JURNAL ILMIAH MANAJEMEN DAN BISNIS

Do People Still Listen to Influencers for Buying Decision? Influencer Effect on Purchase Decision Mediated by Electronic Word of Mouth

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Abstract

The proliferation of local skincare products has reach nationwide awareness. Practitioners have find an increasing attention to facilitating skincare consumer purchase decision exposures with influencer and word of mouth strategies. However, previous research on the impact of influencers on consumers' word of mouth is limited. This study aims to provide new insights into the drivers of customer purchase decisions on local skincare products. influencers and electronic word of mouth. The questionnaire spread to determine the appropriate influencers' effect. An online survey was held on to test the proposed model. Results indicate that influencers and word of mouth predict consumer purchase decisions. Word of mouth mediated the effect of influencers and consumer purchase decisions. This study sheds on a new path to the understanding of social media influencers through the lens of digital channels. Word of mouth is able to boost the effect of influencers on all social media channels.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade proliferation of local player in the skincare industry has make huge impact in Indonesian consumer growth especially because of government goals in 'local pride movement'. The consumer tries to purchase local product with good quality instead of buying 'foreign' product with good brand image. In this dynamic market, the rising demand for the best skincare by Indonesian consumer led to the creating influencer wars into creating good brand image on its product. According to a recent report, Indonesian skincare market is expected to reach 20% growth from 2017 - 2022 (Technobusiness, 2020). In 2022 skincare consumer expected to reach 130 million from female consumer, and 58% prefer local brand rather than international brand (Antaranews, 2022). Making profitable skincare business is challenging despite its rapid growth industry, skincare companies need to create online presence through social media such as Youtube, Instagram, or Tiktok to build customer awareness on their product (Castillo et al., 2022). The aim of social presence is to build consumers' willingness to participate in social commerce activities, thus increase business unleash their product potential through social media (Jin et al., 2019). The study shows that many skincare consumers follows

their influencers recommendation to purchase skincare product. Recent studies reveals that using digital influencers increase consumer social awareness and consumer awareness on specific target market (Wang et al., 2020) Influencer defined as an individuals or a group who have a large numbers of followers on their social media platform (Gupta & Nair, 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Previous research demonstrated that having influencer is important for increasing customer awareness. Influencer with follower automatically increase customer exposure effectively.

Previous studies have investigated some determinant of skincare purchase decision, such as perceived credibility and image (Castillo et al., 2022), price and product quality (Anjani & Simamora, 2022). However, given that prior researches have ignored the nature relationship between influencers and followers when investigating internet influencers impacts. Consumers usually discussing the product under review by their followed influencer. The follower might expand the impact of the product exposure through word of mouth. Consumers usually have the same group of people follows the same influencer and word have spread in-group enhance the customer intention on purchasing product (Ghosh et al., 2014). Concerning the relationship of the follower which consumers develop with their own group or social community. Thus, research considering word of mouth as the booster for influencer is limited although a comprehensive understanding between these two is needed (Singh, 2021). In the context of skincare industry where consumer preferences highly depends on influencer and friends opinion (Castillo et Purchase decision is an process involves long sequence of behavior from problem recognition to purchase behavior to fulfill a need or wants of the customer (Jokhu & Kawilarang, 2021; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Pasharibu et al., 2020). Consumer must make decision based on many alternatives available that can answer their problem or increase customer satisfaction from using the product or services (Sulaiman et al., 2022). Some research, in online context based, explains that consumer purchasing decision can be affected by many factors, such as : website quality (Dapas et al., 2019; Hidayat & Hidayat, 2017), trust (Le & Hoang, 2020; Sfenrianto et al., 2018), online review (Sun et al., 2020), influencer (Chávez Zirena et al., 2020), and word of mouth (Suharyanto & Rahman, 2022).

Influencer

Influencer address as the individuals with large share of voice in the market with their online persona on social media (Instagram, Facebook, and etc), acquiring followers and engage with them with daily activity in terms of choices and behavior (Chang et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020; Umami & Darma, 2021). Digital influencer seen as the most effective agents to increase product awareness and conversion in specific target market (Wang et al., 2020) through Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube(Silva et al., 2020). Influencer can help marketers to enhance flow of information in social media and increase customer purchase decision on particular product (Yangkluna et al., 2022). However, Positive and negative reputation highly depends on influencer credibility of possessing knowledge or expertise in given area (Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014). Influencer with better credibility will enhance consumer findings the right information and increase their intention to purchase the product (Raposo Junior et al., 2022). Another issues, other than credibility, trustworthiness also important matter as the influencer,

their follower demand for real review not just 'lip service' without any real proof of them using the product (Oliveira & Casais, 2019).

On that argument we hypothesize as follow:

H1: Influence have positive effect on purchase decision

Electronic word of mouth

According to Iqbal et al. (2022) electronic word of mouth is the online review and comment about various commodities or product that effect purchase decision on other consumer. The aim of electronic word of mouth is to secure online presence about product reputation through online information flow. Electronic word of mouth often used by consumer to build a perception about brand or product (Aref, 2022; Dewi & Giantari, 2020; Jokhu & Rahmawati, 2022). Previous research clarifies that consumer opinion or chat in e-commerce environment, like review or comment, influence the product reputation and it has a subliminal impact on consumer purchasing behavior on particular product (Tan et al., 2019). In the new generation like generation Y, where consumer more adept on using social media, electronic word of mouth become one of the tools for marketer to boost their buying behavior for woman product (Jing et al., 2019). On the context of level involvement product, electronic word of mouth affect on customer purchase decision are highly depend on type of product. In low involvement product electronic word of mouth has a low impact toward purchase decision. Thus, in high involvement product, electronic word of mouth has a significant impact toward purchase decision (Gu et al., 2012; Hajli, 2020; Shen et al., 2017). In Based on that, there are clear correlation between electronic word of mouth toward purchase decision.

Thus, over period of study, we build hypothesize like:

 H2: Electronic word of mouth have positive effect on purchase decision

According to Iqbal et al. (2022) electronic word of mouth plays a mediating role between social media effect and purchase behavior in online presence. In Taillon et al. (2020) customer purchase behavior affect, by mediating role of word of mouth, influencer able to affect purchase intention with the medium of social media like Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook. According to Albano et al. (2019) text review or online review provide credibility in social presence and support purchase decision behavior. In other research, it found that word of mouth able to mediate between micro influencer and electronic product purchase decision in Thailand (Yangkluna et al., 2022).

H3: Electronic word of mouth positively mediate influencer toward purchase decision al., 2022).

This study tries the effect of influencers on consumers purchase decision with the mediating effect of word of mouth. present study stressed the significant role of word of mouth in facilitating influencer

(Jokhu & Rahmawati, 2022). Thus the present study seeks to answer the following questions: how does influencer affect consumers purchase decision in skincare products, how do word of mouth affect skincare consumers purchase decision, and does word of mouth mediate influencer towards purchase decisions.

METHOD

This study uses explorative research method, to determine the relationship effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. We discuss the role of word of mouth in mediating the impact of influencer toward consumer purchase decision on beauty product. The research is located in Jabodetabek (Jakarta Bogor Depok Tangerang and Bekasi) to present Indonesia population since the population of people in this area bigger and more vary compare to other area. The population of this research mainly from people who use scarlet cosmetic not limited to women or female, since scarlet uses male models from Korea to penetrate male market in Indonesia. This research used non-probability sampling to draw our respondent, purposive sampling was used in order to set criteria for our sample. The survey was carried out from in a month on October 2022

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondent profile of research participants is as follows (Table 1). Out of 125 respondents from Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bekasi, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi), 90,40% were females. Regarding age, all participants above the age of 16 and most of them (73,40%) were between 17 and 22 years old. In terms of monthly expense on skincare 72% participants spent more than Rp 300.000 for the skincare product.

Table 1 Profile Respondent

	Category	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	12	9,60%
	Female	113	90,40%
Age	17 – 22 Years old	92	73,60%
	23 – 34 Years old	32	25,60%
	> 35 Years old	1	0,80%
Expenses on Skincare	<300.000	90	72%
	Rp. 300.000 – Rp. 499.999	22	17,60%
	>Rp. 500.000	13	10.40%
TOTAL		125	100%

Source: Respondent questionnaire

Items for survey measurement were taken from previously validated scales (Table 2). In this regard, Word of mouth (WOM) were measured several indicators (Talkers, Topics, Tools, talking part and Tracking) adopted from Jalilvand et al. (2011). Influencer was assessed using previous research from Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2019). Last, purchase intention was assessed with five items from Rusmayanti and Agustin (2020) and Wang et al. (2019). The questionnaire items for relevant constructs were evaluated using five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 2 Variable Measuremet

Variables	Dimension	Measurement
Influencer	Trustworthiness	I can trust what the Influencer advertises with the credibility it has
X	Expertise	The experience gained by the influencer affects the clarity of the message in the ad
(Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019; Patwary et al., 2018; Riantini et al., 2019; Rybaczewska et al., 2020)	Attractiveness	An influencer can be relied on to promote a product. I think influencers look attractive when promoting products I feel that the influencers who work with Scarlett Whitening are always consistent in promoting new products.
Word of Mouth	Talkers	I mention the product Scarlett Whitening in conversation with friends or relatives.
Y	Topics	I've always been interested in promoting Scarlett Whitening.
(Jalilvand et al., 2011; Syakiela et al., 2019)	Tools	I got information about Scarlett Whitening through social media.
	Talking part	Scarlett Whitening products are good, so I am willing to share my experiences with others
	Tracking	I always hear people are satisfied after using scarlett product.
Purchase Decision	Product Search	I made the right decision in purchasing the product. The products offered by Scarlett Whitening are varied the kind
Z	Product Selection	I considered various Alternatives before choose the brand Scarlett Whitening.
(Gai, 2016; Jokhu, 2020; Rusmayanti & Agustin, 2020)	Collecting Information	I am looking for more detailed information before deciding to buy the product.
	Payment Method	I feel comfortable shopping at Scarlett Whitening because the payment methods provided are complete.

Source: Author literature review

The pretest was composed in a separate 30 respondent first to the evening student in President University. From the pretest result we conclude that all questionnaires are understandable and

clear. As shown, all items used in this research had meet the minimum requirement for validity and reliability test as it shown in Table 1.

In this research we use two-stage analytical model procedures, firstly, the research framework was assessed and followed by a structural model examination using nonparametric procedure or bootstrapping process. Based on structural model we will analyze the mediation effect on the structural model.

In order to confirm whether the measurement items fit the proposed model well. Hair et al. (2019) mentioned that there are several requirements to meet in order to go the hypothesis testing. First, the factor loadings should above the recommended value 0.50 (Table 1). We exclude EWOM3 and PD3 from the model due to low factor loading (<0.5). Second, AVE score of the construct were measured and meet the minimum standard (0.50), in the table 3 we get all the AVE score meet the minimum requirement (>0.5). Next, Cronbach's alpha and CR values are all above the minimum level of 0.70, which means acceptable internal reliability of the construct. According to Table 4, the square root of AVEs, on the diagonal, are above the correlation between the construct. This shows that the discriminant validity requirement of the construct was meet

Table 3 Validity and Reliability

Construct	Code	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Influencer	IFL1	0.804			
	IFL2	0.723			
	IFL3	0.792	0.852	0.894	0.629
	IFL4	0.844			
	IFL5	0.789			
Electronic Word of Mouth	EWOM1	0.807			
	EWOM2	0.788			
	EWOM4	0.806	0.850	0.899	0.689
	EWOM5	0.790			
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.829			
	PD2	0.854			
	PD4	0.837	0.812	0.875	0.636
	PD5	0.800			

Source: Based on Authors Results

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

	Influencer	Purchase Decision	Electronic Word of Mouth
Influencer	0,793		
Purchase Decision	0,603	0,798	

Electronic Word of Mouth	0,573	0,689	0,830

Source: Based on Authors Results

PLS Result

Figure 2. Smart PLS Result
Source: PLS Result

The study finds that suggested factors such as influencer and word of mouth explain a 53.1% a variance for purchase decisions. Influencer have 32.8% variance for electronic word of mouth. Path analysis finding are shown in Figure 2 and Table 5 with T values and p-values. This shows that hypotheses (H1 – H3) were accepted at $p<0.05$ and $t> 1.97$ in the research framework of skincare purchase decision. Concerning influencer, the results shows that influencer have a statistically positive impact on the skincare consumer purchase decisions (H1: β=0.309; T value= 3.894; p = 0.000). Similarly Electronic Word of Mouth, the results shows that influencer have a statistically positive impact on the skincare consumer purchase decisions (H2: β=0.512; T value= 6.535; p = 0.000). Lastly, the mediating effect of electronic word of mouth, the results shows that electronic word of mouth have a statistically positive impact on the skincare consumer purchase decisions (H3: β=0.573; T Value= 6.131; 0.00)

Table 5. Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	T-value	Sig.	Result
H1 : Influencer – Purchase Decision	3.894	0.000	Accepted
H2 : Electronic Word of mouth – Purchase Decision	6.535	0.000	Accepted
H3 : Influencer- Electronic Word of Mouth – Purchase Decision	6.131	0.000	Accepted

Source: PLS Result

The research aims to investigate the effect of influencer and electronic word of mouth as mediating effect toward purchase decision. We use influencer and electronic word of mouth to explain customer purchase decision in skincare product in this case scarlet product. In the current scenario, local skincare product currently booming and many trying to increase their value through influencer and online marketing via electronic word of mouth. This strategy is utilized to market businesses new goods that can compete with the global giant penetrating Indonesian skincare consumer. The study results show that influencer in social media have a positive impact on skincare consumer purchase decision (H1), the findings indicate that social media marketing using influencer seems to be a good strategy of attracting people purchase decision for skincare products. This research advocate the influencer part of skincare promotion strategy. Social media influencer plays important role as the product aggregator to provide general information about product quality and component information. The skincare product can be effectively evaluated and is completely approved by social media influencer before customer decide to purchase the product. This critical discovery for promotion strategy desiring to increase customer awareness toward the new skincare product and the results supported by Chopra et al. (2021) and Jin et al. (2019). Similarly, the word of mouth had significant effect on purchase intention. Based on this results, word of mouth is an element that affect people to purchase skincare product.

Similarly, electronic word of mouth had significant effect on purchase decision (H2). According to this results, electronic word of mouth is an important part what may affect consumer to purchase a skincare product. Marketers should aware about the flow of information online and their position in consumer mind. Marketers should able to communicate the quality of information flow in the online communities and social media. These strategies for brand and its products to help consumer understand about its product quality and ingredient (Aakash & Aggarwal, 2019; Jing et al., 2019). These strategies are intended to build a good and positive online presence in order to increase consumer purchase decision on skincare products, and this findings supported by Ihsan et al. (2022) and Ashari dan Tafiprios (2021).

Concerning mediating results, electronic word of mouth is positively affect with influencer and purchase decision in skincare product (H3) these results supported by Yangkluna et al. (2022) and George and Adu-Ampong, (2021). Influencer plays important role in customer purchase decision in this case the electronic word of mouth increase and multiply the effect of influencer on skincare product purchase decision. In a matter of influencer trustworthiness and credibility's will increase customer knowledge on its product and with the sporadic flow of information through electronic word of mouth the marketers can have the benefit of positive information circulating on its product.

CONCLUSION

This research found stimulus such as influencer have significant impact on customer skincare purchase decision. Simultaneously, influencer also significantly affect electronic word of mouth and electronic word of mouth significantly affect purchase decision. Regarding mediation roles, electronic word of mouth has positive affect between social media influencer and consumer purchase decision in skincare product. Indonesia market keep proliferate into creating new way to deliver value. In the last five years the present of influencer play important role in business marketing. They are not longer considered as the third party; many consumers consider them as the company representative. This is due to the disruption of technology and information. Skincare consumer get their inputs from social media instead of commercial. Thus, instead of spending million in billboard, commercial, and many other conventional media, skincare companies tend to use social media influencer as their marketing extension. With the proliferation of information from influencer channels it creates sporadic electronic word of mouth flows, in social media, makes skincare consumer believe all influencer information. Scarlett in this case uses many positive image of the influencer to sell their product which create a façade for their product. Unlike brand ambassador, person from the entertainment business or so we called artist/actor, influencer comes from 'bottom of pyramid' segmentation with aggregator knowledge about the skincare product. Marketer in this segment should consider to use influencer for their advantage. With big market population information flows faster with the help of social media engagement. Positive influencer will boost consumer purchase decision on skincare product, also influencer information flows greatly by the help of electronic word of mouth. Therefore, marketers should endeavor in the models introduced in this research to better understanding how to survive in high speed information flows. Consumer would not mind to purchase product from their respected influencer recommendation with positive reviews in social media.

The research is limited in Jabodetabek. The research uses purposive sampling which does non generalize the findings especially for different skincare product with different market segmentation. The context of self care product should consider other brand as comparison. Different brand might have different strategy, as for future research recommended to add omni brand research.

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