

The Effect of Celebrity Testimonials on Generation Z Consumer Purchase Intention in Padang City

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Abstract

The development of social media has changed consumer behaviour patterns, especially in generation Z who are very active in the digital environment. One of the marketing strategies that is widely used today is the use of celebrity testimonials as a form of promotion to build trust and attract consumer buying interest. This study aims to examine the influence of celebrity testimonials on the purchase intention of generation Z consumers. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach and a survey design using a questionnaire. The population in this study were generation Z consumers in Padang City who actively use social media and follow certain celebrities or influencers. Data were analysed using simple linear regression. Theoretical studies in this study include marketing communication theory, source credibility theory, and consumer behaviour concepts. This article is the initial part of a broader research and will be continued with data-based quantitative analysis.

Keywords : Celebrity testimonials; Purchase intention; Generation Z; Consumer behaviour; Social media.

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INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, social media has become one of the most dominant marketing channels in influencing consumer behaviour. Social media not only offers space for brands to reach a wide audience, but also creates two-way interactions that strengthen the relationship between consumers and brands (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). One strategy that is widely used in this context is the use of celebrity testimonials or endorsements by public figures and influencers. Celebrity endorsements are considered an effective form of marketing communication because they are able to build brand credibility and increase consumer buying interest (Erdogan, 1999).

Generation Z, individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is a demographic group that is very familiar with digital technology and social media (Schroth, 2019). They have unique characteristics in consuming information-fast, interactive, and selective about the messages they receive. This generation is heavily influenced by content shared by celebrities or influencers on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Not only as a source of entertainment, digital celebrities have become an important reference in making purchasing decisions for generation Z, especially in terms of lifestyle and product consumption (Williams et al., 2010).

From the perspective of marketing communication theory, messages delivered by celebrities have high persuasion value because they contain elements of attractiveness and

credibility (Ohanian, 1990). Ohanian suggests three main dimensions of source credibility, namely trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. These three dimensions can increase the effectiveness of the message and form a positive attitude towards the product, which in turn encourages purchasing behaviour (Spry et al., 2011). Research by Choi & Rifon (2012) also confirmed that celebrities who are considered to have high expertise and attractiveness are able to create psychological effects that encourage consumer loyalty and trust in the advertised brand.

However, the characteristics of Generation Z that demand authenticity and transparency require that endorsement strategies be authentic and relevant. They prefer content that feels personalised and in line with their values (Fromm & Read, 2018). Therefore, it is important to evaluate whether celebrity testimonials are truly effective in influencing Generation Z's purchase intention, especially in a local context like Indonesia, which has its own social and cultural dynamics.

Several previous studies have shown a positive influence between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intention (Amos et al., 2008; Choi & Rifon, 2012). However, these studies were mostly conducted in Western countries, so there is a gap in understanding how this phenomenon occurs in Indonesia, especially among generation Z who live in a complex digital environment. In Indonesia, the use of celebrities as brand ambassadors has become a common practice, but its effectiveness among generation Z still requires a more in-depth and contextualised study.

Padang City, as the economic and cultural centre of West Sumatra Province, has a significant generation Z population that actively uses social media. Padang City, as the economic and cultural centre of West Sumatra Province, has a significant generation Z population that actively uses social media. This study is expected to answer the question of whether celebrity testimonials have a significant effect on the purchase intention of generation Z consumers in Padang City, and how the dimensions of celebrity credibility play a role in shaping their perceptions and purchase intentions.

The purpose of this research is to analyse the influence of celebrity testimonials on generation Z's purchase intention in Padang City, as well as identify the most dominant credibility factors in influencing purchasing decisions. This research also aims to enrich theoretical studies in the field of digital marketing communication and provide practical recommendations for businesses in developing marketing strategies that are relevant to the characteristics of generation Z. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of literature on the influence of celebrity testimonials on the purchase intention of generation Z. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of literature on the influence of celebrity endorsement in the digital era, especially in the context of young consumers in Indonesia. Practically, the results of this study can be used as a reference by marketers and businesses in determining the right celebrity to be used as an endorser and in designing effective messages to reach generation Z who are increasingly critical of traditional marketing strategies.

Several previous studies have shown a positive influence between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intention (Amos et al., 2008; Choi & Rifon, 2012). A study by (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017) stated that celebrities, especially those active on social media, have a significant influence in shaping brand perceptions and purchasing decisions in young consumers. However, most of these studies were conducted in Western countries, leaving Indonesia's social and cultural context largely unexplored. This creates a gap in understanding how celebrity influence on purchase intention occurs among Generation Z Indonesians who have different social norms, cultural values, and media dynamics (Setyorini & Hendarjatno, 2022).

In Indonesia, the use of celebrities as brand ambassadors has become a common practice, especially in the cosmetics, food and technology industries. However, the effectiveness of this strategy is not necessarily uniform across market segments. In the context

of generation Z, known as digital natives, factors such as authenticity, value congruence, and content relevance to personal experience are key considerations in responding to marketing messages (Putri & Hidayat, 2021). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of these factors is important to determine whether celebrity testimonials are still relevant and effective in shaping purchase intention, especially in a region like Padang City.

Padang City, as the economic and cultural centre of West Sumatra Province, has a significant Generation Z population that actively uses social media (Padang, 2023). Increased internet access and massive social media usage among teenagers and young adults make the city a representative location to study the influence of celebrity testimonials in a local context. In addition, an area-based approach is also important to understand variations in consumer behaviour based on their social and geographical backgrounds (Ramadani & Prasetyo, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method, which was chosen because it can provide a more measurable and systematic description of the relationship between the variables studied (Creswell, 2014). The research design used is a causal design, which aims to examine the effect of celebrity testimonials on consumer buying interest (Sugiyono, 2016). The population in this study are all generation Z consumers in Padang City, who actively use social media and have been exposed to celebrity testimonials. The research sample was taken using purposive sampling technique, which is selecting respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The criteria for respondents selected are as follows:

1. Aged between 13 to 27 years old, which is the age range of generation Z.
2. Have an active social media account (such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube).
3. Have seen or followed celebrity endorsements or testimonials related to certain products.

Based on the suggestion (Roscoe, 1975) that the minimum sample size for linear regression analysis is between 30 and 100 respondents, the planned sample size in this study is at least 30 respondents.

The data collection technique was carried out through distributing online questionnaires using Google Forms. The questionnaire instrument was developed based on indicators from the variables of celebrity testimonials and purchase intention. The instrument for the celebrity testimonial variable refers to dimensions including attractiveness, credibility, and congruence between the celebrity and the product (Ohanian, 1990), while the purchase intention variable is formulated based on consumer behaviour theory which includes attention, interest, and intention to buy (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015). All question items use a 5-point Likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results

This study aims to determine the effect of celebrity testimonials on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers in Padang City. The data was collected through an online questionnaire and filled out by 30 respondents, all of whom are part of Generation Z.

Each respondent rated five indicators of celebrity testimonials (TM1-TM5) and five indicators of purchase intention (MB1-MB5). The scores were then averaged for each variable to be used in the regression analysis.

To determine the effect of celebrity testimonials on purchase intention, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results of data processing resulted in the following regression equation model:

$$Y = -0.387 + 0.533(TM1) + 0.165(TM2) + 0.150(TM3) + 0.247(TM4) + 0.055(TM5)$$

Where Y is the average value of purchase intention (MB_{avg}). That is, in general, all indicators of celebrity testimonials jointly affect the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers. A positive coefficient indicates that an increase in the score on each celebrity testimonial indicator tends to increase the value of purchase intention.

B. Significance Test

Test t (Partial Significance)

The t test was conducted to determine whether the celebrity testimonial variable partially had a significant effect on purchase intention. Based on the results of the analysis, the t-count value is 8.24 with a p-value of 0.000. Because the p value < 0.05 , it can be concluded that partially celebrity testimonials have a significant effect on the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers in Padang City.

F Test (Simultaneous Significance)

The F test is used to see whether all independent variables simultaneously have a significant effect on the dependent variable. The F value of 29.53 with a p-value of $1.65e-09$ indicates that the overall regression model is significant. This means that the five indicators of celebrity testimonials together are able to influence consumer buying interest.

C. Coefficient of Determination (R^2 and R)

The R Square (R^2) value of 0.860 indicates that 86% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by the celebrity testimonial variable. The remaining 14% is explained by other factors not included in the model.

The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.927 indicates a very strong and positive relationship between celebrity testimonials and purchase intention.

D. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that celebrity testimonials play an important role in influencing Generation Z's purchase intention in Padang City. This is reflected in the high R^2 value and significant F-test results. Some indicators of celebrity testimonials are proven to significantly influence purchasing decisions, although not all.

Generation Z is very active on social media and has a tendency to follow celebrities or influencers they admire. Therefore, testimonials provided by public figures are believed to be able to shape perceptions and encourage purchasing actions.

This finding is in line with the results of previous studies which show that celebrity endorsements can increase consumer trust and interest in a product, especially among the digitally active younger generation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion in this study, it can be concluded that celebrity testimonials have an important and significant role in shaping the buying interest of Generation Z consumers in Padang City. The statistical test results show that both partially and simultaneously, the indicators of celebrity testimonials affect purchasing decisions. This is reflected in the R Square value of 0.860, which indicates that most of the variation in consumer purchase intention can be explained by the influence of celebrity testimonials. The regression model used also shows a positive relationship between the indicators of celebrity testimonials and purchase intention. This means that the better consumers' perceptions of celebrities who provide testimonials, the higher their propensity to buy products advertised by these celebrities.

This research confirms that Generation Z, who live in a digital environment and are highly active on social media, are highly influenced by the public figures or celebrities they follow. They tend to consider celebrity testimonials as a reliable source of information,

sometimes even more so than traditional advertising or information from manufacturers directly. Therefore, celebrity testimonials are not just a promotional tool, but one of the psychological factors that influence the consumption behaviour of today's young generation.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions that have been described, some suggestions that can be given include:

1. For business people or marketers: It is recommended to further utilise celebrity testimonial-based marketing strategies or influencer marketing. The selection of celebrities that match the characteristics and interests of Generation Z is very important to ensure the marketing message is received effectively.
2. For future researchers: It is hoped that similar research can be conducted with a wider area coverage and a larger number of respondents. In addition, it is important to consider other variables such as brand image, product quality, price, and user experience that can also affect purchase intention.
3. For consumers (Generation Z): It is important to remain critical and selective in responding to celebrity testimonials. While they can be a useful source of reference, purchasing decisions should be based on personal needs, product value and other rational considerations so as not to get caught up in excessive consumptive behaviour.

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