

Impact of Social Media Influences on the Consumption Behavior of Adolescents and Children

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Abstract

This research is a qualitative study and literature study. This study examines how social media influencers influence the behavior of teenagers and their impact on them. The results showed that social identity, source credibility, and quality of information are factors that have an impact on adolescent consumer behavior where these three things are to encourage purchase intentions and behavior of adolescent consumers. The results of the study also show that the impact of the influencer's social media exposure is the increase in materialism from teenagers which also encourages consumptive behavior from teenagers. The results of this study are an illustration of how influencers have on teenagers. For business people and businesses, this research can be used as input in an effort to increase the effectiveness of the use of influencers for the youth market. Meanwhile, for individual teenagers and parents, this research can also be information to limit teenagers in bad behavior such as materialism which leads to waste.

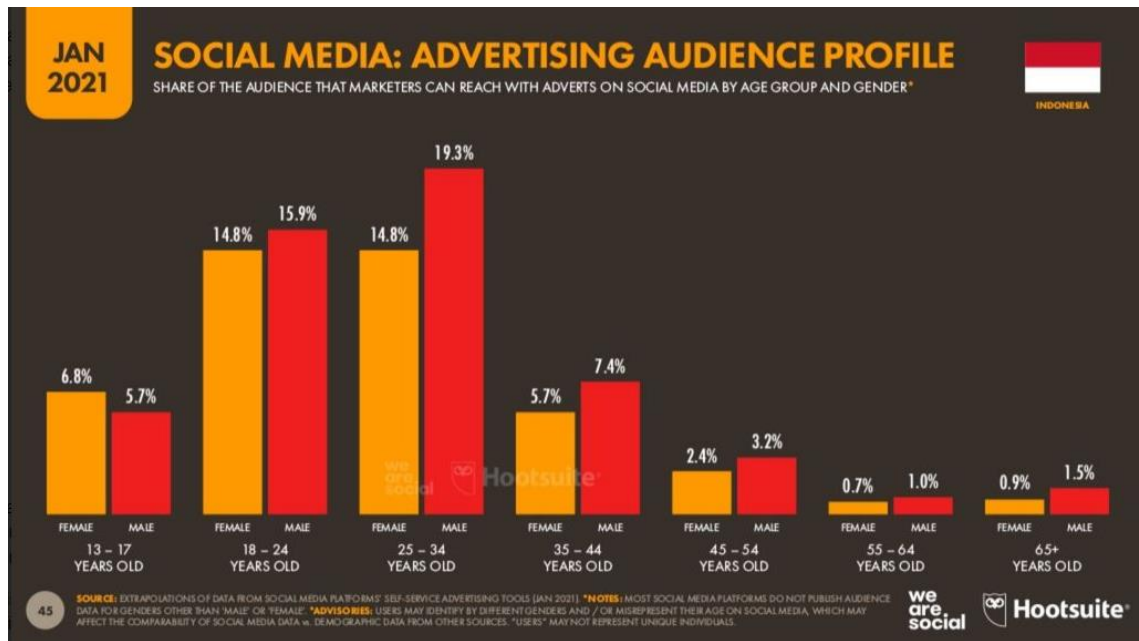
Keywords

Influencers; social media; consumption behavior



I. Introduction

Along with the development of the internet and information technology, social media is increasingly being used by individuals as a means of information and communication (Olaajo, 2020). The widespread use of social media as a habit has increased the search for information on social media networks, especially by the younger generation (Chen & Yuan, 2018). The emergence of social networking sites has also changed the way how humans interact with each other and also in terms of seeking and receiving information (Liu et al., 2015). Based on user age, the age of social media users in Indonesia is widely used by teenagers as can be seen in the image below



Source: We Are Social (2021)

From the picture above, it can be seen that teenagers in Indonesia have a fairly large proportion of the use social media. This is in line with the opinion of Lin et al (2018) who states that currently the existence of blogs and vlogs on social media is becoming increasingly popular and loved by teenagers.

The rapid development of social media has given rise to a phenomenon called microcelebriteists such as bloggers or vloggers who gain fame on social media through *self-branding* (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). This new type of celebrity is also called an *influencer* where they generally use social media to interact with the use of unique self-presentations to attract attention and a large number of *followers* (Chae, 2018). These *influencers* can reach many consumers by using social media so these *influencers* are considered very effective advertisements (Lin et al., 2018). Research shows that young adults often visit platforms such as Instagram or YouTube for product reviews before making a purchase, and often buy goods simply because influencers recommend them on social media (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Development is a systematic and continuous effort made to realize something that is aspired. Development is a change towards improvement. Changes towards improvement require the mobilization of all human resources and reason to realize what is aspired. In addition, development is also very dependent on the availability of natural resource wealth. The availability of natural resources is one of the keys to economic growth in an area. (Shah, M. et al. 2020)

Social media influencers are increasingly popular among the younger generation. For example, there is an increase in users of Instagram and Youtube in the age group of 15 to 19 years (Hassan et al, 2021). With the increasing role of social media in the lives of teenagers, it is not surprising that social influencers have become the new digital celebrities sought and aspired to. by teenagers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). In addition, social influencers are seen as a reliable source of online information, making them effective spokespersons for products and brands (Many young people see social media influencers' accounts as catalogs with images that represent the lifestyle they dream of (Chae, 2018).

Social media influencers and traditional celebrities have similarities for example these two types of celebrities have the fame and popularity of large fans and both can

influence their fans or followers (Lou and Kim, 2019). Unlike traditional celebrities who get fame through appearing in mass media productions such as TV shows and/or movies, social media influencers grow their visibility and popularity by continuously producing valuable content and presenting a preferred persona on social media. Therefore, previous researchers termed social media influencers as "types of new independent third-party advocates who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other uses of social media" (Freberg et al., 2011). Furthermore, Lou and Yuan (2019) define social media influencers as creators of original content that attracts large numbers of people. Followers with generate content and benefit from promoting sponsored content to its followers. Social media influencers can exert a greater influence on adolescents than peers and family members (Al-Harbi and Al-Harbi, 2017).

Vloggers on YouTube or Selegram, have become important influencers for the consumption decisions of their young audience. Influencers will provide their followers with an insight into the brands they like and use in their daily lives and even provide hands-on advice on products their followers should or should not use (De Jans et al., 2019). Because of the reach and credibility they exude, many brands have added these influencers, who are often children or teenagers, into their marketing strategies. While these endorsers may seem like "regular" kids, some are highly paid endorsers, in exchange for promotional items or free payments, brands are asking these influencers to endorse their products on their social media profiles (in their feed or in stories). them on Instagram, videos on YouTube and TikTok, or Facebook updates, etc.) and their YouTube channel in turn earns advertising revenue as a result of their large audience.

Social media *influencers* are now considered to have an impact on changing behavior in things such as *fashion*, lifestyle, and beauty, and they are often seen as role models who have ideas and tastes that are considered worthy of being imitated, especially by the younger generation (Hassan et al, 2021). According to Jed Wolf, today's young people are mostly internet-connected following influencers on social media, and around 73 percent of respondents stated that people on social platforms influence them significantly more than 'traditional' celebrities. In the world of social media where everything can be connected, there are also *peer influencers* where there is a strong urge from fellow teenagers such as peers to imitate influencers together and this encourages these teenagers to make purchasing decisions to imitate these *influencers* (Hassan et al, 2021).).

Previous research that discusses *social media influencers* has focused more on the effectiveness of *influencer marketing* or also on comparing the efficacy of influencers with traditional celebrities. However, there is a phenomenon where more and more young people have been exposed to social media and the younger generation are also *followers* and influencers many consider these *influencers* as *role models* that need to be imitated and trusted by the younger generation. Research on how influencer marketing affects teens or children is still limited. Most studies on influencer marketing focus on adult audiences and examine how influencers influence their followers' buying decisions, therefore this study seeks to examine how *social media influencers influence their behavior*.

II. Research Method

This research uses qualitative research using a library research approach. In this type of research, relevant data will be sought from this case study from articles or journals that discuss the same thing, in this case how the influence of social media influences the younger generation. The unit of data analysis in this research is social media influencers and teenagers as followers of influencers on social media.

III. Result and Discussion

3.1 Social Identification of Social Media Influencers and Buying Behavior

Is known from several studies that show how *social media influencers* can influence the buying behavior of teenagers. This can be explained by social identity theory. By definition, social identity is an individual's knowledge that the individual feels he or she belongs to a particular group with emotional values and *values* that are considered significant for him. In general, He et al (2012) have found that the social identification of consumers with influencers is an important factor in online behavior (Jin and Ryu, 2020, Loureiro and Sarmento, 2019). Jin and Phua (2014) also found that there is an effect of strong identification with influencers on purchasing behavior related to products promoted by social media influencers.

The results of research conducted by Croes and Bartels (2021) show that when adolescents have a strong identification with *influencers*, *the tendency of the individual to want to click on advertisements recommended by influencers* will be stronger and also show buying behavior from the products offered or advertised by the *influencer*. This is in line with previous literature which found social identification with a celebrity to be an important predictor of online buying behavior and purchase intention (Jin & Phua, 2014; Loureiro & Sarmento, 2019). In addition, social identification had a mediating or partial mediation effect on all motivations on online advertising clicking and buying behavior, confirming. This mediating role of identification is consistent with previous studies in the context of branding. This study also found that social identification is an important mediator between attitudes and purchase behavioral intentions (Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). This can happen because identification with the brand can lead to some kind of psychological attachment, which can result in commitment to the brand. The widespread use of social media among teenagers involves their connectivity with other people including with *influencers* where which has an impact on teenagers being easier to get influenced by these *influencers*. The lifestyle that is considered ideal by *influencers* also creates a strong connection between *influencers* and *followers* so that by using *marketing strategies* for *influencers*, the impact of teenage consumer purchases becomes stronger due to *influencers* (Chwialkowska, 2019).

In this era, social influencers such as journalists, celebrities, bloggers, magazines, and brand advocates can make a lot of money by doing brand endorsements, also "the most powerful force in the fashion market" (Wiedman et al, 2012). . They can influence their followers by convincing purchasing decisions to buy a brand or product based on their personal opinions, abilities, and positions who consider the experts themselves to be the same as their followers. Social media influencers have the power of influence to make things trend and as a fashion "must-have" to lead consumers to imitate their style and believe that they hope they will have the same lifestyle as social media influencers if they use the same products as theirs.

3.2 Social Media Influencer Credibility and Teen Buying Behavior

One theory that is widely used in research to explain the impact of *influencers* on consumer buying behavior is *source credibility*. Source Credibility theory states that individuals will be more easily persuaded when the source or sources who present them are considered credible. Definitively, *source credibility* is the trust in the communicator felt by the recipient of the message. So, influencers will be analyzed to understand whether they look credible and reliable for information (Olajojo, 2020)

According to (Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen 2016) *influencer credibility* has two dimensions, namely *expertise* and *trustworthiness*. Source expertise is the perception of the competence or capability of the source as a person who has expertise or skill in a particular area. Meanwhile, source trustworthiness relates to how the source is perceived as honest and trustworthy. In addition, according to Bond (2018) adding that *attractiveness* is also considered a dimension of *influencer credibility* which is the social or physical attractiveness of individuals who act as media personas. Another dimension is a *similarity* which is a mutual characteristic that is felt between *influencers* and individuals (Yuan and Lou, 2020).

Source credibility or endorser credibility is an important factor in the success of persuasive efforts (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). For example, the Trust to Influencer dimension was found to have a positive influence on the purchase intention of social media users. An influencer who has many followers may not necessarily be used as the right promotional strategy. Because a large number of followers is not enough to determine an influencer, trust and some characteristics of influencers will influence Instagram users to have purchase intentions. Brands or marketers must be aware of trust in Marketing Influencers. Because trust and some characteristics of Influencer Marketing in promoting a product will influence Instagram users to have purchase intentions. (Halim et al, 2020)

Influencers themselves basically can create a credible and creative message for a brand or product to attract consumers' attention. Influencers use their expertise to post about brands and products on social media which are usually seen by their followers, brand and product messages are considered more credible and trustworthy than paid sponsored ads (Abdullah et al, 2020). In addition, *influencers* can increase *engagement* with consumers by posting reliable information on social media platforms and interacting with those referred to as experts (Chua and Chang, 2016).

Chetioui et al (2020) describe that influencer attitudes have a positive impact on brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Perceived credibility, trustworthiness, expertise, and suitability have a positive impact on attitudes towards them. Stubb, Nystrom, and Colliander (2019) show that influencer credibility can significantly influence consumer attitudes and provide evidence of new products or previously known products, so that purchase intention for these new products will be better even though they are not yet known. Barbu (2019) highlights that sympathy, trust, expertise, and commonality are the main elements of the credibility of a social media influencer. Wellman et al (2020) discuss the ethical guidelines that influencers use in it. They point to the importance of understanding the principles that guide sponsored content and brands and the need to be loyal to users. Influencers textually and visually show their daily personal lives to attract and retain them; they can also engage followers in posts promoting multiple brands (Chae, 2018).

3.3 Perceived Quality of Information and Adolescent Buying Behavior

The quality of information is considered a very important factor influencing the decision-making process (Price, Neiger & Shanks, 2008). *Perceived information quality* (PIQ), refers to the value given by the audience to the message sent and can be influenced by four dimensions: credibility (reliable information), relevance (appropriate information), understandability (clear information), and timeliness (quick information) (Koohikali & Sidorova, 2017).

Good information from *influencers* relates to the amount and quality of the information provided by *influencers* which can be in the form of information about the company, its products, and services. There are three main factors of information that are

considered useful, namely *valuable*, informative, and helpful. The quality of this information itself will have an impact on the purchase intention of social media users, especially teenagers (Halim et al, 2020)

Informativeness is very important in online shopping because eWOM is a good source of information. Influencer reviews can be evaluated as eWOM because influencers share their experiences and thoughts about a product or service. Luo (2002) stated that the time consumption for specific information needed by consumers is reduced if the recommendation agency, the influencer, in this case, provides useful information. Hence, it helps to increase purchase intention. Studies by Lee and Hong (2016) have shown that good information will encourage good attitudes towards social media advertising from influencers and will have an impact on followers' purchase intentions. (Lou and Yuan, 2019) determined that the informative value of content created by influencers has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions.

3.4 Impact of Social Media Influencers on Materialism

Materialism is defined as "the importance consumers attach to worldly possessions. At the highest levels of materialism, such possessions occupy a central place in one's life and are believed to provide the greatest source of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Although materialism is not always associated with or leads to negative outcomes, studies have often focused on its role in undesirable behaviors/outcomes, such as compulsive buying (Islam et al., 2018), and intention to purchase counterfeit goods. And also decreased levels of psychological well-being (Christopher et al., 2009).

The use of social media is associated with materialistic views among adolescents (Debreceeni and Hofmeister-Toth, 2018). Concern about the impact of social media influencers on psychological well-being and adolescent materialism has increased (Stokel-Walker, 2019), perhaps in part because social comparisons are ubiquitous on social media and that it can lead to materialistic views (La Ferle and Chan, 2008). Recent research has indeed revealed that social comparisons with media celebrities are positively correlated with adolescent materialism, which in turn predicts compulsive buying (Islam et al., 2018). During this process, the use of social media moderates the relationship between social comparison and materialism, with increasing use of social media resulting in intensive materialism (Islam et al., 2018).

In another study, de Rezende Pinto et al. (2017) who studied adolescents (aged 11-18) showed that their attraction to celebrities, attitudes towards TV commercials, the influence of parents, peers, and friends, as well as several sociodemographic factors, together influence the materialistic views of adolescents. Similarly, Clark et al. (2001) found that role models such as fathers and favorite athletes had the greatest impact on adolescent materialism, with fathers serving to reduce their materialistic views and athletes encouraging materialist beliefs. Concerning social media influencers, influencers serve as role models for teen followers and can sometimes stimulate social comparison. In addition, influencers are constantly promoting sponsored products to followers, which can also drive followers' interest in material ownership. Social comparisons of adolescents with influencers and the fact that influencers are often role models for adolescents can encourage materialistic views of adolescents (Islam et al., 2018), which in turn, can be correlated with increased purchase intentions (Islam et al., 2018).

One form of materialism is consumptive behavior where the principles of materialism itself will be applied in the form of consumption. Consumptive behavior itself is the purchase of goods that are not aimed at meeting individual needs but rather to satisfy the desires of individuals and this is done excessively which results in waste and inefficient

costs from consumers (Suyasa and Fransisca, 2005). This behavior is increasingly accommodated by the development of the marketplace and the sale of goods online and teenagers can also easily access this because today's teenagers are familiar with information technology and also have smartphones. The existence of *influencers* themselves strengthens this consumptive behavior because many teenagers perceive *influencers* as *role models*. Boon and Lomore (2001) show that adolescents have relationships with their favorite celebrities and are more likely to influence their choices. Furthermore, teenagers admit that in addition to physical appearance, their idol also influences their attitude values, such as ethical and moral values. Teen consumers are also more likely to use products disseminated by the media to attract celebrities. so they want to imitate them and think what is recommended is good for them. Often what is done or exemplified by *influencers* requires significant financial sacrifices so that they make the teenagers spend a lot of money that they don't need.

IV. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze how the impact of social media influencers on the buying behavior of teenagers. From the results of the analysis, it is known how the impact of social media influencers on the buying decisions of teenagers. In this case, it is known that several factors can influence the buying behavior of teenagers as a result of exposure to social media influencers. First, it is known how the impact of influencers is related to social identification. In this case, adolescents feel they have an identity similar to the influencer and also feel part of the group represented by the individual. This encourages individual teens to follow the advice and lifestyle or choices of the influencer to become the same as the influencer or become part of the group. This is found from research conducted by Jin and Phua (2014), Jin and Ryu (2020), and also Croes and Bartels which show how social identification drives purchase intentions and actual purchases of teenagers, especially products advertised or recommended by these influencers.

How the impact of social media influencers can also be explained through the concept of source credibility. The concept of influencer credibility is a multidimensional concept in which this concept consists of the dimensions of expertise and trustworthiness, similarity, and attractiveness. Source credibility or endorser credibility is an important factor in the success of persuasive efforts (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). The Trust to Influencer dimension was found to have a positive influence on the purchase intention of social media users (Halim et al, 2020). an example of the Trust to Influencer dimension was found to have a positive influence on the purchase intention of social media users. Stubb, Nystrom, and Colliander (2019) show that influencer credibility is significantly higher in influencing consumer attitudes and providing evidence for new products so that new products will have a better image.

The information quality factor of social media influencers was also found to have an impact on teenagers where influencer reviews can be evaluated as eWOM because influencers share their experiences and thoughts about a product or service. Luo (2002) stated that the time consumption for specific information needed by consumers is reduced if the recommendation agency, the influencer, in this case, provides useful information. Hence, it helps to increase purchase intention (Lee and Hong, 2016).

Another impact of social media influencers is the increasing materialism of young people, influencers constantly promote sponsored products to followers, which can also encourage followers' interest in material ownership. Social comparisons of adolescents with influencers and the fact that influencers are often role models for adolescents can

encourage materialistic views of adolescents (Islam et al., 2018), which in turn, can be correlated with increased purchase intentions (Islam et al., 2018). One form of materialism is consumptive behavior where the principles of materialism itself will be applied in the form of consumption. The existence of influencers themselves strengthens this consumptive behavior because many teenagers perceive influencers as role models.

From the results of this study, there are suggestions for several interested parties. Companies that want to use influencers are expected to choose influencers who have good credit and also have identification that fits their target market. In terms of providing information, companies and influencers also need to compose messages and communicate clear, good, and informative messages to followers if they want to market their products.

Parents should have a more important role in the consumption behavior of adolescents. Parents need to provide input on how social media content is good and what influencers should and should not imitate.

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