

**The Influence of the Level of Popularity of Influencer, the Preference of Message Disclosure,
and the Consumer Skepticism of Advertising on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc**

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ABSTRACT

Somethinc uses various influencers with different levels of popularity namely mega, macro, micro, and nano to promote their products. The existence of influencers makes a lot of sponsored content spread on Instagram. However, this has many pros and cons because a lot of content does not use the “Paid Partnership with” feature. This kind of advertising model can also make consumers become defensive and lead to skepticism because there is no transparency about the persuasive nature of the content that influencers share. From late 2020 to early 2021, several national surveys showed that Somethinc was not consumers’ first choice when buying beauty products. The theory used in this study is the Source of Attractiveness Model and the Persuasion Knowledge Model, with the sampling technique of non-probability sampling. The sample consists of 100 people with female characteristics, aged 18-35, who have seen sponsored content by Somethinc’s influencers. The results of the first hypothesis test using a simple regression technique show that there is no influence on the level of popularity of influencers on purchase intention of Somethinc with a significance value of (0.931). The results of the second hypothesis test using multiple regression techniques show that there is no influence on the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of Advertising on Somethinc's purchase intention with a significance value (0.098).

Keywords: Influencer marketing, message disclosure, advertising skepticism, purchase intention

ABSTRAK

Somethinc menggunakan berbagai influencer dengan tingkat popularitas yang berbeda yaitu mega, makro, mikro, dan nano untuk mempromosikan produk mereka. Adanya influencer membuat semakin banyak konten berbayar yang tersebar di Instagram. Namun, hal ini banyak menuai pro dan kontra karena banyak konten yang tidak menggunakan fitur “Paid Partnership with”. Model iklan semacam ini juga dapat membuat konsumen menjadi defensif dan menimbulkan sikap skeptisisme karena tidak adanya transparansi mengenai sifat persuasi dari konten yang influencer bagikan. Selama akhir tahun 2020 hingga awal tahun 2021, beberapa survey nasional menunjukkan bahwa Somethinc bukanlah pilihan utama konsumen ketika membeli produk kecantikan. Teori yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah Source of Attractiveness Model dan Persuasion Knowledge Model, dengan teknik pengambilan sampel berupa non-probability sampling. Sampel berjumlah 100 orang dengan karakteristik perempuan, berusia 18-35, serta pernah melihat konten berbayar oleh influencer Somethinc. Hasil uji hipotesis

pertama dengan teknik regresi sederhana menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat pengaruh pada tingkat popularitas influencer terhadap minat beli dengan nilai signifikansi sebesar (0,931). Hasil uji hipotesis kedua dengan teknik regresi berganda menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat pengaruh pada preferensi terhadap message disclosure dan sikap skeptisisme consumer pada iklan terhadap minat beli Somethinc dengan nilai signifikansi (0,098).

Kata Kunci: Marketing influencer, pengungkapan pesan, sikap skeptic terhadap iklan, minat beli

INTRODUCTION

Background

Instagram has created a new way of marketing called influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is one of the marketing tools that is used to increase a brand's reach, sales, or engagement through individuals that have the ability to influence a specific target market (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). These influencers are classified into four levels of popularity based on the number of followers, namely, Mega influencers, Macro influences, Micro influencers, and Nano Influencers (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2021).

Social media influencers create different types of content such as beauty, technology, food, automotive, and video games. By involving influencers, marketers generally make tie-in advertising that is manifested in paid Instagram posts, the advertised product is included in the Instagram celebrity content, like product reviews, so that an advertisement disguises its existence (Amornpashara, Rompoo, & Phadoongsitthi, 2015).

The nature of the advertisement and its' persuasive intention can be pointed out clearly by disclosures cues, and later help consumers in reasoning the intention of the message (Rozendaal et al. 2011). Instagram created "Paid Partnership with" feature that can be used when posting sponsored content for a brand. Audiences or consumers that are aware of the fact that the contents are a paid partnership have the possibility to activate their persuasion knowledge structures that in turn create a defensive coping mechanism like skepticism.

One of Somethinc marketing strategies is using influencer marketing and their sales have continuously increased over the last couple of years. However, Somethinc's e-commerce sales in the third quartal of 2020 are in the third position (telunjuk.com, 2020), and in the first and second quartal of 2021, their position is stagnated behind MS Glow and Scarlett (compass.co.id, 2021).

Research Problem

As one of the best local brands in Indonesia, Somethinc has continuously grown for the past few years but they haven't successfully outperformed its competitors. In the last couple of quartiles, their e-commerce sales stagnated in the third position of the local beauty brand. One of their strategy to advertise its products is through social media influencers and they use a different level of social media influencers based on the number of their followers.

At first, marketers that involve influencers in their advertising is aimed to create a tie-in advertising that can disguise the existence of an advertisement. Meanwhile, for the last few years, Instagram has introduced a disclosure feature named "Paid Partnership With" for SMIs to use on sponsored content to help consumers identify advertisements.

Sponsored content may activate a defensive coping mechanism to consumers such as Ad Skepticism. Ad Skepticism can negatively impact the behavioral intent of consumer and one of it is purchase intention. Based on the problem that has been stated

above, the research problem of this research is, do the level of popularity of influencers, the preference of message disclosure, and the consumer skepticism of advertising have an influence on the purchase intention of Somethinc?

Research Objective

The research objective is to find out the influence of the level of popularity of influencers, the preference of message disclosure, and the consumer skepticism of advertising to purchase intention of Somethinc.

Research Significance

Practically, this research is expected to be beneficial in giving positive feedback to companies in the beauty sector about the influence of the level of popularity of influencers, the preference of message disclosure, and the consumer skepticism of advertising to purchase intention of Somethinc.

Academically, this research is expected to explain information about science in the field of communication, especially the influence of the level of popularity of influencers, the preference of message disclosure, and the consumer skepticism of advertising to purchase intention of Somethinc.

Socially, this research is expected to give more knowledge and understanding to the society about the influence of the level of popularity influencers, the preference of message disclosure, and the consumer skepticism of advertising to purchase intention of Somethinc.

Theoretical Framework

The influence of the level of popularity of influencers on purchase intention can be explained using the Likability aspect in the Source Attractiveness model. This model generates persuasion through a process of identification, by which the recipient is simulated to explore some sort of connection with the source and as result, adopts identical beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behavior (Belch & Belch, 2003).

The influence of the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising on purchase intention can be explained using the Persuasion Knowledge Model. The Persuasion Knowledge Model focuses on how people use their knowledge of persuasion motives and tactics to interpret, evaluate, and respond to marketers' influence efforts. (Friestad & Wright, 1994).

Hypotheses

H1: There is a positive influence of the level of popularity of influencers (X1) on the purchase intention of Somethinc (Y).

H2: There is a negative influence of the preference of message disclosure (X2) and the consumer skepticism of advertising (X3) on the purchase intention of Somethinc (Y).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type

The type of research is explanatory which aims to determine the influence of the level of popularity of influencers (X1), the preference

of message disclosure (X2), and the consumer skepticism of advertising (X3) on the purchase intention of Somethinc (Y).

Population

In this study, the population that will be the object of research is women who live in Indonesia, aged 18-34 years, and have seen social media influencers sponsored content of Somethinc’s product, but with an unknown amount

Sampling Technique

In this study, the sampling technique that will be used is the non-probability sampling method based on accidental sampling and the sample size in this study will be 100 people.

Data Analysis

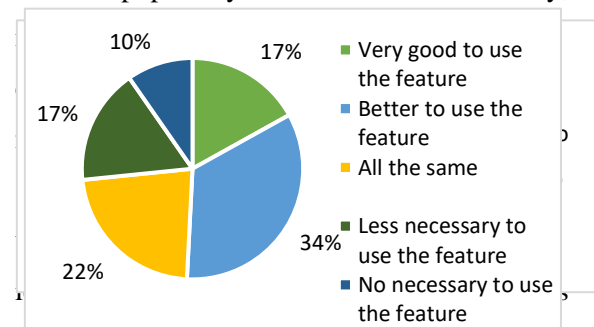
Regression analysis is used to analyze the data obtained in this research. It is a specific form of analysis that is used in a situation where one or more independent variable(s) is (are) hypothesized to affect the dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

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The Level of Popularity of Influencer

Diagram 1 The Level of Popularity of Influencer variable categorizations

Based on the data that has been collected from the respondents, it can be seen that the respondents were most preferred or liked influencers with a very high level of popularity or mega influencers and then followed by influencers with a high level of popularity. Meanwhile, only a few of the respondents chose influencers with a moderate and low level of popularity. It shows that the level of popularity is in line with likeability,

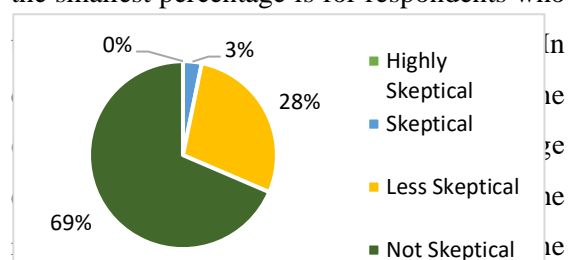


have might elicit greater effects. A high follower count can thus benefit the influencer as ideas spread more widely and quickly and as a result, interpersonal influence increases. It can be seen that most of the respondents like influencers with a very high and high level of popularity.

The Preference of Message Disclosure

Diagram 2 Respondent’s preference of Message Disclosure

As shown in the graph above, the largest percentage is occupied by respondents who think that it is better to use the “Paid Partnership with” feature and then followed by respondents that think content with or without the feature is all the same none of it better than the other. Meanwhile, there is the same percentage for respondents that think it is very good to use the feature and respondents that think it is less necessary to use the feature, and the smallest percentage is for respondents who

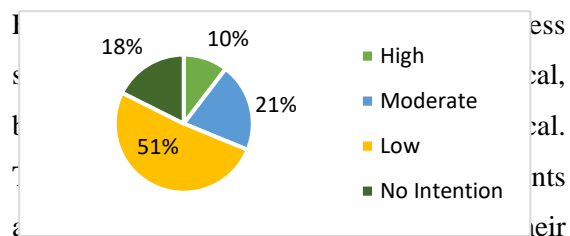


feature, while on the other hand, the other half of the respondent thinks the other way around. It shows that this issue is not crucial because there is no dominant preference of the respondents of this research.

The Consumer Skepticism of Advertising

Diagram 3 The consumer skepticism of advertising variable categorization

As shown in the diagram above, more than half of the respondents, were not skeptical.



attitude towards advertising is mostly positive.

The Purchase Intention of Somethinc

Diagram 4 The purchase intention of Somethinc variable categorization

As shown in the graph above, almost three-quarters of the respondents have a low intention and no intention at all of purchasing Somethinc products. There are only about a quarter of respondents who have an intention in purchasing Somethinc products, both moderately and highly intention. In each category, Somethinc is proven to be the brand most chosen by the respondents. However, once the purchase intention of Somethinc is calculated and categorized, it shows that most of the respondents have a low intention of purchasing it.

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To test the hypothesis, this study uses the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) version 25 application with the Simple Regression and Multiple Regression formulas. From the results of the calculation of the Simple Regression test, the following result are obtained:

Table 1 The Influence of the Level of Popularity Level on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.006	1	.006	.008	.931 ^b
	Residual	89.672	122	.735		
	Total	89.677	123			

a. Dependent Variable: Y
b. Predictors: (Constant), X1

As presented in the table above, the value of the significant level obtained in this Simple Regression analysis is 0.931, which means it is greater than the probability value of 0.05. It shows that the significance value is not significant and there is no influence of the variables the level of popularity of influencers (X1) on the purchase intention of Somethinc (Y). Therefore, the research hypothesis which states that there is a positive influence between the level of popularity of influencers on the purchase intention of Somethinc is rejected.

From the results of the calculation of the Multiple Regression test, the following result are obtained:

Table 2 The Influence of the Preference of Message Disclosure and the Consumer Skepticism of Advertising on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.371	2	1.686	2.363	.098 ^b
	Residual	86.306	121	.713		
	Total	89.677	123			

a. Dependent Variable: Y
b. Predictors: (Constant), X3, X2

As presented in the table above, the value of the significant level obtained in this Multiple Regression analysis is 0.098, which means it is greater than the probability value of 0.05. It shows that the significance value is not significant and that there is no simultaneous influence between the variables the preference of message disclosure (X2), the consumer skepticism of advertising (X3), on the purchase intention of Somethinc (Y). Therefore, the research hypothesis which states that there is a negative influence between the influence of the Preference of Message Disclosure, and the Consumer Skepticism of Advertising on the Purchase Intention of Somethinc is rejected.

Discussion

The first hypothesis is there is an influence of the level of popularity of influencers on the purchase intention of Somethinc. As assumed by the model used in this study, namely Likability in the Source Attractiveness Model. Likability is an affection for the source as a result of physical appearance, behavior, or other personal traits,

likability can be applied by using a popular public figure that people admire and in turn, the recipient is simulated to explore some sort of connection with the source and in results, adopts identical beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behavior like purchase intention. However, based on the hypothesis testing conducted in this study, the level of popularity did not have an influence on the respondent's intention to buy or not to buy Somethinc products. This makes Likability in the Source of Attractiveness model not applicable in this study.

The second hypothesis is there is an influence of the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising on the purchase intention. As assumed by the model used in this research, namely The Persuasion Knowledge Model, people use their knowledge of persuasion motives and tactics to respond to the attempts by the marketers by getting persuaded to buy the product or not persuaded. The model consists of two types, conceptual and attitudinal including the exitance of critical feelings like skepticism. However, based on the hypothesis testing conducted in this study, the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising did not have an influence on the respondent's intention to buy or not to buy Somethinc products. This makes The Persuasion Knowledge Model not apply in this study.

CONCLUSION

AND

RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

The result of this research shows that there is no influence of the level of popularity of influencers on the purchase intention of Somethinc. It is also shows that there is no simultaneous influence of the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising on the purchase intention of Somethinc.

Recommendations

1. The result of the research shows that there is no influence of the level of popularity on the purchase intention of Somethinc. Therefore, Somethinc does not need to focus on the level of popularity when it comes to choosing the brand representation, because it shows that it does not influence the purchase intention. If Somethinc wants to increase the purchase intention, it's not a strategic choice. However, if the goal is awareness, this might be a good idea to put popularity into consideration.
2. The results of this study indicate that there is no simultaneous influence of the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising on the purchase intention of Somethinc. Therefore, Somethinc as a brand should not be focusing on the preference of message disclosure and the consumer skepticism of advertising while looking for things that influenced the purchase intention of Somethinc.

3. The results of this study indicate that all of the independent variables did not have an influence on the purchase intention of Somethinc. Therefore, future research can examine the influence of brand image on the purchase intention of Somethinc. A strong brand image increases perceived quality and benefit, reduces perceived risk, and softens consumers' tendency to evaluate based solely on price. Taken together, all of these factors increase the consumer's purchase intention.
4. The results of this study indicate that all of the independent variables did not have an influence on the purchase intention of Somethinc. Therefore, future research can examine the influence of the level of message persuasiveness on the purchase intention of Somethinc because persuasive messages stimulate attitude change and consequent change in intention and behavior.

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