

Leveraging followers' attitude toward Indonesian social media influencers on purchase intention

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Abstract

Social media influencers are popular marketing partners, requiring the focus of brands to enhance the purchase intention. The majority of brands are passionate to collaborate with favorable social media influencers but lack the understanding to maintain followers' attitude. These circumstances could jeopardize the reputation of brands, leading to a waste of investment. Therefore, this cross-sectional study aimed to examine the effect of credible sources and advertising content (stimuli) on purchase intention (response), mediated by followers' attitude toward social media influencers (organisms). A quantitative study design with purposive sampling was used to select 291 respondents living in Indonesia. The respondents were active social media users and followers of influencers. An online survey questionnaire was distributed through WhatsApp. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied for data analysis. The results showed that credible social media influencers as source of information and entertainment are the main reason for followers to show a positive attitude towards themselves leading to intention to purchase product. Trustworthiness serves as a mandatory element to establish healthy long-term relationships with followers and brands. Those who succeed in maintaining credibility and the ability to share valuable content are the best investment of brands.

Keywords: *SOR framework, followers' attitude, social media influencers, source credibility, advertising value, purchase intention*

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1. Introduction

Social media is an inseparable part of daily life, facilitating interaction and communication between individuals (Arora et al., 2019). It grants unlimited access to information (Pentina et al., 2018) and provides dynamic channels of communicating globally (Melumad et al., 2019; Peng et al., 2018). In fact, the penetration rate of social media in Indonesia was 191.4 million active users in February 2022 and was projected to increase to 204.57 million (Statista, 2022). Users commonly stay online for an average time of 3 hours and 18 minutes daily (Khadijah, n.d.). The exponential growth has triggered a new marketing strategy that applies social media as the primary channel to communicate and interact with customers (Bianchi et al., 2017). Moreover, social media evolved in supporting brands by optimizing persuasive communication, often referred to as influencing. The existence of influencers successfully transformed the engagement of brands with customers and potential customers over the years (Hughes et al., 2019; Jin & Ryu, 2020). As these individuals have many followers across one or more platforms (Agrawal, n.d.; Varsamis, 2018), they play various roles including acting as content creators, online opinion leaders, and entrepreneurs (Balaban & Mustăţea, 2019).

The strong relationship and trust established between influencers and followers improve information and advice from the content posted (Delbaere et al., 2021). A previous study (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017) showed that social media influencers were more influential, credible, and relatable compared to traditional celebrities. In addition, trustworthy social media influencers enhance the effectiveness of advertisements (Schouten et al., 2020). According to Statista (2022), approximately 68% of social media users are followers of one or not less than four influencers, showing significant potential in promoting products or services. Followers develop a stronger emotional bond with influencers providing informative content, and closer relationships lead to more effective persuasion of individuals to accept endorsed products (Ki et al., 2020). Complete and accurate information is mandatory for successful advertisement (Arora & Agarwal, 2019). Both informative and entertaining content are important factors in shaping the perception of followers about innovative marketing forms (Gaberetal, 2019). Social media influencers consistently maintaining these attributes assist in broadening the partnership of brands and attracting a larger number of followers.

Various investigations are related to the effect of source credibility and advertising value in increasing purchase intention mediated by attitude toward advertising, but only a few

have examined the effect of attitude toward advertisers and products (AlFarraj et al., 2021; Ki & Kim, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Weiss, n.d.; Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2021; Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2020; Gaber et al., 2019; Hamouda, 2018; Kim, 2020; Pick, 2021). Therefore, this study aimed to leverage followers' attitude toward social media influencers emphasizing the basic mechanism of an effective marketing campaign.

Social media influencers have crucial roles in enhancing purchase intention and their existence as brand representatives is required to boost marketing campaigns. However, the roles played as brand representatives can be a double-edged sword. The useful, updated, and credible content wrapped with entertainment elements often keep followers engaged. Followers tend to accept recommendations from trustworthy social media influencers and failure to meet these requirements could lead to reputation damage. The followers can easily unfollow the accounts of influencers, stop recommending brands, and switch to another promotion, leading to wasted brand investment. Therefore, the following study questions are proposed:

RQ1: Does followers' attitude toward social media influencers mediate the relationship between source credibility and purchase intention for promoted products?

RQ2: Does followers' attitude toward social media influencers mediate the relationship between advertising value and purchase intention for promoted products?

The results are expected to enhance marketing theory development by providing insights into the relationship between followers' cognitive attitude and positive or negative perceptions formed about social media influencers. Source credibility and advertising value model were used to address this concern.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stimuli-Organism-Response Framework

The stimuli-organism-response (SOR) framework introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) elaborates how organisms mediate the relationship between stimulation and responses to provoke cognitive and emotional states affecting behavioral responses. Stimuli are environmental factors influencing cognitive and affective reactions (Eroglu et al., 2001). Organisms refer to internal perceptual, physiological, emotional, and cognitive activities, mediating stimuli, while responses are the final action or reaction (Bagozzi, 1986).

According to Wu and Li (2018), marketing mix (as stimuli) in social commerce industry significantly affects the value of customers (as organism) which positively influences loyalty (response). A previous investigation by Zhang et al. (2023) stated that environmental factors such as informativeness, wishful identification, para-social relationship, and inspiration affected influencers and customers' attitude toward products. Similarly, Sun and Huang (2022) found that physical environment and situation (as stimuli) affected experience sharing and word-of-mouth communication mediated by visual impression, memorial sense, and depth perception in tourism. According to Hewei (2022), media interactivity affected clothing purchase intention in short video apps mediated by perceived value and immersion experience. The SOR framework was applied in this study to comprehend key factors leading to purchase intention through attitude toward social media influencers.

2.2 Source Credibility

The credibility of a communicator source is a crucial factor (Hovland et al., 1953) in evaluating trust and reliability, and often occurs when the receiver responds positively towards the message conveyed. Previous studies proved that the effectiveness of persuasive message relied on source credibility (Giffin, 1967; Hovland et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). This is the first component which includes the perception of credible, knowledgeable, qualified, and skilled influencers in stating certain claims related to the subject (Mc Croskey, 1966). The second component is how the perception of receivers toward a message is sincere, honest, and truthful. Physical appealing was proposed by McGuire (1985) as the third component of credibility and was adopted by Ohanian (1990).

The previously developed source credibility model (Ohanian, 1990) has been expanded by recent studies to examine the importance of credible influencers in shaping the behavior of customers (Pick, 2021; Saima & Khan, 2021; Weismueller et al., 2020). Followers believe that influencers should be reliable, honest, dependable, sincere, and trusted. Alboqami (2023) stated that source credibility was the main driver of trust in artificial intelligence (AI) influencers, while Lata and Rana (2021) reported that customers preferred credible information, leading to the reviews uploaded by experienced travelers being more trustworthy. The combination of knowledge, competence, and non-biased opinion facilitates the perception of social media influencers as an advisor (Wong et al., 2019). Followers tend to unfollow the accounts of influencers for any misleading information shared (Chopra et al., 2021). Miranda

et al. (2021) stated that skill was a determinant factor of attitude toward content generators that increased purchase intention. Beauty, health food, and fashion industry require good-looking, sexy, and elegant influencers are necessary to attract the attention of followers (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). According to Chetioui et al. (2020), an experience will shape the perception of followers toward social media influencers. In addition, Kim and Read (2021) confirmed that warmth personality and competence promoted positive attitude enhancement. Given the previous empirical evidence, therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Source credibility affects followers' attitude toward social media influencers.

2.3 Advertising Value

Advertising value refers to a subjective evaluation of the relative worth or usefulness of advertising to customers and is considered a valuable concept. The continuous diversion of spending to shorter-term promotional strategies is due to increased dissatisfaction of customers with advertising value and the inability to take prompt action (Ducoffe, 1995). According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), the degree to which advert messages convey valuable and relevant information to customers in satisfying the need for enjoyment, diversion, or emotional release and evoking a feeling of displeasure affects promoted products.

A previous investigation stated that sponsored Instagram content should be more informative, credible, and fun to engage customers (Efendioğlu & Durmaz, 2022; Hussain et al., 2022). Additionally, Mahmut et al. (2022) showed that the combination of up-to-date, entertaining content and credible information would create a positive attitude. Similarly, Othman et al. (2021) found that green advertising served as source of knowledge, information, and pleasant experiences for customers, as well as an idea source for brands to design green marketing strategy.

Tourism advertising on Facebook should be enriched with informative, entertaining, and credible information (Hamouda, 2018). According to Hussain et al. (2023a), Instagram advertisement provided timely and relevant information related to products, while entertaining content fulfilled the enjoyment and escapism needs. The same elements shape the perception and enhance the relationship of customers with brands toward innovative forms of marketing (Gaberet et al., 2019). The findings of Balaban and Mustătea (2019) showed that followers depended on trust and messages coming from a high degree of enjoyable content. Furthermore,

social media influencers endorsing products that match with the lifestyle affect followers' attitude. Given these arguments, therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Advertising value affects followers' attitude toward social media influencers.

2.4 Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers

Attitude shown toward advertisers is a learned predisposition to consistently respond favorably or not towards the sponsoring organization (Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989). This study referred to attitude toward advertisers as equivalent to social media influencers, although is not a well-defined construct, suggesting a need to comprehend the opinion of followers. Park and Chun (2020) reported that fashion influencers as a role model influenced Gen Z through words and actions. Similarly, San Miguel et al. (2019) found that women in Spain greatly admired the styles of fashion influencers. A study by Coates et al. (2020) also showed that children enjoyed watching the content of favorite YouTubers. Followers identifying with influencers will increase the consideration of products and brands promotion in decision-making. Suitable social media influencers attract a positive attitude, which is a critical factor influencing purchase intention (Chetioui et al., 2022; Min et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: Followers' attitude toward social media influencers affect the intention to purchase promoted products.

2.5 Purchase Intention

The Theory of Planned Behavior states that behavioral intention is directly used to predict actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to Bakar and Musa (2020), followers prefer credible influencers with informative and entertaining content to promote Malaysian national car. Similarly, several studies confirmed the effect of social media credibility of influencers in enhancing purchase (Koay et al., 2022; Saima & Khan, 2021; Segovia-Villarreal & Rosa-Díaz, 2022; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018; Weismueller et al., 2020; Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2021). Presented content value also contributes to increased purchase intention (Chetioui et al., 2020; Hashim et al., 2018; Hussain et al., 2023b; Martins et al., 2019; Wibowo et al., 2020; Zhang, 2018). Magano et al. (2022) argue that expert, knowledgeable, and trustworthy influencers are mandatory requirements to be prioritized by brands for collaboration. Certain studies confirmed that followers' positive attitude toward

influencers and created content affected brands, with a tendency to increase purchase intention (Bakar & Musa, 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Reinikainen et al., 2020). Attractive influencers were also found to provide a positive effect on promoted products (Hwang & Zhang, 2018; Taillon et al., 2020). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Followers' attitude toward influencers mediated the correlation between source credibility and purchase intention.

Humor and passionate content can enhance the popularity of influencers, leading to increased enjoyment (Coates et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2022). Informative content will satisfy the need of followers to exchange information, but credible information counts more (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2020). The content created by experts enables followers to gain knowledge, enhance trust, and make preference to purchase real food (Segovia-Villarreal & Rosa-Díaz, 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H5: Followers attitude toward influencers mediated the correlation between advertising value and purchase intention toward promoted products.

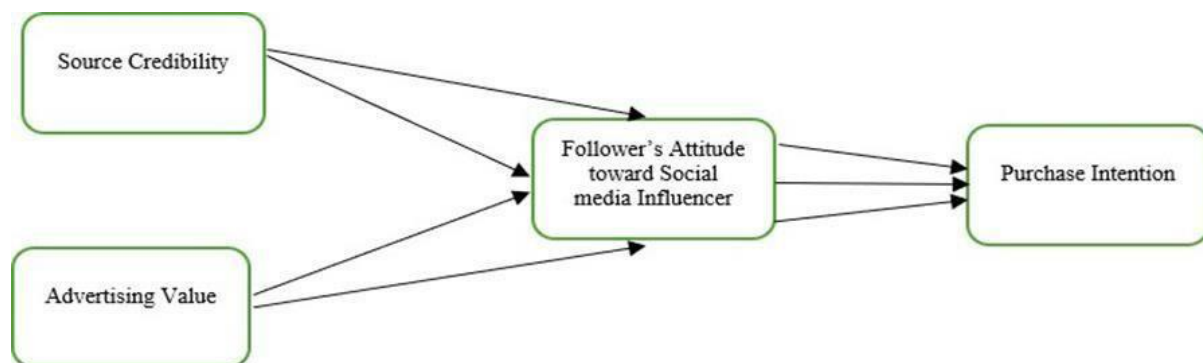
3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

The descriptive correlation design was used in this study, in which the credibility and advertising value of social media influencers were correlated to followers' attitude, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual model for this study



3.2 Sample and Sampling Method

Respondents who contribute to this study were active social media users and followers of a minimum of one influencer in Indonesia. The method applied during selection is known as purposive sampling, which requires special criteria from the sample population. A total of 376 respondents were assessed and only 291 selected after data screening were validated. Among the respondents, 69% women and 31% men, it includes the combination of 52% of Gen Y, 42% of Gen X, and 8% of Baby Boomers. The major occupations were 45% employees, 21% students and 14% entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Instagram (32%), YouTube (25%), and Facebook (24%) were the top three ranked social media platforms used. On average, 65% of respondents claimed to spend between seven to more than nine times weekly to engage with several predominant contents such as food, education, and beauty.

3.3 Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire used in this study was designed by selecting and adopting questions from previous literature to fit the objective, generating a total of 24 statements. The measurement of source credibility consisted of nine statements adopted from a previous investigation (Magano et al., 2022), and the content value was measured by six statements (Gaber et al., 2019). Furthermore, followers' attitude toward social media influencers was evaluated using five statements (Belanche et al., 2021) and the measurement of purchase intention corresponded to the procedure by Magano et al. (2022) and Muda and Hamzah (2021). The four Likert scales applied for this study comprised strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1), with table 1 presenting the questionnaire items.

Table 1

Questionnaire items used in this study

Constructs	Statements
Source Credibility adopted from Magano et al. (2022)	SC1. Social media influencers are credible individuals who share credible information
	SC2. Social media influencers are trustworthy individuals
	SC3. Social media influencers are sincere individuals
	SC4. The social media influencers I follow are experts in the topic shared
	SC5. Social media influencers are knowledgeable related to the topic shared
	SC6. Social media influencers have an experience related to the topic shared
	SC7. Social media influencers are good-looking individuals
	SC8. Social media influencers have an attractive appearance
	SC9. Social media influencers are fashionable

Constructs	Statements
Advertising Value adopted from Gaber et al. (2019)	AV1. I think the content shared by social media influencers is a good source for product information AV2. Social media content provides up-to-date product information AV3. I found the content shared by social media influencers to be useful information AV4. I feel the exposure of content shared is pleasant AV5. I feel the content is enjoyable and entertaining AV6. The content is amusing to me
Followers' Attitude toward Social Media Influencers adopted from Belanche et al. (2021)	AT1. I think these social media influencers are attractive AT2. I think these social media influencers are pleasant AT3. I think these social media influencers are admirable AT4. The majority of followers also like social media influencers AT5. I have a favorable opinion about influencer
Purchase Intention adopted from Magano et al. (2022) and Muda and Hamzah (2021)	PI1. I most frequently have intention to purchase products or services advertised by social media influencer I followed PI2. I will buy products or services advertised by social media influencers in the future PI3. I would consider buying products or services advertised by social media influencers PI4. I generally recommend products or services advertised by social media influencers I follow

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The online questionnaire prepared through Microsoft Form was distributed online from July 29 to November 29, 2022. This study applied a cross-sectional design because the data collection was conducted only once. The data were tallied and collated for analysis and interpretation as soon as all respondents completed answering the questionnaire.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test causal relationships in this study. This is an advanced statistical method combining statistical data with qualitative causal assumptions (Henseler et al., 2009). Partial Least Squares- Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is the most appropriate method for assessing complex study models with variables and constructs. This consists of the measurement model (outer model), reflecting how variables represent the construct measured, and the structural model (inner model), showing the relationship of constructs with each other.

This research was conducted as a final project for a Master's Degree programme at BINUS Business School. Participation on this research was entirely voluntary. All participant's responses were used solely for academic purposes and kept strictly confidential.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Measurement Model (Outer Model)

PLS path model analysis was used to know when the suggested criteria for measurement model assessment of indicator, construct reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity were met. Indicator reliability was also achieved as it exceeds 0.6, which was required in SEM (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). However, the seventh, eighth, and ninth indicators in the credibility scale were excluded due to poor items falling below the required threshold of 0.70 (Hair, 2017). As shown in table 1, the construct reliability was conducted using Cronbach Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR), both exceeding 0.7, showing reliability fit (Hair, 2017). Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all the constructs above 0.5 was considered adequate for confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2

Reliability Test and Validity Test (Convergent Validity)

	Indicator	Loading Factor	CA	CR	AVE
SC	SC1	0.766	0.855	0.859	0.579
	SC2	0.771			
	SC3	0.738			
	SC4	0.734			
	SC5	0.778			
	SC6	0.776			
AV	AV1	0.768	0.853	0.870	0.577
	AV2	0.605			
	AV3	0.713			
	AV4	0.835			
	AV5	0.822			
	AV6	0.792			
AT	AT1	0.735	0.827	0.831	0.591
	AT2	0.800			
	AT3	0.808			
	AT4	0.737			
	AT5	0.762			
PU	PI1	0.688	0.785	0.786	0.610
	PI2	0.799			
	PI3	0.822			
	PI4	0.809			

Discriminant validity assessed the extent to which the measure was unique and not simply a reflection of other variables. The three criteria used in this study included Fornell

Larcker criterion, cross loadings, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The first criterion stated that each latent variable root of square of AVE should be greater than the correlation with any other (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in table 3.

Table 3

Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	Advertising Value	Followers Attitude Toward Social Media Influencer	Purchase Intention	Source Credibility
Advertising Value	0.760			
Followers' Attitude toward Social Media Influencer	0.608	0.769		
Purchase Intention	0.355	0.415	0.781	
Source Credibility	0.552	0.547	0.387	0.761

The second criterion is cross-loadings stating that any indicator should be larger than all the cross-loadings (Chin, 1998), as shown in table 4.

Table 4

Discriminant Validity (Cross Loading Criterion)

	Advertising Value	Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencer s	Purchase Intention	Source Credibility
AT1	0.510	0.735	0.328	0.316
AT2	0.505	0.800	0.314	0.502
AT3	0.439	0.808	0.383	0.412
AT4	0.392	0.737	0.310	0.301
AT5	0.479	0.762	0.262	0.543
AV1	0.768	0.484	0.382	0.542
AV2	0.605	0.267	0.295	0.404
AV3	0.713	0.417	0.330	0.468
AV4	0.835	0.503	0.253	0.416
AV5	0.822	0.527	0.201	0.374
AV6	0.792	0.506	0.211	0.353
PI1	0.273	0.333	0.688	0.199
PI2	0.269	0.278	0.799	0.314
PI3	0.279	0.336	0.822	0.356
PI4	0.285	0.337	0.809	0.338
SC1	0.335	0.417	0.315	0.766
SC2	0.361	0.392	0.306	0.771
SC3	0.326	0.416	0.272	0.738
SC4	0.427	0.346	0.283	0.734
SC5	0.479	0.426	0.318	0.778
SC6	0.568	0.480	0.277	0.776

The third criterion used was the heterotrait-mono trait ratio of correlations also known as HTMT. All values were below the 0.9 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015) as shown in table 5.

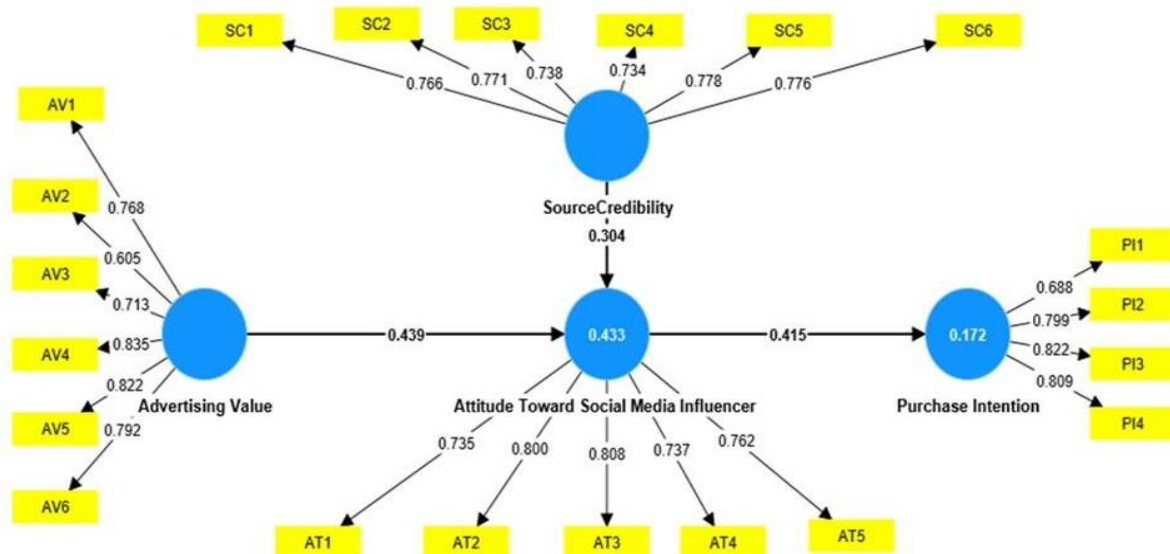
Table 5

Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

	HTMT ratio
Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers<->Advertising Value	0.704
Purchase Intention <-> Advertising Value	0.447
Purchase Intention<-> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers	0.512
Source Credibility<-> Advertising Value	0.652

Figure 2

PLS-SEM Measurement Model



4.2. Structural Model (Inner Model)

A bootstrapping of 5000 samples was used to assess the statistical significance of path coefficients (Hair et al., 2013). All the hypotheses were supported as the t -statistic was above 1796 and the P-value was less than 0.05. The result showed that source credibility had a positive and significant effect on followers' attitude toward influencers compared to specific indirect effects between source credibility and purchase intention mediated. The t -statistic of 3.763 and p -value of 0.000 was positive and significant, which was similar to advertising value compared to the indirect effects between advertising value and purchase intention with a t -statistic of 4.069 and p -value of 0.000.

Table 6
Path Coefficient

Hypotheses	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
Source Credibility -> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers	5.146	0.000	Supported
Advertising Value -> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers	5.281	0.000	Supported
Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers <-> Purchase Intention	6.783	0.000	Supported
Source Credibility <-> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers <-> Purchase Intention	3.763	0.000	Supported
Advertising Value <-> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers <-> Purchase Intention	4.069	0.000	Supported

The determinant coefficient (*R-Square*) of the latent variables was the key criterion for assessing the structural model (Chin, 1998). The three holds of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 were defined as substantial, moderate, and weak levels. The results showed that 43% of the variation in attitude could be explained by source credibility and advertising value as exogenous latent variables. Meanwhile, followers' attitude toward social media influencers explained a 17% variation in purchase intention. The predictive relevance value of attitude toward social media influencers and purchase intention were 0.397 and 0.142, respectively. All *Q-squares* were greater than zero, showing the capacity of the model to predict.

Table 7
Indirect effect

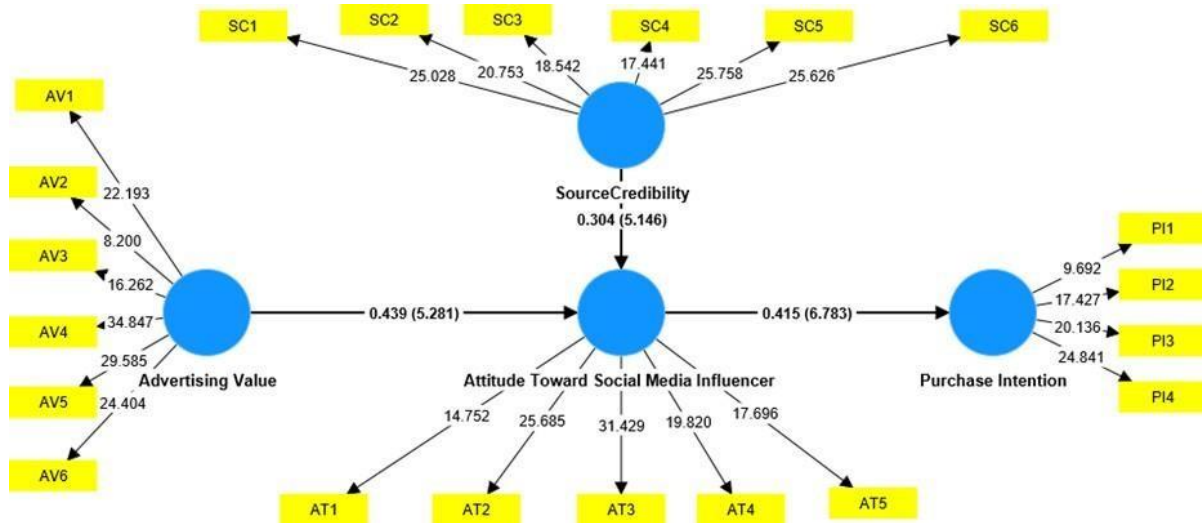
Relationship	t-statistic	p-value
Source Credibility -> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers->Purchase Intention	3.762	0.000
Advertising Value -> Followers' Attitude Toward Social Media Influencers->Purchase Intention	4.069	0.000

The mediating effects examined in this study validated the research questions. First, the followers' attitude toward social media influencers mediate the relationship between source

credibility and purchase intention. Second, followers' attitude toward social media influencers mediate the relationship between advertising value and purchase intention.

Figure 3

PLS-SEM Structural Model



The respondents stated that the credibility of social media influencers supported by the skill, expertise, knowledge, and experience was more important than just looking good or fashionable. Credible social media influencer may help followers to assess various information and reduce uncertainty of product quality. The followers tend to be open for any recommendation or suggestion and willing to buy the product. This result is similar to several previous studies (Acikgoz & Burnaz, 2021; Bakar & Musa, 2020; Balaban & Mustățea, 2019; Belanche et al., 2021; Chetioui et al., 2020; Magano et al., 2022). The credibility of content which enhances the effectiveness of marketing campaigns positively affects the behavior of followers (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2020; John & De’Villiers, 2020; Kemouche et al., 2022; Magno, 2017; Segovia-Villarreal & Rosa-Díaz, 2022). According to Zhang et al. (2023), the availability of useful, timely, and relevant information about products attracts a positive attitude toward the source. The respondents considered credible social media influencers as a source of good information. A genuine review and unbiased recommendation are essential for followers. A caution to be considered is that misleading information can potentially harm the credibility of both brands and social media influencers (Chopra et al., 2021). Followers can unfollow the accounts of influencers and no longer consider the brands because an ethical

breach occurs when disingenuous reviews are disseminated. Followers may select non-quality products, leading to financial and non-financial loss, and in the worst case, this can lead to legal consequences that damage the reputation of influencers and brands.

Saima and Khan (2021) confirmed that influencers who committed to sharing credible content could benefit from expanding partnerships with brands. Followers want to have useful and reliable information among thousands of information shared in social media. On the other hand, the need for escapism, hedonic pleasure, aesthetic enjoyment, and emotional release leads to entertaining advertisement content being preferable (Abbasi et al., 2021; Falcão & Isaías, 2020). Based on the result, the respondents enjoyed watching entertainment contents posted by social media influencers. Humor always attract followers' attention and they like social media influencers who make them laugh.

Source credibility and advertising value have been discussed in previous studies on marketing (Breves et al., 2019; Chopra et al., 2021; Coates et al., 2020; Delbaere et al., 2021; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Hussain et al., 2022; Ki & Kim, 2019; Lou & Yuan, 2019; San Miguel et al., 2019; Zhang, 2018). However, only limited investigations examined the roles of attitude toward social media influencers in creating purchase intention. This study showed that good looking, attractive and fashionable social media influencers counts less than those who are skilled, knowledgeable and expert in sharing useful and informative content. It enhances followers' trust and encourages them to buy the product. Moreover, the entertaining element is a good reason for the followers to keep engaged in contents. The respondents with preferences for credible social media influencers providing valuable content had a higher intention to purchase or recommend promoted products. This result is corresponding to previous similar results (Belanche et al., 2021; Chetioui et al., 2020, 2022; Magano et al., 2022).

This study also contributes some practical implications for social media influencers and brands. Firstly, brands need to collaborate with competent social media influencers, such as skin care products endorsed by dermatologists. Certified financial influencers grant assurance to those desiring to purchase investment products. Fashion influencers are considered important in determining the combination of mixed-match fashion. The existence of influencers helps to reduce uncertainty among customers, which is a prerequisite to purchase products. Secondly, influencers should give unbiased advice and recommendations to enhance trustworthiness, such as the provision of healthy food recommendations by individuals

practicing a healthy lifestyle. Trustworthiness serves as a mandatory element to establish healthy long-term relationships with followers and brands. Thirdly, the perception of influencers can be reinforced or damaged based on content credibility. The entertainment content exposure that fulfills the enjoyment of followers is a trigger for accepting the marketing messages. The combination of reliable information and entertainment are key elements to achieve a maximum effect on advertising goals. Finally, brands need to re-evaluate collaborations with social media influencers to avoid wasted investment. The referral program helps brands to measure the acceptance rate of followers toward social media influencers.

5. Conclusion

The results showed that the importance of credibility and advertising value in shaping followers' attitude toward social media influencers significantly affected purchase intention. Brands must select social media influencers based on the combination of expertise, skill, and experience related to the content. Brands must select social media influencers based on the content. The financial influencers should be those who has banking experiences and expertise to promote financial investments. Their useful and credible information would reduce uncertainty among followers, leading to advice acceptance and the intention to purchase promoted products. Misleading information would cause distrust and the adoption of other products, hence brands should ensure content credibility to avoid ethical breach. The entertainment element could enhance the exposure of content and provide enjoyment to followers. Story telling method helps followers relate to the promotions, while giving away products facilitated engagement with the provided content. The referral code shared by social media influencers offering discount or cashback can measure the acceptance rate. Last but not least, brands need to check profile and portfolio of the social media influencers before collaborating with them.

The limitation of this study was the used samples, which were not entirely random and complete representative of the Indonesian population; hence, further studies are recommended. In addition, future study should add attitude toward a brands and products as mediating variables to provide more insights into the suitable method for enhancing purchase intention.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of Binus Business School. The conduct of this study has been approved and given relative clearance(s) by Binus Business School.

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