



Understanding Opinion Leadership in Social Media: The Role of Perceived Fit with Personal Interests in Purchase Behavior and Social Media Engagement

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ABSTRACT

In today's social media landscape, internet celebrities, often regarded as "opinion leaders", play an essential role in marketing. This study investigates the influence of opinion leaders on social media platforms, with a particular focus on TikTok and Instagram. This study used a quantitative empirical approach through online and offline surveys. Based on the survey results, 327 respondents met the criteria. The findings demonstrated that key factors, such as perceived originality, perceived quality, perceived quantity, and humor, enhanced the persuasive power of influencers, making them role models for consumers. The central concept of this study, the personal fit theory, posits that an opinion leader's success in influencing purchasing behavior and engagement depends on how well their content aligns with their followers' personal interests. The empirical evidence supports this theory, showing a significant increase in purchase behavior when opinion leaders create a personal fit between their content and their followers' interests.

JEL Classification: M10, M31, M37

Keywords: Social media influencer; opinion leadership; social media engagement; purchase behavior; perceived fit with personal interests

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INTRODUCTION

Social media can facilitate the exchange of information among users. Individuals use social media platforms such as Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram to search for information (Lookadoo et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2025). TikTok, the most recent addition, has grown in popularity as a video-sharing platform. According to a report from Business of Apps, TikTok reached 1.6 billion monthly active users (MAU) worldwide by the third quarter of 2023 (Databoks, 2023). Along with today's development of social media, internet celebrities, commonly referred to as "influencers" or "stars" (Das et al., 2022), play an important role in marketing and developing promotional strategies with varying degrees of brand influence (Audrezet et al., 2020). Despite TikTok's booming growth and the importance of influencer marketing, limited research has analyzed how followers respond to influencers on this platform (Barta et al., 2023). Influencers, often regarded as "opinion leaders", are prominent social media users who are considered role models for their audiences (Barta et al., 2023). Influencers representing internet celebrities are leveraged by companies to promote their products on Instagram, YouTube, blogs, and other social media platforms to gain trust and attention (Reinikainen et al., 2020). Influencers provide advantages both for brands and for themselves, offering a degree of influence that is considered more effective than traditional influencers (Reinikainen et al., 2020; Southgate, 2017).

Previous research on the effectiveness of influencers has focused on influencer credibility (Djafarova and Trofimenko, 2019; Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020) through celebrity characteristics such as attractiveness (Djafarova and Trofimenko, 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020), trustworthiness, and competence (van Reijmersdal et al. 2024; Djafarova and Trofimenko, 2019). However, consumer attitudes are also shaped by the content produced by influencers (Jegham and Bouzaabia, 2022). As Ahmadi et al. (2022) found, consumers are more likely to be influenced by Instagram celebrities than by traditional celebrities, suggesting that users are likely to look for product information through posts by Instagram celebrities (Ahmadi et al., 2022). Given the importance of today's contents, consumers are often inspired by purchase images and product recommendations shared by social media influencers (Aragoncillo and Orús, 2018). Therefore, it is important to conduct a further investigation regarding the content shared by online celebrities (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Previous research has examined the antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership on Instagram (Casaló et al., 2020; Fakhreddin and Foroudi, 2022). The findings indicated that perceived originality influenced the formation of perceived opinion leadership. In contrast, Putri and Agus (2019) found that perceived originality, quality, and uniqueness did not have a positive effect on key opinion leaders. In recent research, Barta et al. (2023) have extended the antecedents and consequences of opinion leaders on TikTok by examining both direct and indirect relationships. The findings indicated that perceived originality had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership, whereas quality and humor had no significant effect. Inconsistencies in research findings may be attributed to various factors, including differences in variables (Joshi et al., 2023), platforms (Barta et al., 2023), product types (Ahmadi et al., 2022) and sample limitations (Barta et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors underlying consumer decision-making, including mediators and moderators that are responsible for the variations in consumer responses (Joshi et al., 2023).

This study aims to fill the research gap from Casaló et al. (2020) by examining actual behavior. In addition, this study focuses on cosmetic or personal care products and fashion that have experienced a surge in revenue. In 2022, the beauty and personal care market generated IDR 111.83 trillion in revenue and is expected to continue to grow until 2027 (Databoks, 2022). Furthermore, this study focuses on two social media platforms, namely Instagram and TikTok. This study aims to address the gaps in previous research (Barta et al., 2023; Casaló et al., 2020) by answering the following research questions:

RQ1: What kind of cosmetic, personal care, and fashion content is most influential in shaping opinion leadership?

RQ2: Does the perceived opinion leadership influence product purchase behavior and social media engagement?

RQ3: Does perceived fit with personal interests moderate between perceived opinion leadership and purchase behavior or social media engagement?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) of persuasion is a model in social psychology that explains how individuals process persuasive messages (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). According to ELM, there are two main routes through which people process information, namely the central and peripheral routes. The central route involves prudent evaluation of the arguments and evidence presented in a message. Meanwhile, the peripheral route relies on shallow cues and heuristics, such as the attractiveness of the source, the length of the message, or the number of arguments (Wang et al., 2019). ELM has been applied in various fields, including marketing and advertising, healthcare, counseling, political communication, environmental issues, and education (Srivastava and Saini, 2022). In the field of marketing and advertising, ELM has been used to explain behavior processing (Srivastava and Sivaramakrishnan, 2021; Zhou and Xue, 2019) and online gaming behavior (Wang et al., 2019). In the context of influencers (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020), ELM has been used to investigate the persuasive cues of YouTube and Instagram influencers. These cues are associated with the message and the presentation of the source or speaker, environment, and the like. Therefore, the communicator and their perspective can have an impact on audience persuasion. As defined by Sokolova and Kefi (2020), a speaker's authority, credibility, and social appeal are fundamental to their persuasive impact. This study focuses on the message or content shared by influencers, specifically examining perceived originality, perceived quality, perceived quantity, perceived uniqueness, and perceived humor. These factors are analyzed to understand their effect on audience persuasion that encourages individuals to view influencers as role models and to consider the information conveyed as interesting and persuasive (Casaló et al., 2020).

Hypothesis Development

Perceived originality is a person's ability to think and express themselves independently and creatively (Kei and Osman, 2024). Casaló et al. (2020) defined originality as the degree of novelty and differentiation in individuals' actions. Consumers who follow opinion leaders who publish original content tend to exhibit behaviors beneficial to both opinion leaders and the companies they represent. Previous research shows that perceived originality affects opinion leadership. When fashion and cosmetics influencers present unique and distinct content, consumers are more likely to perceive them as opinion leaders (Casaló et al., 2020; Fakhreddin and Foroudi, 2022). On platforms such as Instagram or TikTok followers seek the latest trends through original and innovative content. This forms the perception that they are not missing anything to be updated fashionable and make a good impression. Therefore, original content promotes their intention to follow the influencer's advice (Jegham and Bouzaabia, 2022; Barta et al., 2023; Fakhreddin and Foroudi, 2022). Kei and Osman (2024) further confirmed that perceived originality influenced purchasing decisions, especially among millennials on Instagram. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *Perceived originality has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership.*

Opinion leaders play a crucial role in communicating with their audience, with the delivery of this information heavily influenced by mass media content distribution (Podschuweit and Geise, 2024). The transfer of interesting information and quality content are key factors in effective information dissemination and can be factors influence users' decisions to follow an account (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Podschuweit and Geise, 2024). Quality is considered important in building a reputation in the community, which in turn can lead users to be considered as opinion leaders (Leal et al., 2014). Publication quality has been demonstrated to be an important factor in building a reputation in online communities (Barta et al., 2023). In addition, Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2022) confirmed that perceived quality influence opinion leadership in Instagram. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: *Perceived quality has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership.*

The interaction between users and influencers determines the status of opinion leaders (Casaló et al., 2020). The quantity of content published influences users' enjoyment and engagement. Greater exposure can foster active participation, attract more followers, and create a positive impression (Audrezet et al., 2020). As a result, the frequency of publication positively affects the experience and hedonic perception of opinion leadership (Barta et al., 2023; Putri and Agus, 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: *Perceived quantity has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership.*

Uniqueness is defined as the extent to which an individual's behavior is distinct and different from others (Casaló et al., 2020). Social media influencers often persuade their followers through their perceived uniqueness (Taillon et al., 2020). The unique content posted by influencers on platforms such as Instagram can shape users' perceptions of them as opinion leaders (Casaló et al., 2020). Consumers are aware that perceived uniqueness attracts attention and leads to a sense of superiority (Putri and Agus, 2019). In other words, unique content contributes to perceived opinion leadership (Cabañero et al., 2023). Previous research has confirmed that unique content has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership (Casaló et al., 2020; Putri and Agus, 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: *Perceived uniqueness has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership.*

Influencers regularly publish content on social media that contains persuasive messages to their followers, offering both informational and entertainment value (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Humor and celebrities are two creative tactics that are useful for advertising, especially for younger target audiences (Southgate, 2017). Barta et al. (2023) demonstrated that TikTok influencers used verbal and non-verbal languages to convey their emotions through short and funny videos. As a result, followers' emotions become synchronized with those of the influencers, creating a pleasant experience (Barta et al., 2023; Lee and Theokary, 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: *Humor has a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership.*

Opinion leadership refers to the extent to which an individual is seen as a model for others and the extent to which the information they provide is considered interesting and persuasive (Casaló et al., 2020). From the users' perspective, this is related to increased self-esteem as followers often have high self-esteem when they buy products that have been recommended by celebrities (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). When users perceive influencers as opinion leaders, it influences their intention to follow the advice (Barta et al., 2023; Jegham and Bouzaabia, 2022; Casaló et al., 2020) and impacts their purchasing decisions (Fakhreddin and Foroudi, 2022). Opinion leaders can build and maintain close relationships with their followers, which is a valuable asset to gather attention and create unique value for their followers and the brands involved (Sheng et al., 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: *Perceived opinion leadership has positive effects on social media engagement.*

H7: *Perceived opinion leadership has positive effects on purchase behavior.*

Perceived fit with personal interests refers to how well an influencer's content aligns with an individual's values, interests, and personality (Casaló et al., 2020). When the content shared by an opinion leader on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram aligns with a consumer's personality, the consumer is more likely to adopt the opinion leader's suggestions and behaviors, such as purchasing products or sharing content (Casaló et al., 2020; Putri and Agus, 2019). Perceived fit with personal interests strengthens the influence of opinion leaders, enhancing their credibility and relatability and making their advice more persuasive. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: *Perceived fit with personal interests moderates the relationship between perceived opinion leadership and purchase behavior.*

H9: *Perceive fit with personal interests moderates the relationship between perceived opinion leadership and social media engagement.*

Based on hypothesis development, the following is the research model. Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between Perceived Originality, Perceived Quality, Perceived Quantity, Perceived Uniqueness, Humor on Perceived Opinion Leadership. Then, relationship Perceived Opinion Leadership on Social Media Engagement and Purchase Behavior. In addition, the moderating effect of perceived fit also examined in this study.

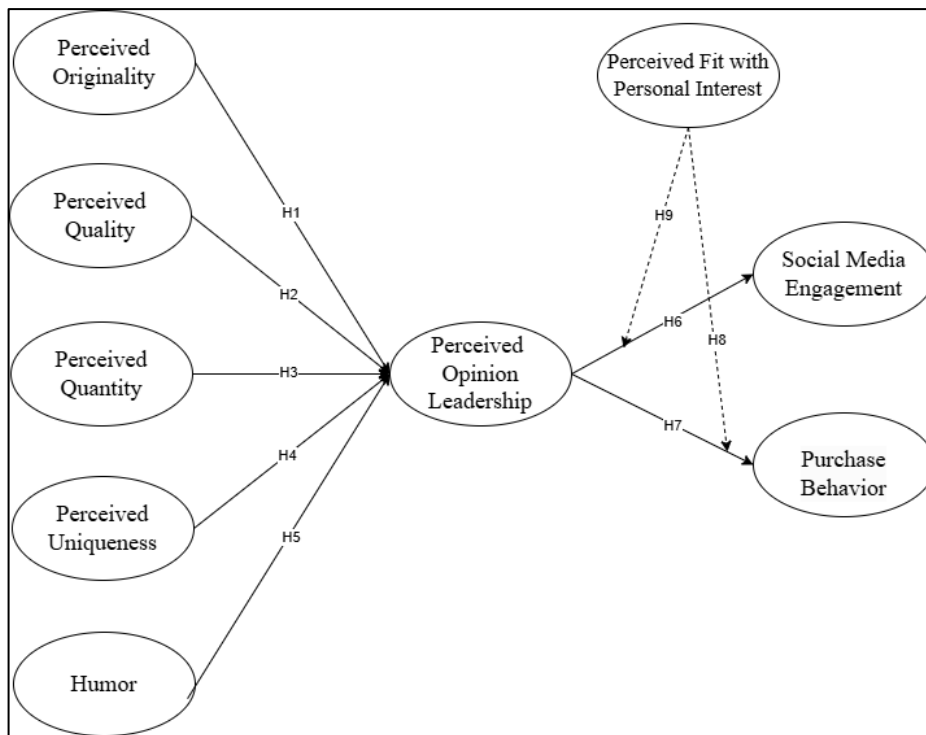


Figure 1 Research Model

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design and Procedures

This study used a quantitative empirical approach by conducting surveys and distributing questionnaires both online and offline. The questionnaires targeted a large population of TikTok and Instagram users in Indonesia.

Selection of Samples

Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, was used to intentionally select participants whose characteristics met the requirements of this study (Donald and Pamela, 2014.) Purposive sampling focuses on individuals with specific traits who are more likely to be relevant and capable of contributing to the explanation of the research phenomenon (Etikan, 2016). This study also included screening questions to ensure that respondents met the criteria as samples and could continue to fill out the survey. The screening questions were:

Q1: “Do you follow any influencer accounts on TikTok or Instagram?”

Q2: “Which cosmetic, personal care, and fashion influencers do you follow on TikTok or Instagram?”

According to Hair et al. (2010), a sample size of 327 respondents in this study met the recommended criterion for Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which requires a sample size at least 10 times the number of the most significant indicators in the research model. Additionally, Cohen (1992) suggested that larger sample sizes enhance the statistical power of the analysis. This study focuses on three generations (generation X, Y, and Z) due to their distinct technology and social media usage characteristics. Generation Z, representing 90.46% of the total respondents, is predominant in the sample, reflecting the prevalence of young social media users. Generation Y (millennials) was also included due to their significant engagement in technology, inquisitive values, and advanced technological skills (Bolton et al., 2013). Although the number of respondents from generations X and Y was not as large as generation Z, their inclusion provides valuable insights since they are also active social media users who influence social media trends and online purchases.

Measurements

To evaluate the variables in this study, statement items from previous studies were adapted. Perceived uniqueness was adapted from Franke and Schreier (2008) and validated by Casaló et al. (2020). Perceived originality was adapted from Moldovan et al. (2011) and validated by Casaló et al. (2020). Quality and Quantity was adapted from Sanchez-Franco and Roldan (2010) and validated by Barta et al. (2023). Humor was adapted from and validated by Phua and Kim (2018) and Zhang (1996). Opinion leadership was adapted from and validated by Gentina et al. (2014), Park (2013), and Thakur et al. (2016). Social media engagement was adapted from and validated by Baek et al. (2022) and Giakoumaki and Kreppa (2020). Finally, fit with personal interests was adapted from and validated by Lee et al. (2012).

Analysis Methods

This research used SEM-PLS, which is an increasingly popular statistical procedure for hypothesis testing. It allows researchers to simultaneously model and estimate complex relationships between several dependent and independent variables (Hair et al., 2018). SEM-PLS emphasizes the model's predictive capability over model fit, making it more suitable for research aiming to predict certain behaviors or outcomes, such as purchasing behavior and social media engagement where the phenomenon being studied is relatively new (Roldán and Sánchez-Franco, 2012; Hair et al., 2016). By using bootstrapping techniques, SEM-PLS can assess the statistical significance of the paths within the model, providing more accurate and stable estimates of path effects (Chin, 1998).

SmartPLS 3.0 was used to analyze the data. The first step involved assessing the validity and reliability of the statement items. Validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) value, with a recommended value for more than 0.5 indicating validity. Meanwhile, reliability was determined using the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) values, with recommended value for both being 0.6 indicating internal consistency (Hair et al., 2018).

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Based on the survey results, 327 respondents met the criteria. The sample consisted of three generations, namely Generation X, Y, and Z. Generation Z, currently aged between 11 and 28 years (Barhate and Dirani, 2022), dominated the sample, representing 90.46% of the total respondents. The millennial generation and generation Y are also highly involved in technology, inquisitive values, and technological skills. Both generations are noted for their extensive use of social media and high interest in social issues. The uneven distribution of generations in this study reflects the actual demographics of today's social media users. Generation Z stands out as the predominant user group on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram (Smith, 2011). Despite this uneven distribution, the sample effectively represents the relevant target population and provides valuable insights into their social media behavior.

The occupational backgrounds of the respondents were also analyzed, revealing that 90.215% were students, 6.42% were private employees, and 1.22% were entrepreneurs. This affects the levels of income, with 69.2% of respondents reporting an income of less than one million. The predominance of student respondents holds significance, given their active engagement as social media users and their frequent

inclusion as the primary audience in digital marketing campaigns (Pempek et al., 2009). Despite this dominance, the diverse occupational backgrounds and income levels contribute to a more holistic understanding of the social media user population.

In terms of social media usage, 56% of respondents actively used both Instagram and TikTok, while 29% used only Instagram and 16% used only TikTok. This reflects TikTok’s status as a relatively new social media platform.

In terms of product categories, namely cosmetics, skincare, and fragrance, the survey results showed that cosmetics were the most preferred product category, with 66% of respondents expressing a preference. Personal care products were preferred by 32% of respondents, fragrance products were the least preferred, with only 1% of respondents expressing a preference. In the fashion product category, including shirts, pants, shoes, and bags, the survey results showed that clothes and pants were the most in-demand products, with 72% of respondents expressing a preference, followed by shoes and bags. Respondent profile are presented in Table 1. Below:

Table 1 Respondents’ Profile

Age	Total	Frequency
Gen X (43-58)	3	1.15%
Gen Y (28-42)	22	8.40%
Gen Z (11-28)	302	90.46%
	327	100.00%
Income		
5-10 million	12	3.67%
1-3 million	63	19.27%
<1 million	227	69.42%
3-5 million	19	5.81%
>10 million	6	1.83%
	327	100.00%
Occupation		
Private sector employee	21	6.42%
Student	295	90.21%
Entrepreneur	4	1.22%
Others (content creator, civil servant)	7	2.14%
	327	100.00%
Social Media Intensity		
3-5 hours	146	44.65%
1-3 hours	102	31.19%
5-10 hours	79	24.16%
	327	100.00%

Source: Respondent survey

Assessment of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed using SmartPLS 3.0, and the results in Table 2. showed that the validity and reliability values met the criteria. The AVE value was higher than the cutoff value of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), demonstrating good convergent validity of the constructs. Additionally, the CA value met the criteria of higher than 0.7, while the CR value met the threshold for consistency. The CA, CR, and AVE values are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2 Validity and Reliability Values

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
PPI	0.939	0.939	0.892
H	0.930	0.955	0.877
OL	0.949	0.949	0.796
PI	0.896	0.935	0.828
PO	0.939	0.952	0.767
PU	0.935	0.959	0.886
SME	0.909	0.936	0.785
PQL	1.0	1.0	1.0
PQN	1.0	1.0	1.0

Note: PO: Perceived Originality, PQL: Perceived Quality, PQN: Perceived Quantity, PU: Perceived Uniqueness, H: Humor, OL: Opinion Leadership, PI: Purchasing Behaviors, SME: Social Media Engagement, PPI: Perceived Fit with Personal Interests. Sig < 0.01** | Sig < 0.05*.

Source: SmartPLS 3.0

Table 3. presents the factor loadings for all constructs in the study. The loading factor values were significant at 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher (Hair et al., 2019), indicating that the items used in this study achieved discriminant validity.

Table 3 Outer Loading Values

	PPI	H	PQL	PQN	OP	PI	PO	PU	SME
PPI1	0.928								
PPI2	0.959								
PPI3	0.945								
H1		0.949							
H2		0.960							
H3		0.913							
PQL			1.000						
PQN				1.000					
OP1					0.887				
OP2					0.872				
OP3					0.900				
OP4					0.889				
OP5					0.906				
OP6					0.900				
PI1						0.909			
PI2						0.919			
PI3						0.917			
PO1							0.865		
PO2							0.893		
PO3							0.811		
PO4							0.921		
PO5							0.894		
PO6							0.913		
PU1								0.962	
PU2								0.953	
PU3								0.924	
SME1									0.859
SME2									0.876
SME3									0.896
SME4									0.911

Note: PO: Perceived Originality, PQL: Perceived Quality, PQN: Perceived Quantity, PU: Perceived Uniqueness, H: Humor, OL: Opinion Leadership, PI: Purchase Behavior, SME: Social Media Engagement, PPI: Perceived Fit with Personal Interests.

Fit Models

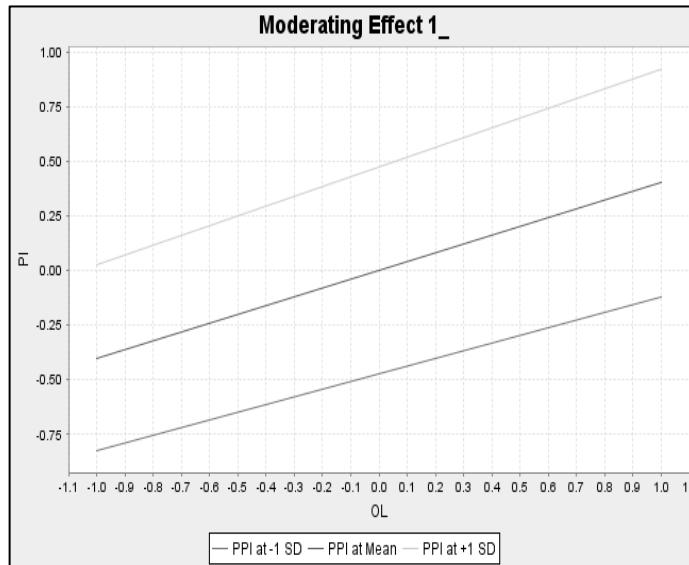
Fit model was assessed through measurements of the normed fixed index (NFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and Chi-square values. The Chi-square value was 1836.374, the was NFI 0.82, and the was SRMR 0.05. These values indicated that the model fit the criteria and had no collinearity problem. Following confirmatory factor analysis and ensuring validity and reliability, bootstrapping tests were conducted to evaluate the model structure (hypothesis testing).

Structural Model Testing

The result of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 4. Perceived originality had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.193$, $p < 0.05$), thus supporting H1. Similarly, perceived quality had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.197$, $p < 0.05$), thus supporting H2. Perceived quantity also had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.243$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H3. However, perceived uniqueness did not have a significant positive effect on perceived opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.111$, $p > 0.05$), thus rejecting H4. Subsequently, humor had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership ($\beta = 0.265$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H5. Finally, opinion leadership had an effect on purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.417$, $p < 0.01$) and social media engagement ($\beta = 0.585$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H6 and H7.

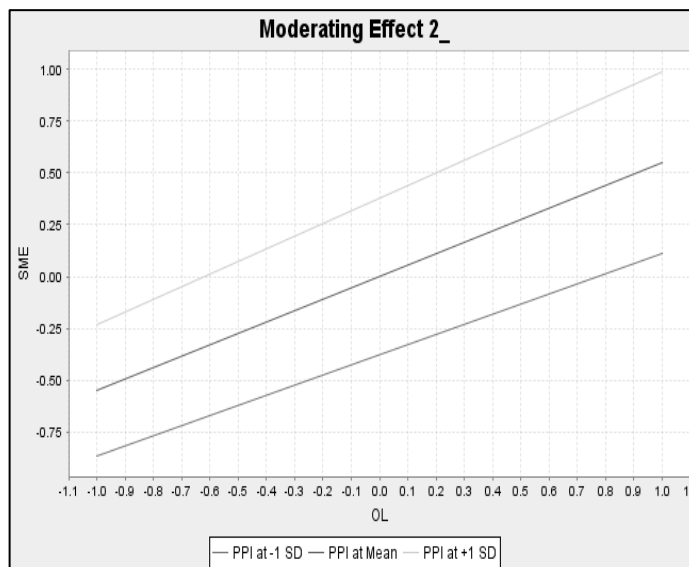
The results of the moderation test, based on the results of the bootstrapping tests, suggested that perceived fit with personal interests had a significant moderating effect on purchasing behavior ($\beta = 0.067$, $p < 0.05$) and social media engagement ($\beta = 0.073$, $p < 0.01$). Figure 2. shows the moderating effect of perceived fit with personal interests on the relationship between opinion leadership and purchasing decisions. This figure demonstrates that a high perceived fit between the brand or product and the opinion leader strengthened the influence of the opinion leader on consumers' purchase behavior. Similarly, Figure 3. shows the moderating effect of perceived fit with personal interests on the relationship between opinion leadership and social media

engagement. This figure demonstrates that a high perceived fit between the brand or product and the opinion leader enhanced the influence of the opinion leadership on users' social media engagement.



Notes: OL: Opinion Leadership | PPI: Perceived Fit with Personal Interests | PI: Purchase Behavior

Figure 2 Moderating 1 (OL*PPI → PI)



Notes: OL: Opinion Leadership | PPI: Perceived Fit with Personal Interests | SME: Social Media Engagement

Figure 3 Moderating 2 (OL*PPI → SME)

Table 4 Hypothesis Testing Results

Path	β-Value	p-Value	Decision
PO → OL	0.193	0.04*	H1 Supported
PQL → OL	0.197	0.02*	H2 Supported
PQN → OL	0.243	0.00**	H3 Supported
PU → OL	0.111	0.199	H4 Not Supported
H → OL	0.265	0.00**	H5 Supported
OL → PI	0.417	0.00**	H6 Supported
OL → SME	0.585	0.00**	H7 Supported
OL*PPI → PI	0.067	0.02*	H8 Supported
OL*PPI → SME	0.073	0.00**	H9 Supported

Notes: PO: Perceived Originality, PQL: Perceived Quality, PQN: Perceived Quantity, PU: Perceived Uniqueness, H: Humor, OL: Opinion Leadership, PI: Purchase Behavior, SME: Social Media Engagement, PPI: Perceived Fit with Personal Interests. Sig < 0.01** | Sig < 0.05*.

Source: SmartPLS 3.0

DISCUSSION

Based on hypothesis testing, perceived originality, perceived quality, perceived quantity, and perceived humor in content had a positive effect on perceived opinion leadership. These results indicated that key factors such as originality, quality content, posting frequency, and entertainment value play crucial roles in shaping consumers' views of influencers as role models or opinion leaders. This supports previous research by Barta et al. (2023), Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2022), and Kei and Osman (2024) which suggests that original, creative, and innovative content can form the perception that users are not missing anything to be fashionable and make a good impression. In other words, original content influences the perception of opinion leadership. Therefore, the results of this study consistently support the idea that perceived quality and quantity have a positive impact on perceived opinion leadership in a communication context. However, this contrasts with Barta et al. (2023) who suggested that quality and quantity are less important for more visually-oriented social networks, which emphasize originality and aesthetics. Nevertheless, this study's predominant generation Z respondents, known as digital natives, are familiar with various digital media, such as social media, instant messaging, video games, live streaming, television, and films. One of the most important characteristics of digital media is high-quality content. This is supported by Barta et al. (2023) who found that publication quality is an important factor in building reputation in online communities, and the frequency of positive publications influences the hedonic experiences and perceptions of opinion leaders (Barta et al., 2023; Putri and Agus, 2019). Consistent with the findings of Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2022), the higher the quality and quantity of posts, the more influential the poster is perceived by their followers.

Humor is also an important factor in shaping perceptions of opinion leaders. Social media posts that can make the audience laugh can foster positive emotions and enhance the connection between the audience and the influencer, thereby creating a pleasant user experience (Barta et al., 2023; Lee and Theokary, 2021). In contrast to other factors, perceived uniqueness had no influence on the formation of opinion leadership. This is consistent with research by Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2022) which suggested that the main focus in shaping perceptions of opinion leadership is the originality of posts. As a result, perceived opinion leadership had a positive effect on social media engagement and purchasing decisions. This is consistent with research by Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2022) and Sheng et al. (2023) which suggested that users who perceive influencers as opinion leaders are more likely to be influenced in their purchasing decisions and maintain close relationships through social media interactions (Sheng et al., 2023). Furthermore, the moderating role suggested that when an opinion leader posted content on Instagram or TikTok that aligns with a consumer's personality, it encourages the consumer to follow the opinion leader's ideas and behavior. This finding is consistent with research by Casaló et al. (2020), Putri and Agus (2019), and Tran and Uehara (2023) which suggested that consumers' emotional connection with perceived suitability can strengthen their trust in the recommendations and opinions of key opinion leaders (KOL), thereby increasing environmentally friendly purchasing intentions. The findings of this study suggested that perceived opinion leadership was not only influenced by personal attributes such as self-confidence or expertise but also by the ability of opinion leaders to provide high-quality and relevant information. These findings offer valuable insights into developing communication strategies and understanding the importance of perceived quality and quantity in shaping the image of an opinion leader.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the marketing literature in the following ways. In the field of influencer marketing, this study focuses on influencer messages by applying ELM to explain how such messages can persuade consumers. Additionally, this study significantly contributes to understanding the role of opinion leadership on social media platforms, especially TikTok and Instagram. The personal fit theory emphasizes that the success of opinion leaders in influencing purchasing behavior and social media engagement depends on the extent to which the content presented matches the personal interests of their followers. This study provides empirical evidence showing that when opinion leaders can create a personal fit between their content and their followers' interests, there is a significant increase in purchasing behavior. In other words, content that is relevant to the preferences and interests of the audience enhances purchase motivation. Moreover, this study highlights the impact of personal fit on social media engagement. When opinion leaders succeed in creating alignment between their content and their followers' interests, there is increased participation and interaction

on social media platforms. This can have a positive impact on content dissemination, increased brand visibility, and stronger community around opinion leadership.

Managerial Contribution

This study is important and useful for brands in choosing influencers who have the ability to convey messages. Brands need to evaluate the content they broadcast. For influencers, this study is useful for adopting strategies and evaluating content so that it meets the criteria of originality, quality, quantity, and humor. Therefore, collaboration between influencers and brands can achieve maximum performance. In addition, this study has a significant practical contribution to marketing strategy and brand interaction on social media platforms. The results of this study provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners and companies seeking to leverage opinion leadership on TikTok and Instagram. An emphasis on the personal fit theory allows practitioners to craft content that is more targeted and relevant to the personal interests of the target audience. By understanding the preferences and interests of the audience, marketers can create more appropriate campaigns that can trigger positive responses, including increased purchasing behavior. As a consequence, marketing strategies that align content with individual interests are likely to be more successful in building engagement and expanding brand impact.

Moreover, this study provides practical insights into how personal fit can enhance social media engagement. Marketing practitioners can adopt these findings to develop content strategies that not only attract attention but also motivate followers to actively participate and interact with the brand. By building stronger communities around opinion leadership, companies can create an environment where consumers feel engaged and emotionally connected to the brand. Another practical contribution of this study is in increasing the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns and efforts to build brand image in the era of social media. By paying attention to the elements of personal fit, practitioners can better leverage the influence of opinion leaders to achieve their marketing goals, whether in increasing product sales or strengthening consumer engagement on TikTok and Instagram.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to fill gaps in previous research by addressing two points, namely the kinds of cosmetic, self-care, and fashion content that most influence opinion leadership and the impact of perceived opinion leadership on product purchasing decisions and consumer engagement. Based on the survey results, within the category of cosmetics and personal care, consumers are most interested in products such as lipstick, mascara, and foundation. In the fashion category, clothes and pants are the most preferred products by the respondents. Furthermore, this study found that perceived originality, perceived quality, perceived quantity, and perceived humor are key factors in establishing perceived opinion leadership, which drives consumer purchasing behavior and social media engagement. The moderating role of perceived fit with personal interests also plays an important role in influencing the outcome of perceived opinion leadership. The findings of this study can be useful for both brands and influencers. For brands, this study demonstrates that content that meets the aspects of originality, posting frequency, quality, and humor can persuade consumers to form opinion leadership and encourage purchasing decisions. For influencers, this study suggests that enhancing performance is beneficial not only for the brand, but also for increasing interaction on the influencer's social media platforms.

This study has several limitations. First, it only focuses on the fashion and cosmetics industry in Indonesia. It would be better if future research focuses on the luxury goods industry which is also experiencing a surge in revenue in Indonesia. Second, among the many platforms that are popular in Indonesia, this study only includes respondents using Instagram and TikTok. Future research can include users of other platforms such as YouTube, X, and Facebook. Third, this study does not compare how content performs across different platforms since each platform has its unique characteristics. An empirical comparison of consumer perceptions between platforms could yield interesting results. Finally, the respondents of this study were dominated by generation Z, followed by millennials generation (Gen Y). Including comparisons of different generations would expand the literature on cohort generation theory and provides an understanding of generational differences in consumer behavior.

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APPENDIX

Measurement			
Variable	Measurement		
Perceived uniqueness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This TikTok/ Instagram account is very unique ● This TikTok/Instagram account is unique ● This TikTok/ Instagram account is very special and different from others 		
	Perceived Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The publication on this TikTok/ Instagram account is genuine ● Publications on TikTok/ Instagram accounts are novels ● Publication on this TikTok/ Instagram account is unusual ● This publication on TikTok/ Instagram accounts is innovative ● The publication on this TikTok / Instagram account is sophisticated ● Publication on this TikTok / Instagram account is creative 	
		Perceived Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The publication on this TikTok/ Instagram account is high-quality
Perceived Quantity			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This TikTok/ Instagram account publishes many posts
		Humor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This post on the TikTok / Instagram account is exciting ● This post on the TikTok/ Instagram account is funny ● This post on the TikTok/ Instagram account is amusing
Opinion Leader			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This TikTok / Instagram account becomes a model for others. ● This TikTok/ Instagram account is one step ahead of others. ● This TikTok/Instagram account offers interesting pictures that suggest new ideas about fashion. ● This TikTok/ Instagram account entices people to dress as the account picture suggests. ● This TikTok/ Instagram account influences people's opinions about fashion. ● I use this TikTok/Instagram account as a source of information.
	Social Media Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I intend to click on the 'like' button for the video content of this TikTok/ Instagram influencer. ● I tend to share video content from these TikTok/ Instagram influencers. ● I intend to comment on the video content of this TikTok/ Instagram influencer. 	
		Purchase Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I want to continue subscribing to this TikTok/ Instagram influencer channel. ● I already buy products regularly on TikTok/ Instagram ● I already have a product that comes from TikTok/ Instagram
			Fit with personal interest