequate for qualitative research. Most themes surfaced in the first 12 interviews, according to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), indicating that a modest sample size may be adequate to reach data saturation. Additionally, involving undergraduates from various programs will improve the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

Interviewee	University	Gender	Year of Study	Programme
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				

(Table 3.4: Sample Profile of Interviewees)

3.5 Development of Interview Protocol

Before conducting any interviews, it is essential to establish a standardized interview protocol. An interview protocol not only emphasizes the purpose of the study but also outlines the necessary steps to be followed. Moreover, a well-structured protocol enables the researcher to gain a clearer understanding of the research focus and ensures that the interview questions remain aligned with the study's objectives (Bolderston, 2012). As emphasized by Kallio et al. (2016), rigorous development of a semi-structured interview guide enhances the objectivity, trustworthiness, and plausibility of qualitative research.

Therefore, the process of developing the interview questions is solely based on the research title, in this case, addressing the question of undergraduates' awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999. Regardless of the interview being structured or unstructured, the interview questions must be generated by the researcher and mainly designed to capture participants' experiences and knowledge along with their perceptions. This process involves identifying the areas that are essential for the research, reviewing journal articles to guide the research title and to create both open and closed ended questions to help balance consistency (Wegmeyer et al., 2022).

After looking through several journal articles relating to the Consumer Protection Act 1999, the researcher will create questions that elicit responses directly related to the objectives of the study. The questions will then be organized according to the specific research questions so that there is a clear alignment between the interview protocol and the study's aims. They are further categorized into thematic areas such as general awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, perceptions of misleading content in influencer marketing, and factors influencing undergraduates' knowledge gaps. To ensure clarity and accessibility for interviewees, the draft interview questions are reviewed by supervisors. All questions are developed based on insights drawn from several journal articles and adapted to the local context, ensuring that they are both relevant and capable of generating rich, meaningful data for analysis.

Overall, the interview protocol will consist of several sections. Firstly, there will be several demographic questions, along with 6 questions on interviewees' understanding of consumer rights. Followed by questions relating to the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, that will consist of 3 questions. In addition, there will be 8 questions on the knowledge gap factor and there will be 6 questions about influencer marketing practices and trust and lastly, there will be 5 questions on interviewee's legal expectations and responsibilities.

Research Questions	Section	Interview Questions
R1: What is the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 in relation to influencer marketing?	- Understanding of Consumer Rights - Tribunal for Consumer Claims	(a) Understanding of Consumer Rights - What comes to mind when you hear the term 'consumer rights? - Have you heard of Consumer Protection Act 1999 in Malaysia? If yes, where have you learned about this Act? - What do you understand by this Act? - Are you aware of the laws S.9 and S.10 under the Consumer Protection Act 1999? - How aware do you think consumers in Malaysia are about their legal rights when buying products or services, especially those that are promoted through social media or influencers? - In your opinion, do you think consumers in Malaysia take legal action when a product cause them harm, defective, not as advertised, etc? Do provide reasons (b) Tribunal for Consumer Claims - Have you heard of the Tribunal for Consumer Claims? - Would you use the Tribunal if you are being misled by a influencer's product promotion? Explain your answer - In your opinion, is this legal system (Tribunal for Consumer Claims) effective on holding influencers accountable for misleading products?
R2: How do undergraduates identify misleading content and legal violations in influencer	- Influencer Marketing Practices and Trust - Legal Expectations	(a) Influencer Marketing Practices & Trust - Have you purchased a product or service that has been promoted by an influencer? Were they honest about promoting the products? Share your reasons

marketing practices?	and Responsibilities	- How do you usually know if the product is promoted by an influencer is legitimate? - What makes you trust some influencers promote a product? - Do you solely believe in the reviews that are provided before you make a purchase? - If an influencer promotes a harmful or low-quality product, who do you think should be held responsible — the influencer, the company, or both? - Can you describe what is considered a misleading advertisement? (b) Legal Expectations and Responsibilities - What responsibilities do you think influencers should have when promoting products and services? - If something goes wrong with the product that you purchased from influencer marketing, who do you think should be held responsible – the company, the influencer or both? - If you face a problem when u purchase a product through an influencer, would you feel confident taking legal action if an influencer promoted a harmful product, why or why not?
R3: What are the factors that contribute to the knowledge gap among undergraduates of their legal awareness of influencer marketing under the Consumer Protection Act 1999	- Knowledge Gap Factors - Legal Expectations and Responsibilities	(a) Knowledge Gap Factors - How confident do you feel about knowing your rights as consumers? - Do you think living in the city affects how much you know your consumer rights? - What do you think are some possible reasons why undergraduates have less knowledge or understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999? - Do you believe that your lack of knowledge affects your decision to report such issues? - Do your friends influence your decisions about consumer rights? Can you give an example? - Where do you normally get information about your rights as a consumer? - Has social media influenced your awareness of consumers' rights? Do give your experience - What do you normally do when you find a product or a service misleading? (b) Legal Expectations and Responsibilities - What type of legal support do you think should be given to consumers when they are being misled by a product online?

		- In your opinion, what can be further improve on Malaysia's legal literacy on the Consumer Protection Act 1999 to better protect online consumers?

(Table 3.5: Research Questions, Sections and Interview Questions)

3.6 Interview Process

The interview procedure will start as soon as the ethical clearance and interview questions are given approval, and it will continue until data saturation is reached. To arrange a time and location that works for them, participants will be notified beforehand. Each interview session is anticipated to last 15 to 30 minutes and will take place either in-person or virtually using platforms like Google Meet, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams.

Participants will be reminded of the purpose of the research and made aware that the interview is going to be recorded in order to collect data before it starts. After that, they will be asked to indicate that they are willing to take part. To guarantee the accuracy of the data gathered, all interviews will be audio recorded after informed consent has been obtained. In order to further explore insights and clarify meanings, a semi-structured interview method will be used, which allows the use of probing questions.

Participants will be guaranteed that their answers will be used only for academic purposes and will be deleted at the end of the study, and confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained throughout the process. By doing this, the researcher will guarantee that the entire interview process is conducted in a way that is both professional and ethical, protecting the research's integrity and the accuracy of the data gathered.

3.7 Data Analysis

To guarantee accuracy and preserve the validity of the data, the interviewees' answers will be carefully documented and examined. Finding significant insights and repeated patterns that are closely linked to the research's goals is made possible by this procedure. Thematic analysis, a technique that finds and investigates patterns of meaning within a dataset and highlights themes that are significant in relation to the study topic, will next be used to analyze the data (Joffe, 2011). Braun and Clarke state that there are six essential steps in thematic analysis: transcription and familiarization with the data, keyword identification, code selection, theme development, conceptualization through interpretation, and, lastly, conceptual model building (Naeem et al., 2023).

The process of theme analysis begins with familiarizing oneself with the facts. According to Naeem et al. (2023), this involves transcribing the gathered data and giving the researcher ample opportunity to interact with it. This phase is essential because it allows the researcher to start figuring out what kinds of themes might show up in the dataset. Additionally, being familiar with the data guarantees that the next analysis is carried out appropriately and intelligently (Dawadi, 2020). In order to accomplish this, the researcher might have to take thorough notes, transcribe audio recordings of interviews, and go over the data several times in order to obtain a deeper understanding (Caulfield, 2023).

The creation of initial codes is the second phase in topic analysis. At this point, scientists analyze the data to find significant sections (Naeem et al., 2023). Parts of the dataset that are relevant to the study issue are systematically labeled as part of this approach (McLeod, 2024). Coding identifies important passages in responses and substitutes them with concise "codes" that capture their main ideas (Caulfield, 2023). There are various methods for creating codes. Researchers can employ open coding in more theoretical analyses, where codes are created and improved over time without depending on pre-established categories, or line-by-line coding in inductive analyses, where each line of data is categorized. As an alternative, researchers can use qualitative data analysis programs like NVivo or ATLAS.ti, which are especially useful for handling massive data sets (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). To arrange codes and spot new

themes, even basic programs like Microsoft Excel might be used (Bree & Gallagher, 2016).

The creation of themes is the third phase in thematic analysis. Following coding, the codes are grouped into more comprehensive sections that reflect the main concept, importance, or topic of the data (Naeem et al., 2023). Because it allows researchers to find patterns and links both within and across the dataset, this stage is essential (Dawadi, 2020). Braun and Clarke (2006) offer an organized guidance because this stage is frequently the most complicated: researchers should start by gathering a list of codes on a different page and then grouping them into "theme-piles" or groups according to how they relate to possible themes. Some codes might be eliminated throughout this process if they are too ambiguous or unrelated, while others might stick out enough to be themes in and of themselves (Caulfield, 2023).

Examining the themes is the fourth phase in the thematic analysis process. This serves as a quality check to ascertain whether the initial themes are meaningful and cohesive by critically comparing them to the coded data as well as the entire dataset (McLeod, 2024). Depending on their accuracy and relevance, researchers may rework the themes by dividing, merging, eliminating, or developing new ones if problems occur (Caulfield, 2023). According to Naeem et al. (2023), themes at this point are more than just recurrent elements; rather, they are patterned meanings that relate the data to the study objectives.

Refining, identifying, and naming the themes is the fifth phase in thematic analysis. The emphasis at this phase is on polishing the themes to guarantee accuracy and clarity. This approach include "identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspects of the data each theme captures," as stated by Braun and Clarke (2006) (Dawadi, 2020). While naming a theme requires offering it with a concise and understandable label, defining a theme necessitates that researchers explicitly express its meaning and explain how it advances comprehension of the dataset (Caulfield, 2023). The relationships between concepts and themes can also be visually

represented by researchers using tools like models or diagrams to aid in this process (Naeem et al., 2023).

The write-up is the last phase of thematic analysis. Presenting a thorough report of the results is part of this step, which aims to persuade readers of the analysis's validity and rigor (Dawadi, 2020). The report must provide detailed interpretations that answer the research objectives and place the findings in the context of the body of current literature, rather than merely summarizing the facts (McLeod, 2024).

The main categories of this study are (1) Consumer Protection Act 1999 Awareness, (2) Perceptions of misleading Content and Influencer Accountability, and (3) Knowledge Gap Factors Affecting Legal Awareness of Undergraduates. Sub-themes that represent variances in interviewees' responses are further subdivided into each of these areas. These sub-themes enhance the findings' relationship to the research's goals and offer a more thorough understanding of the data.

3.8 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has described the research design, sampling strategy, interview question formulation, interview procedure, and data analysis used in this study. Semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis are used in the research to guarantee that participant responses are accurately, consistently, and meaningfully recorded, which enhances the validity of the results. With everything considered, the approach that was selected offers an approachable framework that backs up the goals of the study and establishes a strong foundation for presenting the findings in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

In every research, it is important to analyse data that have been collected. Hence, the definition being a process of inspecting, cleaning along with transforming data with the main aim of emphasizing useful information which can lead to appropriate conclusions and efficient decision making (Bihani et al., 2014). As mentioned in the previous chapter, data have been collected using semi-structured interview methods and are to be analysed using the Thematic Analysis technique.

Before the data are processed using such techniques, there will themes that are to highlight the research questions. The **Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999** corresponds to research questions (RQ) 1 which is on the levels of awareness regarding legal risks in relation to influencer marketing among undergraduates. The theme, **Perceptions of Misleading Content and Influencer Accountability** would relate to RQ2 that is about the perception of undergraduates regarding misleading content and influencer accountability to legal knowledge and lastly, **Knowledge Gap Factors influencing legal awareness** would relate to RQ3 which is in relation to the main sources of knowledge and factors that influence undergraduates' legal awareness.

Below the table shows the demographics of the respondents. Within these 15 respondents, 3 are males while 12 are females. All respondents falls within the age range of 19 to 23 and are currently pursuing their undergraduate programs. These respondents comes from various faculties which includes business, engineering, medical, computer science and social science. All respondents are currently studying within Klang Valley in universities like Monash University, Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Taylors' University, University of

Nottingham, Asia Pacific University (APU), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and UOW.

	Age	Gender	Programme of Study	Year	Institution
1	21	Male	Marketing	Y2	Monash
2	23	Male	Mechatronics	Y3	UM
3	22	Female	Physiotherapy	Y3	UTAR
4	21	Female	Computer Science	Y2	Taylors
5	21	Female	International Business	Y3	UTAR
6	22	Female	Chemical Engineering	Y2	University of Nottingham
7	22	Male	Business	Y2	APU
8	21	Female	Actuarial Science	Y2	UKM
9	21	Female	International Business	Y3	UTAR
10	21	Female	ACCA	Y3	Sunway
11	22	Female	Software Engineering	Y2	APU
12	21	Female	Psychology	Y2	UKM
13	19	Female	Physiotherapy	Y1	UOW
14	21	Female	International Business	Y3	UTAR
15	19	Female	Accounting	Y1	UM

(Table 4.0: Demographics of the respondents)

4.1 Themes and Sub-Themes: Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999

With the themes mentioned; Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, Knowledge Gap Factors influencing legal awareness, and Perceptions of Misleading Content and Influencer Accountability, these themes would be further divided into different parts of sub themes that are shown below.

(1) Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999	(2) Perceptions of Misleading Content and	(3) Knowledge Gap - Factors Influencing Legal Awareness

	Influencer Accountability	
Sub Themes:- - General Familiarity - Specific knowledge on Section 9 and 10 - Perceived relevance of the Act - Understanding of enforcement mechanisms	Sub Themes:- - Definition on 'Misleading Content' - Ability to recognise the violations - Trust level with influencers - Responsibility attribution	Sub Themes: - - Sources of Information - Interviewees' confidence in consumer rights awareness - Social influence on awareness - Barries to accessing legal knowledge

(Table 4.1: Themes and Subthemes)

The first theme, "Awareness of the Consumer Protection Act 1999," examines respondents' broad understanding of their rights as consumers and their familiarity with the Act.

4.1.1 General Familiarity

Each participant showed a basic understanding of what consumer rights were, with 6 respondents characterizing them as "the basic rights of a customer" or a type of consumer protection, which 7 of the respondents had defined. Participant 15 had quoted her own definition: “Truthful information and not to be misleading and is the right to safe goods and services, as what you buy shouldn’t threaten health or safety.”

When it came to the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 in specific, 4 respondents said they had never heard of it, while the remaining 11 respondents had mentioned that they had come across it through online resources, news articles, or classes. When they were asked about their understanding of the act, Participant 1 described it as “a law that protects consumers from unfair or misleading business practices like false advertising or selling defective products.” On the other hand, Participant 4 quoted that “they can help

consumers if they get scammed, and an example given would be when a product does not match the advertisement."

To test the respondents' view on Malaysian consumers' awareness about their legal rights, 13 out of the 15 respondents mentioned that they do not think Malaysian consumers are really aware of their legal rights as consumers, and the main reason for that is due to placing heavy trust on influencers. Participant 3 said that "Some of the customers probably just trust the influencers too easily, while some older customers may not know how to report such scams or even fake ads." On the other hand, Participant 12 had a different view on this, as she quoted that "People are mostly aware of their rights, especially while shopping online or through social media; however, there may be another side that they may not be able to fully understand the risk and the legal details of."

When respondents were asked about their opinion on whether Malaysian consumers are willing to take legal action, 2 of the respondents agreed that they will take legal action, as Participant 13 stated that if the product causes harm, she is sure that Malaysian consumers would probably sue or viralize the product that caused them harm. Meanwhile, the remaining 13 respondents tend to have the opposite view where they would either rarely or not really take legal action. According to Participant 9, it has been said that the consumers would just complain to the seller or just leave a bad review, while Participant 8 had mentioned several reasons, such as lack of awareness, fear of legal costs, and them having a stereotype where they believe their complaints wouldn't lead to any results or they find that the legal process takes a lot of time and effort.

When it comes to the Tribunal for Consumer Claims, only 6 respondents have mentioned that they have ever heard of such tribunals, while the others have never heard of them.

4.1.2 Specific Knowledge on Sections 9 and 10

When probed further, 14 of the respondents have acknowledged that they were either unfamiliar with or had never heard of the Act's particular sections, especially sections 9 and 10. Participant 8, however, is aware of such sections, which she defined as dealing with false or misleading representations and bad advertising along with protecting consumers from fake discounts, exaggerated promotions, or influencers who mislead followers about product quality. Hence, this implies that respondents were usually unaware of the regulations concerning false and deceptive representations.

Respondents were then asked if they have ever thought whether influencer promotions should comply with the Consumer Protection Act 1999; 10 of the respondents had agreed that they should comply with the law, as Participant 7 quoted that “it would be more regulated and cut out more of the misleading advertisement, and if they do break it, they are to be held accountable.” 5 of the respondents have argued that they are not really sure about it.

4.1.3 Perceived Relevance of the Act

Out of the 6 respondents, 3 have stated that they would use the Tribunal if they were being misled by an influencer’s product promotion, while the remaining 3 would use the Tribunal based on the condition; for example, Participant 1 has mentioned that if the product indeed caused real harm, then he would use the Tribunal. However, when asked if they find this tribunal effective, Participant 12 stated that it is quite effective; however, not a lot of consumers realize that influencers are to be held responsible as well, hence she stated it is best for more enforcement. On the other hand, Participant 6 finds the Tribunal to be not

effective, as this Tribunal works best for direct sellers, as it is difficult to apply to influencers.

Additionally, respondents listed several elements that influenced their confidence in an influencer, where Participant 5 stated that if there is an easy reporting system or a hotline that can help people, then she would be confident in reporting such a case. Participant 15 mentioned that she is not very confident, as she believed that the legal process may seem complicated, and she may not know whether what she did was the correct procedure or if she had given the correct evidence that is needed. They relied on reviews differently, though.

Based on the results that have been collected by all 15 respondents, it has been shown that reporting behavior is influenced by ignorance. Respondents were given the opportunity to state what type of legal support they think should be given to consumers. Hence, almost all respondents mentioned the need for a more user-friendly and effective reporting system. According to Participant 10, she quoted that "It is best to have easier reporting channels such as MCMC," while Participant 15 mentioned having clear guidance on evidence.

On the other hand, respondents did mention that it is best to have more awareness campaigns, as it can help improve Malaysia's legal literacy of the Consumer Protection Act 1999. According to Participant 14, such campaigns are needed and should be uploaded on social media to teach consumers about their rights as consumers. Not only to have awareness campaigns, but according to Participant 4, she believes it should be included in studies, and they are to upload online content on social media.

4.1.4 Understanding of Enforcement Mechanisms

The interviewees were then given a scenario whereby if something goes wrong with the product that they had purchased, who shall be held responsible? All 15 respondents have agreed that both the influencer and the company are to be held responsible. However, Participant 7 mentioned that he would target the company first, as the influencer is just doing their job by advertising, and it would be difficult to contact the influencer. On the other hand, Participant 13 had mentioned that it depends on how the influencer will describe and advertise the product. It has been quoted by Participant 13 that "I think it is the influencer's fault because the company is the one making the product, and the person who advertises is an influencer, so sometimes they can be wrong, and such small mistakes can happen."

4.2 Perceptions of Misleading Content and Influencer Accountability

Under this theme, the research looks at how respondents perceive misleading content and how they see influencers' responsibilities in online product and service promotion.

4.2.1 Definition of "Misleading Content"

Although respondents' opinions of what defined deceptive advertising vary, a number of patterns appeared. All 15 respondents have characterized misleading content as involving biased endorsements rooted in sponsored partnerships, false claims and exaggerated outcomes, or the hiding of significant advantages or risks. This suggests a basic comprehension of the topic, as all respondents were able to define deceptive advertisements to some extent. For instance, Participant 9 describes it as when the advertisement gives false or misleading

information that makes people believe something that is not true. On the other hand, Participant 3 has described it as when the advertisement shows exaggerating results, which makes it seem fake.

When asked what they would do if they found a product or service misleading, a number of respondents stated that they would contact the seller. According to Participant 5, she stated that she will usually contact the seller and leave a bad review, while Participant 13 quoted that she will stop using the product and will try to contact the seller. However, if the seller did not get back to her, she would consider filing a complaint to the consumer tribunal or make a report to any related authorities.

4.2.2 Ability to Recognize Violations

All 15 respondents stated that they mostly relied on outside factors when asked if they could distinguish between genuine influencer-promoted products and rip-offs. Participant 5 stated that she will check the comments and reviews and sometimes search for the other customers' experiences with the product. Participant 8 quoted, "I will check for a clear product label and customer reviews and to see whether the brand has an official website or is registered under the Ministry of Health. This dependence shows that their perception of legitimacy is influenced more by visible online cues than by knowledge of consumer protection legislation.

13 out of 15 respondents stated that they had previously bought goods recommended by influencers, which suggested that influencer marketing had a significant impact on their purchasing choices. Responses to the question of whether they thought influencers were sincere in their marketing were conflicting. While some respondents raised concerns and thought that some

influencers tended to overstate benefits or push products for financial gain, others felt that some influencers were honest and straightforward in their recommendations. Based on Participant 7, she mentioned the influencer that she had made a purchase from was honest because the product she bought was a simple product from the influencer; hence, she didn't think much of it.

When asked if they solely believe in the reviews before making the purchase, there were mixed reactions. Participant 6 mentioned that she will not fully believe the reviews, as she will cross-track the reviews from other sources. Participant 3 mentioned that she would believe solely; however, it depends on the reviews. If the majority are good reviews, then it would be fine.

4.2.3 Trust Level with Influencers

All 15 respondents have mixed reactions when it comes to trusting influencers. Although Respondents 3, 4, and 10 stated that they do not trust influencers completely, the remaining respondents show some level of trust. Participant 13 suggested that if the influencer's main niche is beauty and the influencer is promoting beauty products or services, then she would trust them. Participant 14 mentioned that she focused more on the authenticity in brand partnerships, as in the influencers that are not in every brand's promotion. Participant 6 stated that the influencers must be transparent about the sponsorship and must have consistent, authentic content.

4.2.4 Responsibility Attribution

In terms of accountability, all 15 respondents agreed that when a promoted product is harmful, inadequate, or faulty, both businesses and influencers should

be held responsible. Participant 9 has stated her reason as the influencers are being paid by the company to promote the product that is not in the accurate state while the company helps to provide something that is not good to the market. Participant 14 stated that the company is the one who makes the product, while the influencer has the responsibility to check what products they are asked to promote.

All respondents stated various responsibilities that influencers should have when promoting products and services. Participant 4 has mentioned that they should test the product properly, and then they are to tell the truth rather than just stating the benefits of the products. Participant 11 stated that the influencer must ensure that their promotion is truthful and they are to disclose sponsorship and avoid promoting unsafe or unverified products. In short, all respondents should be responsible for their honesty, sponsorship disclosure, verifying authenticity and safety, and ensuring that the product can be tested before promoting it.

4.3 Knowledge Gap—Factors Influencing Legal Awareness

Respondents showed a noticeable knowledge gap that was influenced by social pressures, personal confidence, and divisions in information sources. As a result, this theme assists in understanding the fundamental causes of this legal awareness gap.

4.3.1 Source of Information

The results show that respondents' legal awareness as consumers was clearly lacking. The validity of these sources is still in doubt, even though all 15

respondents claimed to have learned about their rights from government websites, social media campaigns, family and friends, online news stories, and social media platforms. According to other studies, the reliability and accuracy of information found online might differ greatly based on the source and presentation style (Vedder et al., 2003). Given that there were 25.1 million active social media users in Malaysia as of January 2025 (Kemp, 2025), it is not surprising that a large number of people strongly rely on social media news about scams, customer experiences, and consumer advice. Their broad knowledge of consumer issues seems to be influenced by this extensive exposure.

All 15 respondents have agreed that living in the city affects how much they know about their consumer rights. Participant 6 stated that city people get more exposure to campaigns and online resources, while Participant 7 finds living in the city to be flexible in terms of knowing his rights as a consumer compared to living in the countryside, as it is also easier for people to be held responsible. However, Participant 5 stated the possibility of consumers choosing to not pay attention to their rights.

4.3.2 Interviewees' Confidence in Consumer Rights Awareness

When they are being asked about their confidence level, all respondents find themselves to be not fully confident, as Participant 10 stated that she knows her rights; however, it is not in detail. Participant 11 stated that she is not confident, as she herself thinks she needs to learn more about the specific legal provisions. Hence, this suggests that all 15 respondents are only aware of their rights as consumers on a surface level.

Therefore, 14 of the respondents have agreed that their lack of knowledge has affected their decision to report such issues. Participant 7 stated that if he does not have any knowledge of consumer rights, he finds that the claims and supporting documents are not strong enough to defend; hence, it indeed affects the decision to report such an issue. Participant 14 quoted that "Because if I do not know the rights, I will probably just ignore the issue."

4.3.3 Social Influence on Awareness

Social media indeed influenced all 15 respondents' awareness of consumers' rights. All respondents have seen various videos across social media regarding scams and fake products. Participant 5's statement can be used to support this, as it has been quoted that "Mostly I see people share about unfair sellers or scams, which made me more cautious when buying things online." Participant 14 shared an experience where she wasn't aware of such rights until she had seen the TikTok video. The video explains how to get a refund if a product is damaged on arrival.

When asked if their friends influence their decisions regarding consumer rights, 10 respondents have agreed, and Participant 9 had stated an example that is being quoted: "If my friend buys something online and gets scammed but does not report it, I might also feel like it is not worth the effort to take legal action." Not only that, Participant 11 mentioned that if she knew her rights as a consumer, she believed that she would have the right to get a refund when receiving defective products; hence, her friends do not really influence her.

4.3.4 Barriers to Accessing Legal Knowledge

Respondents did mention factors regarding why undergraduates have little to no knowledge of the Consumer Protection Act 1999. Participant 10 has mentioned that the Consumer Protection Act 1999 topic is not being taught in most universities unless the student takes law or economics; however, undergraduates now tend to be more focused on their studies; hence, they do not have the time to learn about the legal rights. Other than education, Participant 12 stated that some consumers may not be interested in legal systems; hence, they will not know where to get such information, as they think that such issues would not happen to them.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The study's main conclusions are outlined in this chapter to answer the research questions regarding Malaysian consumers' knowledge of their rights and the Consumer Protection Act of 1999. In addition to discussing the limitations observed throughout the research, the findings can be applied to support and relate to current literature. Furthermore, recommendations for enhancing analysis in future studies are suggested.

5.1 Findings

Under this section, the findings below are arranged based on the research questions that have been emphasized in this study.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of undergraduates' understanding of the Consumer Protection Act 1999 in relation to influencers marketing?

Based on the respondents' responses, they have a surface level of understanding on their rights as consumers. Although 11 out of 15 respondents have heard of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, only 2 out of the 11 respondents have specific details regarding Section 9 and 10. As for the Consumer Claims Tribunal, only 6 out of 15 respondents are aware of such tribunals. Sstatistics indicate that 66% of customers have bought a product after seeing it promoted online (Ouellette, 2019), along with 69% of customers place more trust in information from friends, family, and influencers than in information directly from brands (Deyo, 2023). Hence, this highlights the understanding of consumers right related to influencer marketing.

Research Question 2: What are the factors that contribute to the knowledge gap among undergraduates of their legal awareness of influence on marketing under the Consumer Protection Act 1999?

Respondents highlighted a number of issues that contribute to undergraduates' lack of legal understanding. Since all 15 respondents reported seeing brief videos about scam interactions online, social media likely to be one of the main factors impacting customer rights knowledge. Peer pressure can also play a role; it has been noted that if peers do not report the scam, they are more inclined not to. All 15 respondents agreed that residing in a city gives them access to resources that can assist them impact their rights as consumers as well as numerous exposures to consumer rights campaigns.

Research Question 3: How do undergraduates identify misleading content and legal violations in influencer marketing practices?

Respondents can tell apart genuine and misleading content as they primarily rely on external cues such as customers' comments, product reviews, and official brand websites. Respondents can describe misleading content as accurately as possible with patterns found like false claims, exaggerating, and biased endorsements. 13 out of 15 respondents have also mentioned that they had purchased from influencers before; however, some respondents had expressed doubts, claiming that they are not honest in their promotions. As a result, 3 respondents have chosen not to believe in influencers, while the remaining 12 respondents have placed a certain amount of trust in them.

Therefore, this states that the respondents prefer to rely more on visible signs and peer reviews instead of the information provided by the influencers.

5.2 Discussion in Findings

The findings of the research can be used to support existing literature where it highlights the limited legal awareness from the Consumer Protection Act 1999 among consumers especially undergraduates. Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry director, Zaid Idris have stated that consumers know what they are doing but they just do not take any action as the 2020 Consumer Empowerment Index (CEI) was conducted and results shows that Malaysian consumers have scored well (56.1%) on understanding the basic financial products but they do not make any claims for compensation (The Star Online, 2024). The observation can be supported by Madugu Vijay Kumar (2016) where he stated that majority of his respondents (65%) have low level of awareness as consumers hence there will be a result off low levels of utilisation of consumer rights.

According to the Digital Marketing Institute, 69% of consumers rely on recommendations from influencers, indicating the significant impact influencers have on consumer behaviour. According to Gupta and Sharma (2021), influencers who disclose sponsorship along with maintain a consistent message are more likely to be trusted. This can be further supported with the research's findings where the undergraduates trust influencers based on their authenticity and credibility.

However, consumers may be more vulnerable due to various levels of media exposure to influencer marketing on social media platforms. Due to their lack of exposure to consumer rights on social media, undergraduates may be more vulnerable to deceptive influencer content.

With the need to enforce stricter enforcement, policymakers should consider implementing consumer rights awareness campaign into an educational curriculum along with utilising social media platforms to help spread awareness of the legal content. Recently, a consumer right organisation has called for an improvement for the enforcement to help fight against online scams (Wen, 2025). By making such improvements, it can help to reduce barriers along with the encouragement of proactive consumer behaviour.

In summary, the research shows that social media and influencer marketing have a big impact on how undergraduates act as consumers. This highlights the need for addressing the current legal awareness gap in order to better protect consumers in an expanding digital marketplace.

5.3 Limitations in Research

Every study has its limits, and this research's primary one is that it only looks at students. Other groups, such as working adults, consumers of all ages, and those from rural areas, are not included in the study. As a result, in terms of consumer rights awareness, the results cannot be applied to all students or the larger Malaysian community. Furthermore, because the results are based on individual experiences and could not be applicable to a larger population, the qualitative nature of this study involves subjectivity (Mwita, 2022).

The genuineness of the results is a further limitation. The truthfulness of responses provided by respondents may be affected because semi-structured interviews were used in the study. Some people may fail to accurately recall incidents, give socially acceptable answers, or unintentionally expand their recollections. In addition, there might be unequal knowledge held by respondents as they come from different

undergraduate educational programs and different years of study, which caused the level of response to vary.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Future studies on consumer rights and protection should be improved. Future research could involve respondents from a variety of industries, people from different age ranges, and members of other communities throughout Malaysia in addition to students. This wider focus would offer a more thorough and in-depth comprehension of Malaysian consumers' legal awareness. Researchers can gain a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour and knowledge gaps regarding influencer marketing and the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 through broadening the sample size.

Additionally, it would be preferable to do longitudinal studies so that researchers can track changes in consumer behaviour and legal awareness in relation to influencer marketing over time. The researchers can determine whether these techniques are effective at providing consumers with legal information by running awareness campaigns. The development of concentrated techniques to boosting consumer protection in the digital age would be further aided by studying the impact of digital literacy in raising consumers' awareness of their rights and protections.

5.5 Conclusion

In summary, this study advances our knowledge of undergraduates' legal awareness of consumer rights and influencer marketing in relation to the Consumer Protection Act of 1999. In order to better protect consumers of all ages in today's digital economy, it also highlights the knowledge gaps that must be filled. The results also emphasize how crucial it is to enhance consumer education and legal support programs in order to

provide consumers with the knowledge they need in order to make wise decisions. Strong and efficient consumer protection is still crucial since influencer marketing continues to play a big part in our lives.

References

Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. Journal of the american college of clinical pharmacy, 4(10), 1358-1367. https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=phprpubs

Ahmad, S. N. B., Malik, I., Sondoh, S. L., & Mahmod, N. A. (2024). Social Media Influencer's Content Credibility on Information Adoption and Purchase Intention of Beauty Product Among Generation Z in Malaysia. Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research, 117–135. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-425-9_10

Ahmed, A. (2025). Legal Awareness and Access to Justice: Analyzing Awareness of Laws Related to Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Student Rights. Available at SSRN 5233069. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=5233069

Ahmed, S. K., Mohammed, R. A., Nashwan, A. J., Ibrahim, R. H., Abdalla, A. Q., Ameen, B. M. M., & Khidhir, R. M. (2025). Using thematic analysis in qualitative research. Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health, 6(6), 100198. ScienceDirect. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2025.100198

Ali, A. A. E. A., & Mohamed, A. A. E. R. A. (2020). The role of perceived justice with service recovery in the realtionship between empowrement of frontline employess and customer satisfaction after service recovery" customers of Egyptian internet companies case study. International Journal of Business, Economics and Law, 21(5), 134-148. https://ijbel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/IJBEL21_252.pdf

Alkan, Z., & Ulaş, S. (2023). Trust in social media influencers and purchase intention: An empirical analysis. http://earsiv.cankaya.edu.tr:8080/bitstream/handle/20.500.12416/7015/Article.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Ao, L., Bansal, R., Pruthi, N., & Khaskheli, M. B. (2023). Impact of social media influencers on customer engagement and purchase intention: A meta-analysis. Sustainability, 15(3), 2744. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/3/2744

Baker, E. H. (2014). Socioeconomic status, definition. The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of health, illness, behavior, and society, 2210-2214. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs395

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society, 12(3), 313. https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.23964

Bashri, Z. A. A. B., & Abu Bakar, E. (2022). Determinants of Consumer Literacy among Universiti Putra Malaysia Students. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 12(10), 110-122.

https://kwpublications.com/papers_submitted/11811/determinants-of-consumer-literacy-among-universiti-putra-malaysia-students.pdf

Baskarada, S. (2014). Qualitative case study guidelines. Baškarada, S.(2014). Qualitative case studies guidelines. The Qualitative Report, 19(40), 1-25. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=2559424

Belanche, D. (2021). Building influencers' Credibility on Instagram: Effects on Followers' Attitudes and Behavioral Responses toward the Influencer. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 61(1), 102585. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102585

Belanche, D., Casaló, L. V., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2021). Building influencers' credibility on Instagram: Effects on followers' attitudes and behavioral responses toward the influencer. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 61, 102585. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102585

Beyond Likes and Shares: The Legal and Social Implications of Online Influencer in Malaysia | WIN & MEN DY | Advocates & Solicitors. (n.d.). Winmendy.com.my. https://winmendy.com.my/the_legal_and_social_implications_of_online_influence_in_malaysia.php

Bihani, P., & Patil, S. T. (2014). A comparative study of data analysis techniques. International journal of emerging trends & technology in computer science, 3(2), 95-101. https://www.academia.edu/download/33713773/IJETTCS-2014-04-09-077.pdf

Bolderston, A. (2012). Conducting a research interview. Journal of medical imaging and radiation sciences, 43(1), 66-76. https://www.jmirs.org/article/S1939-8654(11)00132-9/pdf

Bree, R. T., & Gallagher, G. (2016). Using Microsoft Excel to code and thematically analyse qualitative data: a simple, cost-effective approach. All Ireland Journal of Higher Education, 8(2). https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/download/281/467

Caulfield, J. (2023, June 22). How to Do Thematic Analysis | step-by-step Guide & Examples. Scribbr. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/

Changmai, D. (n.d.). INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEGAL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION Legal Literacy: Need to Go a Long Way for the Much-Desired Impression. International Journal of Legal Science and Innovation, 2. Retrieved August 20, 2025, from https://www.ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Legal-Literacy-Need-to-Go-a-Long-Way-for-the-Much-Desired-Impression.pdf

Chatterjee, A., & Sahoo, S. (2011). Consumer protection: Problems and prospects. Postmodern Openings, 7(9), 157-182. https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1452526

Chen, Y., Qin, Z., Yan, Y., & Huang, Y. (2024). The Power of Influencers: How Does Influencer Marketing Shape Consumers' Purchase Intentions? Sustainability, 16(13), 5471. https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/13/5471

Chen, Y., Qin, Z., Yan, Y., & Huang, Y. (2024). The power of influencers: how does influencer marketing shape consumers' purchase intentions?. Sustainability, 16(13), 5471. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16135471

Chin, K. (n.d.). How Comedian Arwind Kumar Heals With Humour. Tatler Asia. https://www.tatlerasia.com/lifestyle/entertainment/comedian-arwind-kumar-heals-with-humour

Church, R. M. (2002). The effective use of secondary data. Learning and motivation, 33(1), 32-45. https://www.brown.edu/Research/Timelab/archive/Pdf/2002-02.pdf

Consumers' Association of Penang. (n.d.). The Consumer Protection Act – Consumers Association Penang. Consumers' Association of Penang. https://consumer.org.my/the-consumer-protection-act/

Cowton, C. J. (1998). The use of secondary data in business ethics research. Journal of business ethics, 17(4), 423-434. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25073091.pdf?casa_token=9TZtebiKfrQAAAAA:BaVgkcVkAaF7QX7Zpt_x3i0nfv744yVbxaptj2S4lOS8uaYgcNHTezBbgajQDEssrTvKrWUu5PFtjDm1eS-ploD5mGf-Uv5Cjp9pt8bc60I6y_7y2KHh

Datareportal. (2025). Global Social Media Statistics. DataReportal – Global Digital Insights; Kepios. https://datareportal.com/social-media-users

Davies, E. J. (2025, June 21). Chilling rise of TikTokkers peddling dangerous "cures" for cancer & other deadly illnesses in sick bid to g... The Sun. https://www.thesun.co.uk/health/35349843/tiktok-cancer-cures

Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic analysis approach: A step by step guide for ELT research practitioners. Journal of NELTA, 25(1-2), 62-71. https://nepjol.info/index.php/NELTA/article/download/49731/37087

Deyo, J. (2023, February 23). 81% of consumers embraced influencer marketing in the past year, study finds. Marketing Dive. https://www.marketingdive.com/news/influencer-marketing-success-matter-study-2023/643310/

Digital Marketing Institute. (2025, April 16). 20 Influencer Marketing Statistics That Will Surprise You. Digital Marketing Institute. https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/20-influencer-marketing-statistics-that-will-surprise-you

Djafarova, E., & Rushworth, C. (2017). Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. Computers in human behavior, 68, 1-7. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563216307506?casa_token=fkkifdBgIfIAAAAA:2_0hZJy6fdSG8DDe1KG_uwHy4zMELkT_3SRd3QHOYNv4Ba7X9_vrNioW6LnpLUt2P4AxoVBL30g

Djafarova, E., & Trofimenko, O. (2019). 'Instafamous'–credibility and self-presentation of micro-celebrities on social media. Information, communication & society, 22(10), 1432-1446. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1438491?casa_token=7XCdldmU3zUAAAAA:jciIEGbIThVOKxpJYbfpbhhEVKna0rBBYWXVfTVwow2q2qMj6ViCvnX-eLZN9sayZ5MiKh89IrxCuw

Dol, N., Bakar, E. A., & Said, A. M. (2015). Consumer legal literacy, values and consumerism practices among members of consumer association in Malaysia. Asian Social Science, 11(12), 189. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elistina-Bakar/publication/277361142_Consumer_Legal_Literacy_Values_and_Consumerism_Practices_among_Members_of_Consumer_Association_in_Malaysia/links/5653b49e08aefe619b197445/Consumer-Legal-Literacy-Values-and-Consumerism-Practices-among-Members-of-Consumer-Association-in-Malaysia.pdf

Dr Beh May Ting. (2025, March 19). Combating Scam Syndicates in Malaysia and Southeast Asia – Penang Institute. Penanginstitute.org. https://penanginstitute.org/publications/issues/combating-scam-syndicates-in-malaysia-and-southeast-asia/

Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H. (2017). Disclosing Instagram influencer advertising: The effects of disclosure language on advertising recognition, attitudes, and behavioral intent. Journal of interactive advertising, 17(2), 138-149. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nathaniel-Evans-4/publication/319167174_Disclosing_Instagram_Influencer_Advertising_The_Effects_of_Disclosure_Language_on_Advertising_Recognition_Attitudes_and_Behavioral_Intent/links/59a6c07ea6fdcc61fcfbb9df/Disclosing-Instagram-Influencer-Advertising-The-Effects-of-Disclosure-Language-on-Advertising-Recognition-Attitudes-and-Behavioral-Intent.pdf

Fatin, N., Zulkifli, N., Zaiamri, M., & Abidin, Z. (2023). Exploring Social Media Addiction among Malaysian University Students. Forum Komunikasi, 18(1), 120–146. https://forumkomunikasi.uitm.edu.my/images/FK18No1Apr23/FKAPRIL_2023_07_ADDICTION.pdf

Febrianty, Y., Ariyanto, A., Fitri, H., & Ryendra, N. R. (2025). The Effect of Legal Education on Public Legal Awareness. Journal of Public Representative and Society Provision, 5(1), 204-221. http://www.psppjournals.org/index.php/jprsp/article/download/532/603

FMT Reporters. (2024, October 6). Why study when you can be an influencer? Free Malaysia Today | FMT; Free Malaysia Today. https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/leisure/2024/10/06/why-study-when-you-can-be-an-influencer

Gaziano, C. (2016). Knowledge Gap: History and Development. The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0041

George, T. (2022, January 27). Semi-Structured interview | definition, guide & examples. Scribbr. https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/

Ghapa, N., & Ab Kadir, N. A. (2021). Information regulation: A measure of consumer protection. Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 29, 59-74. https://www.academia.edu/download/94647386/05_20JSSHS-1475-2021.pdf

goes, D. (2025, May 16). Why brands in Malaysia are gravitating towards micro-influencers. Marketing-Interactive. https://www.marketing-interactive.com/why-brands-in-malaysia-are-gravitating-towards-micro-influencers

Goundar, S. (2012). Research methodology and research method. Victoria University of Wellington, 1(1), 1-47. https://prallagon.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Research-Methodology-A2.pdf

Graham, R., & Griffin, S. (2024). Introduction. Cognitive Psychology; Pressbooks. https://nmoer.pressbooks.pub/cognitivepsychology/front-matter/introduction/

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. Field methods, 18(1), 59-82. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1525822x05279903?casa_token=gVuvjn8xOUgAAAAA:hETK4wk9IuuePkdfNRKCMP6eWh2Mnq3Jc6I5SmISUHlX_wbOlWg7IgfjxWZVmiaPf97ItMjgbc6w-A

GUNAPALAN, T. (2025, February 28). Over 40 claim RM450 cream a health hazard. The Star. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2025/03/01/over-40-claim-rm450-cream-a-health-hazard#goog_rewarded

Haron, S. A., & Masud, J. (2012). Assessment of Self-Rated Consumer Knowledge among Low Income Housing Residence in Malaysia. Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities, 20(4), 1085–1102. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235948899_Assessment_of_Self-Rated_Consumer_Knowledge_among_Low_Income_Housing_Residence_in_Malaysia

Hecker, J., & Kalpokas, N. (2024, October 18). ATLAS.ti. ATLAS.ti. https://atlasti.com/guides/interview-analysis-guide

Hwang, Y., & Jeong, S. H. (2009). Revisiting the knowledge gap hypothesis: A meta-analysis of thirty-five years of research. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 86(3), 513-532.

Influencer Marketing Hub. (2025, April 25). Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report 2025. Influencer Marketing Hub. https://influencermarketinghub.com/influencer-marketing-benchmark-report/

Ishak, S., & M. Zabil, N. F. (2012). Impact of Consumer Awareness and Knowledge to Consumer Effective Behavior. Asian Social Science, 8(13). https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n13p108

Ismail, R., & Osman, Z. (2019). Alternative dispute resolution process in the Tribunal for Consumer Claims of Malaysia: a way forward. International Journal of Asian Social Science, 9(5), 342-351. https://www.academia.edu/download/99245026/IJASS-2019-95-342-351.pdf

Joffe, H. (2011). Thematic analysis. Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotherapy: A guide for students and practitioners, 209-223. https://www.academia.edu/download/109737427/9781119973249.ch1520231229-1-pfmmc1.pdf

Johnston, D. H. (2003). Encyclopedia of international media and communications. https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/knowledge-gap

Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic Methodological review: Developing a Framework for a Qualitative semi-structured Interview Guide. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 72(12), 2954–2965. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031

Kemp, S. (2025, March 3). DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. DataReportal – Global Digital Insights. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-malaysia

Kemp, S. (2025, March 3). Digital 2025: Malaysia. DataReportal. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-malaysia

Kumar, M. (2016). An Assessment of Consumer Awareness and protection. In International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS) A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal (p. 788711). Page No. 338-343 Published by Scholar Publications. https://www.ijhsss.com/files/36.-Vijoy-kumar_i8143579.pdf

Kutz, K., Espinal, K., Flynn, E., & Cheney, J. (2024). Social Media Influencers' Impact on Consumer Purchasing Decisions. Social Media Influencers' Impact on Consumer Purchasing Decisions , 2023(4), 4. https://docs.rwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1157&context=nyscaproceedings

Leung, F. F., Gu, F. F., & Palmatier, R. W. (2022). Online Influencer Marketing. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 50(2), 226–251. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11747-021-00829-4

Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. Journal of interactive advertising, 19(1), 58-73. https://eclass.upatras.gr/modules/document/file.php/BMA549/%CE%95%CE%BD%CE%B4%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%20%CE%B2%CE%B9%CE%B2%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%C

E%B1%CF%86%CE%AF%CE%B1%20%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1%20%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD%20%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%B1%20%CE%97%CE%BB%CE%B5%CE%BA%CF%84%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BD%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C%20%CE%95%CE%BC%CF%80%CF%8C%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BF%20Influencers%20marketing%202020/Influencers%20bibliography/Influencer%20Marketing%20How%20Message%20Value%20and%20Credibility%20Affect%20Consumer%20Trust%20of%20Branded%20Content%20on%20Social%20Media.pdf

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. All Ireland journal of higher education, 9(3). https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/download/335/553.%20Accessed%2025%20February%202021

Mahdi, N. A. N., Fernando, Y., & Abdalla, Y. A. (2022). Understanding the sustainable development goals concept: Malaysia report and trend. Journal of Governance and Integrity, 5(3), 317-327. https://journal.ump.edu.my/jgi/article/download/8938/2672

Mail, M. (2020, July 25). Direct selling agent fined RM50,000 for selling â€˜coronavirus-repellingâ€™ bracelets. Malay Mail ; Malay Mail. https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/07/25/direct-selling-agent-fined-rm50000-for-selling-coronavirus-repelling-bracel/1887933

Mashuri, S., Sarib, M., Rasak, A., Alhabsyi, F., & Ruslin, R. (2022). Semi-structured interview: A methodological reflection on the development of a qualitative research instrument in educational studies ruslin. IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education, 12(1), 22–29. https://doi.org/10.9790/7388-1201052229

Mat, A., Mohd Ali, A., Mohamad Salleh, M. Z., & Kori, N. L. (2014). Post-purchase behavior: consume complaint behavior. https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/35443/1/35443.pdf

Matin, A., Khoshtaria, T., & Todua, N. (2022). The Impact of Social Media Influencers on Brand Awareness, Image and Trust in Their Sponsored Content: an Empirical Study from Georgian Social Media Users. International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media, 10(18). https://doi.org/10.54663/2182-9306.2022.v10.n18.88-114

Mazhar, M., Ting, D. H., Hussain, A., Nadeem, M. A., Ali, M. A., & Tariq, U. (2022). The role of service recovery in post-purchase consumer behavior During COVID-19: a Malaysian perspective. Frontiers in Psychology, 12, 786603. https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.786603/pdf

Mazhar, S. A., Anjum, R., Anwar, A. I., & Khan, A. A. (2021). Methods of data collection: A fundamental tool of research. Journal of Integrated Community Health, 10(1), 6-10. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Syeda-Ayeman-

Mazhar/publication/356269289_Methods_of_Data_Collection_A_Fundamental_Tool_of_Research/links/61fe7e23870587329e943cd1/Methods-of-Data-Collection-A-Fundamental-Tool-of-Research.pdf

McLeod, S. (2024). Thematic Analysis: A Step by Step Guide. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13084.71048

Meng, T. P. (2019). The Legal Saga of Exclusion Clauses in Malaysia. Review of Politics and Public Policy in Emerging Economies, 1(1), 43-52. https://publishing.globalcsrc.org/ojs/index.php/rope/article/download/1130/805

Minocha, S. (2023, November 30). 15 Influencer Marketing Campaign Examples in 2024 To Get Inspire. Tagshop. https://tagshop.ai/blog/influencer-marketing-campaign-examples/

Mohamed, H., Judi, H. M., Nor, S. F. M., & Yusof, Z. M. (2012). Bridging digital divide: A study on ICT literacy among students in Malaysian rural areas. Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 6(7), 39-45. https://www.academia.edu/download/95313903/39-45.pdf

Mwita, K. (2022). Factors to consider when choosing data collection methods. Available at SSRN 4880486. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=4880486

Mwita, K. (2022, September). Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research in social science studies. ResearchGate; Center for Strategic Studies in Business and Finance SSBFNET. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363520457_Strengths_and_weaknesses_of_qualitative_research_in_social_science_studies

Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A step-by-step process of thematic analysis to develop a conceptual model in qualitative research. International journal of qualitative methods, 22, 16094069231205789. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/16094069231205789

Nawi, N. F., & Faizol, N. A. (2021). Influencer Marketing on Instagram: Examining issues of disclosure and regulation for Malaysia. Journal of ASIAN Behavioural Studies, 6(20), 27-43. https://jabs.e-iph.co.uk/index.php/jABs/article/download/399/508

Nordin, N. (2025). Understanding Behavioral Patterns of Social Media Usage Among Malaysian Undergraduate Students. Asia-Pacific Journal of Information Technology and Multimedia, 14(01), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.17576/apjitm-2025-1401-07

Nurazim, W., Wan, E., Rahim, A., & Kamaluddin, A. (2021). Online Consumer's Behavior on Product Review and The Likelihood of Them Being Fraud Victims. International Journal of Business and Technopreneurship, 11(3). https://ijbt.unimap.edu.my/images/stories/IJBT%20Vol%2011%20Oct%202021/Vol%2011,%20no%203%20June.%202021%20pg%201-20%20IJBT%20279.pdf

Nurdayana, W., Wan, C., & Khair, M. (2023). 1-15 Perceived Brand Image and Purchase Intention among Youth in Malaysia. Management Research Journal, 12(2), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.37134/mrj.vol12.2.1.2023

Othman, Y., Mustaffa, M. S. A., Joni, E. K. E., Badrolhisam, N. I., Hasan, Z., & Ahmad, S. N. A. (2017). Online shopping: Consumers' awareness of their rights and protection. Advanced Science Letters, 23(8), 7907-7910. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Yuhanza-Othman/publication/320648120_Online_Shopping_Consumers%27_Awareness_of_Their_Rights_and_Protection/links/5c9b3587299bf1116949ae11/Online-Shopping-Consumers-Awareness-of-Their-Rights-and-Protection.pdf

Ouellette, C. (2019, October 30). Social Selling Statistics for 2020 (Includes Social Media Marketing!). OptinMonster. https://optinmonster.com/social-selling-statistics/

Palinkas, L., Horwitz, S., Green, C., Wisdom, J., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42(5), 533–544. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Renushara. (2024, May 30). 10K Students Skipped SPM Allegedly Due to Influencers Saying They Can Become Rich Without Education - WORLD OF BUZZ. Worldofbuzz.com. https://worldofbuzz.com/10k-students-skipped-spm-allegedly-due-to-influencers-saying-they-can-become-rich-without-education/

Ross, L. (2020, May 31). The State of Fake Reviews – Statistics and Trends [2025] - Invesp. Invesp - Conversion Rate Optimization Blog. https://www.invespcro.com/blog/fake-reviews-statistics/#elementor-toc__heading-anchor-1

Saeed, O. (2024, June 24). Influencer Authenticity and its Impact on Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention in the Cosmetics Industry. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381659469_Influencer_Authenticity_and_its_Impact_on_Consumer_Trust_and_Purchase_Intention_in_the_Cosmetics_Industry

Safei, S. A., & Abdullah, N. C. (2023). A new proposed features of Malaysian legal framework for alternative dispute resolution in the tribunal for consumer claims. ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 7(2), 71-83. https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/85583/1/85583.pdf

Saka, R., Chinagozi, O. G., & Joe, O. N. (2023). Exploratory Research Design in Management Science: A Review of Literature on Conduct and Application. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), 7(4), 1384–1395. ResearchGate. https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2023.7515

Samsudin, N., Bakar, E. A., Jusoh, Z. M., & Arif, A. M. M. (2020). Personal and environmental determinants of consumer legal literacy among Malaysian consumers. Malaysian Journal of Consumer and Family Economics, 25(1), 27-40.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Norhafifah-Samsudin-2/publication/378474462_Personal_and_Environmental_Determinants_of_Consumer_Legal_Literacy_among_Malaysian_Consumers/links/65db305dadc608480aeab219/Personal-and-Environmental-Determinants-of-Consumer-Legal-Literacy-among-Malaysian-Consumers.pdf

Schunk, D. H., & Usher, E. L. (2012). Social cognitive theory and motivation. The Oxford handbook of human motivation, 2, 11-26. https://nibmehub.com/opac-service/pdf/read/The%20Oxford%20Handbook%20of%20Human%20Motivation.pdf#page=32

Sharma, P., & Kaur, J. (2024, October). Factors influencing the Consumer Awareness Level in Present Era. In 2nd International Conference on Emerging Technologies and Sustainable Business Practices-2024 (ICETSBP 2024) (pp. 124-139). Atlantis Press. https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/126004245.pdf

Soh, P. C., Yan, Y. L., San Ong, T., & Teh, B. H. (2012). Digital divide amongst urban youths in Malaysia-Myth or reality?. Asian Social Science, 8(15), 75. https://www.academia.edu/download/31081854/DigitalDivideAmongstUrbanYouths-2012.pdf

Stevens, L., & Wrenn, C. (2013). Exploratory (qualitative) research. Concise encyclopedia of church and religious organization marketing, 53. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=CR3WYDdKK8QC&oi=fnd&pg=PA53&dq=Exploratory+(qualitative)+research.+Concise+encyclopedia+of+church+and+religious+organization+marketing,+53.+&ots=P0Jay6jwat&sig=Ra9tzTzlUWLl_FYOBP9mM743goQ

StoryBox. (2024, September 28). There Are 127 Million Influencers on Social Media (2024) | StoryBox. StoryBox. https://storybox.io/number-of-influencers-stats/

Suárez Vázquez, A., Du, L., & Río Lanza, A. B. (2020). Word of mouth: How upward social comparisons influence the sharing of consumption experiences. Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 20(3), 736–747. https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1902

supportSEiSB. (2024). Consumerism Movement Division Information. En. https://www.kpdn.gov.my/en/corporate-info/department/tksu-2/consumerism-movement-division-information

Taslaud, G. (2023, March 6). Influencer marketing in Malaysia in 2023 - Data and trends. INSG. https://www.insg.co/en/influencer-marketing-malaysia/

Tenny, S., Brannan, J. M., & Brannan, G. D. (2017). Qualitative study. https://europepmc.org/article/NBK/nbk470395

Tenny, S., Brannan, J., & Brannan, G. (2022). Qualitative Study. National Library of Medicine; StatPearls Publishing. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/

The Star Online. (2024, October 29). EMPOWERING CONSUMER RIGHTS IN MALAYSIA. The Star. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/10/30/empowering-consumer-rights-in-malaysia

tin, T. (2025, April 8). Population of Kuala Lumpur (Capital City of Malaysia). Thông Tin Dân Số. https://danso.info/en/kuala-lumpur-malaysia-population/

University of New South Wales. (2025). Primary and secondary sources. UNSW Sydney. https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/using-the-library/information-resources/primary-and-secondary-sources

Vedder, A., & Wachbroit, R. (2003). Reliability of information on the Internet: Some distinctions. Ethics and Information Technology, 5(4), 211-215. https://research.tilburguniversity.edu/files/633882/VedderWachbroitDef.pdf

Wegmeyer, L. J., Tenbrink, A. P., Delacruz, A. Y., Salim, R., & Speer, A. B. (2022). Interviews from scratch: Individual differences in writing interview questions. Personnel Assessment and Decisions, 8(1), 2. https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1184&context=pad

WEN, H. J. (2025, January 15). Consumer rights group urges stronger measures against online scams. The Star. https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2025/01/15/consumer-rights-group-urges-stronger-measures-against-online-scams

White, J. B. (1982). The invisible discourse of the law: Reflections on legal literacy and general education. U. Colo. L. Rev., 54, 143. https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3115&context=articles

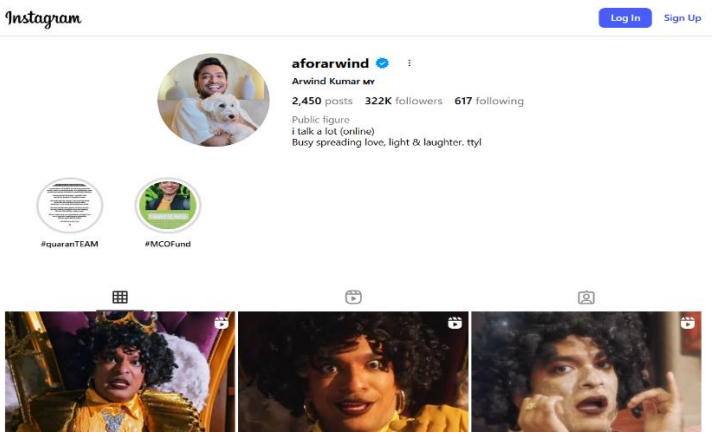
Xu, X. (2023). Influencer Marketing with Social Platforms: Increasing Brand Awareness and User Engagement. Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, 19(19), 228–234. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373760614_Influencer_Marketing_with_Social_Platforms_Increasing_Brand_Awareness_and_User_Engagement

Yahia, I. B., & El Ferci, L. (2015). Exploring consumer empowerment in consumption communities based in social media. International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management (IJCRMM), 6(2), 31-47. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281223931_Exploring_Consumer_Empowerment_in_Consumption_Communities_Based_in_Social_Media

YEC. (2024, August 12). Council Post: The Rise Of The Influencer: Predictions For Ways They'll Change The World. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/councils/theyec/2022/07/08/the-rise-of-the-influencer-predictions-for-ways-theyll-change-the-world/

Zakuan, Z. Z. M., & Ismail, R. (2019). Health supplement and product liability in Malaysia: A call for reform. Malaysian Journal of Consumer and Family Economics, 23(1), 33-55. https://majcafe.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2019-Vol-23-S1-Paper-3.pdf

Appendices



(Appendix 2.1 Arwind Kumar's Instagram)