

The Impact of Influencers' Attractiveness, Credibility, and Parasocial Relationship Towards Purchase Intention on TikTok for Food and Beverage Industry

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Abstract

TikTok is a short-duration video platform that has been on the rise in recent years. The popularity of this platform makes many companies, including food and beverage companies, using TikTok in the form of Influencer marketing. Past researchers have found several characteristics that need to be considered in choosing the right influencers, such as attractiveness, credibility, para-social relationships, and purchase intention. This research tries to apply the same characteristics in a new social media, TikTok, specifically in the food and beverage industry. The data for this research were collected from online questionnaires with 170 respondents and processed using the PLS-SEM method. This study shows para-social relationship has the most positive effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, credibility is a vital factor as it holds significance in para-social relationships.

Keywords: Attractiveness, credibility, food and beverage, influencer marketing, para-social relationship, purchase intention, TikTok

Introduction

The development in technology from the past to the present has changed rapidly, and the world could not avoid it. We are currently in the digitalization era, which means almost all activities are related to technology and the internet. According to Detik.com (2021), up until the end of 2020, Indonesia's social media users are already reaching 160 million people. However, most Indonesia's social media users are still dominated by gen Y and Z, within the age range of 25-34 years old (Kompas, 2021). Still, for TikTok, the age group starts from 14 years old (Sindonews, 2020). One of the most extensive social media now is TikTok, a social media application from China that only focuses on short video format. Currently, TikTok is rising fast in popularity in terms of users, even though it is still far from Facebook and Instagram. According to Sense Tower (2020), TikTok users in Indonesia reached 30.7 million or total downloads of 8,5% in July 2020. As established before, TikTok is different from the other social media applications, like WhatsApp used for chatting and Instagram to post photos and videos. Still, on TikTok, people use it to share short videos with features – exciting features (such as stickers, effects, use of music, and others). Shorter videos tend to spread quickly and widely, which may be the main factor that attracts TikTok users to be aware and engage with the content.

As TikTok has become more significant as a social media, many people are becoming famous on this platform, and they are called TikTok influencers. Influencer gains followers by sharing their skills in their respective fields (Cotter, 2019). Many businesses perceive the fast growth of TikTok influencers to be a potential marketing tool for their products or services. Social media influencer is a proven effective way to promote a product (Lou and Yuan, 2018). As social media influencer is one of the most used marketing channels (Dwidienawati et al., 2020), almost every industry can use TikTok as their marketing platform. One of the industries that could utilize TikTok is the food and beverage sector, since currently, it is the most significant potential for economic growth in Indonesia, according to PikiranRakyat.com (2020). Airlangga, the Minister of

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Industry of Indonesia, said that until the first quarter of 2019, the growth of the food and industry's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 6.77%. This figure is above the national industrial GDP growth of 5.07%. Because of this, the number of food social media influencers overgrows, especially on TikTok. According to Medium.com (2020), it aligns as food content on TikTok is one of the seven best video categories on TikTok right now.

Content creators with domain expertise who influence their followers' attitudes and purchasing decisions are referred to as social media influencers (Lou and Kim, 2019). With such expertise and followers, endorsers need to make sure that the social media influencers chosen can correctly carry the brand's intended message to their audiences, so choosing the right influencer is key to successful influencer marketing. There are many things to pay attention to when selecting influencers, especially TikTok since the platform is still young. Past researches found that attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationship are the main factors that we need to look up when choosing the right social media influencer (Alfarraj et al., 2020; Sokolova and Perez, 2021; Gong, 2020). Physical appearance is the first thing that the user sees on the content. It will also give the user a first impression of the content, so it is essential. According to Business Insider (2020), TikTok currently has a policy regarding its user's video's physical appearance. To avoid promoting more content from people deemed ugly, inadequate, or disabled, depending on TikTok's standard to keep the application more appealing, it makes a physical appearance even more critical on TikTok.

Credibility is also one of the essential factors for TikTok influencers. TikTok users want to see influencers they can trust to get entertainment, information, and recommendation simultaneously. Credibility can be assessed from the influencer's skill, knowledge, and honesty through their content (Lou and Kim, 2019). The TikTok Influencer qualification will also raise credibility from an expertise standpoint, like the TikTok Influencer is a certified nutritionist. All content on TikTok is just a short video maximizing a 1-minute duration. It will be interesting to see which influencer can build a para-social relationship with their followers with this short video format. Para-social relationships have already appeared in other social media like YouTube and Instagram, where people share their daily lives, information, recommendation, and other stuff, but differently than TikTok (Sokolova and Perez, 2021)

The variables adopted by past research about attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationship are presented in different journals that were discussed generally and mainly in the field of fashion and fitness in various social media (Wiedmann and Mettenheim, 2020; Sokolova and Perez, 2021; Taillon et al., 2020; Lou and Kim, 2019). However, influencer marketing research has a vast gap, especially a study in TikTok influencers with food and beverage as the main interest. Therefore, this research aims to see if these same influencer characteristics for other fields will apply to the food and beverage industry on TikTok influencer to fill that gap. So, this research aims to answer the question: will the TikTok influencer's attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationship affect purchase intention on food and beverage that they promoted? This question's answer will serve as a guide to finding the best influencer characteristic on TikTok for the food and beverage brand interested in exercising influencer marketing on TikTok.

Theoretical background

Attractiveness

Selected findings from past researches see attractiveness from parts of the body and facial features. These are the characteristics that can please someone who sees it, in other words, "good looking" (Wiedmann and Mettenheim, 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020; Fang et al., 2020; Rodgers et al., 2019). Another research found that physically attractive people are more preferred non-physically attractive ones (Zakari et al., 2019). Attractiveness also can be defined as how classy, or elegant someone is in other people's eyes (Weismueller et al., 2020). More development about the characteristics that people count to valuing others appearance is a correlation between body weight, body height, body shape, skin tone, and attractive appearance that can conclude whether someone is ugly, pretty, or handsome (Rodgers et al., 2019). A term called "What is good is beautiful," which comes when attractiveness is the nature to find someone who looks good or ugly at just one glance. In this stereotype term, everyone who looks beautiful is automatically associated with positive things. This means that what they said will be perceived as favorable to those who see or hear it (Chaker et al., 2019;

Cao, 2020).

As TikTok is a visual-based social media where all contents consist of a short video, attractiveness is one of the influencers' key aspects to get attention. It is an initial judgment of other persons (Martensen et al., 2018). For the Influencer, Attractiveness is one of the primary aspects of gaining engagement on their TikTok page. Talking about content, many influencers who gain attention by their attractiveness are more likely to evoke engagement, get a boost of followers, and huge opportunity to enter an FYP or For You Page in TikTok (Melanie et al., 2019). For Your Page is TikTok's version of the homepage, but with more randomness but still in the same category or influencer that the users favored. And established before, TikTok's algorithm also favors the ones with great physical features.

Credibility

Credibility is an essential thing for any type of marketing (Dwivendi et al., 2018). Of course, it applies to influencer marketing too. Credibility from past research about influencer marketing usually looks at the influencer's trustworthiness and expertise (Alfarraj et al., 2020; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Argyris et al., 2021). Expertise is an influencer's basic competence, including a source of skills and knowledge related to a particular topic or subject (Weismueller et al., 2020). With high expertise, the influencer will give valuable information because of their knowledge and experience (Ismagilova et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, trustworthiness refers to influencers' dependability, and credibility of the things said (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Trustworthiness means that people believe that the influencer always tells the truth (Liao and Mak, 2019) and has good intentions for their followers (Sokolova and Kefi, 2019). Furthermore, an influencer that regularly updates their content with valuable information for the followers will be seen as caring to their followers and competent in their domain (Sokolova and Kefi, 2019).

In TikTok, even though the content is concise with the maximum duration is only one minute, we can still see and perceive the influencer's credibility from the content they share. Many TikTok Influencer nowadays offers a lot of expertise in what they do, such as nutritionists and meat experts who know about meat in and out. A short video is also easier to make, so TikTok influencer can upload their content regularly to their followers, which is an essential factor for credibility (Sokolova and Kefi, 2019). As a result, TikTok influencers are frequently considered reliable sources of information on what their followers may need in the future or now (Weismueller et al., 2020).

Para-social Relationship

Past researchers found that a para-social relationship is an interpersonal relationship with a media personality through mediated communication, meaning that the relationship was made without knowing or meeting the person personally (Derrick et al., 2019; Lou and Kim, 2019; Hsu, 2020; Kim and Kim, 2020; Vazquez et al., 2020). As their relationship becomes even more regular, the followers will later build a comfortable friendship with the influencer and will be eager to meet the influencer in person (Sokolova and Perez, 2021; Sakib et al., 2020). As the relationship is perceived to be growing, the followers will experience joy when watching the influencer's content and be even more committed to the influencer, thus, watching the influencer's content something that they look forward to (Hsu, 2020). Since social media opens up many opportunities for the influencer to interact with the followers, this will create a feeling of direct communication like a real friend (Gong, 2020; Aw and Labrecque, 2020). As friendship grows more substantially, the followers will eventually miss the influencer if the influencer is not updating any content because of illness or vacation (Gong and Li, 2018). Being close with the influencer will also make the followers want to know more or deeper about the influencer since they perceived the influencer as a real friend (Aw and Labrecque, 2020).

Since TikTok is a social media filled with short videos, it is more frequent for the influencer to update new content. Since the post frequency can be much higher than any other social media, like YouTube, for example, has a longer video format, the para-social relationship between followers and TikTok Influencer can be more developed in a shorter amount of time (Sokolova and Perez, 2021). TikTok also provides two-way communication through the comment section, increasing the para-social relationship between follower and influencer. This interaction will make the influencer feel like a real friend to the followers (Aw and Labrecque, 2020; Kim and Kim, 2020). Moreover, because of TikTok's algorithm, more content from the same category,

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food, and beverage, will be shown to the user, which will most likely dominate the food influencer favored by the user, increasing the relationship return.

Purchase Intention

The possibility of consumers willingly purchase a product from someone in the future is referred to as purchase intention (Chetioui et al., 2020). It is the intention to purchase something. Purchase intention can also imply buying some products the next time they go to a store to buy something (Kudeshia and Kumar, 2017). Since purchase intention was planned before, it is safe to say that consumers could imagine buying a product from the brand or food from the place they intend to purchase (Lou and Yuan, 2018). This means that the person who already wants to buy certain things is interested in what they wanted to believe in the first place, due to their willingness to purchase the product, although they know that it is an ad, to begin with (Lou and Yuan, 2018). There are also some facts regarding social media becoming a place that can relate to a materialistic view to buy certain things that they see online because of social comparison (Lou and Kim, 2019). Since everyone, including the influencer, can share what they buy or have on TikTok, it seems like something they needed to buy. Also, people nowadays are always looking for recommendations online.

Hypotheses Development

As previously mentioned, social media users have surged, contributing to the emergence of social media influencers. Previous research (Lim et al., 2017; Sokolova and Kefi, 2019; Taillon et al., 2020; Weismueller et al., 2020) showed that attractiveness and credibility, as well as para-social relationships, positively impacted purchase intention in this online era. The world keeps moving to the digital age. Many people start to look for products and recommendations on social media, including food and beverage, which has been booming lately. Therefore, it will increase the purchase intention for food and beverage products if promoted by a social media influencer adored by many food lovers in Indonesia. As established before, social media influencers that are loved and have high persuasive power are the ones who have attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationship with their followers.

In the past, there were several studies (Lim et al., 2017; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Taillon et al., 2019; AlFarraj et al., 2020) that conclude that attractiveness does positively affect purchase intention, which includes physical attractiveness. Generally, people are more eager to see and trust people with attractive physiques. Influencers with a high level of attractiveness normally deliver the brand's intended message more persuasively and positively (Wiedmann and Mettenheim, 2020). Many marketers found that physically attractive influencers influence the trend or purchase intention towards the brand they are promote (AlFarraj et al., 2020). Nowadays, people seem to follow the trend, which will increase their purchase intention to trendy and popular things. Most things, including food and beverage products, can be trendy using the proper influencer marketing alone. After combining all the past research on attractiveness, attractive influencers were found to generate a more favorable result to increase consumers' purchase intention (Taillon et al., 2019). Based on past research on attractiveness, this research hypothesized that:

H₁: The Influencer's attractiveness has a positive impact on purchase intention.

Since the day that television got famous, the para-social relationship found calling on the next level with social media like TikTok that made a way to communicate in two ways between the followers and the Influencer (Lou and Kim, 2019). Physical attractiveness has always been one of the most critical determinants of para-social relationships (Sakib et al., 2019). Attractiveness plays a significant role in building para-social relationships because people wanted to see people they think are attractive more frequently. It will create a para-social relationship the more regularly the followers know the influencer on social media, in this case, TikTok (Sokolova and Perez, 2021). So, this research hypothesized that:

H₂: The Influencer's attractiveness has a positive impact on a para-social relationship.

Credibility is one of the best characteristics to have as an influencer. An influencer's credibility is often seen from the trustworthiness, expertise, and goodwill that the influencer has for the followers (Sakib et al., 2019). This implies that with the increase of perceived credibility, so does followers' trust and, eventually, a connection

develops. In this case, a credible source or credible influencer will keep people coming back and see the content that the credible influencer upload on their TikTok because it is valuable to the follower's eye. So, if the follower keeps coming back to see the influencer's content, eventually, it will build a para-social relationship with the credible Influencer (Sokolova and Perez, 2020). So, this research hypothesized that:

H₃: The Influencer's credibility has a positive impact on a para-social relationship.

One of the known primary criteria used to assess influencer marketing efficiency is credibility (Lim et al., 2017). Persuasiveness will rise as an influencer's credibility grows. It has been shown that if an influencer is seen to be trustworthy and credible, followers are more likely to purchase the product that is promoted (Sokolova and Kefi, 2019; Lou and Yuan, 2018). Previous research has demonstrated how an individual's decision or intent to purchase a product is influenced by a credible source (Weismueller et al., 2020). Influencers' credibility is heavily influenced by trustworthiness and experience. Hence, as the influencer's honesty and knowledge about the product they are promoting increase, the more credible they are, the more power to shape the followers' purchase intention towards the product they are promoting. So, this research hypothesized that:

H₄: The Influencer's credibility has a positive impact on purchase intention.

A strong para-social relationship between the influencer and the followers would make the influencer seem like a role model whom followers aspire to be, which causes purchase intention towards the promoted product to go up (Lou and Kim, 2019). A strong relationship like this can be a great predictor of the follower's purchase intention positively. In that case, many followers follow their favorite influencer to get recommendations on the things that they wanted to buy, do, or even eat from the influencer's content (Sakib et al., 2020; Sokolova and Perez, 2021). These effects will become even more effective if people follow the influencer for a longer period, deepening the para-social relationship. With all that said, this research hypothesized that:

H₅: The Influencer's para-social relationship has a positive impact on purchase intention.

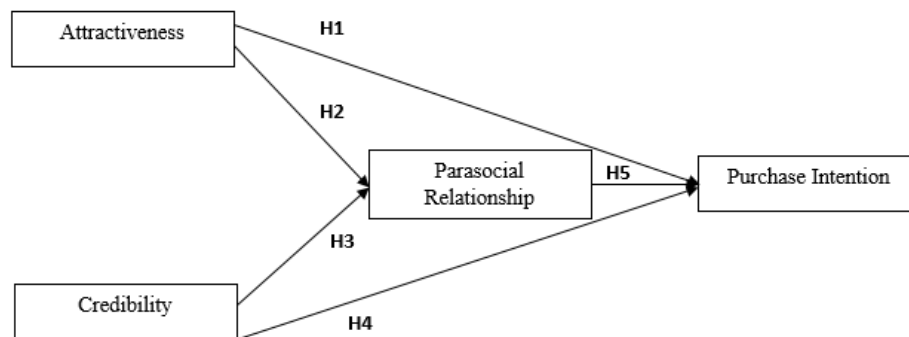


Figure 1. Hypothesized model for the relationship between Attractiveness, Credibility, and Parasocial Relationship towards Purchase Intention

Methodology Research

Measures

To ensure the validity of all items, the data of this research adapted from past research items relevant to the concept of this research, with only a slight adjustment to suit this research needs. The measures for the Influencer's Attractiveness were taken from Sakib et al. (2020) and Weismueller et al. (2019). In measuring the influencers' credibility, five questionnaire items adapted from Sokolova and Kefi (2019) were used. Five items to measure a para-social relationship between influencer and follower were obtained from Sokolova and Perez (2021). As for purchase intention, two measurement items were adapted from Sokolova and Kefi (2019), and three items were adopted from Weismueller et al. (2019). With each question modified to suit our context better. All questionnaires will be assessed on a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging between "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". The list of items used in this research is shown in the Appendix.

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The data collected will be processed with SmartPLS software using the PLS-SEM method. Before processing the data, a validity and reliability test was required for the outer model. In the validity test, all instruments were examined in convergent validity and discriminant validity. The needed factor loading value should be greater than 0.50, while the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value should be greater than 0.50 for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2011). For the discriminant validity, the inter-construct correlations value should be less than the square root of AVE

Meanwhile, this research uses composite reliability for the reliability test with the value should be greater than 0.60 (Hair et al., 2011). This study used a one-tail test to examine the link between components in the inner model. The t-value must be more than 1.654 as determined by the T Student table, and the p-value should be less than 0.05. The relationship between variables will be observed from the strength of the path coefficient and the R-squared value to see how accurate the model is.

Subjects

This research used the preference about chosen variables on TikTok Food Influencers by TikTok users in Jabodetabek. Especially for food TikTok influencers, our focus is on the food and beverage industry, which has been booming. Our primary target respondents are gen Y and gen Z ranging from 14 to 35 years old, the most active social media users. They often see many recommendations about what to eat or new food trends from social media like TikTok. As for the 14 to 17 years old will be represented by <18 years old since the minimum age required to open a TikTok account is 14 years old. Before answering the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they follow any food influencer and state their favorite one on TikTok as the main subject for the influencer. If the respondents were not following any food influencer on TikTok, they could not answer the questionnaire. From the questionnaire, this research got 201 respondents who were using TikTok and checked our respondent criteria. The first part of this research questionnaire covers some primary demographic data to classify the respondents. In the second part, the respondents were asked to state their preferences and opinion according to the Likert scale that we provided.

Data Analysis

After compiling all the data gathered from this research respondents through an online questionnaire, only 170 data were valid through this research respondent criteria. In Table 1, the respondents characteristic was divided into a simple attribute. By gender, most respondents were female, with 68.66% compared to males with only 31.34%. As for the age group, most of the respondents were 18 – 23 years old, which made 87.06% of the overall respondents. In addition, 62.18% of the respondents were currently living in Jakarta as most of the respondents. A little bit more than half of all respondents, precisely 59.20%, were using TikTok for 1 to 3 hours daily.

Table 1 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	63	31.34%
	Female	138	68.66%
Age	<18 years old	19	9.45%
	18 – 23 years old	175	87.06%
	24 – 29 years old	6	3.00%
	30-35 years old	1	0.49%
Location	Jakarta	125	62.18%
	Bogor	12	5.98%

	Depok	3	1.50%
	Tangerang	46	22.88%
	Bekasi	15	7.46%
Daily Average Time on TikTok	<1 hour	44	21.90%
	1 – 3 hours	119	59.20%
	4 – 6 hours	30	14.92%
	> 6 hours	8	3.98%

In Table 2, the result for the reliability and convergent validity test for the data was stated per instrument. After testing the reliability of all constructs, it is safe to say that all the constructs are reliable and meeting the requirement for a reliable construct, which required each construct to have a composite reliability value that exceeds 0.60. As for the convergent validity test, all items were included in this data analysis since all factor loading exceeded the value of 0.50. All four constructs also meet the requirement of an AVE value exceeding 0.50.

Table 2 Reliability and Convergent Validity Result

Variable	Item	Factor Loading (>0.50)	Composite Reliability (>0.60)	AVE (>0.50)
Attractiveness	AT1	0.828	0.903	0.652
	AT2	0.824		
	AT3	0.871		
	AT4	0.768		
	AT5	0.738		
Credibility	CR1	0.808	0.884	0.606
	CR2	0.808		
	CR3	0.832		
	CR4	0.776		
	CR5	0.658		
Parasocial Relationship	PR1	0.843	0.901	0.645
	PR2	0.861		
	PR3	0.761		
	PR4	0.762		
	PR5	0.782		
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.861	0.907	0.662
	PI2	0.834		

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	PI3	0.824		
	PI4	0.753		
	PI5	0.793		

Discriminant validity test results shown in Table 3 show that all square roots of AVEs of all construct values are higher than every single inter-construct correlation. This means that each construct is different from one to another.

Tabel 3 Discriminant Validity Results

	Attractiveness	Credibility	Para-social Relationship	Purchase Intention
Attractiveness	0.807			
Credibility	0.397	0.779		
Parasocial Relationship	0.507	0.550	0.803	
Purchase Intentions	0.477	0.548	0.719	0.814

In Table 4, the result of this research shows that attractiveness and credibility impact the para-social relationship. Regarding purchasing intention, attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationships all have a beneficial influence. As for the R Square result, this research contributes 40.1% and 56.1% of the variance in a para-social relationship and purchase intention.

Tabel 4 Hypothesis Test Result

Path	Path Coefficient	T Values	P Values	Conclusion
AT -> PI	0.120	1.863	0.031	Accepted
AT -> PR	0.343	4.199	0.000	Accepted
CR -> PR	0.414	6.168	0.000	Accepted
CR -> PI	0.198	2.422	0.008	Accepted
PR -> PI	0.550	7.395	0.000	Accepted

Discussion

An intention to purchase food and beverage based on a recommendation by some TikTok Influencer was assumed to occur depends on the characteristics of the TikTok influencer. Hence, the main focus for this research, as the main goal is to find the central element of the influencer, namely attractiveness, credibility, and para-social relationship, which the endorser needs to look at thoroughly before they use TikTok Influencer as one of their marketing channels. Therefore, this research is fundamental and required urgently since doing influencer marketing is unavoidable for most companies these days. Furthermore, the food and beverage industry recognized TikTok as one of the newest and most trending social media sites.

This research found that the respondents could rate attractiveness and credibility based on their preferences. Still, the respondents' perspective towards their favorite TikTok food influencer is the same, even though their chosen influencer was varied. This may happen because most respondents are in the same generation, Gen Z

(18-23 years old). Attractiveness was assumed to positively impact purchase intention. According to this study, attractiveness has a direct positive influence on purchase intention. This result aligned with previous studies (Lou and Kim, 2019; Taillon et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2019), which supported that attractiveness positively affects purchase intention. These previous studies were conducted regarding various social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, and others, which are fundamentally different from TikTok as the topic of this study. Therefore, it can be implied that this theory will work in any social media to date. However, one study from Jordania by AlFarraj et al. (2020) found no direct impact from attractiveness to purchase intention due to differences in respondents' views. This could imply that the result may be dependent on the respondents' characteristics themselves. Since our respondents give a high score for attractiveness on average, our respondents do care about the attractiveness of their favorite influencers as it creates an excellent first impression and makes them attracted to watch the content.

Past studies assumed that attractiveness positively impacts the para-social relationship between influencers and their followers, proven through this research. Based on the results, they are consistent with a previous study (Sakib et al., 2020), which discovered that attractiveness has a beneficial influence on para-social connections. As established before, attractiveness is one reason that the followers wanted to watch the content from the influencer in the first place, thus creating the initiation process (Tukachinsky and Stever, 2018) and will be attracted to watch more. Each time the respondents watch the influencer's content, it will eventually evolve into a stronger para-social relationship with the influencer (Sokolova and Perez, 2021). Even though this study was done in the context of YouTube and fitness with Gen Z as most respondents, it is safe to say the result could be applied globally, proven by the statistical work on this research. The frequency of the respondents watching the content from their favorite influencer could also be rising since most of the respondents spend 1 to 3 hours of TikTok per day. This result is also supported by how the respondents feel about attractiveness is essential, as it is the first impression of the influencer. Our work found that the most critical factor for attractiveness is how good-looking the influencer is in the respondents' eyes. This is consistent with Sakib et al. (2020), which states how good-looking the influencer is the most significant factor for attractiveness.

The influencer's credibility was also assumed to positively impact the para-social relationship between the influencers and their followers, as shown by this research. The statistical result from this research aligns with the previous studies (Sokolova and Perez, 2021; Sakib et al., 2020) that found credibility impacting para-social relationships positively, with credibility being more significant than attractiveness. Both studies were done in a different geographical location and ethnicity than our study, which means that the result could be applied across location and ethnicity. This research found that to be accurate, the statistics showing the β value of the credibility (0.414) is higher than the β value of the attractiveness (0.343), which means that credibility is a more significantly positive para-social relationship. Trustworthiness is an essential factor to the respondents, followed by efficiency, expertise, caring, and regular updates. So being a trustworthy source of information is key to a solid para-social relationship. Past research supported by past research explained how important it is to build trustworthiness because it will build confidence from the followers if the messages are honestly delivered (Yuan et al., 2016). This statement also aligns with respondents' opinions because they want an honest and genuine source about their experience with the food and beverage itself. This statement is supported by the findings from Lou and Kim (2019) on trustworthiness as the most significant factor on credibility to a para-social relationship.

As the main objective of all endorsers, which is to sell products to their target market, increasing purchase intention will be the primary goal when choosing a marketing channel, in this case, influencer marketing. This research signals that credibility does positively impact purchase intention, which aligns with previous research (Jong and Hanqun, 2020). In the end, trust is the most dominant factor to build the perceived credibility of the respondents. On the other side, there are surprising findings that contradict these research findings (Dash et al., 2021; Cooley et al., 2019), where gen Z is located in the US is more trusting in referral people and India trusting group peers. The different impact is the signal that demographics can cause other preferences in whom they trust. Apart from that, it was proven that user-generated content, like what the influencer does, is why Gen Z put more of their trust online than any other generation (Herrando et al., 2019). However, the case still stands that demographics need to be researched deeply to see if this finding could be applied to that specific demographic.

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This study's findings are consistent with prior research, revealing how effective para-social relationships had on purchase intention (Jin and Ryu, 2020; Hsu, 2020). This research found that para-social relationships help close the gap between the influencer and the followers, making the followers feel a lot closer and putting more trust in the influencer. This is shown through how the influencer replying to the followers in the comment section will strengthen the para-social relationship (Lou and Kim, 2019). Since past researches have a variety of social media and respondents that the majority are different from our respondents, it can be concluded that this finding could be applied across social media and to any kind of demographic. Statistically, this research shows that parasocial relationship ($\beta = 0.550$) is more significantly positive towards purchase intention than credibility ($\beta = 0.198$) and attractiveness ($\beta = 0.120$). The most critical element of a para-social relationship is the curiosity to know more about the influencer. This research has shown that the para-social relationship between the respondent with their favorite influencer is high, with a mean of 3.960 out of 5. It can be concluded that a para-social relationship is an essential element for purchase intention to occur.

Conclusion and Implication

This research aims to find the essential characteristics of a TikTok food influencer for a food and beverage company looking into expanding their marketing channel using TikTok food influencers. This research found that a para-social relationship is the best predictor to purchase intention. The curiosity to know more about the influencer is the most determining factor for a para-social relationship. Para-social relationships will strengthen over time as the frequency of the followers watching the influencer's content increases. Credibility was found to be a great predictor for a para-social relationship, with trustworthiness as the most significant item factor followed by efficiency, expertise, caring, and regular update.

Attractiveness impacts purchase intention and para-social relationship directly, but it is not the most significant factor. However, the respondents tend to give a high score on attractiveness for their favorite influencers, implying that they prefer attractive influencers. This research concludes that credibility and para-social relationship will be the company's characteristics to look out for in TikTok food influencers. The easiest factor to track as a company is to look out for the track record of the TikTok food influencer itself by looking at how trustworthy and how deep the relation with the followers. The para-social relationship can also be seen from how the influencer interacts with the followers. However, attractiveness still could not be neglected because it will create an excellent first impression and make the followers watch the content.

There are, of course, some limitations in this research. Concerning that, there is some suggestion that can be taken into consideration for further study. First, having a more specific or broader range of age groups would also be beneficial since TikTok is still growing as a social media platform. The content may or may not evolve in the future, and so is the user of this social media application. Therefore, having a more detailed demographic could be an excellent addition for further studies. Second, changing the physical attractiveness variables to different types of attractiveness like social attractiveness or content attractiveness is also suggested since these types of attractiveness are also one of the selling points that a social media influencer has on TikTok. Finally, further studies could also do a separate or even a side-by-side comparison between food and beverage or even other fields aligned with TikTok in the future.

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Appendix

Items for Attractiveness (5 Items)

Does para-social interaction with weight loss vloggers affect compliance? The role of vlogger characteristics, consumer readiness, and health consciousness (MD Nazmus Sakib, Mohammadali Zolfagharian, Atefeh Yazdanparast, 2019) (three items)

Influencer endorsements: How advertising disclosure and source credibility affect consumer purchase intention on social media (Weismueller et al., 2019) (two items):

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1. I find [Name of social Influencer] very attractive physically
2. I think [Name of social Influencer] is quite pretty/handsome
3. [Name of social Influencer] is good looking
4. Ugly - Beautiful
5. Plain - Elegant

Items for Credibility (5 Items)

Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How credibility and para-social interaction influence purchase intentions (Karina Sokolova and Hajer Kefi, 2019)

1. I find [Name of social influencer] expert in his domain
2. I find [Name of social Influencer] efficient in his job
3. I find [Name of social Influencer] trustworthy
4. I think [Name of social Influencer] cares about his followers
5. [Name of social Influencer] updates regularly his content

Items for Parasocial Relationship (5 Items) Modified

Sokolova, K., & Perez, C. (2021). You follow fitness influencers on YouTube. But do you actually exercise? How para-social relationships and watching fitness influencers relate to intentions to exercise.

1. If my favorite food influencer appeared on another media, I would watch it to know more
2. If my favorite food influencer appeared on another media, I would read it to know more
3. I look forward to watching the last video uploaded by my favorite food influencer on TikTok
4. I miss seeing my favorite food influencer on TikTok when he or she is not publishing videos
5. I would like to meet my favorite food influencer in person

Items for Purchase Intention Modified

Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it; why should I buy? How credibility and para-social interaction influence purchase intentions (Karina Sokolova and Hajer Kefi, 2020) (2 items)

Influencer endorsements: How advertising disclosure and source credibility affect consumer purchase intention on social media (Weismueller et al., 2019) (3 items)

1. I would purchase the products promoted by [Name of social Influencer] in the future
2. I would encourage people close to me to buy the products promoted by [Name of social Influencer]
3. I can imagine buying food from this restaurant.
4. The next time I buy food, I will consider this restaurant.
5. I am very interested in buying food from this restaurant.