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## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER'S TRUSTWORTHINESS ON ENGAGEMENT, EXPECTED VALUE AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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### ABSTRACT

#### KEYWORDS

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In this digital age, it is indisputable that the internet has become an essential part of human existence and has had a great impact on society. By having this condition, businesses may consider allocating budgets to use influencer marketing as a marketing strategy. This study aimed to examine whether followers' perception of a social media influencer's trustworthiness can lead to responses to the influencers' recommended brands, specifically brand engagement in self-concept, expected brand value, and intention to purchase recommended brands. This study used non-probability sampling with the criteria of Indonesians who follow an influencer. The data was gathered by distributing an online questionnaires via Google Form to a total of 264 respondents. The data analysis technique utilized is SEM, which was conducted using the AMOS 22 application. The results showed that perceived influencer trustworthiness positively influence brand engagement in self-concept, brand expected value and intention to purchase recommended brand. While, brand engagement in self-concept positively influence brand expected value and intention to purchase recommended brand. Also, brand expected value positively influence intention to purchase recommended brand. This research will assist in understanding how social media influencers' recommendations influence customers' perceptions and behavior patterns.

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### INTRODUCTION

In today's era, a business is increasingly faced with advances in technology and information systems. The era of globalization has demanded that all information be accessed quickly and practically, one of which is through social media (Muslichia & Irwansyah, 2019). Social media is a platform that connects people mainly between business organizations and customers. This has become a marketing strategy to manage market shrinkage in various industries (Ali & Wahyuni, 2017). In particular, during the pandemic, all profit and non-profit institutions have been affected by the Covid-19 virus. This opens up opportunities for various circles in the business industry to focus on social media as a marketing platform. Various brands or brands around the world are very aware of the absorption of people whose social media activities are and are increasingly taking advantage of their use from social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Trulline, 2021). Revenue in the worldwide social media advertising segment amounted to US\$68 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach US\$185 billion by 2022.

In this digital era, it is indisputable that the internet has become an essential part of human existence and has had a great impact on society. People generally spend more time on social media than any other form of website (Guesalaga, 2016). According to Lou & Yuan (2019), social media and social networking sites have transformed how people get

information and news nowadays (SNS). As social media is increasingly diverse, specialized, and segmented, it may target a specific audience (Wiedmann & von Mettenheim, 2020).

Social media, in particular, has transformed the marketing landscape by allowing a third party, known as an influencer, to act as a temporary intermediary between a brand and a consumer (Dodosh, Hamrebj, Taheri, & Thesis, 2020). Social media influencer referred as opinion leaders with the power to influence consumers' opinions, decisions, and behaviors in their social media communities (Godey et al., 2016). These influencers used content creation to affect the actions of others in their sphere of influence by leveraging their reputation and access. Influence has evolved into a new type of digital currency that businesses can buy, sell, and employ in their digital marketing efforts (Dodosh et al., 2020). By having this condition, businesses may consider allocating budgets to use influencer marketing as a marketing strategy.

The rise of digital influencers has shifted the way businesses and their target audiences interact on social media platforms and online social networks (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). According to (Childers et al.2019), many businesses are looking for digital influencers to promote their brands since influencers engage the specified target market with the brand. McNair (2021) stated as there is no established physical relationship between influencers and their followers, but in the online context of influencer marketing is necessary. The trust built up through the influencer-follower relationship is bringing online social bonds and offering brands a new way to reach their target consumers. According to a study by Lou & Yuan, brands utilize influencer marketing to obtain brand recommendations from influencers, which increases brand recognition within their target audience and, as a result, drives sales.

Several studies have examined the factors that may influence purchase intention, including perceived influencer' trustworthiness (Abdullah, et al., 2020; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Weismueller et al., 2020), customer brand engagement (Bilal, Jianqu, & Ming, 2021; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019), perceived value (Bonsón Ponte, Carvajal-Trujillo, & Escobar-Rodríguez, 2015; Dao, Le, Cheng, & Chen, 2014; Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The majority of the factors in this study were similar to those in prior study from Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández which investigated the ability of digital influencers to influence followers' behavior, with the exception of perceived influence, which was substituted by perceived influencer's trustworthiness. According to prior study, followers' purchase intention affected by various factors such as perceived influence, brand engagement in self-concept, and brand expected value. Whilst, this study focused on the effect of perceived influencer' trustworthiness on followers behavior. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine whether followers' perception of a social media influencer's trustworthiness can lead to responses to the influencers' recommended brands, particularly brand engagement in self-concept, expected brand value, and intention to purchase recommended brands.

## METHOD RESEARCH

### Population and Sample

The primary data for this research was collected by utilizing a quantitative method, which included distributing a questionnaire and using a Six-Point Likert Scale. The researcher employed non-probability sampling in this research, particularly purposive

technique sampling. The researcher succeeded in distributing questionnaires to 264 respondents who are Indonesians who had social media accounts and followed influencers on their social media.

### Data Collection Method

This research included both primary and secondary data. primary data collected from information collected from the research object utilizing a measurement or data retrieval technique on the subject as the source of the information. A survey of 264 respondents was used to compile the data for this study. To assist respondents in better understanding the questions, all of the questions in the survey were translated into Bahasa Indonesia. The respondent received the questions through online Google form. Meanwhile, the secondary data is obtained through journal references.

### Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test is performed to assess the accuracy of the variables in this study. Validity was determined using the product moment correlation approach ( $r$ ) and the indicator test, which is considered valid if the  $r$  count is greater and positive than the  $r$  table (Ghozali, 2014) at a 5% significance level. While, the reliability test is evaluated by the value of Cronbach Alpha with a minimum value of 0.7 (70%). However, the first 50 respondents were included in pilot test, which were conducted using SPSS 25.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. RESULT

#### 1. Data Analysis

The research's data analysis can be summarized as follow. the majority of respondents were female with 175 respondents, with the percentage of 66.3%. The rest of the respondents were male with 89 respondents, with the percentage of 33.7%. Based on age, most of the respondents were between the ages of 15 and 19 with 126 respondents or 47.7%. Meanwhile, with only four responses (or 1.5 % of the total), the age group over 34 had the least number of respondents. According to the respondent's occupation, college students made up the majority of respondents, accounted for 78.8% of the total with 208 respondents. While, teachers and unemployed received the least responses, with only one respondent each (0.4%). However, most of respondents came from West Java, with 66 respondents or 25%. Whereas, respondents came from Aceh, Bangka Belitung, East Nusa Tenggara, and South Sulawesi were the least with 1 respondent or 0.4%. The majority of respondents, 90 in total (34.1%), reported expenses ranging from Rp. 500,000 to Rp. 1,500,000. The group with the lowest expenditure, with only 10 respondents (3.8%), was those who spent less than Rp. 3,500,000. Based on the time spent on social media, the majority of respondents (130 respondents or 49.2%) spend 2 to 5 hours every day on social media. Those who spent more than 9 hours had the fewest responses, with only 21 (8%) respondents.

## 2. Validity and Reliability Test

The data analysis of the research was analyzed by utilizing Structural Equation Model with AMOS 22 software through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The validity and reliability tests revealed that all of the instruments representing four variables had factor loading values greater than 0.5 and construct reliability values greater than 0.7. According to Ghozali (2014), the data is considered valid if the factor loading value is greater than 0.5. Furthermore, test findings were considered reliable if the construct reliability value was greater than 0.7. The entire research instrument can be considered valid and reliable based on these results.

## 3. Normality Test

The normality of data should be accomplished for being processed further for SEM modelling. The normality test in AMOS output is calculated by comparing the normality assessment's C.R (critical ratio) result to a critical value of 2.58 at the 0.01 level (Ghozali, 2014). Based on the result, the critical ratio (C.R) values for kurtosis (curliness) and skewness (skew) were in the 2.58 range, indicating that most univariate normality tests are normally distributed. Meanwhile, since the result of -1.477 was in the range of 2.58, multivariate data fulfilled the normal assumption.

## 4. Goodness of Fit Measurements

The goodness of fit test examined how well the proposed model "fits" or matches the sample data. Fit quality is determined using several parameters, which included CMIN/DF, GFI, RMSEA, AGFI, TLI, NFI. The cut-off value obtained during the test can be used to determine whether it is good or not. The result can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1 Goodness of Fit Result**

Goodness of fit index	Cut-off value	Research Model	Model
CMIN/DF	$\leq 2.0$	1,827	Good Fit
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0,921	Good Fit
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0,056	Good Fit
AGFI	$\geq 0.90$	0,890	Marginal Fit
TLI	$\geq 0.90$	0,973	Good Fit
NFI	$\geq 0.90$	0,952	Good Fit

Source: Data Processed, 2022

## 5. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is used to assess the structural model that has been developed. The proposed hypothesis can be tested using the standardized regression coefficient values. The results of data processing show that a positive association between variables occurs if the C.R is more than 1.96, and a significant relationship occurs if the P value is less than 0.05. (Ghozali, 2014).

**Table 2 Hypothesis Testing**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Description
EGA	<---	TRU	.808	.068	11.849	.000	significant
EVA	<---	TRU	.774	.094	8.261	.000	significant
EVA	<---	EGA	.212	.084	2.525	.012	significant
PI	<---	TRU	.231	.112	2.066	.039	significant
PI	<---	EGA	.372	.076	4.875	.000	significant
PI	<---	EVA	.480	.102	4.698	.000	significant

Following are the findings of the regression weight analysis:

- a. According to hypothesis testing the influence of influencer trustworthiness on brand engagement in self-concept, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.808, and the C.R value is 11.849. The probability value for the relationship between the two variables was 0.000. (p 0.05). This indicated that the higher perceived influencer trustworthiness would form stronger brand engagement in self-concept.
- b. According to hypothesis testing the influence of influencer trustworthiness on brand expected value, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.774, and the C.R value is 8.261. The probability value for the relationship between the two variables was 0.000. (p 0.05). This indicated that the higher influencer trustworthiness, the higher brand expected value.
- c. According to hypothesis testing the influence of influencer trustworthiness on intention to purchase recommended brand, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.212, and the C.R value is 2.525. The probability value for the relationship between the two variables was 0.012. (p 0.05). This indicated that the higher perceived influencer trustworthiness would form higher intention to purchase recommended brand.
- d. According to hypothesis testing the influence of brand engagement in self-concept on brand expected value, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.231, and the C.R value is 2.066. The probability value for the relationship between the two variables was 0.039. (p 0.05). This indicated that the stronger the brand engagement in self-concept, the higher the expected value of the brand.
- e. According to hypothesis testing the influence of brand engagement in self-concept on intention to purchase recommended brand, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.372, and the C.R value is 4.875. The probability value for the relationship between the two variables was 0.000. (p 0.05). This indicated that the stronger brand engagement in self-concept would generate higher intention to purchase recommended brand.
- f. According to hypothesis testing the influence of brand expected value on intention to purchase recommended brand, the regression weight coefficient's estimated value is 0.480, and the C.R value is 4.698. The probability value for the

relationship between the two variables was 0.000. (p 0.05). This indicated that the higher brand expected value, the higher intention to purchase recommended brand.

## A. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis revealed that perceived influencer trustworthiness had a positive and significant impact on self-concept brand engagement. It indicated that followers who thought a social media influencer was more trustworthy developed a stronger brand engagement in self-concept. This finding is supported by (AlFarraj et al., 2021) which stated that consumers must be able to engage with influencers, and they must be seen as genuine, neutral, and trustworthy.

The second hypothesis revealed that a significant and positive relationship exists between perceived influencer trustworthiness and brand expected value. It suggested that followers who believe more social media influencers are trustworthy will create higher brand expectations. Unfortunately, research on the relationship between perceived influencer trustworthiness and brand expected value is limited. The findings of a prior study by Djafarova and Rushworth confirmed these result. According to the study, the goal of a celebrity endorsement is to boost the perceived value of a brand, product, or service.

The third hypothesis revealed that the relationship between perceived influencer trustworthiness and intention to purchase the recommended brand showed a significant and positive result. It implied that followers who trust social media influencers more are more likely to purchase the recommended brand. This finding is reinforced by Weismueller et al. (2020), who found that all aspects of source credibility, including source attractiveness, source trustworthiness, and source expertise, had a positive influence on customers' purchase intention. This finding contradicted with the previous studies by Balabanis & Chatzopoulou (2019) and (Lou & Yuan, 2019) which indicated that influencer trustworthiness has negative influence on purchase intention. This disparity in results could be related to previous research conducted in the United States, whereas this study was conducted in Indonesia. There will be differences in cultures, behavior, and traditions

The fourth hypothesis revealed that According to the findings, Brand self-concept engagement had a positive and significant impact on brand expected value. It signified that brand engagement in self-concept would predict expected brand value positively. This finding is supported by Itani et which argued that customers who are engaged with a brand can generate value for the business. According to France, because of its interactive and engaging nature, customer-brand engagement is likely to have an impact on consumers' expectations of brand value.

The fifth hypothesis revealed that brand involvement in self-concept had a significant and positive impact on the intention to purchase a suggested brand. It implied that brand engagement in self-concept predicts the intention to buy recommended brands. This finding was consistent with the findings from Bilal, which claimed that customer brand engagement has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention. Meanwhile, this finding contradicted with the earlier study from Verma (2021) which discovered that consumer purchase intention is not influenced by brand engagement. This difference in results could be attributable to the fact that Verma's research was conducted in Delhi in 2021, whereas this study was conducted in Indonesia. Thus, there will be distinctions in cultures, behaviour, and traditions

The sixth hypothesis revealed that brand expected value has a significant and positive impact on the intention to purchase a suggested brand. It signified that the expected value of a brand can predict whether or not someone will purchase the recommended brands. This finding was consistent with Dao and colleagues' (2014) study of the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention among Vietnamese social media users, which found that advertising's perceived value had a positive impact on online purchase intentions.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis results of all the data received, it can be concluded that the respondents' average score for the service quality variable (X1) was 4.17, while the respondents' average score for the interpersonal communication variable was 1.4.17 (X2) The average rating is 4.12; the average customer satisfaction rate is 4.08. These three variables have mean values in the consent category. Therefore, it can be said that PT Buana Listya Tama's service quality, interpersonal communication and customer satisfaction are all in a good category.

From the results of hypothesis testing, this study supports three hypotheses, namely interpersonal communication and service quality variables, which are partially or simultaneously significantly correlated with customer satisfaction variables. The quality of service variable is positively and significantly correlated with t-count 4,905 and greater than t-table 1,998, so it can be concluded that H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a</sub> is accepted. Interpersonal communication variables are also positively correlated with customer satisfaction, with a t-count value of 6.108 and a t-table greater than 1.998, so H<sub>0</sub> can be rejected in favor of H<sub>a</sub>.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) value between variables was 0.749 or 74.9%. The contribution rate of service quality and interpersonal communication variables to customer satisfaction is 74.9%. The rest is simply explained by other factors outside the research model. It is expected that the application of the results of this study will have an impact on improving customer (user) satisfaction with the service, and the management of PT Buana Listya Tama must continuously improve the service quality and interpersonal communication.

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