



## The Influence of Trustworthiness and Parasocial Interaction on Purchase Intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung Products

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**Abstrak:** Dalam pemasaran kontemporer, influencer media sosial memiliki dampak signifikan dengan mengendorse produk kepada pengikut mereka. Agar seorang influencer dapat secara efektif menghasilkan minat beli, mereka harus dianggap kredibel. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana kepercayaan dan interaksi parasosial memengaruhi niat beli pengikut terhadap produk Klinik Bening Lampung, khususnya mereka yang mengikuti influencer Andhita Irianto. Penelitian ini menggunakan data primer yang dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dari 136 responden, yang dipilih melalui Purposive Sampling dalam kerangka Nonprobability Sampling, serta data sekunder. Metode analisis meliputi uji validitas dan reliabilitas, regresi linier berganda, dan pengujian hipotesis melalui uji t, uji F, dan koefisien determinasi ( $R^2$ ). Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa baik kepercayaan maupun interaksi parasosial dengan Andhita Irianto secara positif dan signifikan memengaruhi niat beli pengikut terhadap produk Klinik Bening Lampung.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepercayaan, Interaksi Parasosial, Niat Beli, Influencer.

**Abstract:** In contemporary marketing, social media influencers significantly impact by endorsing products to their followers. For an influencer to effectively generate purchase interest, they must be deemed credible. This research examines how trustworthiness and parasocial interactions influence the purchase intentions of followers towards Bening's Clinic Lampung products, particularly those following influencer Andhita Irianto. The study utilizes primary data collected through questionnaires from 136 respondents, selected via Purposive Sampling within a Nonprobability Sampling framework, along with secondary data. The analysis methods include validity and reliability tests, multiple linear regression, and hypothesis testing through t-tests, F-tests, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Findings reveal that both trustworthiness and parasocial interactions with Andhita Irianto positively and significantly impact followers' intentions to purchase Bening's Clinic Lampung products.

**Keywords:** Trustworthiness; Parasocial Interaction; Purchase Intention; Influencer.

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### Introduction

In the context of globalization, rapid technological advancements and the internet's essential role have significantly influenced human life, particularly through social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube. As of November 2023, Instagram boasts 96,965,500 active users in Indonesia, making it a highly popular platform for direct product marketing (Nasution, 2021; Databoks, 2023). Influencers have become pivotal in this marketing strategy, especially within the beauty industry, where their reviews profoundly impact consumer purchase intentions (Hanindharputri & Putra, 2019; Lee & Eastin, 2020; Chen, 2022). Bening's Clinic, operating 66 branches across Indonesia, leverages local beauty influencers such as Andhita Irianto to endorse

their products. Andhita, a Make-Up Artist with a substantial following of 149,000 on Instagram, regularly shares product reviews and her personal experiences with treatments at Bening's Clinic Lampung, thereby building trust among her followers (Ferdiana et al., 2022; Wilopo, 2021).

The credibility established by influencers like Andhita fosters parasocial relationships, characterized by one-sided interactions that create a sense of closeness between followers and influencers (Astagini & Kaihatu, 2017; Pratama, 2021). Despite this, followers' responses to Andhita reveal some skepticism, indicating potential challenges in the effectiveness of the interaction and the trustworthiness perceived. Effective trust and parasocial interactions are crucial for generating purchase intentions. However, existing research presents mixed findings on the impact of trustworthiness and parasocial interactions on purchase intentions. For instance, Cahyani (2022) reported a significant influence of parasocial interaction, but not trustworthiness, on purchase intentions. Conversely, Purwanto & Purwanto (2019) and Nyssa & Rahmidani (2019) found a significant impact of trustworthiness. Additionally, Amara (2020) and Isna'in & S.E. (2022) noted that parasocial interaction mediates the effect of social attractiveness on purchase intentions, though results remain inconsistent.

Based on this background, the research questions addressed are: does trustworthiness affect purchase intention, and does parasocial interaction influence purchase intention? This study aims to ascertain the effects of trustworthiness and parasocial interaction on purchase intentions. The findings are expected to benefit influencers by providing insights for evaluating trustworthiness and parasocial interactions, serve as a reference for academics conducting further research on this topic, and enhance researchers' understanding of how trustworthiness and parasocial interaction influence consumer purchase intentions

## **Theoretical Studies**

### **1. Marketing Communication**

Marketing communication involves utilizing communication techniques in marketing activities to disseminate information to the audience with the objective of enhancing revenue through the consumption of services or products offered (Kennedy & Soemanagara, 2006; Puspasari et al., 2021). Its goal is to bolster marketing strategies and support the marketing operations of a company (Puspasari et al., 2021). Integrated marketing communication represents a planning process that introduces a comprehensive planning framework to assess the strategic role of various marketing communication elements—such as public relations, advertising, direct selling, sales promotion, and interactive marketing—aiming for clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact (Srisusilawati, 2017). Information exchange in marketing

communication is a two-way process involving listening, reacting, and speaking until a satisfying exchange relationship is established (Srisusilawati et al., 2019).

## 2. Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) refers to positive or negative opinions expressed by consumers about a product or company via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to Hasan (2010) in Agatha et al. (2019), E-WOM is a crucial element in marketing programs that develop consumer expression towards a brand. The impact of online branding shows that current purchases are influenced by the role of E-WOM in building and activating brand image. During the information search phase, online consumer references can be sourced from various platforms like social media networks. E-WOM is regarded as a vital brand-related information source in today's digital era, necessitating attention to the credibility of reviews or information provided (Carolyn & Xiaowen, 2017). Research by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) indicates that consumers engage in E-WOM for social interaction, economic incentives, attention to other consumers, and self-enhancement. The perceived value of product quality shapes preferences and attitudes that influence purchasing decisions. E-WOM proves more effective than direct marketer promotions because consumers are more easily influenced by and trust recommendations from others who have experienced a product's benefits. Overall, E-WOM is an evolution of word of mouth (WOM) communication facilitated by the internet (Ardana & Ratini, 2018).

## 3. Social Media Influencers

Social media influencers are individuals with a substantial following who can sway purchasing decisions through their views, advice, or opinions. They assist companies or brands in connecting with target audiences through promotional social media content, fostering brand attachment and consumer loyalty (Nasution, 2021; McKerrell, 2019 in Girsang, 2020). Influencers are categorized into celebrities, industry experts, opinion leaders, bloggers, and micro-influencers, with most influencer marketing taking place on social media (Girsang, 2020). Studies indicate that consumer perception of influencers positively impacts purchase intention (Jain et al., 2019 in Shadrina & Sulistyanto, 2022). Influencer profiles can be developed through several dimensions: credibility, where influencers must make sincere and trustworthy recommendations aligned with their expertise; trust, crucial for reducing purchasing risk and maintained through transparency and consistency; authenticity, which involves unbiased information and communication with a unique individual style; and charisma, where influential personalities offer engaging digital personas that provide followers with a sense of belonging (Deges, 2018). Through credibility, trust, authenticity, and charisma, influencers aid brands in building robust consumer relationships.

#### 4. Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility is a critical factor in assessing the effectiveness of message delivery by endorsers. Credibility includes the perceived expertise and trust consumers place in the message conveyed (Stafford et al., 2002). Credible influencers can prompt positive consumer reactions to brand endorsements, making credibility a key aspect of efficient influencer utilization (Lou & Kim, 2019). According to Lou and Kim (2019), source credibility comprises four dimensions: (a) expertise, or the source's ability to provide knowledgeable and quality assessments related to a topic; (b) trustworthiness, the source's perceived reliability by the audience, indicating honesty, sincerity, or truthfulness; (c) attractiveness, the physical appeal or likable nature of the source; and (d) similarity, the perceived psychographic similarity followers feel towards themselves and the influencer.

#### 5. Trust

According to Sumarwan (2004, in Wardani & Maskur, 2022), trust is the belief that a product possesses specific attributes, often referred to as object-attribute linkage—consumers' belief in the likelihood of a relationship between an object and its relevant attributes. Trust also involves the consumer's ability to rely on a brand despite risks, with the expectation of positive outcomes (Geok Theng Lau, 1999). Trustworthiness, in contrast, is the trust established between various parties, such as superiors and subordinates, and among employees within a company. It fosters a comfortable work environment, eliminating negative attitudes like suspicion, jealousy, and backstabbing (Kapuy, 2019). According to Yilmazdoğan et al. (2021), there are five indicators of consumer trust in influencers: reliability, trustworthiness, credibility, sincerity, and promise-keeping. Influencers are expected to provide dependable and trustworthy information, have quality, credibility, and the capability to inspire trust, and be honest, sincere, and keep promises in their communications with followers.

#### 6. Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction refers to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses of fans to media figures, creating parasocial relationships through mass media (Cohen, 2014; Schramm & Hartmann, 2008). This interaction meets fans' social interaction needs and addresses loneliness through media content (Astagini & Kaihatu Veronica, 2017). Meanwhile, parasocial relationships displayed by celebrities through social media posts offer one-way closeness from fans to celebrities, enhancing intimacy (Sagita & Kadewardana, 2018). Although different, both influence consumption patterns; fans who engage in parasocial interaction with influencers tend to adopt similar consumption behaviors as the influencers (Labrecque, 2016, in Cahyani, 2022). Indicators of parasocial interaction include fans' expectations to interact with influencers on social media

(Sokolova & Kefi, 2019), and their comfort and dependence on influencers' messages (Zafar, Qiu, & Shahzad, 2020, in Cahyani, 2022). Parasocial interaction and parasocial relationships, despite their differences, both play crucial roles in the dynamics of social media and its influence on consumer behavior.

## 7. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention represents an individual's plan or desire to make a purchase, resulting from an overall evaluation of the product and emotional response to a specific behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2004; Wu & Lee, 2012, in Jufrizen et al., 2020). Attitudes towards a brand or product influence purchase intention, with positive attitudes likely encouraging individuals to buy (Assael, 1995; Hawkins et al., 1992, in Ain & Ratnasari, 2015). Purchase intention can be measured by observing consumer behaviors, such as the tendency to want to buy, preference for the product, and actively seeking information about the desired product (Ferdinand, 2016, in Purwanto & Purwanto, 2019). Several indicators of purchase intention include the desire to buy the promoted product, recommending the product to others, confidence in using the product, certainty in choosing the product, and planning to purchase the product (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Devi et al., 2020). This indicates that purchase intention not only involves personal desire but also considers social influence and confidence in product use.

## Method

### 1. Research Type

This study is a descriptive research employing a quantitative approach, following the definition by Sugiono (2019) which involves the use of numerical data analyzed with statistical methods. The primary focus is to investigate the impact of trustworthiness and parasocial interaction on the purchase intentions for skincare products at Bening's Clinic Lampung.

### 2. Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Primary data are directly obtained from the research subjects by the researcher, as described by Sugiono (2019). In this context, primary data were gathered from the followers of Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto, who serve as the respondents. Secondary data, according to Sugiono (2019), are collected indirectly, through other people or documents. This study sourced secondary data from Instagram accounts, books, and journals. Data collection was carried out through a survey by distributing questionnaires to respondents, adhering to the methodology described by Sugiyono (2019). The questionnaires were distributed online using Google Forms, and respondents' opinions on trustworthiness, parasocial interaction, and purchase intentions were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

### 3. Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of followers of beauty influencer Andhita Irianto who have shown an interest in purchasing products from Bening's Clinic Lampung, as defined by Sugiyono (2019). The sample, representing a portion of the population, was selected using Nonprobability Sampling with a Purposive Sampling Technique, in line with Sugiono (2019). The sample includes followers of the Instagram account @\_andhitairianto who frequently engage with Andhita Irianto's posts about Bening's Clinic Lampung and have an intention to buy the products. For this study, using 3 variables and 17 indicators, a sample size of 136 Instagram followers of beauty influencer Andhita Irianto is required, based on the formula provided by Hair et al. (2014).

### 4. Instrument Testing Requirements

Validity testing assesses how well a questionnaire measures the variables it intends to, using construct validity through factor analysis to evaluate the fit between indicators and theoretical concepts, as described by Sekaran & Bougie (2017). A variable is considered valid if its loading factor exceeds 0.50, as recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Reliability testing, on the other hand, evaluates the consistency and reliability of the measurement tool, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of  $\geq 0.60$  indicating good reliability, according to Hair et al. (2014). Values between 0.6 and 0.7 are considered acceptable, while those between 0.7 and 0.9 are deemed satisfactory.

### 5. Data Analysis Methods

Descriptive analysis is used to detail the collected data without making broad generalizations, as outlined by Sugiyono (2018). Multiple linear regression analysis is applied to investigate the relationships between one dependent variable and several independent variables, using the equation described by Hair et al. (2010). Partial regression testing is conducted with the t-statistic to determine the acceptance or rejection of hypotheses, as explained by Abdillah and Hartono (2015). The F-test (simultaneous test) examines whether the independent variables collectively influence the dependent variable, using a significance level of 0.05, as advised by Ghozali (2018). Additionally, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) measures the extent to which the model explains the variation in the dependent variable, with values closer to 1 indicating better explanatory power, as described by Ghozali (2018).

## Results And Discussion

### 1. Results

#### a. Questionnaire Collection

The data was collected by distributing questionnaires to the Instagram followers of Andhita Irianto, who is the Brand Ambassador for Bening's Clinic Lampung located in Bandar Lampung.

The questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms to streamline data processing. The data collection spanned three weeks, from February 1 to February 20, 2024, and successfully gathered responses from 136 participants who fit the study criteria, specifically being followers of Andhita Irianto on Instagram.

#### b. Descriptive Analysis

The study identified the characteristics of respondents, who follow Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto, the Brand Ambassador of Bening's Clinic Lampung, based on gender, age, occupation, and monthly expenditure. From the 136 respondents, the majority were female (73.53%), with most respondents aged between 18 and 26 years (68.38%). The largest occupational group was students (63.97%), followed by freelancers (13.24%) and private employees (13.24%). A significant portion of respondents had monthly expenses under Rp 1,000,000 (40.44%). This data suggests that the followers of Andhita Irianto interested in purchasing products from Bening's Clinic Lampung are mainly young women, particularly students, with limited monthly spending. These factors play a role in their interest and purchasing decisions regarding beauty products, which are increasingly viewed as essential in daily life.

#### c. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The study used multiple linear regression analysis to assess the impact of trustworthiness and parasocial interaction on the purchase intentions of Bening's Clinic Lampung products among Instagram followers of influencer Andhita Irianto. The sample included 136 respondents, with a 95% significance level. The analysis indicated that trustworthiness (X1) had a coefficient of 0.354, while parasocial interaction (X2) had a coefficient of 0.422. The regression equation is represented as  $Y = 4.754 + 0.354X_1 + 0.422X_2 + e$ . The results demonstrate that both trustworthiness (X1) and parasocial interaction (X2) have positive and significant coefficients. This implies that higher levels of trustworthiness and parasocial interaction are associated with greater purchase intentions (Y) for Bening's Clinic Lampung products among the followers of influencer Andhita Irianto.

#### d. Partial Test

**Tabel 1.** Partial Test Results

Variabel	t value	t table	Sig.	Conclusion
H1: Trustworthiness has a positive influence on purchase intention	4,009	1,96	< 0,001	Ha accepted
H2: Parasocial interaction has a positive influence on purchase intention	7,607	1,96	< 0,001	Ha accepted

Partial hypothesis testing is conducted to determine whether trustworthiness (X1) and parasocial interaction (X2) have a significant effect on purchase intention (Y) of Bening's Clinic Lampung products on Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto's followers. With a confidence level of 95% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), the test results show that both variables have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention for the product. This is supported by the calculated t-values being greater than the t-table values, namely 4.009 for trustworthiness (X1) and 7.607 for parasocial interaction (X2), with both significance values (P-values) less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, indicating a partial influence between trustworthiness (X1) and parasocial interaction (X2) on purchase intention (Y) of Bening's Clinic Lampung products on Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto's followers.

e. Simultaneous Test (F Test)

Simultaneous hypothesis testing is conducted to determine whether the independent variables, trustworthiness (X1) and parasocial interaction (X2), have a significant effect together on the dependent variable, purchase intention (Y) of Bening's Clinic Lampung products on Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto's followers. Using a confidence level of 95% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) and degrees of freedom of 133, the F-test results show that the calculated F-value is 65.924, exceeding the F-table value of 3.064234. Additionally, the significance value (P-value) is also less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, meaning that the independent variables together have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Thus, it can be concluded that trustworthiness and parasocial interaction simultaneously affect the purchase intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung products on Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto's followers.

f. Coefficient of Determination Test (R<sup>2</sup>)

Coefficient of determination testing is conducted to evaluate how much variability in the dependent variable (purchase intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung products) can be explained by the independent variables (trustworthiness and parasocial interaction). In this study, the coefficient of determination or R-squared (R<sup>2</sup>) is obtained at 0.498, meaning that approximately 49.8% of the variability in the purchase intention of the product can be explained by trustworthiness and parasocial interaction. The rest, at 50.2%, is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. An R<sup>2</sup> value approaching one indicates that the independent variables significantly contribute to explaining the variability in the dependent variable. Thus, it can be concluded that trustworthiness and parasocial interaction have a significant effect on the purchase intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung products on Instagram influencer Andhita Irianto's followers, although other factors also play a role in determining this purchase intention



## 2. Discussion

### a. The Influence of Trustworthiness on Influencer Andhita Irianto's Followers' Purchase Intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung Products

Trust demonstrated by celebrity endorsers when promoting products plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' beliefs about a product, which in turn can increase consumer purchase intention. According to Shimp (2013), the honesty displayed by celebrity endorsers can instill confidence in consumers regarding the promoted product. Partial test results indicate that trustworthiness (X1) in influencer Andhita Irianto has a positive and significant influence on the purchase intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung products. This indicates that the trust demonstrated by the influencer significantly affects the purchase intention of the product. This finding is also supported by previous studies, such as that conducted by Purwanto & Purwanto (2019), which found that trustworthiness in influencers significantly influences purchase intention, and by Nyssa & Rahmidani (2019), who found that perceived trustworthiness has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention. Therefore, influencers are expected to continue strengthening their trustworthiness aspects, such as being reliable, trustworthy, honest, and consistent in promoting products, especially beauty products like Bening's Clinic Lampung.

### b. The Influence of Parasocial Interaction on Influencer Andhita Irianto's Followers' Purchase Intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung Products

Audience and media persona form a relationship known as parasocial relationship, where the similarity of characteristics can enhance the relationship (Pratama, 2021). Parasocial interaction between influencers and their followers on Instagram also plays a significant role in determining purchase intention of products, as seen in the partial testing (t-test) indicating that parasocial interaction (X2) has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of Bening's Clinic Lampung products. On influencer Andhita Irianto's Instagram account, there is evidence of parasocial interaction through the comments provided by her followers. This indicates that parasocial interaction has been well established between the influencer and her followers, which impacts the increase in purchase intention of the product. This research finding is also supported by previous studies, such as that by Cahyani (2022), which found that parasocial interaction significantly influences purchase intention. This finding is also in line with Amara's (2020) research, which showed that social attractiveness does not positively influence purchase intention, but parasocial interaction mediates the influence of social attractiveness on online product purchase intention. Additionally, research by Ruthllianie & Candraningrum (2020) found that parasocial interaction can influence merchandise purchases. This confirms that the closer the

parasocial relationship between an influencer and their followers, the higher the followers' motivation to make purchase intentions toward the promoted products.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis findings, the initial hypotheses regarding the significant and positive impact of both trustworthiness and parasocial interaction on the intention to purchase Bening's Clinic Lampung products are validated. The trustworthiness aspect, especially concerning the trust and honesty demonstrated by influencer Andhita Irianto, significantly influences followers' purchasing intentions. Similarly, parasocial interaction, particularly manifested through followers' appreciation of Andhita's content related to Bening's Clinic Lampung products, also notably contributes to purchase intention. Suggestions stemming from these results include underlining the crucial role of influencers' consistency and integrity in delivering information, alongside their active involvement with followers to sustain interest and purchase intent towards the products. Moreover, future research endeavors are encouraged to explore additional variables associated with influencer credibility to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of purchase intention for Bening's Clinic Lampung products.

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