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The Influence of the Attractiveness of Social Media Influencer on Purchase Intention with Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable (on Beauty Products)

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ABSTRACT

Influencers and social media are inseparable. Influencers have enormous influence, where influencers can influence their followers to do what they do. This is the bright side of entrepreneurs to market their products through influencers on social media. This research focuses on the physical attractiveness or appearance of influencers, especially in beauty, which can give a halo effect to purchasing the products offered. This research is based on Social Influence Theory (SIT), where other people's references can influence a person's attitude or action. In previous studies, it was found that there were inconsistencies in the results of the attractiveness of influencers on purchase intentions so that researchers were encouraged to do this research. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the attractiveness of social media influencers on purchase intentions for beauty products. This research was conducted on female Instagram users familiar with beauty influencers such as Tasya Farasya, Rachel Goddard, Suhay Salim, Sarah Ayu, and Abel Cantika. This study uses purposive sampling with a sample of 100 respondents. The analytical tool used is by using causal step-mediated regression analysis using SPSS 22 software. The results show that all hypotheses are supported. Influencer attractiveness has a positive effect on purchase intention and brand trust. Brand trust has a positive effect on purchase intention. Also, brand trust can partially mediate between attractiveness and purchase intention.

Keywords: Social Media Influencer; Attractiveness; Brand Trust; Purchase Intention.

1. Introduction

Social networks are becoming increasingly popular with increasingly diverse features and have become a means of promoting products or services to be marketed quickly and easily. There is a report from a British company, We Are Social, in collaboration with Hootsuite, publishing a report entitled "Digital 2021: The Latest Insights Inti the State of Digital". The report states that the number of social media users in Indonesia reached up to 170 million, or 61.8 % of the total population in Indonesia, in January 2021, an increase of 10 million or around 6.3% compared to the previous year. According to the report, the large number of social media users in Indonesia can



encourage companies to use social media as a marketing tool. Influencers become the target of both large and small-scale businesses to collaborate with because their scope is wider to attract more consumers (RedComm, 2021). Influencers are constantly working to distribute brand campaigns in unique contexts. They know that their audience will change quickly, so they treat each post with care to attract consumers (Agrawal, 2016). They are active in their respective fields. However, an influencer sometimes does not only have expertise in one area but also varies, such as fitness, beauty, food, and beverage, technology, etc. (Kolarova, 2018).

According to Hubspot (2019), it is known that customers are more likely to trust influencers (or people they admire) and those closest to them than trust promotions run by the company. This is in line with a survey by Berger and Keller Fay Group (2016), stating that influencers are seen as more credible, trustworthy, and knowledgeable. They can explain products well and that 82% of people act on influencer recommendations compared to recommendations from ordinary people, in contrast to traditional advertisements such as radio, television, and other print media, which are considered less effective in attracting consumers' attention (TapInfluence, 2015). So, influencer marketing is more effective because it is packaged creatively, uniquely, and attractively.

Each influencer has differences from one another, one of which is the attraction that each influencer has. Even the delivery method by each influencer will be different even though the product being promoted is the same. For this reason, Ohanian (1990) created a scale to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers (influential people) and has a model, namely the Ohanian Source Credibility Model, in which there are three components of source credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. However, this research will focus on the attractiveness of influencers. According to McGuire (1985), the source attractiveness model is the most widely used model to determine persuasive endorsers. Some studies find that when comparing attractive and unattractive celebrities, attractive celebrities will foster more purchase intention than unattractive ones (Kahle and Homer, 1985). Purchase intention is a consumer's possible plan to buy a particular brand in the future (Huang et al., 2011).

Several previous studies tested the attractiveness of social media influencers on purchase intentions and found inconsistencies in the results between these variables. Research conducted by (Widyanto and Agusti, 2020; Chekima, Chekima, and Adis 2020; Weismueller, et al., 2020) states that influencer attractiveness positively affects purchase intention. However, the opposite result was found in a study conducted by Lim, et al. (2017), which says that attractiveness has no significant effect on purchase intention. This result may be due to several reasons, including the influence of the influencer's attractiveness on purchase intention in an indirect effect. To explain the inconsistency of the findings, the researcher added a brand trust variable as a mediating variable based on research conducted by Wiedmann and Mettenheim (2020), which said that the attractiveness of an influencer has a positively influences purchase intention. With the results of the two studies, the brand trust variable can mediate the attractiveness of influencers on purchase intention. Brand trust is essential for consumers to transact because they believe that the company/party/brand they trust has fulfilled all of its commitments correctly and as expected (Firman, 2021).

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of influencer attraction on purchase intention of



beauty products. Thus, based on the background described above, the researcher is interested in conducting this research with the title "The Influence of the Attractiveness of Social Media Influencers on Purchase Intention with Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable (on Beauty Products)".

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Purchase Intention

Consumers are often interested in buying the desired product before making a purchase. This fact needs to be a consideration for marketers to get consumers interested in a brand that will eventually push them to purchase. Kotler and Keller (2006) stated that purchase intention is self-control of a purchase or purchase decision. Spears and Singh (2004) said, "Purchase intention is an individual's conscious plan to try to buy a brand." In addition, purchase intention also refers to planning to buy something for future use, but before cognitive processes, this process plays a role in certain factors, such as consumers' views on brands (Onu et al., 2019). So, it is crucial to understand the consumer purchase intentions because they are related to consumer behavior, opinions, and attitudes to be used to predict the buying process (Ghosh, 1990).

Based on the above definition, the researcher can understand that what is meant by purchase intention is the tendency of someone to want to make a purchase decision on a brand. According to Ling (2010), four dimensions measure purchase intention: Transactional interest, Referential interest, Preferential interest, and Explorative. Transactional interest is a person's tendency to buy a product. Referential interest is a person's tendency to recommend a product to others. Preferential interest is the behavior of someone who has a primary preference for the product. Meanwhile, Exploratory is the behavior of someone who is always looking for information about the product of interest.

2.2 The Attractiveness of Social Media Influencers

This study uses the Social Influence Theory (SIT) by Kelman (1958) to carry the concept of influencer support. SIT states that references from others subsequently influence attitudes, beliefs, and individual actions or behavior. SIT considers how others affect people in particular social networks and then shows certain patterns of consumer behavior (Li, 2013). In this study, influencers influence consumers through social media and make them show purchase intention behavior. One of the influencer components, attractiveness, is a stimulus related to the endorser's physical attractiveness, which is recognized by his followers (Eisend & Langner, 2010). Attractiveness includes a physical appearance that is attractive, classy, elegant, and beautiful (Ohanian, 1990).

Attractiveness can give consumers a first impression of the influencer as a whole (Ohanian, 1990; Long-Crowell, 2016). This phenomenon can also be said as the halo effect, which refers to judging something based solely on its outward appearance. According to (Kahle and Homer, 1985), attractive influencers become a valuable source of information when the advertised product is appropriate or related to the influencer's appeal and can be an essential tool that can influence marketers' efforts to guide consumer behavior (Kahle and Homer, 1985). 1985), such as consumer confidence in the brand and consumer purchase intentions. As can be seen from the various



advertisements in each region, most advertisements show people who look attractive to attract consumers and are ultimately interested in trying the product (Erdogan, 1999). As stated by (Waldt et al., 2009), "attractive endorsers drive consumers' purchase intentions."

Several studies support this explanation, which found that the attractiveness of social media influencers has a significant effect on purchase intention (Widyanto and Agusti, 2020; Chekima, Chekima, and Adis, 2020; Weismueller, 2020). In addition, Wiedman and Mettenheim (2020) research found that the attractiveness of an influencer can have a significant effect on brand trust. From some of these researches, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: The attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H2: The attractiveness of social media influencers has a positive effect on brand trust.

2.3 Brand Trust

According to Chaundhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust is the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function. Building a brand's trust image can be based on direct experience or contact in the use, evaluation, and satisfaction of consumers with a particular brand and indirect contacts, such as word-of-mouth marketing, advertising, and brand reputation (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). According to Delgado-Ballester et al. (2003), trust has two dimensions, namely brand reliability and brand intention. Reliability is the consumer's belief in a product that can deliver the promised value. Brand intentions are consumers who believe that brands can prioritize the welfare and interests of consumers (Andaleeb, 1992).

This explanation is supported by research conducted by Dwivedi and Johnson (2012); endorser credibility (measured as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) significantly affects consumer trust in a brand. Sanny et al., (2020) found that brand trust affects purchase intention. And also, research by (Reinikainen et al. 2020; Punyatoya, 2014) found that belief in a brand recommended by an influencer positively affects the intention of audience members to buy the endorsed brand. From these results, It's probable that influencers' attractiveness impacts consumer trust in the brand., then consumer confidence in the brand will affect customers' purchase intention. From some of these studies, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H3: Brand trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

H4: Brand trust mediates the attractiveness of social media influencers to purchase intention.

A research model is used to examine the effect of the attractiveness of social media influencers on purchase intentions with brand trust as a mediating variable. the research model is presented as follows:





Figure 1. Research Model

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

This research uses a survey by distributing questionnaires that are distributed to respondents according to predetermined criteria. This questionnaire will be distributed online via Instagram and WhatsApp using the google form. Purposive sampling was chosen as the sampling technique. The criteria used are female Instagram users in Indonesia who know several influencers (Tasya Farasya, Rachel Goddard, Suhay Salim, Sarah Ayu, and Abel Cantika) on Instagram and are at least 17 years old. Then, the number of respondents as many as 100 people are obtained.

3.2 Measurement Items

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the questionnaire variables. Strongly disagree with a score of 1 to strongly agree with a score of 5. The measurement scale used for each variable, purchase intention with 5 items from (Ahmad and Nurita Juhdi, 2008; Ling, 2010), brand trust with 4 items from (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001), and the influencer attractiveness with 4 items developed by (Ohanian, 1990).

3.3 Analysis Tools

The analytical techniques used in this research are validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and mediation regression analysis with the causal step method developed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

4. Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

Based on the data collected, 100 questionnaires can be used with the majority of the respondents aged 17-25 years old with a percentage of 59%. The majority of respondents (37%) work as private sector employees. From the data obtained, it was found that 89% of respondents followed one or more beauty influencers (Tasya Farasya, Rachel Goddard, Suhay Salim, Sarah Ayu, and Abel Cantika). For beauty influencers, the most followed one is Tasya Farasya, with as many as 43 respondents. In addition, 92% of respondents have purchased products based on recommendations from these beauty influencers.



4.2 Validity and Reliability Test

It is necessary to test its validity and reliability to see the model's suitability as a whole. This test uses 30 respondents to determine the validity of each item variable question. An item is considered to be valid if the value of r count > r table or Sig. (1-tailed) < 0.05.

Variable	Item	r count	r table Validity		Cronbach's	Reliability
variable			(Confidence level 95%)	Explanation	alpha	Explanation
The	01	0,749	0,361	Valid	0.827	Reliable
attractiveness of	02	0,862	0,361	Valid		
social media	03	0,834	0,361	Valid	0,827	
influencers (X)	04	0,800	0,361	Valid		
Brand trust (M)	05	0,828	0,361	Valid	0,858	Reliable
	06	0,840	0,361	Valid		
	07	0,798	0,361	Valid		
	08	0,882	0,361	Valid		
Purchase intention (Y)	09	0,760	0,361	Valid		
	10	0,650	0,361	Valid		
	11	0,889	0,361	Valid	0,802	Reliable
	12	0,813	0,361	Valid		
	13	0,639	0,361	Valid		

Table 1. Validity and reliability test results

From the results obtained in Table 1, each item of the influencer attractiveness variable, brand trust, and purchase intention is valid because each item's r count is greater than the r table (0.361). In addition, it can also be seen from Sig. It was also found that the Sig results for each item were smaller than 0.05, which is 0.000 < 0.05. It means that the items for each variable were stated valid and could be used as items for this research question. Furthermore, reliability testing is the ability of the measuring instruments to produce reliable measurement results (Suliyanto, 2018). The measurement results can be trusted if the value of Cronbach's alpha > 0.6. Based on the results of Cronbach's alpha value for each variable greater than 0.6, then the instrument variable is declared reliable.

4.3 Classical Assumption Test

Before testing the hypothesis, it is necessary to test the classical assumptions where this test is carried out to ascertain whether there are problems with classical assumptions. The classical assumption test used in this study is the normality test, non-multicollinearity, and non-heteroscedasticity test. There are three equations with notations, namely influencer attractiveness (X), brand trust (M), and purchase intention (Y). The normality test is carried out to know whether the standardized residual values studied are normally distributed or not (Suliyanto, 2011). The normality assumption test used is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov non-parametric statistical test. It is said to be normally distributed if the value of Sig > alpha (0.05). Based on Table 2., regarding the normality test, it is found that the standardized residual of each equation is greater than 0.05, which means the standardized residual value is normally distributed.

In the non-multicollinear test, the result can show whether there is a strong (almost perfect)



correlation between the independent variables or not (Suliyanto, 2011). This non-multicollinear test can be done by looking at the value of VIF (variance inflation factor). It is said that there is no multicollinearity if the VIF value is < 10. Based on Table 3, the results show that the VIF value for the attractiveness and brand trust variable is 1.148 < 10, which means that there are no multicollinear symptoms. Meanwhile, in the non-heteroscedasticity test with the Glejser method, the result is obtained by regressing the independent variable to the absolute residual value (Suliyanto, 2011). Based on Table 2, it is found that the results of each equation show that the value of Sig. greater than 0.05. Thus, this result is said to have no heteroscedasticity symptoms.

Equation	Asymp. S	ig. (Normality)	VIF (non- multicollinearity)		Sig (non-heteroscedasticity)	
$1: X \to Y$	0,159	> 0,05			0,135	> 0,05
$2: X \rightarrow M$	0,200	> 0,05			0,342	> 0,05
3: X and $M \rightarrow Y$	0,200	> 0,05				
$X \rightarrow Y$			1,148	< 10	0,173	> 0,05
$M \rightarrow Y$			1,148	< 10	0,588	> 0,05

Tabel 2. Normality.	non-multicollinearity	, and non-heterosceda	asticity test results
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4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The coefficient of determination (R2) in the X to Y equation is 0.241, which means that the effect of influencer's attractiveness on purchase intention is 24.1%, and the rest is affected by other variables not examined. Equation X to M is 0.129, which means that the effect of influencer's attractiveness on brand trust is 12.9%, while the rest is affected by the variables studied. The equation X and M to Y is 0.336, which means that the effect of attractiveness and brand trust on purchase intention is 33.6%, and the rest is influenced by other variables not examined.

The F test was carried out to determine whether the model used was fit or not (Suliyanto, 2011). In the X to Y equation, it is found that the F test result is 31, 147 > 3.09. In the X to M equation, it is found that the F test result is 14.505 > 3.09. meanwhile, in the equations X and M against Y, the F test result was found to be 24,567 > 3.09. So, it can be concluded that the regression equation model formed meets the fit criteria. The T-test can be seen in Table 3 and shows that the t-value of each relationship between variables meets the requirements where the t-count value is greater than the t-table (1.66). Thus, the relationship between these variables is declared to have a significant effect.

Relationship Between Variables		t value	Sig	Alpha (α)	Explanation
H1: Attractiveness \rightarrow purchase intention (c)	0,564	5,581	0,000	< 0,05	Accepted
H2: Attractiveness \rightarrow brand trust (a)	0,359	3,809	0,000	< 0,05	Accepted
H3: Brand trust \rightarrow purchase intention (b)	0,380	3,727	0,000	< 0,05	Accepted
H4: Attractiveness \rightarrow brand trust \rightarrow purchase intention (c')	0,428	4,203	0,000	< 0,05	Accepted

Tabel 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

In testing the hypothesis with causal regression analysis by looking at Table 3, the first step is to regress X against Y to get c and its significance. It is found that c is 0.564 with Sig. 0.000 < 0.05, which means that X has a significant positive effect on Y directly. Second step, regress X against



M to get a and its significance. It is found that a is 0.359 with Sig. 0.000 < 0.05 means that X has a significant positive effect on M. Third step, regress X and M against Y to get b, c', and their significance. The result shows that b is 0.380 with Sig. 0.000 < 0.05, which means that M has a significant positive effect on Y. Then, the result of c' is 0.428 with Sig. 0.000 < 0.05, which means that X has a significant positive effect on Y after entering the M. Based on Table 3, it can be seen that c, a, and b are significant, and the value of c to c' decreases from 0.564 (significant) to 0.428 (significant). Because of these results, it can be concluded that brand trust partially mediates the causal relationship between the attractiveness of social media influencers and purchase intention. Thus, H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported.

5. Discussion

Based on the tests carried out, the first hypothesis, attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, is stated to be supported. This result is consistent with previous research (Widyanto and Agusti, 2020; Chekima, Chekima, and Adis, 2020), which said attractiveness significantly affected purchase intention. This result aligns with the expectation that the more attractive an influencer is, the higher the intention to buy the product recommended by the influencer.

In the second hypothesis, it is found that attractiveness has a significant positive effect on brand trust. This result is in line with Wiedman and Mettenheim's (2020) research, showing that influencers with attractive physical appearances will affect brand trust, especially in beauty products.

The third hypothesis found that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This result is in line with the research conducted by Punyatoya (2014), showing that higher brand trust results in higher intent to buy a brand because people believe that the brand will meet their expectations, so they will intend to buy it.

The fourth hypothesis results that brand trust mediates between attractiveness and purchase intention. These results follow previous research supporting the hypothesis, such as the research conducted by Sanny et al., (2020), which states that brand trust affects purchase intention. Reinikainen et al., (2020) also found that belief in a brand positively affects audience members' intent to purchase the endorsed brand. These results indicate that attractive influencers strengthen brand trust and ultimately drive purchase intention. Especially in beauty, the attraction of influencers, especially in this research (Tasya Farasya, Rachel Goddard, Suhay Salim, Sarah Ayu, and Abel Cantika), can strengthen trust in the advertised brand. From the attractiveness of an influencer, consumers can get a first impression and believe that the brand has good quality. Thus, the attractiveness then convinces them when they want to buy a product.

6. Conclusion

This research has answered the inconsistencies that occur in the influencer's attractiveness variable on purchase intention. The results of the tests that have been carried out show that brand trust can be used as a solution to mediate between the attractiveness of influencers and purchase intentions. The results are in accordance with the existing theory, Social Influence Theory (SIT) by Kelman



(1958). This theory proves that a person's behavior, such as believing in a brand and having the intention to purchase, is affected by references or recommendations given by influencers.

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