Influencer Credibility as A Source of Travel Information for Generation Z to Bali

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Abstract

The development of technology is increasingly rapid, so tourism business managers must keep up with existing technological developments. Social media, especially Instagram, is one of the most widely used platforms in the world, especially for Generation Z. However, some respondents use Instagram for information and entertainment and there is a problem that the information obtained is sometimes not in accordance with reality, especially tourist information. This shows that there is still a lack of credible influencer filtering used in disseminating information about a product or place. This study aims to examine the differences in the interests of Generation Z in assessing the credibility of influencers as a source of tourism information to Bali. In the study, the researcher used a quantitative approach with data analysis used, namely the Multivariate of Variance Test (MANOVA). The number of samples used was 110 respondents per type of tourist. The sampling technique is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling approach. The results of the study revealed that both domestic and foreign tourist groups judged influencers by their attractiveness to create a feeling of trust in the content disseminated. Meanwhile, for the gender group, they have the same perspective in assessing the credibility of an influencer.

Keywords: Influencer, Generation Z, Source Credibility

INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has significantly changed the global tourism industry by influencing the paradigm, industry structure, and new potentials and challenges (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005). The development of the internet and new social media platforms has changed the way people exchange information from one-way communication to two-way communication. Popular video content on social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat provides individuals with better access to watch short video clips, in keeping with the contemporary lifestyle of travelers (Choi & Lee, 2019). The majority of travel decisions are influenced by information obtained from social media and digital marketing (Islam, 2021). Based on We Are Social (2024) data reported through the official website as of January 2024, social media users around the world amount to 5.04 billion by spending 2 hours and 23 minutes with one of the purposes of using social media is to find content and social media Instagram is still one of the platforms widely used by generation z. This is in accordance with the opinion (Prihatiningsih, 2017)that Instagram is the social media that is the most able to meet all needs compared to other social media, especially among teenagers.

Generation Z is expected to change the dynamics in the tourism sector in the future, especially in the suggestions given in the tourism sector. In this case, Generation Z was born in an environment rich in technology and social media is the main factor in influencing

Generation Z's decisions (Walia & Jasrotia, 2021). Generation Z uses social media more to collect information and purchase decisions about a product or service and Generation Z tends to share their travel experiences on social media (Williams & Robert A. Page, 2011). This indicates that marketing through social media is still very important to do, especially in disseminating tourist information for needs before Generation Z travels. In this context, the research focuses on Generation Z to understand how they seek information and how mindsets differ among different genders. Generation Z often relies on social media to find tourism information, but often they find untrustworthy sources. In today's technological era, the problem of trust in online sources of information arises because often these sources violate their professional ethics. This is due to the pressure to meet the rapid information needs of the public. Online media tend to prioritize speed in delivering news, but this does not always guarantee high quality information (Chandrabuwono et al., 2022).The effectiveness of searching for data does not only depend on the source, whether it comes from the internet or social media such as Instagram. Effective data quality is often related to the credibility of the source. Consumers often use online travel intermediary platforms to find trustworthy service providers. Research shows that personal information such as name, address, and date of stay can increase trust in traveler reviews on the internet, ultimately affecting the popularity of those reviews online. Travel brokerage sites can also reinforce the visual impression of credibility indicators by using different typefaces, colors, and formatting techniques such as underlining, highlighting, and bold (Jimmy Xie *et al*., 2011).

In the context of tourism in Bali, the authenticity of photos and content is a major concern in today's digital era. Social media features and platforms for sharing images have given rise to increasingly common problems, such as photo and content manipulation. Some people may use editing techniques or filters to improve the appearance of the destination, such as beaches that look cleaner or clearer than they actually are. This practice can mislead travelers who rely on the image as a guide in making travel decisions. In addition, changes in actual conditions at tourist locations often do not reflect what is displayed on social media, which can cause tourists to feel disappointed or even cause negative perceptions of the destinations visited. This situation will certainly have an impact on Bali's image as an attractive tourist destination. Source credibility in the use of Instagram is important in the world of tourism. Poor credibility can affect the image of the destination itself. It is also found in research conducted by (Veasna et al., 2013) where the credibility of the source will affect the image of the destination itself. This will certainly worsen Bali's image if the information shared on Instagram is not guaranteed to be true.

With this in mind, the assumption that can be made in this study is that the credibility of the source of information, along with the communication medium and message characteristics, plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of communication. This research departs from the idea that people who consume information tend to give better trust and response to sources that are considered trustworthy. Therefore, it is important to understand the views of the audience, especially Generation Z, in looking for sources of information that they consider credible to meet their information needs effectively.

Tourist Destination

According to Undang-undang Nomor 10 Tahun 2009 tourist destinations are geographical areas that are equipped with various tourist attractions, public facilities, tourist facilities, accessibility, and interaction with local communities. (Morrison, 2019) defines tourist destination is intended for recreational or vacation activities, equipped with supporting infrastructure such as accommodation and transportation. Tourist destinations are places where tourists carry out tourist activities, which can be cities, regions, provinces, or countries (Hidayah, 2019).

Tourist

According to Undang-undang Nomor 10 Tahun 2009 defines tourist is an individual who travels for tourism (Hidayah, 2019) defines a tourist as someone who visits a place for tourism purposes, staying for at least 24 hours. (Sugiama, 2011) describes tourists as individuals or groups traveling for leisure, business, healthcare, religious activities, or studies, identifying anyone temporarily leaving their residence as a tourist.

Social Media

Social media is a tool used by consumers to share information such as text, images, audio, and video with others and companies (Keller *et al.*, 2016). According to (Brogan, 2010), social media is a new collection of communication and collaboration tools that enable various types of interactions previously unavailable to ordinary people. It allows users to communicate, share, collaborate, and interact with each other, forming virtual connections. Nasrullah, (2016) defines social media as internet platforms that enable users to present themselves, interact, cooperate, share information, and communicate with others, building virtual social relationships.

Influencer

An influencer, derived from the word "influence" or influence, is someone who has the ability to influence others, often a public figure or an active user of social media with a large following. What an influencer says can indirectly affect the behavior of his followers (Nisa, 2024). According to (Brown & Hayes, 2008), influencers are third parties that have an important role in influencing customer purchase decisions. They are related to marketing, specifically in the concept of Influencer Marketing, which is a modern approach in marketing and public relations, targeting potential consumers with influencers helping to raise awareness and influence purchasing decisions among those who value their expertise.

Source Credibility Theory

The Source Credibility Theory, first proposed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley in 1953, explains that individuals are more susceptible to influence when their communicators are considered credible. A communicator who is considered an expert and trustworthy will be more effective in influencing the opinions of others (Hovland *et al.*, 1953). (Ohanian, 1990) measures an influencer's credibility through three components such as expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. (Andrews & Shimp, 2018) further explains that these aspects include the knowledge, experience, or skills perceived by followers (expertise), honesty and integrity perceived by the audience (trustworthiness), and the emotional connection or appeal that the influencer has (attractiveness).

Generation Z

Generation Z, also known as the iGeneration or the internet generation, has similarities to Generation Y but has the ability to perform various activities simultaneously, such as using mobile phones to tweet, browsing with PCs, and listening to music with headsets. They live integrated with the everyday virtual world, and since childhood have been familiar with advanced technology and devices, which indirectly affect the formation of their personality (Bencsik & Machova, 2016). According to (Bencsik & Machova, 2016) Generation Z grows up with the development of digitalization, allowing them to quickly access information and develop into intelligent, tech-skilled, and creative individuals. One of the main differences with the previous generation is their expertise in using information and technology.

Information Search Based on Tourist Type

Information sources such as brochures and the internet are useful for both domestic and foreign tourists. However, foreign tourists tend to rely more on these tools compared to domestic tourists. Domestic tourists often depend more on friends and family for recommendations rather than brochures. Foreign tourists trust information from Tripadvisor, blogs, and Google (Muktaf & Zulfiana, 2018), while domestic tourists prefer recommendations

from friends and family shared on social media (Dewi *et al.*, 2021). The differences in information sources are crucial for managers, ensuring that information aligns with actual conditions. According to research conducted by (Fesenmaier & Jeng, 2000), travelers have different information needs because they make diverse choices during different phases of travel. This, the difference in the situation faced by tourists will indirectly affect the way they seek information. Previous research has not specifically examined the differences in the search for information sources between domestic and foreign tourists in detail. Therefore, there are several assumptions that can be made in this study.

H1: There is a significant influence in the preference for choosing tourist information for Generation Z based on the credibility of the source a) Expertise b) Trustworthiness c) Attractiveness is influenced by the type of domestic tourists and foreign tourists.

Information Search Based on Gender

Gender influences consumer information search behavior (C. Haridasan *et al.*, 2021). Men and women have different information processing strategies (Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015). This gender disparity also extends to the types and number of sources used for information searches (C. Haridasan *et al.*, 2021). Diverse perspectives by gender on the design and content of information sources are crucial for managers when designing tourism websites, interacting with potential visitors, and determining the most appropriate online messages to convey (Kim *et al.*, 2007). According to research conducted by (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008), gender is an important factor in market segmentation that affects the use of social media. Women tend to visit websites or look at reviews more often than men. They believe that reading reviews from others helps them make decisions more efficiently and reduces risk and uncertainty. Women also tend to conduct more detailed searches compared to men, where the quality of information and the credibility of the source of the content shared on social media can further influence their decisions. In addition, women often make decisions based on information obtained from external sources rather than relying solely on their own judgments, as well as considering more sources of information before making a final decision (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, several presumptions or hypotheses emerged in the research conducted, including the following:

H2: There is a significant influence in the preference for choosing tourist information for Generation Z based on the credibility of the source a) Expertise b) Trustworthiness c) Attractiveness is influenced by gender (female and male).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research employs a quantitative approach focusing on the perspective of Generation Z in assessing the credibility of influencers as a source of travel information to Bali. The study uses a purposive sampling approach, considering specific criteria for respondents: minimum age of 17 years, active Instagram users, and followers of an influencer account considered trustworthy. The research includes both domestic and foreign tourists. The sample size is determined using the formula by (Hair *et al.*, 2014), as the population size is unknown, aiming for a minimum sample size of 5-10 times the number of indicators. With 11 indicators, the required sample size is 110 for domestic tourists and 110 for foreign tourists. Data collection utilizes a questionnaire in the form of a Google Form distributed online via Instagram. The study measures the variable of source credibility across three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Data analysis employs MANOVA Analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Comparison of the Importance of Influencer Credibility is influenced by Type of Tourist

Table 1. Comparison of the Importance of Influencer Credibility is influenced by type of Tourist

Dependent Variabel	Group to be Compared		Mean Difference Between Group		Statistical Significance
	Dimensi(I)	Dimensi (J)	Mean Difference	Std Error	Tukey HSD
Nusantara	Expertise	Trustworthiness	.755	.369	0,104
		Attractiveness	4.782	.369	0,000
	Trustworthines	Expertise	-755	.369	0,104
		Attractiveness	4.027	.369	0,000
	Attractiveness	Expertise	-4.782	.369	0,000
		Trustworthiness	4.027	.369	0,000
Mancanegara	Expertise	Trustworthiness	.036	.322	0,993
		Attractiveness	4.482	.323	0,000
	Trustworthines	Expertise	-36	.324	0,993
		Attractiveness	4.445	.325	0,000
	Attractiveness	Expertise	-4.482	.326	0,000
		Trustworthiness	4.445	.327	0,000

Based on the results of the MANOVA test, it indicates that both domestic and foreign tourists hold similar perceptions when assessing the credibility of an influencer, focusing primarily on the influencer's attractiveness. This suggests that the dimensions of expertise and trustworthiness among both domestic and foreign have p-values greater than 0.05, indicating no significant differences ($p > 0.05$). On the other hand, attractiveness among domestic and foreign shows p-values smaller than 0.05, indicating statistical significance ($p < 0.05$).

Comparison of the Importance of Influencer Credibility is influenced by Gender

Table 2. Comparison of the Importance of Influencer Credibility is influenced by Gender

Dependent Variabel	Group to be Compared		Mean Difference Between Group		Statistical Significance
	Dimensi(I)	Dimensi (J)	Mean Difference	Std Error	Tukey HSD
Perempuan	Expertise	Trustworthiness	0,045	.369	0,992
		Attractiveness	4.255[*]	.369	0,000
	Trustworthines	Expertise	-0,045	.369	0,992
		Attractiveness	4,209[*]	.369	0,000
	Attractiveness	Expertise	-4.255[*]	.369	0,000
		Trustworthiness	-4.209[*]	.369	0,000
Laki-laki	Expertise	Trustworthiness	0,709	.328	0.080
		Attractiveness	4.936[*]	.328	0,000
	Trustworthines	Expertise	-0,709	.328	0.080
		Attractiveness	4.227[*]	.328	0,000
	Attractiveness	Expertise	-4.936[*]	.328	0,000
		Trustworthiness	-4.227[*]	.328	0,000

Based on the results of the manova test, it shows that female and male have the same predefinition in assessing the credibility of an influencer, namely from the attractiveness of an influencer. This shows that the value of expertise and trustworthiness in women and men has a value greater than 0.05 (p value > 0.05) and attrativeness in women and men has a value smaller than 0.05 (p value < 0.05).

Therefore, this result shows that attractiveness is important in the assessment of influencers. This is in accordance with the reason of the respondents who revealed that one of the reasons for trusting an influencer is because the influencer is already popular and has a name among the audience. According to (Sylvia & Hasan, 2023) famous influencers will easily attract the attention and trust of the audience. Famous influencers indirectly know the lifestyle that influencers live.

Hipotesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine the significant influence using the responses of 110 domestic tourists and 110 foreign tourists. Here are the results of the hipotesis test.

H1: There is a significant influence in the preference for choosing tourist information for Generation Z based on the credibility of the source a) Expertise b) Trustworthiness c) Attractiveness is influenced by the type of domestic tourists and foreign tourists.

H1a: There is no significant influence between the type of tourists and expertise (p-values for domestic tourists and foreign tourists were 0.104 and 0.993, respectively, > 0.05).

H1b: There is no significant influence between the type of tourists and trustworthiness (p-values for domestic tourists and foreign tourists were 0.104 and 0.993, respectively, > 0.05).

H1c: There is a significant influence between the type of tourists and attractiveness (p-values for domestic tourists and foreign tourists were 0.000 and 0.000, respectively, < 0.05).

The research findings indicate that expertise and trustworthiness do not significantly influence Generation Z's perceptions of influencers, whether in the context of domestic or foreign tourists. Generation Z tends not to assess an influencer's credibility based on these factors. This is because evaluating an influencer's expertise and trustworthiness often requires a deeper understanding of a broader context, such as practical experience or third-party testimonials. A single post is also not always sufficient to provide a comprehensive picture. Additionally, influencers sometimes share content based on material or approvals from third parties, which can affect the objectivity of the content they share, especially in product review content. Sometimes, reviews that are supposed to be honest and based on personal experience can be interspersed with paid promotions, which can disappoint followers who expect objective information (Qiarasyifa, 2020).

Overall, Generation Z tends to assess an influencer's credibility based on their attractiveness, such as shared interests, popularity, and how they deliver content. This is because Generation Z believes that an influencer's expertise and trustworthiness cannot be guaranteed from just one social media post, which may not fully reflect the truth. Therefore, they are more likely to follow influencers who have attractiveness aligned with their preferences and who have already established a positive image in society.

H2: There is a significant influence in the preference for choosing tourist information for Generation Z based on the credibility of the source a) Expertise b) Trustworthiness c) Attractiveness is influenced by gender (female and male).

H2a: There was no significant effect between gender and expertise (p values for female and male (0.992 and 0.080 > 0.05).

H2b: There was no significant effect between gender and trustworthines (p values of female and male (0.992 and 0.080 > 0.05).

H2c: There is a significant influence between gender and attractiveness (p values of female and male (0.000 and 0.000 < 0.05).

Based on the test results, both men and women perceive influencer credibility similarly, focusing on the influencer's attractiveness. This aligns with psychological theories suggesting that Generation Z is heavily influenced by social factors, impacting their decision-making processes. Generation Z tends to trust influencers who exhibit attractiveness because these influencers build strong connections with their followers through shared content. On social media platforms, Gen Z followers derive psychological satisfaction from the recognition and validation they receive through positive interactions with influencers they follow.

This theory underscores the importance of understanding that Gen Z's trust in influencers is shaped by evolving social norms within their online environments and the information or content presented. When influencers are deemed trustworthy, it can significantly influence Gen Z's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors across various aspects of daily life, including purchasing decisions, lifestyle choices, and media preferences (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). This perspective also resonates with prior research indicating that attractiveness is a primary factor influencing tourist attitudes. Influencers with a positive image and charisma typically exert considerable influence over their audience (Chen et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, there are two conclusions, including the following 1) The results of the study showed that there was no significant difference in the assessment of influencer credibility between Indonesian and foreign tourist groups. The influencer's expertise and trust dimensions have no significant influence on their judgment. This shows that Generation Z is less likely to judge credibility based on just one aspect of an influencer's post. However, the dimension of influencer appeal turns out to have a significant influence. This is surprising because the initial expectations regarding the importance of influencer expertise and trust are not in line with the finding that attractiveness factors, such as popularity and brand image, affect the trust of Generation Z audiences more towards influencers. 2) Influencer credibility ratings by gender also show that the values given are relatively the same between male and female. Influencers who have appeal are more likely to be considered credible, while the dimensions of expertise and trust have no significant effect. This finding is consistent for both Indonesian and foreign tourist, where audiences tend to trust influencers based on their attractiveness related to popularity and suitability of interest in the content presented.

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