Content Value versus Influencer Credibility: What Matters More for Followers' Trust and Behavioural Intention towards Collaborative Brands?

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ABSTRACT

Instagram is one of the top three most popular social media platforms in Indonesia. Nowadays, many local brand owners collaborate with influencers to promote products or services sold through Instagram. This study examines the extent to which influencer credibility and advertising content value are shared to create brand trust and consumer behavioural intention. The online survey was distributed to 206 followers of three female Indonesian fashion influencers with at least four hundred thousand followers on Instagram. Results showed that influencer credibility and advertising content value significantly, and directly, influenced brand trust towards Indonesian fashion products promoted by influencers. Brand trust also significantly, and directly, influenced the followers' behavioural intentions. However, the influencer credibility and her advertising content indirectly influenced the followers' behavioural intentions through brand trust. These findings indicate that brands under influencers endorsements must first earn trust from the followers prior to encouraging their behavioural intention.

Keywords: influencer credibility, advertising content value, brand trust, behavioural intention, Instagram, collaboration, local brands.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, brands must consider social media in their digital marketing strategy. In Indonesia, Instagram sits in the top three most popular social media platforms for reasons such as ease of access marketing [1]. Instagram provides viral salient, images, and videos, including other advanced features that can attract existing and potential customers' behaviour. Whereas consumers usually explore and obtain first information and promotions through Instagram, their purchases in the end, might be directed to marketplaces such as Shopee and Tokopedia. Data from the Indonesian Business in 2018 showed that as many as 87 percent of brands in Indonesia had succeeded in increasing sales after carrying out marketing activities through Instagram [2].

One of the most effective strategies to promote products and services virtually is to partner with social media influencers [3]. Unlike celebrities or public figures who had first become famous through traditional media, they are ordinary people who create and upload valuable contents on various social media platforms, paving their way to a large number of followers. In turn, they may influence their followers' attitudes and behaviors [4]. Social media influencers are usually experts in specific fields such as healthy living, travelling, food or culinary, lifestyle, beauty, or fashion [5], have likeable personalities and are recognized by many followers through viral content created on social media [6]. These characteristics make them more appealing to create added value for products/brands through promoted content on social media [5].

On the other hand, considering the high reach of digital platforms, digital content marketing represents the fastest growing way of marketing with relatively lower costs than traditional marketing [7]. Consumers primarily seek out information on new brands in Indonesia through search engines by 49.7%, advertisements on social media by 39.2%, and recommendations or comments on social media by 39% [8]. Aside from an increase in internet users, Indonesia is also reported to be first among other countries, with internet users who prefer to shop via e-commerce or online in 2020 [8]. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced consumers to stay at and do most of their

activities from home. This explains the increase in online purchases as it is considered the most suitable way for people to meet their needs without leaving their houses. Hence, the pandemic encourages businesses to adapt to the situation by utilizing digital information and technology in their marketing efforts.

This research focuses on social media influencers engaged in fashion, given their increasing growth in Indonesia. In January 2021, e-commerce growth and spending by category in the fashion sector in Indonesia experienced a 50.7% increase in consumer spending compared to 2019. They occupied the highest position in consumer e-commerce spending [7]. This study also aims to provide information for sellers about the importance of adjusting marketing efforts to attract potential customers and retain existing customers so that the resulting profit can be maximized.

[9] argue that behavioural intention is an essential goal in the consumer marketing community and can be considered critical for long-term viability or sustainability. However, when discussing social media, where there is a greater risk than offline sales, trust is regarded as a crucial point. Many previous studies measure the direct role of influencer credibility on purchase intention [10]–[12], besides the natural role of influencer credibility on behavioural intention [13], [14]. However, this study adds advertising content value as an independent variable and raises brand trust as an intervening variable to see the indirect relationship between variables, especially in Indonesia. Furthermore, this research focuses on local fashion brands that collaborate with influencers, not only on products from brands endorsed by influencers. This will be useful for businesses to develop promotional strategies to increase the product awareness of local Indonesian brands to enter international markets in the future.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

A quantitative causal research approach was conducted to test the proposed theoretical framework. The sample at which the framework is tested was selected purposively with two criteria. First, females aged 18-34 years old who follow at least one Instagram account of these three mega-influencers, namely: 1) Titan Tyra (@titantyra); 2) Vinna Gracia (@vinnagracia), and 3) Nikita Kusuma (@nikitakusuma). The second criterion is to have seen at least one influencer collaboration's content with one of the local brands on Instagram.

The questionnaire items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to agree strongly). A path analysis using the PLS-SEM approach was conducted to test the research model shown in Figure 1.

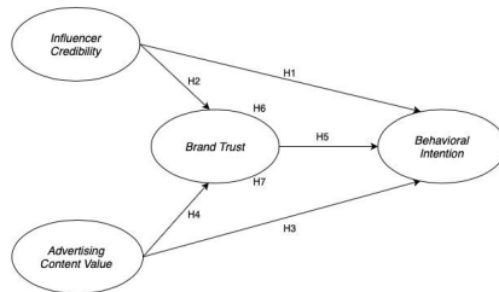All items for each variable are developed based on an extensive literature review.

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Influencer credibility is the level of attractiveness, trust, expertise, and similarity in influencers acknowledged by followers, which can also persuade or influence their perceptions. Four dimensions of influencer credibility, namely: 1) attractiveness; 2) trustworthiness; 3) expertise; and 4) similarity, were used adapting from [14-16]. Advertising content value in this study is defined as the evaluation/assessment of followers' usefulness of advertising content shared by influencers for followers themselves. Advertising content value was measured by two dimensions, namely: 1) informative value and 2) entertainment value. Both dimensions and their items are adopted from the research by [17-18] and [5]. Brand trust in this study is defined as the tendency of followers to feel that brands that influencers collaborate with will perform their functions well and satisfy the wants and needs of followers. Brand trust is measured by three dimensions adopted from the research by [19-20] and [21], that is: 1) competence, 2) benevolence, and 3) integrity. The behavioural intention in this study is defined as the intention of followers to show positive behaviour towards local brands that influencers collaborate. Three dimensions measure behavioural intentions: 1) word of mouth, 2) price premium, and 3) repurchase intentions. The three dimensions and items were adopted from [22] and [19]. From 229 responses received, thirteen cases were dropped due to double entry and proof of unengaged responses, arriving at 206 cases eligible for data analysis.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents in this study were females, with the majority of 18-23 years old or 156 respondents (75.7%), followed by respondents aged 24-29 years, as many as 49 respondents (23.8%). The 142 respondents, or the majority of respondents in this study, were already working outside the workforce, and 64 respondents were students. Based on the respondents' average monthly expense on fashion products, it can be seen that most respondents have average monthly expenses of IDR 250.000 to IDR 500.000, amounting to 72 respondents (34.9%), while 65 respondents (31.5%) spent on an average of IDR 500.000 to IDR 1 million monthly for purchasing fashion products.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Item		Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability
Influencer Credibility			0.544	0.943
ICE1	I consider the influencer an expert on the product	0.792		
ICE2	I consider the influencer sufficiently experienced to make assertions about the product	0.737		
ICE3	I feel the influencer knows a lot about the product	0.810		
ICE4	I feel the influencer is competent to make assertions about the product	0.805		
ICS1	The influencer and I have a lot in common	0.613		
ICS3	The influencer and I have similar lifestyle	0.544		
ICS4	The influencer and I have the same life values	0.616		
ICT1	I consider the influencer was honest	0.768		
ICT2	I consider the influencer was sincere	0.793		
ICT3	I consider the influencer earnest	0.806		
ICT4	I feel the influencer a reliable figure to promote the product	0.767		
Advertising Content Value			0.633	0.928
ACVE1	The content was enjoyable	0.810		
ACVE2	The content was interesting	0.799		
ACVE3	The content was entertaining	0.805		
ACVE4	The content was cool	0.850		
ACVI1	The content gives me a comprehensive information about the product	0.795		
ACVI2	The content helps me understand more about fashion product in general	0.825		
ACVI3	The content helps me know more about fashion product	0.773		
ACVI4	The content helps me know the latest fashion styles or trends	0.717		
ACVI5	The content is valuable for me	0.782		
Brand Trust			0.648	0.928
BTB1	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer care about my need	0.781		
BTB2	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer will do their best to solve the problem which I may experience	0.869		
BTB3	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer has a goodwill	0.799		
BTC1	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer will do what they have promised	0.672		
BTC2	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer will deliver the product as promised	0.781		
BTC3	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer is reliable	0.829		
BTI1	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer shows integrity	0.803		
BTI2	The local brand that collaborate with the influencer tells the truth	0.861		
BTI3	Overall, I am confident in purchasing the local brand that collaborate with the influencer	0.832		
Behavioral Intention			0.720	0.939
BIP1	Rela membayar lebih untuk membeli produk kolaborasi	0.806		
BIR1	Ke depannya, akan terus membeli produk kolaborasi	0.816		
BIW1	I am willing to say positive comments about the local brand and its collaborations with the influencer	0.857		
BIW2	I am willing to recommend the local brand and its collaborations with the influencer	0.881		
BIW3	I will encourage other people to buy the local brand and its collaborations with the influencer	0.881		

Three items of the attractiveness dimension of the influencer credibility variable, and one item of the similarity dimension were reduced. This indicated that the four items did not accurately describe the influencer credibility in the context of this study. The validity test results showed that all items were valid because the value was above 0.5. The composite reliability value of all variables was above 0.7, which indicated that all variables in this study are reliable. The validity test results and composite reliability values are presented in Table 1. R square (R^2) value for the dependent variable was entirely greater than zero. The R square value of the behavioural intention variable was 0.488, which means the magnitude of influencer credibility, advertising content value, and brand trust in behavioural intention was 48.8 percent.

Based on the value of path coefficients, it was found that the relationship between variables was positive. From the t-statistic value, it is known that the relationship of influencer credibility to behavioural intention was not significant. Meanwhile, the association of influencer credibility with brand trust was significant. Additionally, the relationship between advertising content value and the behavioural intention was significant. Moreover, the relationship between advertising content value and brand trust was significant. Lastly, the relationship between brand trust and the behavioural intention was significant. For the indirect effect between variables, the relationship of influencer credibility on the behavioural intention with brand trust is significant. Likewise, the relationship between advertising content value and behavioural intention with brand trust as a significant mediation also substantial.

Table 2. Direct Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1: IC → BI	0.114	1.259	0.199	Rejected
H2: IC → BT	0.201	3.245	0.001	Accepted
H3: ACV → BI	0.294	3.514	0.000	Accepted
H4: ACV → BT	0.617	9.985	0.000	Accepted
H5: BT → BI	0.357	3.884	0.000	Accepted

It is undeniable that digital media, mobile phones, and social media have become an inseparable part of everyday life at all levels of society. Even in Indonesia, internet users increase every year compared to the previous year. Indonesia also ranks first as a country with internet users who like to shop through e-commerce or online in 2020.

In recent years, the development of fashion and beauty products in Indonesia has become increasingly widespread, signified by many local brands that have sprung up in the country. These local brands use marketing techniques, one of which is attracting influencers to collaborate, so they can help attract the attention of potential customers and shape consumer behaviour towards local brands that collaborate with influencers. Businesses can use many techniques to promote their products and services, and the role of influencers is stated in one significant way. On the other hand, given the high reach of digital platforms, digital content marketing represents the fastest growing way of marketing with relatively lower costs. This study examines the effectiveness of influencers and content shared through Instagram social media in influencing trust in the local brands involved and their behavioural intention to collaborate with influencers in Indonesia.

The results of the first hypothesis test show that influencer credibility did not directly affect the behavioural intention of the followers. This finding follows the principles of the SOR theory, where influencer credibility acts as a stimulus, while behavioural intention is a response to the stimulus received by the consumer. To give a specific answer, it is necessary to have the role of an organism that mediates the relationship between stimulus and response.

The results of the second hypothesis test show that the influencer credibility variable directly had a positive and significant effect on brand trust. The higher the influencer credibility recognized by followers, the higher the followers' trust in brands that collaborate with influencers. These results support the previous research by [23] and [5]. Social media influencers are people considered opinion leaders on social media platforms and usually play a role in being a source of information in the persuasion process. This study confirms that the expertise and trustworthiness of influencers are the most essential elements seen by consumers when assessing an influencer's credibility, which will also affect consumer confidence in the brand being reviewed.

Table 3. Indirect Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H6: IC → BT → BI	0.072	2.255	0.024	Accepted
H7: ACV → BT → BI	0.221	3.694	0.000	Accepted

Furthermore, the third hypothesis test results reveal that advertising content value directly had a positive and significant influence on behavioural intention. This means, the more informative and entertaining the content shared by the influencer, the more likely it is for followers to show the desired positive behaviour. The results of this study support the previous research conducted by [17] and [24]. The content that is considered to explain best the role of advertising content value shared by influencers is fun content, content that helps understand the product better, and content that followers can enjoy. [25] state that attractive advertisements are more effective in marketing efforts to persuade individuals. This research revealed that exciting content is the statement that best describes advertising content value.

Based on the fourth hypothesis test results, it can be inferred that advertising content value had a positive and significant direct effect on brand trust. The results of this study confirm the previous research by [5] and [26]. The content that is considered to explain best the role of advertising content value shared by influencers is fun content, content that helps understand the product better, and content that followers can enjoy.

The results of the fifth hypothesis test indicate that brand trust had a positive and significant direct effect on behavioural intention. This shows that the higher the followers' trust in brands that influencers collaborate with, the more likely it is for followers to deliver the desired positive behavior. The results of this study are in line with the previous research by [27] and Ceesay and [24]. In brand trust, trying their best when there is a problem, providing correct information, and trusting to buy from the brand, are considered the most capable of explaining the followers' trust in the brand. For this reason, in line with the results of this study, which shows that the more followers believe in brands that collaborate with influencers, the higher the likelihood of followers to recommend products, encourage friends or relatives to buy, or tell positive things.

Based on the sixth hypothesis test results, it can be inferred that brand trust significantly mediated the effect of influencer credibility on behavioural intention. Social media influencers can influence consumers' perceptions of brands and stimulate behavioural intentions by providing accurate and reliable advice and information about products and services [14]. The participants of this research were dominated by respondents in the age group of 18-23 years. In contrast, for this age group, the role of opinion leaders in influencing purchasing decisions is important.

Finally, the seventh hypothesis test results show that brand trust significantly mediated the effect of advertising content value on behavioural intention. This shows that the more informative and entertaining the

influencers share, the more trust followers have in the collaborative brands reviewed. Hence, it will also increase the possibility of followers recommending products, encouraging friends or relatives to buy, or share positive things. Respondents dominated the participants of this study in the age group 18-23 years, and it is possible that this age group likes entertaining social media content. [28] researched that online product reviews, content elements, and similar backgrounds (social elements) can increase trust. Then research by [13] states, that when consumers evaluate and trust a brand, consumers are more likely to buy, recommend it to friends, and display behaviours that are considered positive. This is in line with the results of this study which show that when followers rate the content shared by influencers as being fun content, helping them better understand products and content that followers can enjoy, the more likely it is for followers to believe in the collaborative brand being reviewed. It will also encourage followers to show more positive behaviour, such as recommending products, encouraging friends or relatives to buy, or telling positive things.

4. CONCLUSION

Behavioural intention is an important goal in the consumer marketing community because it is a crucial component for business viability or sustainability in the long term [29]. Meanwhile, brand trust is an effective way to produce incomparable brands and build a strong brand between companies and consumers [30]. In response to this, several things can be considered to help brand owners build and grow their businesses in this research. To increase both brand trust and followers' behavioural intention towards local brands, the role of influencer credibility and advertising content value are essential variables that can help.

This study revealed how influencer credibility and advertising content value of influencer collaboration products contribute to behavioural intention through followers' trust in local brands. This means that the higher the influencer's credibility, the higher the followers' trust in the brand. Furthermore, the higher the use of advertising content value for followers, the higher the possibility of followers showing positive behavioural intention and followers' trust in local brands that influencers collaborate with. This study affirmed that the higher the followers' trust in local brands, the higher the likelihood of followers to show the desired positive behavioural intention. In addition, this study also emphasized the importance of the mediating influence of brand trust on the credibility of influencers and advertising content value in shaping behavioural intention.

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