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SOR Framework on Customer Engagement by Using Influencer Marketing in E-Commerce Affiliate Program

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ABSTRAK

This study explores the use of influencer marketing in e-commerce affiliate programs to enhance customer engagement, utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. The research model incorporates the commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts, trust in influencers, and purchase intention as key variables. Data analysis and hypothesis testing reveal significant influences, indicating that influencer content on Instagram substantially impacts consumer trust and purchase intention. The findings underscore the potential of influencer marketing strategies to build consumer trust and influence purchasing decisions. The study's insights provide valuable implications for e-commerce businesses seeking to leverage influencer marketing for enhanced customer engagement and brand promotion.

Kata Kunci: Affiliate Program, Instagram, Influencer Marketing, SOR Framework, E-commerce

ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of influencer marketing in e-commerce affiliate programs to enhance customer engagement, utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. The research model incorporates the commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts, trust in influencers, and purchase intention as key variables. Data analysis and hypothesis testing reveal significant influences, indicating that influencer content on Instagram substantially impacts consumer trust and purchase intention. The findings underscore the potential of influencer marketing strategies to build consumer trust and influence purchasing decisions. The study's insights provide valuable implications for e-commerce businesses seeking to leverage influencer marketing for enhanced customer engagement and brand promotion.

Keywords: Affiliate Program, Instagram, Influencer Marketing, SOR Framework, E-commerce

I. PENDAHULUAN

In the Industry 4.0 era, where all economic activities are transforming from traditional to more modern, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has also accelerated the change process. Business patterns are shifting from face-to-face meetings to online dominance. The adoption of digital technology is also increasingly widespread, which is the main trigger for the rapid growth of ecommerce in Indonesia.

The success of e-commerce as a phenomenon is inseparable from the needs of an increasingly dynamic society and high mobility. In a fast-paced life, efficiency and convenience become the main criteria for accommodating consumer needs. E-commerce platforms can provide solutions for both criteria, allowing people to shop without leaving the comfort of their homes. The importance of efficiency and convenience creates a new paradigm in consumer behavior. The concept of online shopping is now considered as an alternative, but rather as the leading choice. In addition, the development of

e-commerce also positively impacts business opportunities in Indonesia. Businesses, especially small ones, can achieve greater profits by selling products online, overcoming geographical constraints, and accessing a broader market (Maskuroh, Fahlevi, & Irmac, 2022).

According to information from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), over the past five years, there has been an increase of more than 100% in the number of e-commerce users in Indonesia. In 2018, the number of e-commerce users reached 93.42 million, but by 2023, the number will increase to 196.47 million in Indonesia (Kompas.com, 2023). This shows the potential power of e-commerce in driving economic growth in Indonesia. It is unsurprising, given that Indonesia has achieved a position among the top ten countries with high-speed e-commerce growth globally.

Currently, there are many e-commerce sites in Indonesia. The high competition makes e-commerce must have the right strategy. One way that is widely adopted today is to use digital marketing, such as using social media platforms. Social media is not just a momentary phenomenon but a strategic necessity for modern businesses. Digital marketing involves various aspects, including engaging content creation, efficient ad targeting, and active user interaction. Through social media, e-commerce can build a strong brand image, convey the added value of products or services, and increase consumer trust. By acquiring relevant and high-quality content, e-commerce can attract consumers' attention and build long-term relationships.

In recent decades, the effectiveness of this change and the role of marketing on social media has been proven as every individual now has a cell phone or laptop and can access the internet. According to data from We Are Social, by January 2023, there will be 213 million active social media users in Indonesia, equivalent to 77% of the country's population (Databoks, 2023). This means they can access the social media platforms they use. That is why social media is an essential and effective platform in the marketing world: it can increase the brand's value (Mabkhot, Isa, & Mabkhot, 2022).

One of the digital marketing methods to introduce products to the public is to use influencers commonly referred to as content creators/Key Opinion Leaders (KOL). Influencer marketing is considered one of the most effective strategies to attract the attention of potential customers when marketing through social media. This strategy utilizes the existence of many influencers who have many followers on social media so that they can shape the product image at a lower cost than brand ambassadors (Erfiana & Purnamasari, 2023)

Social media influencers are independent third parties that have the potential to influence many people through the content they produce. Such content, which discusses brands and products, is considered to have a more authentic and personalized appeal to potential consumers than conventional marketing communication efforts conducted directly by companies. As a result, companies' investments in influencer marketing budgets have more than doubled in recent years (Gamage & Ashill, 2022).

With the presence of influencers, manufacturers can now efficiently market their products, while consumers get product information more efficiently. Buying and selling transactions are common and frequently encountered daily activities aiming to fulfil daily needs. There are various types of goods sold by sellers to consumers. Before online shopping applications (e-commerce) existed, buying and selling transactions were limited to the Market or direct visits to points of sale. Commonly used strategies in promoting products involve advertising, distribution of promotional leaflets, and information transferred orally from one individual to another (Winata & Alvin, 2022)

The affiliate program held by e-commerce is a collaboration between e-commerce and social media influencers to promote products sold through social media feeds. In this program, the influencer will receive a commission every time there is a successful and valid sale (without purchase cancellation). The high interest in e-commerce affiliate programs with marketing strategies on social media is increasing the interest of e-commerce customers, especially among young women.

Various needs such as clothing, skincare, room decoration, and others can be easily searched by typing keywords in the search field. E-commerce users who participate in these affiliate programs usually make video reviews and embed links in their bio section, which their followers can view and click. The shift in people's preference from traditional shopping to online shopping through marketplace platforms has become a trend.

One platform that is often used for e-commerce affiliate programs is Instagram. Many influencers, both nano and macro, use Instagram as their medium. This is due to the massive number of Instagram users. According to data from We Are Social, the number of Instagram users in Indonesia reached 106 million in April 2023. With this achievement, Indonesia is ranked fourth with the most significant number of Instagram users worldwide (Databoks, 2023). In addition, Instagram also has many complete features that can help influencers carry out their promotional activities to be maximized, such as the IG story feature, IG Feed, sharing links through stories, and many other features.

- Q1. How does the commercial orientation of influencer posts influence follower willingness to search for product-related information?
- Q2. Do trustworthiness towards the influencer and perceived credibility of the influencer-created content mediate the relationship between the commercial orientation of influencer-created content and follower willingness to purchase for the product?

II. LITERATUR REVIEW

Digital marketing

Digital marketing can be defined as an effort to promote brands, products, or services through digital media platforms. Digital marketing aims to attract the attention of consumers and potential consumers quickly and effectively (Kompas.com, 2023). Through digital marketing, communication and transactions can occur at any time and even have the potential to reach a global level. Unlike traditional marketing, which relies on print media as the main channel, digital marketing prioritizes the use of online media. In this era, digital marketing has become a form of promotion that is in demand by the public, supporting various business activities. Many people have switched from conventional marketing models to modern marketing, namely digital marketing (Binus University Online, 2021).

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is an online service provided by influential individuals to market a company's products or services. An influencer can influence potential buyers towards a product or service by promoting it or providing recommendations through social media platforms. Influencers have a strong emotional connection with their followers, thus having the ability to influence audience preferences and behaviors, which in turn can impact the level of brand awareness (Barta & Flavián, 2023)

E-commerce

Electronic commerce or e-commerce is all buying and selling activities through electronic media. The book "E-commerce: Implementation, Strategy, and Innovation" explains that e-commerce results from the use of information technology in exchanging goods, services, and information through electronic systems such as the Internet, television, and other computer networks. Meanwhile, according to the explanation contained in the book "E-Commerce: An Introduction to Digital Business," e-commerce is defined as the process of distributing, buying, selling, and marketing goods and services through electronic media, such as the Internet, television, WWW, or other computer networks (Bisnis Indonesia, 2022).

Affiliate Marketing

E-commerce Affiliates Program is an initiative to earn additional income by promoting products in e-commerce through social media accounts. This program is open to any active social media user, providing creativity in implementing the Affiliate Program, for example, through video content creation. Program participants can add a link to the product being promoted to the description or caption. The commission received depends on the participant's performance in marketing the e-commerce product. The more purchases from affiliate links, the greater the income will be obtained (Shopee, 2021).

SOR Framework

The S-O-R framework, which stands for Stimulus-Organism-Response, is a fundamental conceptual tool. It provides insight into the intricate interplay between an external stimulus, the individual organism, and the resulting response. By diving into this framework, we understand how humans react to various stimuli in different contexts.

Stimulus (S):

External factors or situations that trigger a response. Stimuli can come in many forms, from verbal cues and visual elements to specific events or circumstances. Stimuli play a crucial role in shaping individual behavior.

Organisme (O):

At the core of the S-O-R framework is the organism, which represents the individual or group that processes and responds to a given stimulus. The organism includes a variety of internal factors, including personal characteristics, past experiences, attitudes and emotional states. These internal dynamics influence how the stimulus is understood and interpreted.

Respons (R):

The culmination of the S-O-R process is the response - an observable reaction or behavior exhibited by the organism in response to the stimulus. Responses can appear

as physical actions, emotional reactions, or attitude changes. Understanding this response provides valuable insight into the cognitive and emotional mechanisms involved in the individual (Armawan, Sudarmiatin, Hermawan, & Rahayu, 2022).

III. METODE PENELITIAN

Type of Research

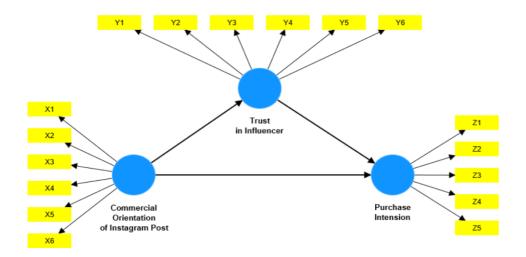
Quantitative research produces data in the form of numbers or numbers, and the data is analyzed using statistical methods. The primary purpose of quantitative research is to collect data that can be measured numerically, thus allowing in-depth statistical analysis. Quantitative data refers to information in the form of numbers resulting from calculations or measurements; primary data is obtained directly from respondents at the research location, while secondary data is information obtained from other sources that support the research and is not collected by researchers directly. Data collection techniques involve observation, use of questionnaires, literature study, and documentation by the methods used in the study (Sugiyono, 2019).

Population and Sample Population

Primary data were collected through the online distribution of questionnaires filled out by respondents who met the criteria. Seventy-six respondents aged 18-40 resided in the Jabodetabek area and actively used Instagram and e-commerce. The interval scale used in the questionnaire is a measurement method where respondents provide numeric values to express the level or degree of a characteristic or attitude. For example, the scale ranges from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The smaller the number chosen by the respondent, the higher the disagreement with the presented statement. Conversely, the larger the number chosen by the respondent, the higher the level of agreement with the statement.

Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive Statistical Analysis and Partial Least Squares SEM are used to develop or predict a pre-existing theory. Descriptive methods are applied to obtain a comprehensive and accurate overview of the research objectives using a 5-point Likert scale. Partial Least Squares SEM is also employed, a proper analytical technique for developing or predicting existing theories (Sarwono & Narimawati, 2015). This research applies structural model analysis using the PLS method with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software. Referring to Ananda Sabil's perspective (2015:18), structural model analysis involves several stages, including 1) formulating the structural model theory, 2) conducting outer model analysis, 3) running inner model analysis, and 4) testing hypotheses.



Gambar 1. Research model

Source: SmartPLS

Data measurement scale

Researchers use The interval scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" while 5 indicates that the respondent "agrees with the existing statement. Respondents' answers regarding existing variables, namely commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts, trust in influencers and purchase intention, will be explained by looking at the mean value. The following are the criteria for the average Respondent's answer with a class interval of 1.33:

Interval Kelas = Highest Value - Lowest ValueJumlah kelas

1 - 2.33 = Low respondent answer

2.34 - 3.67 = Respondent's answer is medium

3.68 - 5.00 =High respondent answer

Outer Model

Outer model testing aims to evaluate the validity and reliability of a model. This test analysis includes an evaluation of Convergent Validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Discriminant Validity, and composite reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent Validity is a way to measure the validity of reflective indicators as a variable assessment, which can be seen from the outer loading of each variable indicator. An indicator is considered reliable if its outer loading value exceeds 0.70. Meanwhile, the acceptable outer loading value ranges from 0.60, while indicators with an outer loading value below 0.50 can be removed from the analysis (Ghozali & Latan, 2015, p. 199).

Discriminant Validity

Validity measures how well a measuring instrument can assess the concept it is supposed to measure. Discriminant validity, on the other hand, ensures that the concepts in the latent model are mutually distinct. In SMART-PLS,

discriminant validity is evaluated through the Fornell-Larcker criteria and cross-loadings. The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root with the correlations between latent variables. Cross loadings, in turn, assess the value of indicator loadings on a particular construct compared to other constructs. Discriminant validity is essential to show adequate differences between concepts. Overall, it can be concluded that all research variables meet discriminant validity. Decision-making in the validity test involves comparing the r-count value with the r-table, where a more considerable r-count value signifies the validity of a question item in the questionnaire and vice versa if it is smaller.

Composite Reliability

A general guideline often used to assess the Reliability of a construct is to ensure that the Composite Reliability value exceeds 0.7. Composite Reliability reflects the extent to which indicators of a block of unobserved latent variables are interrelated so that they can reflect the internal consistency of the indicators that make up the construct. Although a value of 0.7 is often considered an acceptable limit, it is not an absolute standard, and additional assessment and particular context may be required in evaluating construct reliability (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

T Hypothesis Test

The t-test is hypothesis testing. The significant value used (two-tailed) t-values are 2.64 (significance level 10%) and 1.99 (significance level 5%). This study's significant level is 5%, namely using Table 1.99.

- H1. The commercial orientation of the social media influencer's posts positively influences followers' trustworthiness towards the influencer.
- H2. The perceived credibility of social media influencer posts is positively associated with followers' inclination to buy the product featured in the Instagram post.
- H3. The positive correlation between the commercial emphasis in Instagram posts and followers' willingness to purchase the mentioned product is mediated twice in sequence—first by the trustworthiness towards the influencer and subsequently by the credibility of the Instagram post.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was distributed over approximately seven days using the online method. In this section, the characteristics of the respondents, including age, gender, income, and address will be described in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent profile based on age

Age	Total	Percentage
18 – 25	43	56.6

26 – 30	26	34.2
31 - 35	5	6.6
36 - 40	2	2.6
	76	100

Table 2. Respondent profile based on gender

Gender	Total	Percentage
Pria	31	40.8
Wanita	45	59.2
	76	100

Table 3. Respondent profile based on income

Income	Total	Percentage
<rp1.000.000< td=""><td>6</td><td>7.9</td></rp1.000.000<>	6	7.9
Rp1.000.000 - Rp3.000.000	7	9.2
Rp3.000.000 - Rp5.000.000	13	17.1
Rp5.000.000 - Rp7.000.000	24	31.6
> Rp7.000.000	26	34.2
	76	100

Table 4. Respondent profile based on domicile

Address	Total	Percentage
Jakarta Utara	2	2.6
Jakarta Barat	6	7.9
Jakarta Timur	16	21.1
Jakarta Selatan	17	22.4
Jakarta Pusat	3	3.9
Bogor	7	9.2

Tangerang	5	6.6
	76	100

After the screening stage, the number of respondents to be considered was 76, which will be the central database for the primary test. Of these, 45 respondents were women who had completed the questionnaire. In terms of presentation, respondents aged 18-25 dominated with 56.6%, while respondents aged 26-30 accounted for 34.2%. Therefore, in terms of age group, the distribution of respondents is quite balanced. Regarding domicile, 17 respondents (22.4%) reside in the South Jakarta area, while 16 (21.1%) reside in East Jakarta. The rest of the respondents came from other areas in Jabodetabek.

Table 5. Commercial orientation of influencer post

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Variable	STS	S	N	S	SS	Mean	Ket
X1	4	16	18	24	14	3.37	Medium
X2	0	12	12	30	22	3.82	Medium
X3	3	6	8	28	31	4.03	High
X4	6	13	28	15	12	3.11	Medium
X5	8	16	24	15	13	3.12	Medium
X6	1	13	31	21	10	3.34	Medium
m . 1		• , ,•	C . M		, (C)	2.46	3.6.1

Total commercial orientation of influencer post (S) 3.46 Medium

In measuring the "commercial orientation of influencer post" variable, 3 indicators are used, namely influencer scale, public interest, and the influence of influencer content. These three indicators produce an average value of 3.46 which is included in the moderate category. This shows that the commercial orientation of influencer post respondents is quite influential for respondents.

Table 6. Trust in influencer

Variable	STS	S	N	S	SS	Mean	Ket
Y1	1	9	32	25	9	3.42	Medium
Y2	2	10	23	33	8	3.46	Medium
Y3	1	5	27	33	10	3.61	Medium
Y4	1	12	26	28	9	3.42	Medium
Y5	1	5	24	34	12	3.67	Medium

Y6	4	18	21	19	14	3.28	Medium
			Trust in influencer			3.48	Medium

The second variable, "trust in influencer," has two indicators: trustworthiness toward the influencer and intention to search for more information about the product. These two indicators produce an average of 3.48. This figure shows that respondents have sufficient trust in influencers.

	Table 7. Purchase intention						
Ket	Mean	SS	S	N	S	STS	Variable
Medium	2.64	5	18	15	21	17	Z1
High	4.01	30	27	11	6	2	Z 2
Medium	3.21	11	24	17	18	6	Z 3
High	3.97	27	28	15	4	2	Z 4
High	4	29	30	8	6	3	Z5
Medium	3.57	Purchase intention					

In the table, the average value is 3.57. Although this is higher than other variables, it is still considered moderate. This means that respondents consider purchasing decisions after viewing content from influencers.

	Table 8. Table Convergent Validity							
Variable	Commercial Orientation of Instagram Post	Purchase Intention	Trust in Influencer					
X1	0.77							
X2	0.854							
X3	0.853							
X4	0.874							
X5	0.881							
X6	0.776							
Y1			0.859					
Y2			0.767					

Y3		0.824
Y4		0.799
Y5		0.826
Y6		0.776
Z 1	0.845	
Z2	0.922	
Z3	0.913	
Z4	0.878	
Z 5	0.912	

The table shows that the outer loading value of each indicator of the commercial orientation of influencer post variables, trust in influencers, and purchase intention has a loading factor value above 0.6 so that it has met the minimum limit. This shows that all indicators in this test are valid.

2) Discriminant Validity

Table 9. Table Discriminant Validity

	Commercial Orientation of Instagram Post	Purchase Intension	Trust in Influencer
<u>X1</u>	0.77	0.39	0.388
X2	0.854	0.52	0.398
X3	0.853	0.587	0.463
X4	0.874	0.539	0.528
X5	0.881	0.503	0.543
X6	0.776	0.45	0.644
Y1	0.535	0.523	0.859
Y2	0.301	0.35	0.767
Y3	0.471	0.467	0.824
Y4	0.39	0.48	0.799
Y5	0.53	0.487	0.826

Y6	0.581	0.7	0.776
Z 1	0.378	0.845	0.521
Z 2	0.598	0.922	0.579
Z 3	0.58	0.913	0.565
Z 4	0.53	0.878	0.632
Z 5	0.572	0.912	0.572

In this table, the cross-loading value for each intended construct is greater than the cross-loading value of other constructs. This can indicate that each indicator used by each variable is declared valid. Apart from using the cross-loading value, the discriminant validity test can be seen from the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value.

Table 10. Table Average variance extracted

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Commercial Orientation of Instagram Post	0.913	0.919	0.933	0.698
Purchase Intension	0.937	0.942	0.952	0.8
Trust in Influencer	0.896	0.91	0.919	0.655

From this table, all indicators used to measure the commercial orientation of influencer post variables, trust in influencers, and purchase intention are considered valid because the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value exceeds 0.5.

3) Composite Reliability

Table 11. Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha
Commercial Orientation of Instagram Post	0.913
Purchase_Intension	0.937
Trust_in Influencer	0.896

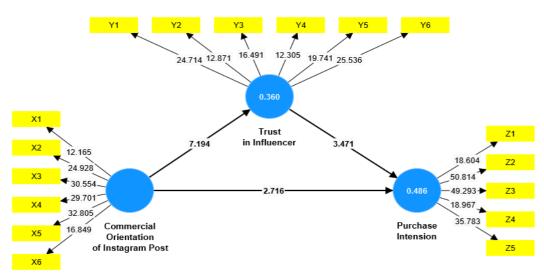
The respondent profile based on general guidelines often used to assess the Reliability of a construct is to ensure that the Composite Reliability value

exceeds 0.7. Composite Reliability reflects the extent to which indicators of a block of unobserved latent variables are related, thus reflecting the internal consistency of the indicators that make up the construct. Although a value of 0.7 is often considered an acceptable limit, it is not an absolute standard, and additional assessment and particular context may be required in evaluating construct reliability (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Table 12	2. R-Square
	R-square
Purchase intension	0.486
Trust in Influencer	0.36

From the data above, the R-square value is obtained, which shows that trust in influencers is influenced by the commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts by 48.6%. In comparison, the purchase intention variable is influenced by the commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts by 36%. A high R-square value indicates a robust model. Meanwhile, to measure predictive relevance, the Q-square value is used, which can be calculated as follows:

This means that the model can explain the data by 27.1% percent, which consists of trust in influencers by 48.6% and purchase intention by 36%, and other factors influence the rest.



Picture 2. Research model Source: SmartPLS

IV. KESIMPULAN

- Based on the results of data analysis and hypothesis testing, the following conclusions can be drawn:
- 1. This study found that the commercial orientation of influencer Instagram posts has a significant influence on trust in influencers, as indicated by the highest T-test value of 7.194. This suggests that the content posted by influencers on the Instagram platform substantially impacts the level of consumer trust in the influencer. Thus, marketing strategies through influencer content on Instagram have great potential to build consumer trust in the promoted brand or product.
- 2. The T-test results show that the Trust in Influencer variable significantly affects Purchase Intention, with a t-value of 3.471, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.99 at the 5% significance level. This shows that the higher the respondent's level of trust in the influencer, the more likely they will buy the product recommended by the influencer. Therefore, trust in influencers is essential in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.
- 3. The effect of the commercial orientation variable of influencer Instagram posts on purchase intention is also significant, albeit with a lower T-statistic value of 2.716. Nevertheless, this value still indicates a discernible influence of the content posted by influencers on the Instagram platform on consumer purchase intention. This confirms that marketing strategies through influencer content on Instagram can also influence consumer behavior regarding the propensity to make purchases.

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