

An S-O-R Model Analysis: The Role of Influencer Persona Attributes and Credibility in Shaping Food Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the crisis of consumer trust in the influence of food purchasing intentions on social media, where content is currently not objective, as reflected in the viral phenomenon of disputes between food content creators who exaggerate their assessments and content creators who base their assessments on honest results. The main problem faced by culinary marketing industry owners today is the decline in the quality of relationships between influencers and their followers, which will have an impact on low consumer purchasing interest. This study examines the influence of persona attributes consisting of similarity, inspiration, and level of enjoyment, as well as the credibility of influencers on relationship quality and purchase intent. The research method used was hypothesis testing and cross-sectional data, with respondents obtained through an online survey using a Likert scale to assess each item. The researchers gave 27 questions to each respondent. This study obtained 270 respondents who met the classification determined by the author. The minimum age studied by the author was 17 years old, as it was expected that respondents would be able to understand the role of social media. This study used the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) method, which was very interesting to explore.

Keywords: *Persona Attributes, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intention.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the current era of digitalization, smartphones and internet connectivity have become integral to everyday life, enabling individuals to access information and conduct financial transactions through mobile devices. Indonesia currently has approximately 221 million internet users, representing 79.5% of its total population. As of January 2025, the country had 143 million registered social media user identities, equivalent to 50.2% of the national population. Indonesia is also home to approximately 863,000 influencers, accounting for 3.6% of the global influencer population. In 2024, Indonesian influencers produced approximately 3.1 million content posts, placing the country fourth worldwide in terms of influencer-generated content volume (Komdigi, 2025; Nabilah Muhamad, 2025; Ribka Stevany, 2025). Social media influencers can serve as valuable sources of information about particular products and services. Because the information they provide originates from third

parties who are not directly controlled by producers, consumers may perceive it as more independent and valuable. Influencers who have established trusting relationships with their followers can increase the likelihood that consumers will purchase the brands they endorse. Social media platforms also function as intermediaries between brands and consumers. Consequently, using social media as an online channel to reach customers and increase sales has become an increasingly important marketing strategy (Mohamed et al., 2025; Muhammad et al., 2024).

Influencer marketing is therefore regarded as an effective method for increasing brand and product awareness, reaching prospective customers, generating traffic, strengthening audience engagement, and shaping consumers' product perceptions and purchasing decisions. Influencers share several characteristics with opinion leaders, as both are perceived as possessing expertise or distinctive qualities within a particular field. As a result, their opinions and recommendations tend to attract attention and influence the attitudes and behaviors of others (Ketut Karwini et al., 2024; Tang et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, influencer selection is not always determined by follower count; an influencer's ability to capture and sustain audience attention may be equally important. Nano-influencers who are beginning their careers as food reviewers may attract greater interest from brands because their content can generate stronger perceptions of authenticity and trustworthiness. Nano- and macro-influencers may also achieve relatively high levels of audience attention and engagement while offering more affordable endorsement rates than mega-influencers. Although their content may be relatively simple, this simplicity can convey personal sincerity and authenticity to online audiences. However, influencers frequently encounter tensions with brands or Indonesian social media users when attempting to maintain a consistent personal identity (KOL.ID, 2025). Another emerging phenomenon concerns consumers who visit shopping malls merely to browse without making purchases. These two phenomena provide the basis for investigating how influencer persona and influencer credibility, through the role of relationship quality, contribute to the formation of consumers' food purchase intentions (Mela Syaharani et al., 2025).

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), is an influential framework in environmental psychology. It assumes that external stimuli (S) affect an individual's internal cognitive and affective states as an organism (O), which subsequently produce particular behavioral responses (R) (as cited in Wang et al., 2025). Previous research has extended the S-O-R framework by explaining the relationships among social media influencer attributes, relationship quality, and followers' behavioral intentions. This extended model also incorporates the moderating role of *swift guanxi* in the organism-response relationship (Wang et al., 2025).

Leban et al. (2021) define persona as a collectively constructed representation of an influencer's identity, encompassing the traits, goals, attitudes, and lifestyle attributed to the influencer by others. In the context of social media marketing, an influencer persona reflects the distinctive characteristics through which an influencer presents an identity and develops connections with an audience. Leban et al. (2021) further demonstrate that the unique characteristics embedded in an influencer's persona can attract and retain a substantial number of followers. Meanwhile, influencer credibility refers to an influencer's perceived competence and

trustworthiness in providing product-related information, assessments, and recommendations that can attract and persuade consumers (Aenaya & Sulhaini, 2024). Relationship quality represents an overall evaluation of a relationship based on perceived trust, satisfaction, and loyalty between the parties involved. In influencer marketing, this construct reflects the strength and quality of the relationship that followers perceive themselves to have with an influencer. Purchase intention, in turn, refers to a consumer's plan, willingness, or readiness to purchase a particular product in the future (Bhardwaj et al., 2024; Franck & Damperat, 2023). Accordingly, this study applies the S-O-R framework to examine how influencer persona attributes and credibility operate as stimuli that shape perceived relationship quality as an organismic state, which subsequently influences consumers' behavioral response in the form of food purchase intention.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory

According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974), the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model is a prominent theoretical framework in environmental psychology. The model posits that external stimuli (S) influence an individual's internal cognitive and affective states as an organism (O), which subsequently produce particular behavioral responses (R) (as cited in Wang et al., 2025). Previous research has extended the S-O-R model by explaining the relationships among social media influencers (SMIs), relationship quality, and followers' behavioral intentions. The extended framework also incorporates the moderating role of swift guanxi in the relationship between organismic states and behavioral responses (Wang et al., 2025).

Social Media Influencer Persona Attributes

An influencer's persona refers to the collectively constructed public representation of their identity. Similarity, inspiration, and enjoyability are regarded as key attributes in shaping this persona and developing emotional bonds between influencers and their followers. Nevertheless, empirical evidence concerning how these persona attributes affect followers' behavioral intentions through relationship quality remains limited (Wang et al., 2025).

Similarity refers to the perceived degree of congruence between influencers and their followers in terms of appearance, lifestyle, status, preferences, and interests. Social media influencers who share similar tastes and preferences with their followers are more likely to establish close relationships and satisfy followers' relational needs. Accordingly, greater perceived similarity between influencers and followers is expected to strengthen relationship quality (Wang et al., 2025). Based on the findings of previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Similarity has a positive effect on relationship quality.

In influencer marketing, inspiration is an important mechanism through which social media users interact with and respond to information sources. It is therefore relevant to the development and evaluation of relationship quality. As human brands, social media influencers possess distinct personality characteristics that enable them to

inspire their followers. Influencers can introduce new ideas, broaden followers' perspectives, and encourage them to explore experiences or activities they have not previously considered (Beckert & Naderer, 2023). Based on the findings of previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Inspiration has a positive effect on relationship quality.

Enjoyability refers to the extent to which followers perceive their interactions with an influencer and exposure to the influencer's content as pleasant, entertaining, and emotionally rewarding. Although the role of enjoyment in relationship development has been discussed in previous research, its effect on the quality of follower-influencer relationships requires further empirical examination (Wang et al., 2025). Based on the findings of previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Enjoyability has a positive effect on relationship quality.

Influencer credibility refers to the extent to which an influencer is perceived as trustworthy and capable of providing reliable product information and recommendations. Consumers are more likely to trust product promotions communicated by influencers whom they perceive as credible (Delvina Carissa & Rodhiah, 2025). Such credibility can reduce uncertainty and strengthen followers' confidence in the influencer, thereby contributing to higher relationship quality. Based on the findings of previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Influencer credibility has a positive effect on relationship quality.

Drawing on the S-O-R framework adopted by Song et al. (2023, as cited in Wang et al., 2025), this study conceptualizes relationship quality as an organismic state that mediates the relationship between social media influencer attributes as stimuli and consumers' behavioral intentions as responses. Previous research suggests that the quality of the relationship between a brand and its consumers comprises three principal dimensions: trust, satisfaction, and commitment. A high-quality relationship can strengthen consumers' emotional and psychological attachment to an influencer and increase their willingness to act on the influencer's recommendations. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Relationship quality has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's plan, willingness, or readiness to purchase a particular product in the future. It represents a stage in the consumer decision-making process between recognizing a need for a product or service and exhibiting actual purchasing behavior. Purchase intention therefore indicates the likelihood that consumers will select and purchase an offered brand, product, or service in response to their perceived needs (Alkan & Ulas, 2023; Bhardwaj et al., 2024; Franck & Damperat, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to test the

proposed hypotheses. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to Indonesian residents who had watched food-review content created by Indonesian food influencers at least three times. Accordingly, the target population comprised Indonesian social media users who had previously viewed videos in which food influencers reviewed restaurants or other dining establishments. Eligible respondents were required to be at least 17 years old, as individuals within this age group were expected to possess an adequate understanding of social media and its functions.

Several screening questions were included to ensure that respondents met the study's eligibility criteria. These questions assessed whether respondents had watched food-review videos, which social media platform they used most frequently, how often they watched food-review content, and which influencer they watched most frequently. Responses to all measurement items were recorded using a Likert scale. The data were subsequently analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

The questionnaire comprised 27 items measuring the constructs examined in this study. All measurement items were adapted from established instruments in previous research. The items measuring social media influencer persona attributes—which comprised similarity, inspiration, and enjoyability—and relationship quality—which encompassed commitment, satisfaction, and trust—were adapted from Wang et al. (2025). Influencer credibility was measured using items adapted from Delvina Carissa and Rodhiah (2025), while food purchase intention was assessed using items adapted from Muhammad et al. (2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Based on the available data, it shows that female gender is the most dominant characteristic of the respondents, with 179 people (71.6%). This can also be interpreted as meaning that women are actively engaged with social media. Women often get information about interesting places to visit through advertisements or even social media posts. In the age range of 17 years to over 40 years, the author found the three highest age groups in this study. First, there are 131 people in the 17-22 age range (52.4%). At this age, respondents are still in the category of high school grades 10-12 or have just entered college. At this age, they often use social media to find recommendations for hangouts and food. At the age of 23-28 years, there are 50 people (20%), at this age, usually the age of just starting out in the world of work or even receiving their first salary. In this age range, many want to explore and buy because it is a self-reward for themselves for having worked to earn that income. Finally, 34 people (13.6%) were over 40 years old. This age group is usually starting to become bored with their jobs or even approaching retirement age for some companies or institutions. Regarding monthly income or allowance, there are two highest. First, at >Rp. 5,000,000, at 88 people (35.2%). This income comes from their daily work. They usually use social media to temporarily relieve stress from work or look for recommendations or even attractive discounts. Second, there are 82 people (32.8%) in the range of Rp. 500,001 to Rp. 2,500,000. This can be indicated by the college age range where they receive pocket money from their parents to support their living expenses during their studies.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Results

Characteristics	Category	Amount	Presentation n
Gender	Man	71	28.4%
	Woman	179	71.6%
Age	17-22 Years	131	52.4%
	23-28 Years	50	20%
	29-34 Years	17	6.8%
	35-40 Years	18	7.2%
	>40 Years	34	13.6%
Background Education	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	113	45.2%
	Diploma	7	2.8%
	Bachelor	107	42.8%
	Postgraduate	23	9.2%
Income or pocket money in a month	< Rp.500,000 ,-	33	13.2%
	Rp.500,001 ,- – Rp.2,500,000 ,-	82	32.8%
	Rp. 2,500,001,- – Rp. 3,500,000,-	16	6.4%
	Rp.3,500,001 ,- – Rp.4,000,000 ,-	15	6%
	Rp.4,000,001 ,- – Rp.5,500,000 ,-	16	6.4%
	> Rp. 5,500,000 ,-	88	6%

Source: Data processing results

Validity and Reliability Test

The analysis above shows that the measurement indicators for the variables *persona attribute*, *influencer credibility*, *recommendation quality*, and *food purchase intention* demonstrate satisfactory validity. This is evident from the factor loadings exceeding 0.35 for each indicator. Furthermore, the Cronbach's α value exceeding 0.70 indicates reliability. The following are the results of the validity and reliability tests conducted by the author:

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Indicator	Validity Testing		Reliability Testing	
	Factor Loading	Conclusion	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
Charm Attributes (Similarity)				
SIM 1 - I feel like the Influencer is quite similar to me	0.816	Valid	0.846	Reliable
SIM 2 - I found influencers have similar tastes and preferences to me	0.685	Valid		
SIM 3 - I feel like Influencers have a lot in common with me	0.948	Valid		
Persona Attributes (Inspiration)				
INS 1 - Influencers attract my attention with new ideas	0.746	Valid	0.867	Reliable
INS 2 - Influencers broaden my horizons	0.836	Valid		
INS 3 - Influencers inspire me to discover something new	0.923	Valid		

Indicator	Validity Testing		Reliability Testing	
	Factor Loading	Conclusion	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
Persona Attributes (Enjoyability)				
ENJ 1 - I find Influencer funny	0.803	Valid	0.877	Reliable
ENJ 2 - I find Influencer very funny	0.981	Valid		
Influencer Credibility				
IC 1 - Influencer can be trusted	0.701	Valid	0.880	Reliable
IC 2 - Influencers make honest posts	0.731	Valid		
IC 3 - Influencers are competent to make brand product claims	0.787	Valid		
IC 4 - Influencers have an attractive appearance	0.695	Valid		
IC 5 - Influencers are easily recognized on social media	0.642	Valid		
IC 6 - Influencer demonstrates good work ethic	0.789	Valid		
Recommendation Quality (Commitment)				
COM 1 - I feel committed to continuing the relationship with the Influencer as a follower	0.823	Valid	0.916	Reliable
COM 2 - I feel loyal to the Influencer	0.867	Valid		
COM 3 - I want to build a long-term relationship with Influencers	0.869	Valid		
Recommendation Quality (Satisfaction)				
SAT 1 - As a loyal follower, I have a high-quality relationship with the Influencer	0.885	Valid	0.905	Reliable
SAT 2 - I am happy with the efforts Influencers make for loyal followers like me	0.836	Valid		
SAT 3 - I am satisfied with the relationship I have with Influencers	0.853	Valid		
Recommendation Quality (Trust)				
TRU 1 - Influencers give me a sense of trust	0.757	Valid	0.909	Reliable
TRU 2 - I believe in Influencers	0.823	Valid		
TRU 3 - Influencers give a trustworthy impression	0.730	Valid		
Food Purchase Intention				
PI 1 - If given the opportunity in the future, I might consider purchasing a brand/product promoted by an influencer.	0.799	Valid	0.916	Reliable
PI 2 - There is a possibility for me to buy a brand/product promoted by an influencer in the near future.	0.819	Valid		
PI 3 - With the opportunity given, the intention to buy the brand/product	0.928	Valid		

Indicator	Validity Testing		Reliability Testing	
	Factor Loading	Conclusion	Cronbach Alpha	Conclusion
promoted by the influencer arises				
PI 4 - There is an intention to consider the brand/product promoted by the influencer in my future purchases.	0.875	Valid		

Source: Processed data results

Goodness of fit results

This stage, often referred to as model fit, is performed before entering the Structural Equation Model (SEM) model test, which can test existing hypotheses. The following are the results of the AMOS SEM test:

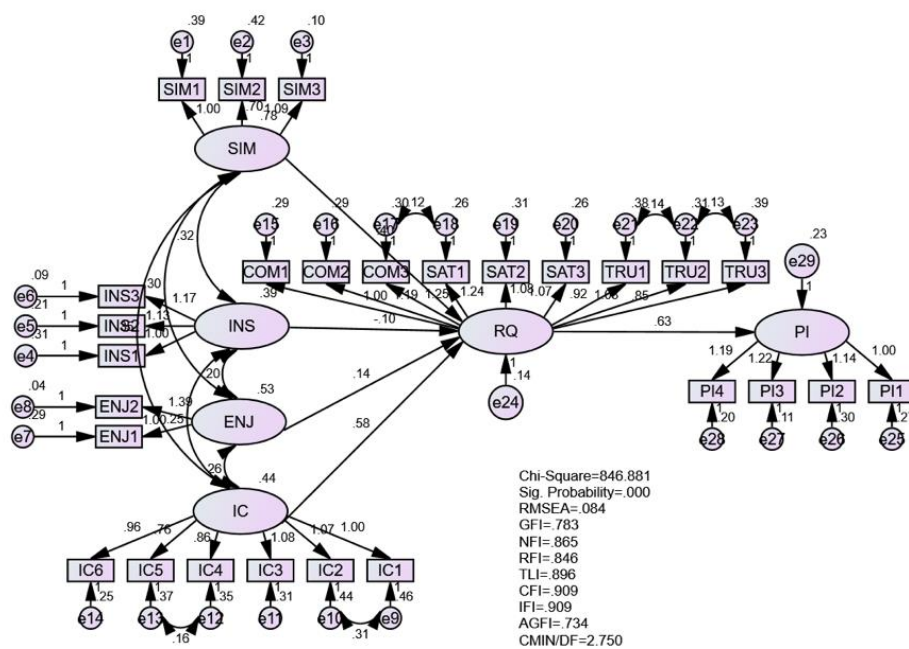


Figure 2. SEM Amos Test Results

Hypothesis Testing

This is the final stage in a study and will determine whether the author's hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The following are the results of the hypothesis test based on the data obtained by the author:

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Estimate	CR	P	Conclusion
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H1	Similarity has a positive effect on Relationship Quality	0.397	7,190	0.000	Hypothesis Supported
H2	Inspiration has a positive effect on Relationship Quality	-0.097	-1,354	0.088	Hypothesis Not Supported
H3	Enjoyability has a positive effect on Relationship Quality	0.138	2,652	0.004	Hypothesis Supported
H4	Influencer Credibility has a positive influence on Relationship Quality	0.578	6,458	0.000	Hypothesis Supported
H5	Relationship Quality has a positive effect on Purchase Intention	0.633	10,703	0.000	Hypothesis Supported

Similarity and Relationship Quality

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that similarity positively influences relationship quality. The hypothesis test yielded an estimated coefficient of 0.397 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between similarity and relationship quality. Thus, H1 is supported. This finding suggests that greater perceived similarity between consumers and influencers contributes to stronger relationship quality. It is also consistent with Wang et al. (2025), who reported a positive association between similarity and relationship quality.

Inspiration and Relationship Quality

The second hypothesis (H2) proposed that inspiration positively influences relationship quality. However, the analysis produced an estimated coefficient of -0.097 and a p-value of 0.088, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.005. These results indicate that inspiration has a negative but statistically insignificant effect on relationship quality. Therefore, H2 is not supported. This finding is consistent with Wang et al. (2025), who similarly found no significant positive relationship between inspiration and relationship quality.

Enjoyability and Relationship Quality

The third hypothesis (H3) proposed that enjoyability positively influences relationship quality. The results showed an estimated coefficient of 0.138 and a p-value of 0.004 ($p < 0.005$), demonstrating a positive and statistically significant effect of enjoyability on relationship quality. Therefore, H3 is supported. This result indicates that the more enjoyable consumers perceive an influencer's content to be, the stronger the relationship quality they develop with the influencer. This finding is consistent with the results reported by Wang et al. (2025).

Influencer Credibility and Relationship Quality

The fourth hypothesis (H4) proposed that influencer credibility positively influences relationship quality. The analysis yielded an estimated coefficient of 0.578 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), indicating a positive and statistically significant effect of influencer credibility on relationship quality. Thus, H4 is supported. The result suggests that consumers' perceptions of an influencer's credibility play an important

role in strengthening the quality of their relationship with the influencer. This finding is consistent with that of Delvina Carissa and Rodhiah (2025).

Relationship Quality and Purchase Intention

The fifth hypothesis (H5) proposed that relationship quality positively influences purchase intention. The hypothesis test generated an estimated coefficient of 0.633 and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.005$), confirming a positive and statistically significant relationship between the two constructs. Therefore, H5 is supported. This finding indicates that stronger relationship quality between consumers and influencers increases consumers' intention to purchase the recommended products or services. The result is consistent with the findings of Wang et al. (2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, this study concludes that influencer-related stimuli can shape audience perceptions and subsequently elicit specific behavioral responses. The findings demonstrate that influencer credibility is the strongest stimulus in developing relationship quality, followed by perceived similarity and content enjoyability. However, inspiration does not significantly contribute to relationship quality in the context of this study. Overall, the empirical results confirm that high-quality relationships between audiences and influencers play an important role in strengthening consumers' purchase intentions.

From a managerial perspective, food business owners should carefully select influencers or content creators who possess high credibility and demonstrate lifestyles, values, and personal characteristics that align with those of the target audience. Establishing authentic congruence between influencers and their audiences may be more effective than merely producing content that appears inspirational but lacks authenticity. Future studies are encouraged to investigate potential moderating variables, include larger and more diverse samples, and conduct cross-platform comparisons to provide a deeper understanding of why inspiration did not significantly affect relationship quality in this study.

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