

The Role of Social Media Influencers in Building Strategies to Increase Visits Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This research uses self-congruity theory, which initially refers to the compatibility between consumers and brands or products, to the compatibility between endorsers and potential tourists to evaluate the effectiveness of endorsements. This study aims to analyze the influence of influencer marketing, attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the destination on intention to visit. The sample in this study are 101 respondents of tourism in East Java Park (Jatim Park) I. The research results show that influencer marketing, attitude towards the advertisement, and attitude towards the destination (atd) have significant influence on intention to visit in Jatim Park I. Attitude towards the advertisement and attitude towards the destination has greater impact on intention to visit than influencer marketing.

Keywords: *Attitude Towards Advertising, Attitude Towards Destination, Influencer Marketing, Intention to Visit.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industry that has great potential to support economic growth, open new jobs, improve living standards, and also provide encouragement to other production sectors (Yakup 2019) According to (N. Hikmah et al.2022) Tourism has become the main choice for many people who are looking for entertainment from their daily routine. The tourism sector is currently experiencing rapid growth and promises huge profits. To attract tourists, Tourism requires interesting and diverse tourist attractions. One of the interesting things in tourism is the cultural events that are held.

In an era that continues to develop, in attracting tourists, the role of sophisticated technology and information is very important, with easy internet access now becoming the main tool (Dwityas 2016) Social media, as the most commonly used internet platforms, facilitates communication, participation and interaction between individuals in online networks. For many people, social media is not only a source of interesting information, but also an important part of their lifestyle, used for expression and sharing (Moriensyah 2015) Many tourism managers also use social media to promote and share information about their destinations. Types of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter allow users to participate, create, and share experiences easily. In addition, the use of celebrities as spokespersons. The ability of social media to disseminate information quickly and achieving a wide reach makes it an effective promotional tool in attracting tourist interest (Herlina and Lubis 2017). According to (Insights 2018) as many as 3.5 billion active social media users worldwide, including major social networking applications such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, the influence of social media (SoMe) continues to increase in brand marketing and influence consumer behavior. As of early 2018, in the United States, the 18-29 year old age group accounted for 88% of social media platform (SoMe) users (Smith and Anderson 2018). This age group dominates most SoMe platforms, with 91% using YouTube, 81% using Facebook, 68% using Snapchat, and 64% using Instagram (Smith and Anderson 2018). The profession that is currently in great demand is content creator. The Content Creator profession is a profession whose job is to create creative content according to one's abilities in the form of photos, writing or videos whose platform is internet media (L. Hikmah et al. 2023) Therefore, many people use influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is a popular strategy in social media (SoMe), used by many brands to influence their consumers' intention decisions (Claude, Malek, and Runnvall 2018)

Influencer involves collaboration between brands and influencers where the influencer promotes the brand's products or services on various SoMe platforms (Mathew 2018) As many as 61% of consumers rely on SoMe for product information when shopping (Kramer 2018) . Research shows the important impact of influencer marketing on consumer purchasing habits (Claude, Malek, and Runnvall 2018). However, research on the influence of SoMe influencers on the travel intentions of the Millennial generation is still limited, even though this generation has a significant impact in the tourism industry because it has large purchasing power (Sofronov 2018) Over 90.4% of Millennials actively used and 38% of them trust digital influencers and their content, making influencer marketing a key factor in this generation's

purchasing decisions (Klein 2018) Endorsements from celebrity influencers are used in various forms of communication, not only in traditional advertising, but also on social media platforms. Today, celebrities endorse not only consumer products, but also business-to-business services, non-commercial entities such as political parties, and even non-profit organizations. Therefore, Bergkvist and Zhou offer the following definition: “A celebrity endorsement is an agreement between a publicly known individual (a celebrity) and an entity (such as a brand) to use that celebrity for the purpose of promoting that entity” (Bergkvist and Zhou 2016)

With a credible image, a celebrity usually has a greater influence on consumers' attitudes and purchasing intentions compared to non-celebrity spokespersons. There are three dimensions identified as components of celebrity credibility as endorsers according to Tzoumaka, et al, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness expertise refers to the degree to which a communicator is perceived as a valid source of statements (Tzoumaka, Tsiotsou, and Siomkos 2016). Expertise comes from the spokesperson's knowledge and experience in the related field. Trust is a consumer's confidence in a source of information, namely whether the source provides objective and truthful information. For example, salespeople are often considered less trustworthy than family members and friends. Attractiveness is related to physical attractiveness perceived by consumers, such as the endorser's appearance. Therefore, this study aims to examine how the perceived credibility of influencers on SoMe influences the attitudes of Millennial SoMe users and their intentions to visit certain destinations. In addition, this research will examine the moderating role of influencer follower behavior (IFB) of SoMe users in this relationship. It is hoped that this research will expand understanding of influencer marketing in the tourism context and provide insight for destination marketing companies to utilize SoMe marketing tools and influencer sponsorship effectively, especially for the Millennial generation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Intention to Visit

According to Gosal, et al the desire to travel refers to a person's internal drive that expresses a desire to visit a destination that is interesting to them (Gosal, Andajani, and Rahayu 2020). Travel intentions also reflect tourists' perceptions of a particular destination that may build confidence in them, influencing their final decisions regarding travel. As stated by Albarq, the desire to travel is the first step where prospective tourists take action before making a final decision to go to the desired destination (Albarq 2014). The concept of desire to travel is thought to be related to behavioral intention theory, which substantially emphasizes an individual's commitment to travel and how this motivation leads to concrete action.

2.2. Influencer Marketing

An influencer is a person or figure on social media who has a large number of followers and what they say can influence the behavior of their followers. Influencer marketing has experienced significant growth over the past few years as companies believe that the ROI from influencer marketing is 11 times greater than that of traditional marketing methods (Johansen and Guldvik 2017). With the development of the social media interaction (SoMe) era, influencer marketing has had a major impact on the marketing industry, especially for the Millennial generation. SoMe influencer marketing involves the use of third-party influencers to promote brand messages, products, or services, as well as to connect with the intended target market through social media platforms (Lim et al. 2017). In the travel and tourism industry, marketing influencers have become a major focus. Some social media influencers not only create product-related content on various platforms, but also provide valuable travel information, which serves as a source of motivation and guidance for travelers. Examples of popular travel influencers on Instagram include the Bucket List Family with 1.6 million followers and Jessica Stein with 2.5 million followers. Both influencer accounts have diverse audiences and cover specific target markets (Gretzel 2017). According Gretzel, marketers have recognized the potential to amplify messages targeted at specific segments delivered by social media influencers (Gretzel and Collier de Mendonça 2019). Destination marketing has also utilized social media as the main tool in promoting their destinations.

2.3. Attitude Toward Advertising

Influencers have become a very effective tool in building strong relationships between brands and consumers (Hämäläinen and Lahtinen 2016), as well as contributing to the overall consumer-brand relationship (Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget 2021). However, because each influencer has a different level of effectiveness, the main challenge for brand owners is selecting influencers that suit the brand (De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders 2017). In the advertising industry, influencers share persuasive messages that include informational values related to various product choices or other informational content. They do so with a personal aesthetic touch that creates a pleasant experience for their followers (Lou and Yuan 2019). The success of an influencer lies not only in their attractiveness, but also in the

credibility and understanding they have regarding the products they communicate from a particular brand (Kolarova 2018) emphasizes the importance of messages from influencers on social media (SoMe) which are presented as brands and sponsored. The congruence between the influencer and the advertised brand is critical in increasing the perceived credibility of the source, which in turn influences consumers' behavioral intentions (Breves et al. 2019). Information conveyed by influencers is considered credible and has a significant impact on users' beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behavior (Lim et al. 2017). Research also shows that influencer credibility contributes to attitudes toward influencer marketing on social media (Xiao, Wang, and Chan-Olmsted 2018).

In the tourism context, perceived source credibility greatly influences online tourists' attitudes towards user-generated content (Ayeh 2015) Millennials negatively respond to influencer marketing when they feel influencers are less credible. Therefore, source credibility plays an important role in shaping attitudes consumers towards influencer marketing (Lim et al. 2017), which is also relevant in the context of millennial users' attitudes towards influencer marketing on tourism-related social media.

2.4. Attitudes Toward Destinations

According to research by Kim and Han, attitude refers to an individual's assessment of an object, whether as good or bad (Kim and Han 2010). A person's high level of attitude tends to influence their behavior. The attitudes reflect an individual's beliefs about behavior. A person's attitude plays a crucial role in the desire to travel, because it is an important part of tourists' considerations in determining their intention to travel. Therefore, the attitudes formed within individuals greatly influence the decisions taken by tourists regarding the trip they want to travel.

2.5. Hypothesis

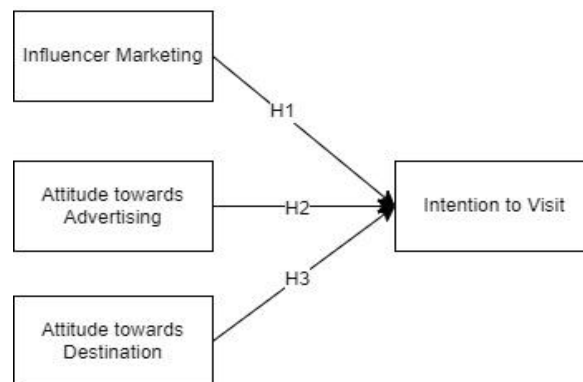


Figure 1 Research Framework

According to the concept of the match hypothesis, the match between celebrity and product is a key factor that determines the success of celebrity endorsement. When applied in the context of destination marketing, it is natural to suspect that the fit between the endorser – in this case, a social media personality (SMP) – and the destination also plays an important role. In addition, when consumers try to build an ideal self-image and see celebrities as inspiring models, they tend to imitate behavior and adopt attitudes supported by celebrities whose images match the consumer's ideal self-image. As a result, a high level of congruence between the celebrity image and the consumer's ideal self-image will result in more positive attitudes and greater willingness to make purchases. Endorser celebrity traits of physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise positively impact a tourist's intention to revisit or recommend the endorsed destination (Biswas and R.V. 2022). Result of other research, using micro-celebrities in the practice can lead to more effective measures for increasing purchase intention of the audience and selecting an influencer based on their personal characteristics will lead to a successful influencer marketing strategy (Kolarova 2018).

H1: A high level of congruence between the image understood by SMP endorsers and the image of the destination they support will have a positive influence to intention to visit

Previous research has examined attitudes toward advertising, attitudes toward brands, and purchase intentions as variables that measure endorsement effectiveness. Through the double mediation hypothesis, it is confirmed that attitudes towards advertising will influence attitudes towards the brand, and in turn influence purchase intentions. Study of Vietnamese Rap 2020—an event sponsored by Pepsico shows that attitude toward sponsor brand has a significant positive influence on purchase intention (Nguyen and Vu 2022). Other result of research based on the perceptions of universities students regarding fast food restaurants and transport services in Pakistan shows that brand credibility and

attitude toward brand positively impact purchase intentions (Sheeraz et al. 2016). The success of an influencer lies not only in their attractiveness, but also in the credibility and understanding they have regarding the products they communicate from a particular brand (Kolarova 2018) emphasizes the importance of messages from influencers on social media (SoMe) which are presented as brands and sponsored. The congruence between the influencer and the advertised brand is critical in increasing the perceived credibility of the source, which in turn influences consumers' behavioral intentions (Breves et al. 2019).

H2: Attitude towards advertising has a direct positive impact on intention to visit

Previous research found that destination–tourist congruence has a positive impact on behavioral intentions (Usakli and Baloglu 2011) (Xu (Rinka) and Pratt 2018). Other research shows that there was a significant positive influence between religiosity, subjective norms, attitude and intention to visit the Tomb of Sunan Ampel. The results of 150 muslims also explain that attitude can mediate subjective norms, religiosity and intention to visit (Mulia Wibawa, Rizqina Mardhotillah, and Amalia Elfita 2022). The same research shows that tourists' positive attitudes play a key role in bridging the gap between destination awareness and destination personality in terms of future visit intentions. Repeat visits in the future will be more beneficial if a destination takes initiatives to influence tourists' positive attitudes, particularly on destination awareness (Erвина and Octaviany 2022). The research framework can be seen in Figure 1.

H3: Attitude towards the destination has a direct positive impact on the intention to visit the destination.

3. METHODS

The data collection process was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires via Googleform from 101 people to tourist respondents visiting the East Java Park 1 tourist attraction. This study analyze the influence of variable Influencer Marketing (IM), Attitude towards the Advertisement (ATA), Attitude towards the Destination (ATD) on Intention to Visit (IV). SmartPLS is used in this research to evaluate hypotheses.

4. RESULTS

The sample in this study are 101 respondents. Thus, 101 questionnaires were distributed and the results of the questionnaire data were obtained. The following is a description of respondents who have filled out the research questionnaire.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

No	Respondent Profil	Percentage
1	Gender	
	Man	66,3
	Woman	33,7
2	Respondent's age	
	15 - 20 year	31,7
	21 - 25 year	62,4
	26 - 30 year	5
	31 - 35 year	0
3	Respondent's Occupation	
	Student	77,2
	Housewife	1
	Civil servants	3
	Self-employed	4
	Farmer	1
	Private	12,9
Another	1	
4	< Rp 1.000.000	16,8
	Rp 1.000.000-Rp 2.000.000	21,8
	Rp 2.000.000-Rp3.000.000	7,9
	Rp 3.000.000-Rp5.000.000	9,9
	> Rp 5.000.000	5
	No income yet	38,6

Source: Primary Data 2023

The composition of respondents in this study consisted of 66.3 percent men and 33.7 percent women. Table 1 shows that the majority, namely 67.4 percent of respondents, have an age range of 21 to 30 years. There are fewer consumers under 21 years of age, perhaps because in this age range they are generally more busy with education. In terms of work, around 77.2 percent of respondents are still students, 1 percent of respondents work as housewives, 3 percent of respondents work as civil servants, 4 percent work as entrepreneurs, 1 percent of respondents work as farmers, 12.9 percent of respondents work in the private sector and 1 percent of respondents work in other professions. In terms of monthly income, respondents received various income ranges. Sequentially, income with a range of Rp. 1,000,000 covers 16.8 percent, income of Rp. 1,000,000-Rp. 2,000,000 is 21. percent, income of Rp. IDR 3,000,000-IDR 5,000,000 is 9.9 percent, income of more than Rp. 5,000,000 is 5 percent and those without income are 38.6 percent.

Next, to assess the quality of the data that has been obtained, validity and reliability tests are carried out. The validity test in this study used the outer loading value. Overall, the outer loading value for each indicator for the four variables has a value greater than 0.70. Apart from that, Table 2 also displays the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each variable, all of which are greater than 0.50. Based on this assessment, it can be concluded that all instruments used in this research are valid.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
IM	0.635	0.635	0.846	0.732
ATA	0.881	0.881	0.910	0.627
AYD	0.747	0.779	0.885	0.663
IV	0.794	0.797	0.866	0.618

Source: Primary Data 2023

Information: IM= Influencer Marketing, ATA= Attitude Toward Advertising, ATD = Attitude Toward Destination, IV= Intention to Visit

Next, to complete the validity testing, a reliability test was carried out using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values as a reference. Table 2 shows that the results of both tests exceed 0.70, which indicates that all questionnaire instruments have good reliability. The next step to test the proposed hypothesis is through a structural model test using the R2 value of each latent variable (Ghozali and Latan 2015). This R2 value indicates the extent to which the model construction can be explained by variations in exogenous variables. Based on Table 3, Intention to Visit (IV) can be explained 66.2% with Influencer Marketing (IM), Attitude towards the Advertisement (ATA), and Attitude towards the Destination (ATD).

Table 3. R-Square Test Results

Variabel	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
IV	0.685	0.662

Source: Primary Data 2023

Based on Table 4, Influencer Marketing (IM), Attitude towards the Advertisement (ATA), and Attitude towards the Destination (ATD) have significant influence on intention to visit in Jatim Park I. Attitude towards the Advertisement (ATA) and Attitude towards the Destination (ATD) has greater impact on intention to visit than influencer marketing.

Attitude towards the Advertisement (ATA) and Attitude towards the Destination (ATD) have a greater influence on the intention to visit tourist attractions such as Jatim Park compared to influencer marketing due to the factors: 1) Trust and Credibility: ATA and ATD base their influence on information received directly by potential visitors from sources deemed credible, such as official advertisements from Jatim Park or reviews from previous visitors. Meanwhile, influencer marketing uses famous people or influencers as a source of influence. While influencers may have a large follower base, their level of trust and credibility can vary. Some followers may consider influencers to be authorities in a particular field, while others may be skeptical of their motivations and honesty; 2) Target Audience: ATA and ATD can be designed to target specific audiences, such as people interested in family or adventure tourism. Meanwhile, influencer marketing may reach a wider but less segmented audience. Although influencers can have large audiences, not all of them may be potential Jatim Park visitors or have a strong interest in the destination; 3) Perception Control: In ATA and ATD, the party who manages the advertising and promotion of the destination has full control over the message conveyed and how the destination is presented to potential visitors. On the other hand, influencer marketing may face challenges in controlling the way influencers convey messages about Jatim Park. Although there may be

established guidelines or collaborations, influencers have the freedom to convey their personal opinions or experiences, which may not always match the message the tourism destination wishes to convey.

Table 4. Direct Effect Value

Variabel	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	Results
IM > IV	0.111	1.653	0.098*	Significant
ATA > IV	0.271	3.584	0.000***	Significant
ATD > IV	0.597	9.038	0.000***	Significant

* $\alpha = 0.1$

*** $\alpha = 0.01$

Source: Primary Data 2023

5. CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis, Influencer Marketing, Attitude towards the Advertisement, and Attitude towards the Destination have significant influence on intention to visit in Jatim Park I. Attitude towards the Advertisement and Attitude towards the Destination has greater impact on intention to visit than influencer marketing. Attitude towards the Advertisement and Attitude towards the Destination have a greater influence on the intention to visit tourist attractions such as Jatim Park compared to influencer marketing due to the factors: 1) Trust and Credibility: Attitude towards the Advertisement and Attitude towards the Destination base their influence on information received directly by potential visitors from sources deemed credible, such as official advertisements from Jatim Park or reviews from previous visitors.; 2) Target Audience: Attitude towards the Advertisement and Attitude towards the Destination can be designed to target specific audiences, such as people interested in family or adventure tourism.; 3) Perception Control: In Attitude towards the Advertisement and Attitude towards the Destination, the party who manages the advertising and promotion of the destination has full control over the message conveyed and how the destination is presented to potential visitors. Therefore, marketers should consider employing endorser (influencers) that suits the characteristics of the tourist destination and give them the knowledge and message guiding to promote East Java Park 1.

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