Instagram Made Me Buy It: A Quantitative Study on Influencer Strategy and Consumer Behavior

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Abstract. The rapid development of social media, particularly Instagram, has created new opportunities for influencer marketing as an effective digital marketing strategy. However, studies examining influencer marketing within niche communities, such as the Indonesian raw denim community, remain limited. This study aims to analyze the effects of five dimensions of influencer credibility trustworthiness, expertise, likeability, similarity, and familiarity on brand attitude, examine the influence of brand attitude on purchase intention, and investigate the mediating role of brand attitude. A quantitative approach with a causal associative research design was employed. Data were collected from 170 Instagram users in Indonesia who had been exposed to raw denim influencer content using purposive sampling and an online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4 was applied for data analysis. The findings demonstrate that all measurement indicators meet the required validity and reliability criteria. Influencer credibility has a significant positive effect on both brand attitude and purchase intention, either directly or indirectly through the mediating role of brand attitude. Moreover, brand attitude significantly mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. The model exhibits strong predictive capability based on the coefficient of determination and predictive relevance values, while effect size analysis indicates a substantial effect of influencer credibility on brand attitude and moderate effects on the remaining relationships. These findings emphasize the importance of selecting credible influencers to strengthen brand attitudes and purchase intentions, contributing to more effective digital marketing strategies for niche communities.

Keywords: Brand Attitude, Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention, Raw Denim, Social Media

1 Introduction

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed how Indonesian consumers search for information and make purchase decisions. 63% of Indonesian consumers research products through social media, making it the most dominant pre-

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purchase information channel [1]. Instagram stands as the leading platform with over 101 million active users in Indonesia in 2024 [1], serving simultaneously as an effective arena for influencer-based marketing. 90% of marketers using influencers claim their campaigns were successful, indicating the relevance of this strategy in shaping consumer attitudes and decisions [1].

In this context, influencer credibility plays a critical role in shaping consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention [2-3]. Influencers with high credibility are considered capable of enhancing brand attitude and purchase intention toward the promoted product [4]. Digital media has transformed marketing communication into a more interactive process [5], with influencers representing a concrete manifestation of this transformation [6].

Although the effectiveness of influencer marketing has been extensively studied, existing research tends to focus on mass-market product categories such as cosmetics [7-9], food and beverages [10-11], and fast fashion [12-13]. Studies addressing technically-oriented niche communities with strong historical values, such as the raw denim community, remain very limited, particularly in Indonesia. This community exhibits distinctive characteristics: members possess in-depth technical knowledge, demonstrate high loyalty, and engage educationally through social media. This constitutes a significant research gap that warrants attention.

Furthermore, findings across studies on influencer credibility dimensions remain inconsistent. Trustworthiness and parasocial relationships significantly influenced purchase intention [14], whereas trust had no significant relationship with purchase intention [15]. Likewise, prior research highlights differing dominant dimensions, where likeability is identified as the primary driver [10], while other findings indicate that expertise exerts a stronger influence [12]. These inconsistencies underscore the need for further investigation, particularly in the context of technically-oriented product communities such as raw denim. Moreover, most prior studies have only examined the direct relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention, without considering brand attitude as a mediating variable, despite its theoretically and empirically established mediating role [3].

Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of five dimensions of influencer credibility (trustworthiness, expertise, likeability, similarity, and familiarity) on the brand attitude of raw denim community consumers, and to examine the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention toward local denim products in Indonesia. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the digital marketing literature on niche communities, while also serving as a practical reference for local denim brands in designing influencer-based marketing communication strategies.

2 Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative research design. This study aims to examine the influence of the five dimensions of influencer credi-bility

(expertise, trustworthiness, likeability, similarity, and familiarity) on brand atti-tude, the influence of brand attitude on purchase intention, and the direct influence of influencer credibility on purchase intention. In addition, this study also examines the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention.

2.2 Population and Sample

The population in this study are Instagram users in Indonesia who follow or are exposed to content from raw denim community influencers. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with criteria:

1. at least 18 years old
2. actively using Instagram
3. have seen or followed content from local raw denim influencers.

The number of samples obtained in this study were 170 respondents, who were eligible and suitable for analysis. The determination of the sample size refers to the Hair et al, which is a minimum of 5-10 respondents for each variable indicator [16].

2.3 Reseach Instruments

Data was collected through a Google Form-based online questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The Likert scale was chosen due to its simple format, easy to understand by respondents, and has been widely used in influencer marketing and consumer behavior research [3, 10].

Variable indicators were developed from previous literature as follows:

1. Influencer credibility: measured through five dimensions (expertise, trustworthiness, likeability, similarity, familiarity) adapted from [17 – 18].
2. Brand attitude: measured using two main dimensions, namely cognitive (consumer knowledge and perceptions of the brand) and affective (consumer feelings or emotions towards the brand) [3, 20].

Purchase intention: measured as a dimensionless reflective construct, with indica-tors adapted from [10, 14].

2.4 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) ap-proach with SmartPLS software. SmartPLS was chosen because of its ability to ana-lyze complex models with reflective indicators and medium sample sizes, and to han-dle data that is not always normally distributed [16]. The analysis was conducted in two stages:

1. Testing the Measurement Model (Outer Model):
   - Convergent validity (AVE ≥ 0.50)
   - Discriminant validity (HTMT ratio and Fornell-Larcker Criterion)
   - Construct reliability (Composite Reliability ≥ 0.70 and Cronbach's Al-pha ≥ 0.70)
2. Testing the Structural Model (Inner Model):
   - Multicollinearity test (VIF) to detect multicollinearity between latent in-dicators (VIF < 5)
   - R^2 Value

- Test predictive relevance (Q^2) to assess the predictive ability of the model
- Path coefficient value
- Test path significance using the bootstrapping method
- Test the brand attitude mediation hypothesis
- Effect size test (f^2) to see the magnitude of the effect of constructs on other constructs

The results of the outer model and inner model analysis are evaluated simultaneously to ensure the model has validity, reliability, and good predictive ability before being interpreted substantively.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Outer Model

The outer model was evaluated to confirm construct validity and reliability prior to structural testing. The evaluation comprised three stages: convergent validity, construct reliability, and discriminant validity.

3.2 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed through outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicators produced outer loading values above 0.70 (range: 0.751–0.883), confirming that each indicator strongly represents its respective construct [16]. AVE values for all constructs exceeded the 0.50 threshold (Brand Attitude = 0.731; Influencer Credibility = 0.637; Purchase Intention = 0.750), indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of its indicator variance. Convergent validity was therefore adequately satisfied.

Table 1. Outer Loading, AVE, and Construct Reliability

Construct	Outer Loading (Range)	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand Attitude	0.816 – 0.881	0.731	0.877	0.916
Influencer Credibility	0.751 – 0.857	0.637	0.936	0.946
Purchase Intention	0.840 – 0.883	0.750	0.833	0.900

Source : Author's Work

3.3 Construct Reliability

Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). All constructs yielded Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 (Brand Attitude = 0.877; Influencer Credibility = 0.936; Purchase Intention = 0.833) and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 (Brand Attitude = 0.916; Influencer Credibility = 0.946;

Purchase Intention = 0.900), demonstrating good internal consistency and adequate construct reliability across the model [20].

3.4 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was verified through two approaches. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion confirmed that the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with all other constructs. Additionally, all HTMT Ratio values remained below the 0.90 cut-off, indicating no discriminant validity issues between constructs [16]. With all criteria satisfied, the model was deemed suitable for inner model analysis.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT Ratio

	Brand Attitude	**Influencer Credibility**	**Purchase Intention**
Brand Attitude	0.855 / –		
Influencer Credibility	0.751 / 0.828	0.798 / –	
Purchase Intention	0.748 / 0.873	0.777 / 0.876	0.866 / –

Source : Author's Work

3.5 Inner Model

The inner model was used to examine relationships between latent variables in the structural model, encompassing multicollinearity testing, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), path coefficient analysis, bootstrapping significance testing, mediation testing, and effect size (f^2).

3.6 Multicollinearity and Model Fit

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all paths fell below 5, confirming the absence of multicollinearity in the model [21]. The R^2 value for Brand Attitude (0.564) and Purchase Intention (0.665) demonstrates adequate explanatory power. Q^2 values exceeding 0 for both dependent constructs (Brand Attitude = 0.556; Purchase Intention = 0.595) confirm the model's predictive relevance.

Table 3. R^2, Q^2, and VIF Value

Construct / Relationship	**R^2**	**Q^2**	**VIF**
Brand Attitude	0.564	0.556	1.000
Purchase Intention	0.665	0.595	–
Brand Attitude -> Purchase Intention	–	–	2.295
Influencer Credibility -> Purchase Intention	–	–	2.295

Source : Author's Work

3.7 Path Coefficient and Significance

Path coefficients were tested using the bootstrapping method. All inter-variable relationships were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Effect size analysis indicated that the influence of Influencer Credibility on Brand Attitude was large ($f^2 = 1.295$), while the effects of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.317$) and Brand Attitude on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.185$) were categorized as medium [16].

Table 4. Path Coefficient, Significance, and Effect Size

Relationship	Path Coeff.	T-Statistics	P-Value	f^2	Result
Influencer Credibility -> Brand Attitude	0.751	17.673	0.000	1.295	Significant
Influencer Credibility -> Purchase Intention	0.494	5.269	0.000	0.317	Significant
Brand Attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.377	3.906	0.000	0.185	Significant
Mediation: IC -> BA -> PI	0.283	3.681	0.000	–	Significant

Source : Author's Work

H1: Influencer Credibility Positively Influences Brand Attitude

The analysis confirmed that influencer credibility positively and significantly influences brand attitude (path = 0.751; T = 17.673; p = 0.000), thus H1 is supported. The large effect size ($f^2 = 1.295$) further underscores that influencer credibility is the dominant factor shaping brand attitude within the raw denim community.

This finding is consistent with [10 & 12], who emphasized the role of expertise and trustworthiness in forming positive consumer brand attitudes. In the raw denim community context, influencers possessing deep technical knowledge, such as understanding of fabric weight, stitching construction, and denim fading processes, combined with authentic communication styles, proved more effective in building audience trust toward local denim brands. This aligns with the nature of niche communities, whose members apply high evaluative standards when assessing information sources and tend to favor credibility rooted in technical expertise over general popularity.

H2: Influencer Credibility Positively Influences Purchase Intention

Influencer credibility demonstrated a positive and significant influence on purchase intention (path = 0.494; T = 5.269; p = 0.000), thus H2 is supported. This result aligns with [2 & 14], who found that consumer trust in influencers drives purchase intention. Unlike [15], who reported no significant relationship between trust and purchase intention, this study demonstrates that expertise-based trust plays a crucial role in the raw denim community context. Members of this community possess high product literacy and evaluate influencer recommendations based on technical depth rather than mere popularity. This explains why the expertise and trustworthiness dimensions collectively produce a significant effect on purchase intention, a finding that highlights the distinctive dynamics of influencer marketing in technically-oriented niche communities compared to mainstream product categories.

H3: Brand Attitude Positively Influences Purchase Intention and Mediates the Relationship Between Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention

Brand attitude positively and significantly influenced purchase intention (path = 0.377; T = 3.906; p = 0.000). Furthermore, brand attitude partially mediated the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention (indirect effect = 0.283; p = 0.000), thus H3 is supported.

The partial mediation indicates that influencer credibility influences purchase intention through two pathways: directly, and indirectly through the prior formation of positive brand attitude. This supports the Theory of Reasoned Action, which posits that a positive attitude toward an object fosters behavioral intention [22]. The finding is also consistent with [3], who affirmed the critical mediating role of brand attitude in bridging marketing messages and consumer behavior.

Unlike [2], who found full mediation, this study reveals partial mediation. This suggests that in the raw denim community, credible influencers not only cultivate positive brand attitudes but also directly drive purchase intention through trust in their technical recommendations. This finding enriches the understanding of influencer marketing mechanisms in knowledge-based niche communities, an area that has remained largely understudied in the Indonesian context, and extends the theoretical scope of influencer marketing literature beyond mainstream product categories.

4 Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effect of Influencer Credibility on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention, and examine the role of Brand Attitude as mediation on the Instagram social media platform. The results showed that Influencer Credibility has a significant effect on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention, both directly and indirectly through Brand Attitude.

The research instruments have met the criteria of convergent validity, construct reliability, and discriminant validity, thus supporting the validity of the overall model. This research model also has good predictive ability with a high R^2 value on the dependent variable. The findings of this study support influencer marketing theory which emphasizes the importance of influencer credibility in building consumer trust and positive attitudes towards brands.

This research makes an important contribution in enriching the influencer marketing and consumer behavior literature, and provides practical recommendations for marketing managers to be more selective in choosing credible influencers. Influencer credibility not only influences purchase intention directly, but also through the formation of positive consumer attitudes towards brands, thereby increasing the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. This study uses a cross-sectional survey method that only captures data at one point in time, so it cannot observe changes in the relationship between constructs over time. This limits the study's ability to explain the dynamics of consumer behavior longitudinally. The re-search sample was limited to Instagram users in Indonesia who follow raw denim community influencers, so the results of this study may not be generalizable to other social media platforms or to different consumer segments. This context limitation may affect the external validity of the study. This study has not considered moderat-ing variables such as respondents' demographic characteristics or product types that may affect the relationship between variables in the model. This limitation opens up opportunities for future research development by considering these moderating varia-bles.

Future research is recommended to use a longitudinal design in order to capture the dynamics of changes in relationships between constructs over time. This research design will provide a deeper understanding of changes in consumer behavior in the context of influencer marketing. Further research could expand the context by testing this model on other social media platforms, such as TikTok or YouTube, to increase the external validity of the research findings. The use of multiple digital platforms will help understand more diverse consumer behaviors relevant to dynamic social media trends. Future research could also consider moderating variables, such as age, gender or product type, to enrich the understanding of how these factors affect the relationship between variables in the research model.

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