



# The Influence of Fashion Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention: Examining Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness as Credibility Dimensions

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**Abstract.** This study examines the influence of fashion influencer credibility on purchase intention in Indonesia's sustainable fashion market. Drawing on Source Credibility Theory, credibility is conceptualized through trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness as reflective dimensions of a single construct. Using data from 161 Instagram users and analyzed through PLS-SEM, the findings show that influencer credibility strongly predicts purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.766$ ;  $R^2 = 0.586$ ), with trustworthiness emerging as the most influential dimension. The study contributes to communication and marketing scholarship by confirming the applicability of credibility-based persuasion in digital sustainability contexts. Practically, the results highlight the importance of collaborating with influencers who demonstrate consistent authenticity, ethical alignment, and domain expertise to strengthen consumer intention toward sustainable fashion.

**Keywords:** Source Credibility Theory, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intention, Sustainable Fashion, Digital Communication

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## INTRODUCTION

The growing influence of social media has transformed how brands communicate with their audiences, particularly in the fashion industry. In this digital era, consumers increasingly rely on fashion influencers as trusted intermediaries who shape their perceptions, preferences, and purchase decisions. Within the context of sustainable fashion, influencers are not only product endorsers but also opinion leaders who convey values of ethics, responsibility, and authenticity. This shift reflects the broader evolution of consumer behavior, where credibility and alignment of personal values play a greater role than traditional advertising appeal (Belanche et al., 2021; Kopplin & Rösch, 2021).

Indonesia represents one of the most active digital markets globally, with 143 million active social-media users, of whom 76% follow at least one influencer and 68% have purchased products endorsed by influencers (INSG, 2025). These statistics highlight the strong persuasive power of influencers in shaping purchase intention, especially in visually driven categories such as fashion.

In the field of communication studies, the persuasive power of influencer messages is often explained through the Source Credibility Theory (SCT) proposed by Hovland and Weiss (1951) and further developed by Ohanian (1990). SCT posits that message effectiveness depends on three key dimensions of the communicator's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness which collectively determine how audiences perceive the reliability and persuasiveness of the information delivered. These attributes influence whether consumers accept, internalize, or act upon a message. In the context of digital communication, these dimensions gain new significance, as audiences assess credibility not only through physical cues but also through perceived authenticity and consistent value alignment between influencer and brand.

Previous research has extensively examined influencer marketing as a persuasive communication tool. However, most studies have treated influencer credibility as a moderating variable, assuming it strengthens the link between content quality or brand image and consumer behavior (Venciute et al., 2023; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Few empirical studies have directly tested the independent impact of influencer credibility on purchase intention, especially in emerging markets such as Indonesia, where cultural values, collectivism, and trust norms differ from Western contexts. Moreover, in sustainable fashion, where consumers are encouraged to make ethical and environmentally conscious choices, the credibility of the message source becomes even more critical in shaping attitudes and behavioral intentions (Pandey & Yadav, 2023).

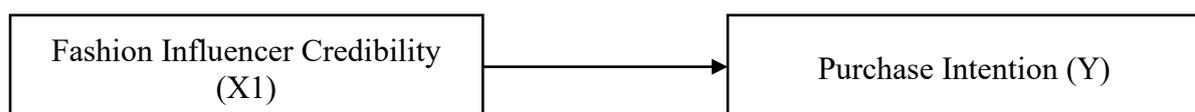
Despite this, there remains limited empirical work examining how the three dimensions of influencer credibility jointly influence purchase intention within Indonesia's sustainable fashion context, creating a clear research gap that this study seeks to address. In this study, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness are modelled as reflective dimensions of a single fashion influencer credibility construct rather than as separate mediating variables.

This study seeks to address that gap by examining the direct effect of fashion influencer credibility on purchase intention in the context of digital sustainable fashion communication. By integrating the classical perspective of SCT with contemporary influencer marketing practices, this research aims to determine whether the credibility of influencers reflected through trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness can directly drive consumers' intention to purchase sustainable fashion products. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically by reaffirming the relevance of SCT in digital contexts and practically by offering insights for brands to collaborate with influencers who embody authentic and credible communication.

In line with these aims, the study focuses on two research objectives: (1) to examine the direct influence of fashion influencer credibility on purchase intention, and (2) to identify which credibility dimension exerts the strongest effect. Based on these objectives, the study proposes the hypothesis that fashion influencer credibility positively influences consumer purchase intention in sustainable fashion communication.

Based on the theoretical framework and the proposed hypothesis, the conceptual model of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**Conceptual Framework**



## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach to examine the causal relationship between fashion influencer credibility and purchase intention in the context of sustainable fashion communication. The research design was theory driven, adopting Source Credibility Theory (SCT) as the main conceptual framework to explain how the three dimensions of influencer credibility trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness influence consumers' behavioral intentions toward sustainable fashion products.

The study utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS version 4, as this method is suitable for exploratory models, complex constructs with multiple indicators, and non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022).

In addition, PLS-SEM is appropriate when testing theory-informed models where constructs are operationalized based on theoretical dimensions, such as Ohanian's (1990) credibility scale. This aligns with the study's aim to examine direct causal effects as proposed by SCT.

To strengthen the theoretical grounding of the indicators, the credibility construct also reflects insights from Parasocial Interaction Theory, which explains how perceived intimacy and one-sided relationships enhance trust in influencers, thereby reinforcing trustworthiness as a behavioral antecedent (Giles, 2002). Furthermore, Perceived Authenticity Theory supports the inclusion of competence and ethical alignment as components of influencer expertise (Audrezet et al., 2020). These theoretical integrations provide justification for the construct structure measured in this study.

### Population and Sampling

The population of this research consisted of Indonesian consumers who actively follow or interact with sustainable fashion influencers on Instagram. Because the total population was not known, non-probability purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met specific inclusion criteria:

1. Actively use Instagram at least once per day.
2. Follow at least one influencer promoting sustainable fashion products or environmentally conscious clothing brands.
3. Have seen or engaged with influencer content related to sustainable fashion campaigns in the last three months.

A total of 161 valid responses were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Instagram and WhatsApp between May and October 2025. Demographic information including age, gender, education level, occupation, and frequency of Instagram usage was recorded to provide contextual insights into respondent characteristics, as recommended in PLS-based behavioral studies (Hair et al., 2022). This sample size exceeds the minimum statistical power requirement for a single-predictor model using SEM-PLS, satisfying both the 10-times rule and  $R^2$ -based power analysis.

**Table 1**  
**Respondent Demographics (N=161)**

| Category  | Description | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender    | Male        | 26        | 16.0           |
|           | Female      | 135       | 83.0           |
| Age       | < 20 years  | 5         | 3.1            |
|           | 21–30 years | 78        | 48.5           |
|           | 31–40 years | 64        | 39.8           |
|           | > 40 years  | 14        | 8.7            |
| Education | High school | 27        | 16.7           |

|            |                                 |    |      |
|------------|---------------------------------|----|------|
|            | Diploma                         | 14 | 8.6  |
|            | Bachelor's degree               | 89 | 55.6 |
|            | Master's degree                 | 28 | 17.3 |
|            | Doctoral degree                 | 1  | 0.6  |
| Occupation | University Student              | 17 | 10.5 |
|            | Private Employee                | 54 | 33.3 |
|            | Entrepreneur                    | 17 | 10.5 |
|            | State Owned Enterprise Employee | 4  | 2.5  |
|            | Civil servant                   | 20 | 12.3 |
|            | Homemaker                       | 26 | 16.0 |
|            | Others                          | 23 | 14.9 |

The demographic profile shows that the majority of respondents were female (83%), dominated by individuals aged 21–30 years (48.5%) and 31–40 years (39.8%). Most participants held an undergraduate degree (55.6%) and were primarily employed in the private sector (33.3%), followed by civil servants (12.3%) and homemakers (16%). This demographic structure aligns with the typical audience profile of fashion and sustainable lifestyle content on Instagram, indicating that the sample is appropriate for capturing consumer responses toward fashion influencer credibility within the digital sustainable fashion context.

### Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of two constructs: fashion influencer credibility and purchase intention

1. Fashion Influencer Credibility was assessed using nine indicators covering trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, adapted from Ohanian (1990) and updated to fit digital contexts based on Belanche et al. (2021), Kopplin and Rösch (2021), and Venciute et al. (2023). These indicators captured perceived honesty, competence, and appeal of influencers in promoting sustainable fashion. The trustworthiness items also drew from McCroskey and Teven's (1999) credibility scale to strengthen measurement validity in communication science contexts.
2. Purchase Intention was measured through four indicators reflecting consumers' willingness and intention to purchase sustainable fashion products recommended by influencers. The items were refined from Taylor and Bearden (2002) and supported by recent studies on ethical consumption (Dangelico et al., 2022; Pandey & Yadav, 2023).

All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The instrument was reviewed for content validity and reliability following recommendations by Hair et al. (2022) before data collection. Construct reliability and convergent validity were later confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70), Composite Reliability (>0.70), and Average Variance Extracted (>0.50), indicating that the measurement model met the recommended statistical thresholds. The questionnaire was administered between May and October 2025. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity of responses, and participants' right to withdraw at any time.

### Data Analysis and Ethical Procedures

Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 in two main stages: measurement model evaluation and structural model testing. Validity and reliability were confirmed through factor loadings (>0.70), Average Variance Extracted (>0.50), Composite Reliability (>0.70), and HTMT ratios (<0.90).

Model robustness was further assessed through collinearity checks ( $VIF < 3$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2 > 0$ ), and bootstrapping using 5,000 subsamples following Hair et al. (2022). These steps ensure that the structural paths meet the standards of SEM-PLS analysis for behavioral research.

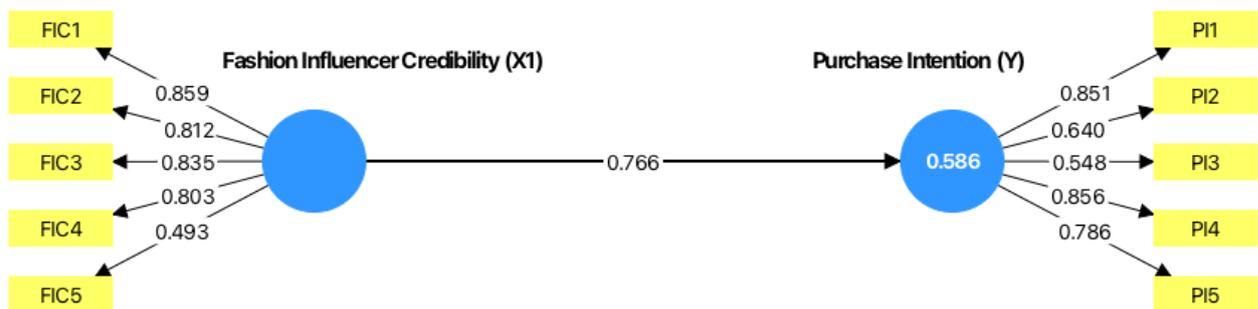
The path analysis showed that fashion influencer credibility had a significant positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.766$ ;  $t = 21.394$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), with  $R^2 = 0.586$  and  $f^2 = 1.418$ .

Ethical procedures were implemented throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and respondents provided informed consent before accessing the questionnaire. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by not collecting identifying information, and all data were stored securely following institutional guidelines. The data collection was conducted between May and October 2025.

## RESULT

To facilitate interpretation of the structural relationships examined in this study, the PLS-SEM output is presented in the following figure. The diagram summarizes the standardized path coefficient from Fashion Influencer Credibility (X1) to Purchase Intention (Y), together with the indicator loadings and the explained variance ( $R^2$ ) of the endogenous construct. This visual representation complements the statistical results reported in the subsequent tables and provides a concise overview of the model's magnitude and direction of effects.

Figure 2  
Structural Model PLS-SEM Output



### Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was assessed to ensure that all constructs met the required thresholds for reliability and convergent validity prior to estimating the structural paths. Following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2022), indicator loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were evaluated. Indicators with loadings above 0.70 were classified as strong contributors to the construct, whereas items between 0.40 and 0.70 were retained when their inclusion improved the construct's overall AVE and conceptual coverage. Composite Reliability values above 0.80 and AVE values above 0.50 were used to confirm adequate convergent validity. The results of the outer-loading assessment are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Outer loadings (convergent validity)**

| Construct                             | Item | Outer Loading | Status                |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Fashion Influencer Credibility</b> | FIC1 | 0.859         | Valid                 |
|                                       | FIC2 | 0.812         | Valid                 |
|                                       | FIC3 | 0.835         | Valid                 |
|                                       | FIC4 | 0.803         | Valid                 |
|                                       | FIC5 | 0.493         | Acceptable (Retained) |
| <b>Purchase Intention</b>             | PI1  | 0.851         | Valid                 |
|                                       | PI2  | 0.640         | Acceptable (Retained) |
|                                       | PI3  | 0.548         | Acceptable (Retained) |
|                                       | PI4  | 0.856         | Valid                 |
|                                       | PI5  | 0.786         | Valid                 |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

As shown in Table 2, four indicators measuring Fashion Influencer Credibility (FIC1–FIC4) exhibit high loadings ( $>0.80$ ), indicating strong convergence with the latent construct. FIC5 shows a lower loading (0.493); however, it remains acceptable and retained because the construct’s AVE exceeds 0.50, and removing the item would not improve the scale’s psychometric properties. For Purchase Intention, PI1, PI4, and PI5 demonstrate solid loadings above 0.75, while PI2 and PI3 fall within the moderate range (0.640 and 0.548). Both remain retained, as the construct maintains an acceptable AVE (0.557) and demonstrates consistent internal reliability. These results confirm that all indicators contribute sufficiently to their respective constructs and meet the recommended standards for convergent validity in PLS-SEM analysis.

After establishing the indicator-level validity through outer loadings, the next step was to assess construct-level reliability and convergent validity. This evaluation ensures that each construct demonstrates internal consistency and captures a sufficient proportion of variance from its indicators, in line with the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2022). Accordingly, Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$  and  $\rho_c$ ), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were examined to confirm the robustness of the measurement model. The results of these assessments are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Construct Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

| Construct          | Cronbach's alpha | Composite reliability ( $\rho_a$ ) | Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ ) | Average variance extracted (AVE) | Status   |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| Fashion Influencer | 0.821            | 0.855                              | 0.878                              | 0.597                            | Reliable |

|                        |       |      |      |       |          |
|------------------------|-------|------|------|-------|----------|
| Credibility (X1)       |       |      |      |       |          |
| Purchase Intention (Y) | 0.805 | 0.87 | 0.86 | 0.557 | Reliable |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

The construct reliability assessment confirmed that all latent variables satisfied the recommended thresholds. Cronbach’s Alpha values for Fashion Influencer Credibility (0.821) and Purchase Intention (0.805) exceeded the 0.70 cut-off, indicating adequate internal consistency. Composite Reliability values ( $\rho_A$  and  $\rho_C$ ) for both constructs also surpassed 0.80, demonstrating stable and reliable measurement. The AVE values of 0.597 and 0.557 met the minimum requirement of 0.50, confirming that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. These results indicate that the measurement model satisfies the criteria for convergent validity and reliability as outlined by Hair et al. (2022).

Having established convergent validity, the next step was to assess discriminant validity to ensure that the constructs are empirically distinct. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT), and the results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Discriminant Validity HTMT**

| Construct  | HTMT  | Status |
|--|-------|--------|
| Fashion Influencer Credibility (X1) ↔ Purchase Intention (Y) | 0.863 | Valid  |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

The discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT), as recommended by Hair et al. (2022). The HTMT value between Fashion Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention was 0.863, which is below the conservative threshold of 0.90, indicating that the two constructs are empirically distinct. This confirms that respondents were able to differentiate perceptions of influencer credibility from their intention to purchase, satisfying the requirement for discriminant validity in PLS-SEM.

Following the confirmation of discriminant validity, the next step was to assess potential collinearity issues between indicators. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were examined to ensure that the predictors in the model did not exhibit multicollinearity that could bias the structural estimates.

**Table 5**  
**Collinearity Assessment (VIF)**

| Construct | VIF       | Status               |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| FIC1-FIC5 | 1.2 - 2.4 | No multicollinearity |
| PI1-PI5   | 1.3 – 2.3 | No multicollinearity |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

The collinearity assessment indicates that all indicator VIF values fall within the acceptable range of 1.2 to 2.4. These values are well below the maximum threshold of 5.0 recommended by Hair et al. (2022), confirming that multicollinearity is not a concern in the measurement model. Thus, each indicator contributes unique variance to its respective construct without redundancy, supporting the stability of the subsequent structural model estimation.

**Hypothesis Testing (Structural Model)**

The structural model was assessed after confirming that the measurement model met all reliability and validity requirements. Following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2022), the analysis examined the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and the significance of the structural paths through bootstrapping. This stage evaluates the explanatory power and predictive capability of the model and determines whether the hypothesized relationship between Fashion Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention is supported.

**Table 6**  
**Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Testing Result**

| Hypothesis | Path  | $\beta$ | t-value | P-value | Result    |
|------------|---|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| H1         | Fashion Influencer Credibility → Purchase Intention | 0.766   | 21.394  | 0.000   | Supported |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

The path coefficient shows that fashion influencer credibility has a strong positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.766$ ). The t-value (21.394) is far above the 1.96 threshold, and the p-value (0.000) confirms significance at the 5% level. These results support the hypothesis that higher influencer credibility leads to stronger purchase intention among Indonesian consumers. The strength of this effect indicates that credibility functions as a key predictor in the model, aligning with findings that consumers tend to rely on trusted and competent influencers when considering fashion products in online settings. This pattern is consistent with prior studies noting that in collectivist societies, trust and social cues carry substantial weight in shaping decision-making. The magnitude of the coefficient also reflects documented trends in Indonesia, where a high proportion of users report purchasing items promoted by influencers (INSG, 2025).

**Model Predictive Power ( $R^2$  and  $f^2$ )**

In addition to testing the significance of the structural path, the study examined the model’s predictive strength by evaluating the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ) and the Effect Size ( $f^2$ ). According to Hair et al. (2022),  $R^2$  reflects the extent to which the exogenous construct explains variance in the endogenous variable, while  $f^2$  indicates the substantive contribution of the predictor to the model. Assessing these two criteria is essential for determining whether the structural model offers meaningful explanatory and predictive power beyond statistical significance. The results of the model’s predictive assessment are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**  
**Model Predictive Power: Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)**

| Endogenous Variable | Exogenous Variable             | R <sup>2</sup> | f <sup>2</sup> | Interpretation  |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| Purchase Intention  | Fashion Influencer Credibility | 0.586          | 1.418          | R <sup>2</sup> = Moderate to Substantial<br>f <sup>2</sup> = Large Effect |

Source: *Smart PLS 4 2025*

The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.586 shows that fashion influencer credibility explains 58.6% of the variance in purchase intention, placing the model in the moderate–strong range as described by Hair et al. (2022). The effect size is large (f<sup>2</sup> = 1.418), indicating that fashion influencer credibility contributes a substantial share of explanatory power within the structural model. This combination signals that the predictor is not only statistically influential but also meaningful for practical decision-making in sustainable fashion communication.

The empirical findings confirm that the measurement and structural components of the model meet the expected standards for SEM-PLS analysis. All retained indicators show acceptable loading values, with reliability supported by Cronbach’s Alpha, composite reliability, and AVE levels that satisfy the minimum criteria. Discriminant validity is confirmed through the HTMT ratio, and VIF values indicate the absence of multicollinearity. The structural assessment shows a strong positive effect of fashion influencer credibility on purchase intention, with a significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.766$ ), high t-value, and a p-value below the accepted threshold. This relationship is reinforced by the moderate-to-strong R<sup>2</sup> value and the large effect size, indicating that credibility is a major factor influencing consumers’ willingness to purchase sustainable fashion items. These results highlight the central importance of trusted and competent influencers in guiding consumer responses in Indonesia’s digital fashion environment, where social cues and perceived sincerity hold considerable weight in shaping purchasing behavior.

## DISCUSSION

The results show that fashion influencer credibility significantly and positively affects purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.766$ ;  $t = 21.394$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), explaining 58.6% of the variance (R<sup>2</sup> = 0.586) with a large effect size (f<sup>2</sup> = 1.418). This confirms the proposition of *Source Credibility Theory* (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990), which asserts that the persuasiveness of a message depends on how audiences perceive the source’s trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Among these three dimensions, trustworthiness emerged as the most influential, showing that credibility based on honesty and integrity is central to building consumer trust. This finding supports prior studies by Belanche et al. (2021) and Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024), who found that authenticity-driven credibility enhances persuasion and purchase intention. Expertise, as a representation of professional competence, also contributes to message acceptance by reducing consumers’ uncertainty about sustainable product quality. Conversely, attractiveness plays only a peripheral role, consistent with the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), where visual appeal enhances engagement but does not guarantee behavioral change. Culturally, Indonesia’s collectivist society emphasizes trust, moral integrity, and social responsibility in evaluating communicators (Wijaya & Paramita, 2021). Thus, influencers who reflect ethical consistency and sustainability values are more persuasive than those who rely solely on physical appeal or follower count. This finding highlights a theoretical shift:

credibility operates as a direct predictor rather than a moderating variable, strengthening the explanatory power of *Source Credibility Theory* in digital sustainability communication.

## CONCLUSION

This study empirically confirms that fashion influencer credibility directly and positively influences purchase intention in sustainable fashion communication. The model demonstrates substantial explanatory power ( $R^2 = 0.586$ ) and a large effect size ( $f^2 = 1.418$ ), with trustworthiness identified as the most dominant dimension, followed by expertise and attractiveness. Theoretically, this research extends *Source Credibility Theory* by positioning influencer credibility as a direct antecedent of consumer behavior rather than as a moderating variable. This contributes to the body of knowledge on digital marketing and sustainability communication, emphasizing the importance of ethical and cognitive credibility in shaping consumer decisions. Practically, fashion brands should collaborate with influencers who demonstrate authenticity, transparency, and domain expertise to strengthen trust and promote sustainable consumption. Influencers must move beyond image-based persuasion toward value-driven communication that aligns with sustainability principles. The main limitation of this study lies in its single independent variable and focus on Instagram users in Indonesia. Future research could integrate mediating variables such as consumer trust, perceived value, or brand authenticity and compare results across different social media platforms to enhance generalizability.

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