Asian journal of research in business and management

https://www.aarbss.org/ajrbm/index

ISSN (Online): 2312-9034

VOL 03 ISSUE 01 (2026)

Vlog Marketing And Customer Decision-Making:Areview Of The Mediating Roles Of Customer Engagement And Brand Perception In The Malaysian Context. An Integrative Literature Review And Conceptual Framework

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Abstract:

This integrative literature review examines how vlog marketing shapes customer decision-making and explains why customer engagement and brand perception are central mediating mechanisms in this process. The review focuses on video-led influencer communication across YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and related social platforms, with particular attention to the Malaysian digital marketplace. Drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, source credibility theory, parasocial interaction, and customer engagement literature, the paper develops a mechanism-based explanation of vlog persuasion. The synthesis indicates that vlog marketing is most persuasive when content combines informational value, authenticity, narrative vividness, creator credibility, interactivity, and creator-brand congruence. These characteristics stimulate cognitive attention, emotional connection, and behavioral participation while simultaneously shaping perceived brand trust, quality, personality, and relevance. In turn, engagement and brand perception influence information search, alternative evaluation, purchase intention, brand choice, and post-purchase responses. The Malaysian context strengthens the importance of culturally congruent communication because consumer interpretation is embedded in multilingual, multi-ethnic, community-oriented, and increasingly mobile-first media practices. The review identifies persistent contextual, format, mechanism, measurement, dual-mediation, and cultural gaps, proposes seven research propositions, and presents a unified conceptual framework suitable for future testing through structural equation modeling. The paper concludes with theoretical, managerial, and methodological implications for researchers, brand managers, agencies, and content creators seeking to understand the effectiveness of video influencer marketing in emerging digital economies.

Keywords: *Vlog Marketing, Customer Decision-Making, Customer Engagement, Brand Perception, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Growth of Vlog Marketing

Digital marketing has moved from predominantly brand-controlled communication toward creator-led, platform-mediated communication (Arraafi, Kristian, & Ibrizah, 2026) in which consumers encounter products inside entertainment, education, lifestyle, and community content. Vlogs are particularly important in this transition because they combine moving images, speech, music, demonstration, personality, and narrative continuity in a format that can feel less intrusive than conventional advertising. A creator can show how a product is used, explain advantages and limitations, compare competing alternatives, answer audience questions, and embed commercial information in everyday experience (Skulsuthavong, 2026). This multimodal structure gives vlog content both informational and experiential value, allowing consumers to observe product performance while simultaneously evaluating the credibility and personality of the person delivering the message. Research on influencer marketing shows that message value, source credibility, perceived similarity, expertise, attractiveness, and trust can influence brand awareness and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Related work finds that influencer content can persuade through opinion leadership, identification, and consumers' desire to emulate admired creators (Ki & Kim, 2019). In video environments, parasocial interaction is especially salient because repeated exposure to a creator's voice, face, routines, and personal disclosures can create a sense of relational closeness. Sokolova and Kefi (2020), for example, demonstrate that credibility and parasocial interaction are linked to purchase intention in Instagram and YouTube contexts. These studies confirm that vlog marketing is not simply another advertising placement; it is a relational and psychological communication environment.

1.2 Vlog Marketing in the Malaysian Context

Malaysia provides a strong setting for examining these processes because digital connectivity and social media use are deeply embedded in everyday consumption. Recent digital reports indicate very high internet penetration and a large social media user base, creating an environment in which product discovery (Amin, Gohar, & Ali, 2025), comparison, peer validation, and brand interaction increasingly occur through social platforms. Yet the Malaysian market cannot be treated as culturally homogeneous. Consumers differ by ethnicity, language, religion, age, region, and lifestyle, and effective digital communication often requires adaptation across Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin, Tamil, and mixed-language online discourse (Leong, 2025, December). As a result, the persuasive success of a vlogger may depend not only on reach and production quality but also on cultural fluency, perceived authenticity, and alignment with the audience's norms and identity. For many Malaysian consumers, risk reduction and social reassurance are important when evaluating products online (Johan, Chong, & Ismail, 2026). Vlogs can supply both. Product demonstrations reduce uncertainty by making quality, appearance, fit, usability, and consumption experiences visible, while comments and creator-audience interaction provide social proof. In categories such as beauty, fashion, food, travel, consumer electronics, financial services, education, and halal-sensitive products, the creator's credibility and cultural appropriateness may meaningfully affect whether viewers accept or reject a recommendation (Hallinan, Trillò, Mizoroki, Scharlach, Park, Green, & Shifman, 2026). The Malaysian context therefore offers a useful opportunity to extend predominantly Western and East Asian influencer research into a multicultural Southeast Asian setting.

1.3 Research Problem

Despite the growth of influencer and social media research, the specific mechanism through which vlog marketing affects customer decision-making remains insufficiently integrated (Chen, Liang, Chen, & Gao, 2026). A substantial share of prior studies focuses on direct links

between influencer attributes and purchase intention (Zhao, Xu, Ding, & Li, 2024). Such models are useful but can oversimplify the decision process. Exposure to a vlog does not automatically generate a purchase. Viewers first attend to the content, assess the creator, interpret the message, form or revise brand beliefs, experience emotions, interact with the content, consult comments, compare alternatives, and only then may move toward a behavioral decision. This suggests that internal consumer states should be modeled explicitly rather than treated as an invisible black box. Two internal mechanisms are particularly relevant. The first is customer engagement, reflecting cognitive absorption, emotional connection, and active participation with vlog content and the associated brand. The second is brand perception, reflecting how consumers interpret brand quality, trustworthiness, personality, value, and fit after exposure to the creator's message. Although both constructs are well established in marketing literature, they are rarely integrated as parallel mediators in a single vlog-marketing framework, particularly in the Malaysian setting. This review addresses that theoretical and contextual gap.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Review

The purpose of this integrative review is to consolidate theoretical and empirical knowledge on vlog marketing, customer engagement, brand perception, and customer decision-making and to organize it into a coherent conceptual framework. Rather than presenting vlog exposure as a simple direct predictor of purchase, the review explains how video-based influencer stimuli are cognitively, emotionally, and evaluatively processed before they affect decisions.

- Examine the defining characteristics of vlog marketing and explain how they differ from static or conventional digital advertising.
- Synthesize evidence on the relationship between vlog marketing and customer decision-making.
- Explain how vlog marketing influences cognitive, emotional, and behavioral customer engagement.
- Assess how vlogger credibility, authenticity, and creator-brand congruence shape brand perception.
- Integrate ELM and S-O-R to explain both message-processing routes and the transformation of marketing stimuli into consumer responses.
- Develop a dual-mediation conceptual framework and testable propositions for future empirical research in Malaysia.
- Identify research gaps and provide a focused agenda for platform-specific, cultural, longitudinal, and methodologically rigorous studies.

2. Review Methodology

2.1 Review Design

This paper adopts an integrative literature review design. Integrative reviews are appropriate when a research problem spans multiple theoretical traditions and empirical methods and when the objective is conceptual synthesis rather than statistical meta-analysis. The topic examined here draws on digital marketing, advertising, consumer psychology, brand management, human-computer interaction, and communication research. An integrative design therefore permits the combination of foundational theory with recent empirical evidence and supports the development of a new conceptual model. The review should be understood as a theory-building synthesis rather than a PRISMA-style systematic review. The available manuscript did not document a reproducible screening flow, database export, duplicate-removal procedure, or final study count. Accordingly, this completed version does not invent such numbers. Instead, it clarifies the search domains, inclusion logic, analytical categories, and synthesis procedure so that a future systematic review can extend the present work with a formal protocol.

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

The literature base was organized around major scholarly databases and publisher platforms commonly used in business and social science research, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Wiley Online Library, and Google Scholar. Searches were concept-driven and combined terms related to vlogs, social media influencers, video marketing, engagement, brand perception, credibility, parasocial interaction, purchase intention, decision-making, and Malaysia. Foundational works on ELM, S-O-R, brand equity, source credibility, and customer engagement were also incorporated because these theories provide the conceptual architecture necessary for explaining the mechanisms reviewed.

2.3 Search Terms and Inclusion Logic

- 'vlog marketing' AND 'consumer behaviour'
- 'vlogger marketing' AND 'purchase intention' OR 'purchase decision'
- 'video blogging' AND 'customer engagement'
- 'influencer marketing' AND 'brand perception' OR 'brand trust'
- 'parasocial interaction' AND influencer AND purchase
- 'creator credibility' AND brand attitude
- 'vlog marketing' AND Malaysia
- 'social media marketing' AND Malaysia AND consumer
- 'customer engagement' AND digital content AND purchase
- 'brand perception' AND customer decision-making

Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles and high-quality scholarly sources that directly examined influencer or video content, customer engagement, brand-related evaluations, persuasion, purchase-related outcomes, or the theoretical mechanisms used in the proposed model. Studies confined exclusively to static advertising were used only when they offered transferable theoretical constructs. Trade commentary, purely promotional material, and unsupported opinion pieces were excluded from the conceptual synthesis.

2.4 Analytical Procedure

The literature was coded conceptually rather than statistically. Each source was considered in relation to four questions: (1) what vlog or influencer stimulus was examined; (2) what internal consumer state was activated; (3) what behavioral or evaluative outcome followed; and (4) which theoretical mechanism best explained the relationship. Evidence was then mapped onto the S-O-R sequence of stimulus, organism, and response and cross-checked against ELM's central and peripheral processing routes. This produced a dual-mediation framework in which customer engagement captures relational and participatory processing while brand perception captures evaluative and brand-schema processing.

Table 1: Core constructs and working definitions

Construct	Working definition	Indicative dimensions	Role in model
Vlog marketing	Creator-led video content incorporating brand-relevant information, demonstration, narrative, endorsement, or recommendation.	Authenticity, informativeness, entertainment, interactivity, credibility, congruence, cultural relevance	Stimulus / independent variable
Customer	The intensity of a	Attention/absorption,	Mediator 1 /

engagement	consumer's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in content, creator, or brand interactions.	enthusiasm/connection, commenting, sharing, following, information seeking	organism
Brand perception	Consumer evaluation and mental representation of a brand formed through accumulated and current touchpoints.	Trust, quality, credibility, personality, value, fit, authenticity	Mediator 2 / organism
Customer decision-making	The process through which consumers recognize needs, seek information, evaluate options, choose, and respond after purchase.	Consideration, evaluation, intention, choice, purchase, satisfaction, loyalty	Response / dependent variable

3. Conceptualising Vlog Marketing

3.1 Definition and Evolution

Vlog marketing refers to brand-related communication delivered through video-blog style content in which creators integrate products, services, or brand narratives into a recognizable personal content stream (Tikkanen, 2023). Value creation in online brand communities on Youtube (Alsaeed, 2022). The defining feature is not simply video format. Vlog marketing typically combines a recurring creator identity, a conversational tone, experiential demonstration, audience interaction, and narrative continuity across episodes or posts (Arora, 2025). This distinguishes it from a conventional pre-roll advertisement or brand-produced promotional video, where the commercial origin is more explicit and the relational bond with an identifiable creator is weaker. The development of vlog marketing mirrors a broader shift from mass-media persuasion toward networked influence. Early blogs established creator authority through written expertise and personal disclosure. YouTube expanded this logic through long-form video, allowing creators to demonstrate products and develop stable communities. Instagram added visual lifestyle curation and short video, while TikTok normalized algorithmically distributed short-form clips capable of rapid diffusion beyond a creator's existing follower base. Across these platforms, commercial communication has become embedded within entertainment and social interaction, thereby blurring the boundary between advertising, peer recommendation, and creator expression.

3.2 Key Characteristics of Effective Vlog Marketing

Authenticity and relatability: Viewers respond more favorably when a creator appears consistent, sincere, transparent, and personally familiar. Authenticity lowers persuasion resistance because the message can be interpreted as experiential testimony rather than scripted promotion.

Informational value: Detailed explanations, demonstrations, comparisons, and usage tips support central-route processing and help consumers reduce uncertainty during information search and alternative evaluation.

Entertainment and narrative vividness: Humor, storytelling, pacing, music, visual editing, and personal narrative increase attention and emotional involvement, which can extend watch time and strengthen memory for brand-related cues.

Source credibility: Expertise and trustworthiness influence whether the audience accepts product claims. Source credibility can also transfer to the endorsed brand, particularly when the creator is perceived as knowledgeable in the relevant category.

Interactivity: Comments, replies, polls, live streams, Q&A sessions, and creator responses transform communication from one-way exposure into participatory exchange, deepening behavioral engagement and perceived intimacy.

Creator-brand congruence: Fit between the creator's identity and the endorsed brand reduces perceptions of opportunism. Poor fit can weaken both brand attitude and creator authenticity.

Social proof and community cues: Likes, comments, shares, subscriber counts, and visible audience reactions can signal popularity and reduce uncertainty, although very high follower counts do not always produce more favorable brand outcomes (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Cultural relevance: Language, humor, values, food practices, dress norms, religious sensitivity, and local social references affect whether Malaysian audiences perceive content as appropriate and trustworthy.

4. Customer Decision-Making in the Vlog Environment

4.1 Nature of Digital Customer Decision-Making

Customer decision-making is conventionally described as a sequence involving need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation (Gupta, Gaurav, & Jaiswal, 2023). Digital environments make this process more recursive and socially embedded. Consumers can move repeatedly between platforms, creators, search engines, marketplaces, review sites, and peer conversations before choosing (Agrawal, 2026). A vlog may initiate the journey, enter midway as a source of reassurance, or appear after purchase as a means of validating the decision.

4.2 Vlogs Across the Decision Journey

1. Need recognition: Lifestyle and unboxing content can expose consumers to new products, usage situations, trends, or problems they had not previously prioritized.

2. Information search: Tutorials, reviews, comparisons, and "day-in-the-life" demonstrations provide product information in a concrete, experience-rich form.

3. Evaluation of alternatives: Side-by-side comparisons, pros-and-cons discussion, price-value judgments, and creator recommendations help consumers simplify choice among competing brands.

4. Purchase decision: Affiliate links, platform shops, discount codes, live-commerce prompts, and direct calls to action can shorten the distance between persuasion and conversion.

5. Post-purchase response: Follow-up videos, comment communities, and user-generated responses can reduce dissonance, stimulate advocacy, or amplify disappointment when actual performance contradicts expectations.

4.3 Risk Reduction and Diagnosticity

A major contribution of video content is perceived diagnosticity: the extent to which information helps a consumer evaluate a product accurately. Visual demonstration can reveal size, texture, interface, speed, appearance, fit, and real-world usage that text descriptions may not convey. For high-involvement or experience-oriented products, this vivid evidence can reduce information asymmetry and perceived performance risk. However, diagnosticity depends on credibility. Highly edited or obviously sponsored demonstrations may be discounted if viewers suspect selective presentation or undisclosed commercial influence.

4.4 From Purchase Intention to Decision Quality

Much influencer research uses purchase intention as the principal outcome, but decision-making is broader. A theoretically complete model should distinguish attention, consideration, preference, intention, actual choice, satisfaction, repeat purchase, and advocacy. Vlog

marketing may increase intention without producing purchase when price, availability, competing information, or household influence intervenes. Conversely, it may improve decision quality by helping consumers reject unsuitable products. Future Malaysian studies should therefore combine self-reported intention with behavioral indicators where feasible.

5. Customer Engagement as a Mediating Mechanism

5.1 Conceptual Foundations

Customer engagement is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional state reflecting cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in interactions with a brand, community, or media object. Hollebeek et al. (2014) describe consumer brand engagement in social media through cognitive processing, affection, and activation, while Dessart et al. (2015) similarly emphasize dimensions of engagement in online brand communities. Applied to vlog marketing, engagement explains why two viewers exposed to the same video may respond very differently: one may watch passively and forget the message, while another may concentrate deeply, feel emotionally connected, comment, share, search for additional information, and eventually purchase.

5.2 Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement concerns attention, concentration, absorption, and elaboration. Vlog content can increase cognitive engagement when it provides useful information, clear demonstrations, credible comparisons, or personally relevant problems and solutions. This dimension corresponds closely with ELM central processing. When consumers are motivated and able to process the message, detailed product arguments can produce relatively stable attitudes because they are based on issue-relevant reasoning rather than surface cues.

5.3 Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement reflects enjoyment, enthusiasm, identification, affection, and felt connection (Huang, Huang, & Chang, 2022). Vlogs are structurally well suited to emotional engagement because creators repeatedly disclose personal experiences and communicate through facial expression, voice, humor, and narrative. Parasocial interaction can make viewers feel that they know a creator despite the asymmetry of the relationship. This perceived closeness increases receptivity to recommendations when the creator is trusted, but it can also create vulnerability to disappointment when sponsored content appears inconsistent with the creator's established identity.

5.4 Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement is visible in actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, saving, subscribing, following links, participating in live sessions, and seeking additional brand information. These behaviors matter because they deepen self-generated involvement. A consumer who comments on a review or shares it with friends moves beyond exposure into active participation. Such participation can reinforce memory, invite social feedback, and make the endorsed brand more salient in subsequent choice situations (MOUSUMI & Sohail, 2026).

5.5 Engagement as a Mediator

The mediating logic is therefore sequential. Vlog characteristics first stimulate attention and relational involvement; engagement then changes how intensively consumers process brand information and how willing they are to continue interacting with the brand. The resulting increases in salience, recall, confidence, and interpersonal discussion make a purchase-related response more likely. This pathway is consistent with S-O-R because engagement represents an internal organism state generated by the marketing stimulus before the behavioral response occurs (Anderson, Nguyen, & Anderson, 2026).

Relational pathway: Vlog Marketing → Customer Engagement → Customer Decision-Making

6. Brand Perception as a Mediating Mechanism

6.1 Meaning of Brand Perception

Brand perception refers to the network of judgments, associations, expectations, and feelings that consumers hold about a brand (Bhowmick, 2022). It encompasses perceived quality, trust, credibility, personality, value, symbolic meaning, and the degree to which the brand is seen as suitable for the consumer. Brand perception is not fixed. It is continuously revised through direct experience, advertising, word of mouth, online reviews, creator endorsements, and social interaction.

6.2 Credibility Transfer and Meaning Transfer

A central mechanism in influencer marketing is credibility transfer. When viewers perceive a vlogger as knowledgeable and trustworthy, those positive evaluations can spill over to the brand that the vlogger endorses. Lou and Yuan (2019) show that influencer trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity, and the informative value of content contribute to trust in branded posts and subsequent brand-related outcomes. Similarly, Sokolova and Kefi (2020) highlight the importance of credibility and parasocial interaction for purchase intention. These findings support the proposition that creator evaluation is not separate from brand evaluation; the creator acts as a lens through which the brand is interpreted.

6.3 Creator-Brand Congruence

Congruence refers to perceived fit between the creator and the endorsed brand (Weinlich & Semerádová, 2024). Fit may arise from category expertise, lifestyle, personality, values, audience composition, or long-term usage. Congruence strengthens message consistency and reduces suspicion that the endorsement is purely transactional. Incongruence has the opposite effect: viewers may infer that the creator is motivated mainly by payment, weakening both authenticity and brand credibility. This is particularly relevant in Malaysia where halal considerations, family values, language style, and social norms may shape judgments of appropriateness.

6.4 Brand Perception as a Mediator

Brand perception mediates the effect of vlog marketing when the video changes how consumers understand the brand and those revised beliefs subsequently guide choice (Irfan, Malik, & Zubair, 2022). Impact of vlog marketing on consumer travel intent and consumer purchase intent with the moderating role of destination image and ease of travel. For example, a credible demonstration may increase perceived quality; a transparent comparison may increase trust; an aspirational lifestyle vlog may alter brand personality; and culturally relevant content may increase perceived fit. These evaluative changes reduce perceived risk and increase confidence during alternative evaluation, creating a pathway from exposure to decision.

Evaluative pathway: Vlog Marketing → Brand Perception → Customer Decision-Making

7. Theoretical Foundations

7.1 Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model developed by Petty and Cacioppo explains persuasion through two broad processing routes. Under the central route, individuals carefully evaluate message arguments when motivation and ability are high. In vlog marketing, central cues include evidence, demonstrations, technical detail, comparative reasoning, price-value explanations, and transparent discussion of strengths and weaknesses. Attitudes formed through high elaboration are generally more stable and predictive of behavior.

Under the peripheral route, consumers rely more heavily on heuristic or affective cues when motivation or ability to process is low. Vlogger attractiveness, popularity, charisma, music, production quality, visual aesthetics, and social proof can function as peripheral cues. These cues may produce quicker evaluations but can also be less durable. Importantly, vlog content can activate both routes simultaneously. A consumer may value the technical evidence in a smartphone review while also being influenced by the presenter's credibility and likability.

7.2 Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Framework

The S-O-R framework, originating in environmental psychology, conceptualizes behavior as a sequence in which environmental stimuli affect internal organism states that then produce approach or avoidance responses. Applied to vlog marketing, content features are the stimulus; customer engagement and brand perception are organism states; and customer decision-making is the response. This structure is especially suitable for mediation because it explicitly rejects the assumption that external cues produce behavior without internal psychological processing.

7.3 Source Credibility and Parasocial Interaction

Source credibility theory explains why expertise and trustworthiness influence acceptance of persuasive messages. In creator environments, credibility is often reinforced by repeated demonstrations of competence, consistency between sponsored and unsponsored content, transparency about commercial relationships, and congruence with the product category. Parasocial interaction complements this explanation by capturing the one-sided sense of intimacy that can develop through repeated exposure to a media persona. Together, credibility and parasocial closeness help explain why viewers may treat vlog recommendations as quasi-interpersonal advice rather than anonymous advertising.

7.4 Integrating the Theories

The integrated model developed in this review assigns distinct explanatory roles to these theories. ELM explains how viewers process informational and peripheral cues; source credibility and parasocial interaction explain why the creator becomes a persuasive social source (Yen, Chen, Kang, Wang, & Yang, 2024); and S-O-R organizes these processes into a causal sequence (Jayadi, Putra, & Murwani, 2022). Customer engagement captures the relational and participatory organism state, whereas brand perception captures the evaluative organism state. The result is a dual-mediation explanation that is theoretically richer than a simple direct-effects model.

8. Synthesis of Empirical Literature

The empirical literature generally supports the proposition that influencer communication works through combinations of content value, source evaluation, identification, and social interaction. However, the field is fragmented across platforms and constructs. Table 2 summarizes representative studies that inform the present framework.

Table 2: Representative empirical literature informing the framework

Study	Context / method	Key constructs	Main relevance	Gap for present review
De Veirman et al. (2017)	Instagram; experimental studies	Follower count, product divergence, brand attitude	Popularity cues affect influencer evaluation and can shape brand attitude.	Not focused on vlog format or Malaysia.
Lou & Yuan (2019)	Social media influencer followers; PLS	Message value, credibility, trust, brand	Informative value and credibility build trust in	Does not model engagement and brand

		awareness, purchase intention	branded content.	perception as parallel mediators.
Ki & Kim (2019)	Instagram; SEM	Influencer attributes, opinion leadership, desire to mimic	Influencer posts shape favorable behavior through attitudinal and motivational mechanisms.	Focuses on mimicry rather than dual engagement-brand processes.
Sokolova & Kefi (2020)	Instagram/YouTube; PLS	Credibility, parasocial interaction, purchase intention	Credibility and parasocial processes are linked with purchase intention.	Limited cultural focus on Southeast Asia.
Hollebeek et al. (2014)	Social media; scale development	Cognitive processing, affection, activation	Provides multidimensional structure for brand engagement.	Not specific to creator video.
Dessart et al. (2015)	Online brand communities	Consumer engagement dimensions	Clarifies engagement as affective, cognitive, and behavioral participation.	Community rather than influencer-video context.
Keller (1993)	Conceptual brand equity	Brand knowledge, image, associations	Explains how marketing touchpoints create brand meaning and response.	Predates social and creator media.
Petty & Cacioppo (1986)	Persuasion theory	Central and peripheral processing	Explains differential processing of arguments and source cues.	Requires adaptation to interactive digital media.

8.1 Vlog Marketing → Customer Decision-Making

Vlogs influence decisions because they combine exposure with diagnostic information, social cues, and direct conversion mechanisms. Demonstrations make product performance visible; testimonials humanize brand claims; and embedded links or codes reduce transaction friction (Garnett, 2025). Yet direct effects are likely to vary by involvement, product category, creator credibility, and platform context. The literature therefore supports a direct path while also implying that indirect psychological mechanisms are essential.

8.2 Vlog Marketing → Customer Engagement

Authenticity, entertainment, interactivity, and perceived similarity encourage viewers to devote attention and emotion to creator content (Yi, Ramlie, Subri, & Zhu, 2025). Interactive platforms further allow audiences to participate through comments and sharing. As

engagement deepens, the consumer becomes more invested in the content ecosystem and more likely to continue seeking information about the endorsed brand.

8.3 Vlog Marketing → Brand Perception

Source credibility and creator-brand fit can change beliefs about brand trust, quality, authenticity, and relevance. The effect is not uniformly positive: excessive commercialization, weak disclosure, poor fit, or perceived inauthenticity can damage brand perception. This asymmetry makes brand perception a crucial mechanism rather than a guaranteed outcome.

8.4 Customer Engagement → Customer Decision-Making

Engaged consumers process information more deeply, remember brand cues better, and are more likely to interact with the brand or creator. Behavioral engagement also exposes the consumer to additional social information through comments and peer reactions, which can increase decision confidence.

8.5 Brand Perception → Customer Decision-Making

Favorable brand perception reduces uncertainty and simplifies choice. Trust decreases perceived relational risk, perceived quality reduces performance risk, and positive brand personality can strengthen self-brand fit. These evaluations influence consideration, preference, and purchase intention.

8.6 Customer Engagement as Mediator

The mediation argument is strongest when vlog content first captures attention and builds relational involvement, which then motivates further search, interaction, and consideration. Engagement therefore converts exposure into meaningful processing and action.

8.7 Brand Perception as Mediator

The evaluative mediation pathway operates when creator communication changes the consumer's brand schema. A credible vlog can reframe an unfamiliar brand as trustworthy or improve perceptions of an established brand. Those revised beliefs then influence the final decision.

8.8 Why Parallel Mediation Matters

Customer engagement and brand perception are conceptually related but not interchangeable. A viewer can be highly engaged with a creator while remaining skeptical of the promoted brand, or can develop a favorable brand perception without actively commenting or sharing. Testing both mediators in parallel therefore allows researchers to determine whether vlog marketing works primarily through relational involvement, evaluative brand change, or both.

9. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework positions vlog marketing as the primary stimulus, customer engagement and brand perception as parallel organism states, and customer decision-making as the behavioral response. A direct effect from vlog marketing to decision-making is retained because some persuasive effects may occur without full mediation. At the same time, the dual pathways allow the model to test whether the effect is transmitted through relational engagement, evaluative brand processing, or both.

Conceptual framework: parallel dual mediation

STIMULUS (S)	ORGANISM (O)	RESPONSE (R)
VLOG MARKETING • authenticity • informativeness • entertainment • credibility • interactivity • creator-brand fit	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT Cognitive • Emotional • Behavioral ⇩ parallel mediating mechanisms ⇩ ORGANISM (O) BRAND PERCEPTION	CUSTOMER DECISION-MAKING • need recognition • information search • evaluation • purchase intention • brand choice

• cultural relevance	Trust • Quality • Credibility • Personality • Fit	• post-purchase response

The model can be tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) when the research objective emphasizes prediction, theory extension, and complex mediation, or covariance-based SEM when confirmatory model fit and established measurement theory are priorities. Bootstrapped indirect effects should be used to test mediation rather than relying solely on the significance of individual paths.

10. Research Propositions

P1: *Vlog marketing positively influences customer decision-making.*
P2: *Vlog marketing positively influences customer engagement.*
P3: *Vlog marketing positively influences brand perception.*
P4: *Customer engagement positively influences customer decision-making.*
P5: *Brand perception positively influences customer decision-making.*
P6: *Customer engagement mediates the relationship between vlog marketing and customer decision-making.*
P7: *Brand perception mediates the relationship between vlog marketing and customer decision-making.*

11. Research Gaps and Future Research Agenda

Contextual gap

Much influencer research is concentrated in Western, Chinese, Korean, or other large digital markets. Malaysia's multilingual and multi-ethnic setting remains comparatively underexamined. Future work should test whether relationships differ across ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional audience segments without assuming that national averages represent a single consumer culture.

Content-format gap

Influencer research often aggregates multiple social formats. Long-form YouTube reviews, short TikTok clips, Instagram Reels, livestreams, and platform-native shopping features differ in duration, algorithmic discovery, interactivity, and persuasive affordances. Comparative platform studies are needed.

Mechanism gap

Direct purchase intention remains overused as an outcome. More studies should investigate attention, trust formation, engagement, perceived diagnosticity, brand perception, and post-purchase responses as mechanisms and intermediate outcomes.

Dual-mediation gap

Relational and evaluative mechanisms are rarely tested simultaneously. Parallel or sequential mediation models could reveal whether customer engagement precedes brand perception, whether brand perception drives later engagement, or whether both operate independently.

Measurement gap

Researchers frequently rely on cross-sectional self-report measures. Behavioral data such as watch time, click-through, conversion, repeat exposure, comment behavior, and actual purchase could improve validity when combined ethically with surveys.

Cultural gap

Cultural congruence is often treated descriptively rather than modeled. Future research should examine language choice, collectivism, power distance, halal sensitivity, family orientation, and local identity as moderators of source credibility and brand fit.

Disclosure and ethics gap

Sponsored-content disclosure can increase transparency but may also activate persuasion knowledge. Malaysian studies should examine how disclosure wording, placement, and creator reputation jointly affect trust and decision-making.

AI and synthetic creator gap

Virtual influencers and AI-generated video content complicate authenticity, disclosure, and credibility. Future research should compare human and synthetic creators and assess whether parasocial processes operate similarly.

Table 3: Priority future research agenda

Priority question	Suggested design	Potential moderator	Recommended outcome
Do YouTube and TikTok vlogs persuade through the same mechanisms?	Multi-group SEM or experiment	Platform format / involvement	Engagement, brand trust, choice
Does cultural congruence strengthen creator credibility in Malaysia?	Survey + experimental manipulation	Language, ethnicity, religiosity/context sensitivity	Credibility, brand perception
Do micro-vloggers produce stronger engagement than macro-vloggers?	Field study / matched campaigns	Follower size, niche expertise	Watch time, interaction, conversion
Does disclosure reduce or strengthen trust?	Randomized experiment	Creator reputation, sponsorship fit	Persuasion knowledge, trust, intention
Do engagement and brand perception operate in parallel or sequence?	PLS-SEM / CB-SEM mediation	Product type, involvement	Indirect effects, purchase behavior

12. Theoretical Implications

First, the review extends vlog marketing scholarship by shifting attention from exposure and source attributes toward a mechanism-based model. The central theoretical claim is that persuasive effectiveness depends on what happens inside the consumer after exposure. This reframing helps explain inconsistent findings in prior studies: the same creator characteristic may generate different behavioral outcomes depending on whether it successfully activates engagement or changes brand perception. Second, the integration of ELM and S-O-R creates a multi-level explanation. ELM clarifies how the content is processed, while S-O-R clarifies how processed stimuli translate into internal states and behavioral responses. This combination allows detailed content cues and broader psychological mechanisms to coexist in the same framework. Third, the dual-mediation model distinguishes relational engagement from evaluative brand perception. This distinction is theoretically important because creator attachment does not guarantee brand acceptance. By modeling both mediators simultaneously, future research can identify situations in which a creator is engaging but commercially ineffective, or where brand perceptions improve despite relatively low interactive engagement. Fourth, the Malaysian focus contributes to emerging-market theory by emphasizing cultural and linguistic congruence. Rather than assuming universal influencer effects, the framework proposes that persuasion is embedded within locally meaningful norms, identities, and community practices. This creates a foundation for comparative ASEAN research.

13. Managerial Implications

For brand managers, influencer selection should extend beyond follower count. The most strategically relevant criteria are category expertise, audience-brand fit, trustworthiness, content quality, engagement quality, historical sponsorship behavior, and cultural congruence. A smaller creator with a credible relationship to a niche audience may produce stronger decision effects than a celebrity creator with broad but weak relevance. For digital marketers, campaign design should balance informational and emotional value. High-involvement products benefit from detailed demonstrations, comparisons, and evidence that support central processing. Lower-involvement or hedonic products may benefit more from entertainment, narrative, aesthetics, and community participation. The strongest campaigns often combine both by embedding useful information inside engaging storytelling. For content creators, commercial sustainability depends on protecting authenticity. Repeated promotion of poorly fitting products can erode the credibility that makes influencer marketing valuable. Clear disclosure, honest discussion of limitations, selective partnerships, and consistency between ordinary and sponsored content support long-term trust. For agencies, campaign evaluation should move beyond impressions and views. Watch time, completion rate, saves, meaningful comments, shares, sentiment, branded search, click behavior, conversion quality, repeat purchase, and changes in brand perception provide a more complete assessment. Campaign dashboards should separate engagement quantity from engagement quality. For Malaysian enterprises, localization should be treated strategically rather than cosmetically. Language choice, humor, social norms, religious sensitivity, and local cultural references can affect perceived authenticity and brand fit. Multicultural segmentation may therefore be more effective than a single national creative approach.

14. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The review has several limitations. First, it is integrative rather than systematic and does not report a PRISMA study-flow count or meta-analytic effect sizes. Its contribution is conceptual integration, not quantitative estimation. A future systematic review should pre-register search strings, databases, screening criteria, coding rules, and a complete flow diagram. Second, much of the underlying influencer literature is cross-sectional and relies on self-reported purchase intention. This limits causal inference and may overstate the relationship between favorable attitudes and actual purchasing behavior. Experimental and longitudinal research is therefore needed. Third, platform environments evolve rapidly. Algorithmic recommendations, short-form video conventions, social commerce features, disclosure rules, and creator monetization systems can change within a short period. Conceptual models should therefore distinguish enduring psychological mechanisms from platform-specific affordances.

Fourth, the Malaysian discussion is theoretically grounded but still requires direct empirical validation. Future studies should collect sufficiently diverse Malaysian samples and explicitly examine demographic, linguistic, cultural, and geographic heterogeneity. Urban university samples alone should not be treated as representative of the national market. Finally, future research should investigate emerging forms of creator communication, including livestream shopping, AI-generated influencers, virtual avatars, deepfake risks, and synthetic voice/video endorsements. These formats may alter authenticity judgments and require extensions to conventional source-credibility theory.

15. Conclusion

Vlog marketing has become an important form of contemporary persuasion because it combines the informational capabilities of product demonstration with the relational influence of creator-led communication. The literature reviewed in this paper indicates that its commercial impact cannot be understood adequately through simple exposure-to-purchase models. Consumers respond to vlogs through cognitive, emotional, social, and evaluative

processes that determine whether a brand message is accepted, rejected, remembered, discussed, and acted upon. The proposed framework explains these processes through two parallel mediating mechanisms. Customer engagement captures the degree to which viewers invest attention, emotion, and behavior in the content, while brand perception captures changes in trust, quality, credibility, personality, and fit. Integrating ELM with S-O-R clarifies both how vlog cues are processed and how those internal states lead to decision-making outcomes. The model therefore offers a theoretically coherent basis for future empirical testing. In Malaysia, these mechanisms are likely to be shaped by cultural congruence, language, community norms, and the growing role of social platforms in product discovery and evaluation. Brands that treat vloggers merely as distribution channels risk overlooking the source of their persuasive power. Effective vlog marketing requires credible creators, useful and engaging content, appropriate brand fit, and sustained trust. Future research that measures these processes rigorously across platforms and cultural groups can significantly advance understanding of digital consumer decision-making in Malaysia and other emerging markets.

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