

Incentives and Food Blogger Influence on Customer Engagement through Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's food and beverage industry continues to grow and is expected to reach USD 3,221 million market volume by 2024. This growth was supported by emergence of various digital platforms for businesses to market their product at the online market. Utilization of social media as one of the platforms to build engagement with customers is important for business to survive and create competitive advantage. This study explores the influence of incentives as customer motivation to engage with food and beverage brands and food blogger endorsement in building customer engagement through social media Instagram. Incentives defined with monetary and non-monetary dimensions and food blogger defined with attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise dimensions that represent food blogger's credibility. This study was divided into three stages, pilot test, pre-test and main test. A structural equation model using AMOS was used to analyse 374 out of 440 data from Indonesian respondents that were collected through online surveys. The result of this study showed in three findings. First, incentives positively influence attitudes toward engagement with brands through social media. Second, food bloggers positively affect brand influence which strongly affects attitude towards engagement with brand through social media. Third, positive attitude towards engagement resulted in positive intention to engage, which continues to intention to purchase through social media. This study findings provides empirical literature for food and beverage business (brand) on customer engagement using incentives and food bloggers through social media Instagram. in the abstract either.

Keywords: *Incentive, Food Blogger, Customer Engagement, Instagram, Food and Beverage.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Food and beverage industry in Indonesia continuously grows its influence on national GDP. Current revenue of the food and beverage industry is USD 1,968m and with 13.1% CAGR, the food and beverage industry is expected to have a market volume of USD 3,221m by 2024 [1]. The growth of the internet indirectly impacted the growth of food and beverage industry users in Indonesia. In 2024, the number of food and beverage industry users is estimated to touch 61.2 million individuals with a penetration rate of 21.5% [1]. Seeing the bright prospects from the rate of industrial growth and the high demand and supply in Indonesia, Airlangga Hartanto as Minister of Industry believes that the food and beverage industry can become a leading industry [2].

The emergence of various digital platforms for selling such as social media, e-commerce and the same-day-delivery feature via online delivery platform widens

offline retailers reach. It is predicted that 0.9% of sales in the food and beverage industry will come from online [1]. Therefore, the government supports businesses to go digital, especially for small and medium enterprises by utilizing the online market through social media and e-commerce.

Social media used as interaction and communication tools between its users for personal or business, between brands and its customers [3]. Social media marketing is defined as a technique that targets social media users and its social circle in order to increase brand awareness or to market a product. Therefore, social media marketing accounted as a highly effective strategy not only for building brand but also for customer engagement [4].

Customer engagement is important because it can increase the competitive advantage of a business [5] by building relationships between brand and its customer [6]. Usage of social media as a platform for brands to engage with its customers is classified as effective if the

customer feels motivated to engage [7]. There are 5 interactions with customers on social media: timeliness, product information, fun or entertainment, brand engagement and incentive or promotion [8]. Customer engagement activities through social media positively increase customer intention to purchase through social media [9].

In Indonesia, Instagram is listed as one of the top five most used social media platforms [10]. Instagram provides various interactive features for its users that are not only useful for personal use, but also suitable for business accounts [11]. Lately, celebrity or influencer marketing strategy is raved especially on Instagram. Celebrities and influencers are used because of their reach to their specific audiences that represent potential markets for a brand. On top of that, they have greater persuasive effect for building brand influence especially if they are noted as credible celebrities or influencers [12].

Influencers have their own specific interest that becomes their main topic for the shared content. The ones interested in food are called food bloggers. The use of food bloggers as endorsers and incentive are commonly practiced by food and beverage businesses as their promotional strategies. However, literature that provides information about customer engagement through social media in the food and beverage industry is still limited. This study aims to enrich empirical literature about customer engagement in the food and beverage business through social media, to be specific Instagram, by examining the effect of incentives and food blogger towards brand influence and attitude toward engagement through social media followed by intention to engage through social media which is finalized by intention to purchase through social media.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

2.1. Incentive

Usage of social media as a platform for brands to engage with its customers is classified as effective if the customer feels motivated to engage [7]. There are two types of monetary incentives which are worth money benefits, usually in the form of discounted money or discounts [13, 14, 15] and non-monetary incentives which are non-monetary benefits, for example product samples Monetary incentive proven to positively affect customer motivation to engage with brand on online community [14, 15, 16].

H1: Incentive has a positive effect on attitude toward engagement with a brand through social media.

2.2. Social Media

Social media is a form of digital media that facilitates content creation, interactive information sharing, and collaboration on social networks. At the beginning of its use, social media is more intended for personal use such as communicating with friends and family. Social media is transforming the field of marketing because it is not only used for personal needs, but also to communicate with brands [17]. As a means of communication social media is also a place for customers to convey their voice in the context of satisfaction and disappointment felt from experience with the brand. In addition to communicating, consumers can also follow social media from their favourite brands to get the latest information about products, promotions, get discounts or find out the latest information about the brand [18].

2.2.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is defined as a form of online marketing that uses the cultural context of the social context which includes social networks, virtual words, social news sites and social opinion sharing to meet the goals of branding and communication [18]. Another definition of social media marketing is a collection of techniques that target social networks and their users to increase brand awareness or market a product [4]. Social media marketing provides many benefits because it allows marketers to build brand awareness, share knowledge and information, acquire and retain customers, initiate cost-effective promotions, and also interact interactively with consumers [19].

2.2.2. Influencer Marketing

Influencers are defined as key individuals who have an influence on a group of consumers who have sales potential [20]. Social media influencers refer to individuals who have a large social community of followers on one or more social media platforms [21]. These influencers then filter and spread curated content to their followers or audience [19, 22]. Influencers are considered as "ordinary celebrities". Influencers use narratives to attract audiences by cultivating as much attention as possible (shaping the celebrity effect) and creating authentic personal brands through social media. These two things are then used by companies and marketers to reach consumers [23]. Based on the reach, influencers are categorized into three: micro influencer (1000-100,000 followers), macro influencer (100,000-1,000,000 followers) and mega influencer (> 1,000,000 followers) [24].

Source of credibility theory stated that celebrity credibility can be observed from three dimensions: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness [12]. Perceived credibility of celebrity used for endorsement

directly influences its brand attitude which indirectly affect purchase intention [12, 25, 26]. Implementation of influencer marketing into the mix marketing strategy was found to increase total sales ranging from three to 18% during the promotion period [27].

H2: Food bloggers have a positive effect on attitude toward engagement with brands through social media.

H3: Food bloggers have a positive effect on brand influence.

2.3. Brand Influence

Brand influence in this study implied from brand attitude that perceived by customers under influence of influencer endorsement. Brand attitude resulted from overall evaluation from perceived attributes of brand and its benefit [28]. The result can be positive or negative and affect customer tendency regarding continued action of customers towards brand [26]. A good brand attitude has a positive effect on consumer's attitude [26] which indirectly increases the likelihood of brand use [29].

H4: Brand influence has a positive effect on attitude toward engagement with a brand through social media.

2.4. Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a marketing terminology adapted from psychology [30]. This concept emphasizes the importance of building a good relationship between brand and its customer. The relationship between brands and consumers is a valuable and vital asset, which can determine the sustainability of the brand [6]. Furthermore, customer engagement maintains and enhances competitiveness in business competition [5].

Pansari and Kumar [31] defined customer engagement as a direct or indirect mechanism that increases value proposed from brand to customer that motivates customers to engage with brand [30]. Brodie et.al [31] added that customer engagement can shape the cognitive and emotional sides of consumers which lead to behavioral investments in specific brand interactions that include activities beyond purchase such as word-of-mouth, giving recommendation, interactions between customers, information searching, writing feedback and any other similar activities [33, 17].

2.4.1. Attitude towards Engagement

Attitude is the result of an individual evaluation regarding a behavior; it can be positive or negative. The evaluation is based on observation and analysis from secondary information. Attitude influences the intention to perform a behavior and is proven to increase intention to engage through social media [9].

H5: attitude toward engagement with brand through social media has a positive effect on intention to engage with brand through social media

2.4.2. Intention to Engage

Intention is described by [34] as a derivative of actual behavior. The stronger the intention, the more likely a consumer is to carry out the behavior significantly [34]. Customer engagement through social media is proven to be able to invest even exceeding purchase behavior [9, 33]. Brodie [32] added that customer engagement can shape the cognitive and emotional side of consumers which leads to behavioral investment in interacting with specific brands, so consumers will be more interested and may buy products from that brand.

H6: intention to engage with a brand through social media has a positive effect on intention to purchase through social media.

2.4.3. Intention to Purchase

Customer's purchase behavior is affected by customer engagement towards the brand [32]. This statement is supported by a previous study that found consumers who were fully engaged and engaged contributed a 30% increase in income to the company [31]. In addition to increasing sales, good customer engagement is found to increase satisfaction [35] and have an impact on consumer loyalty [30, 32, 35, 36].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Model

The research model displayed in Figure 1 was built out of six variables to investigate the effect of incentive as customer motivation in engaging with brand and food blogger usage as endorser for food and beverage brands in building customer engagement through Instagram. The incentives variable and its dimension is used as an indicator for customer motivation in engaging with brand and customer attitude toward engagement were adapted from [14].

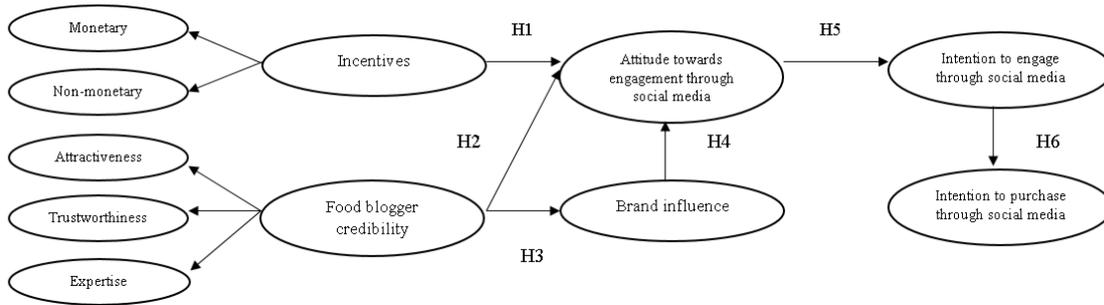


Figure 1 Research Model

Food blogger as celebrity endorsement and its credibility dimension as well as the impact towards brand (in this case brand influence) were adapted from [12]. To further investigate the effect of incentives and food bloggers towards engagement, intention to engage through social media and intention to purchase through social media were adapted from [9].

3.2. Research Sampling and Instrument

Online survey was spread to respondents through convenience and snowball sampling. The survey questionnaire consists of 36 items adapted from previous studies. Items of food blogger dimensions and brand influence were adapted from [12]. Items of incentives dimensions were adapted from [15]. Items of attitude toward engagement with brand through social media and intention to engage with brand through social media were adapted from [9]. Items of intention to purchase through social media were adapted from [9, 12].

Respondents in this study were asked about food blogger credibility criteria as food and beverage brand endorsers which are generally perceived by respondents (not directed into specific food bloggers, since every food blogger differs in his/her style and characteristics). This study focused on Instagram as the social media platform, so the intention to purchase was specifically directed to purchase through food and beverage business (brand)’s Instagram account.

Respondents' response towards questionnaire items is then measured by a 5-points Likert scale where one indicates strongly disagree and five indicates strongly agree. Respondents screened with questions related to usage of Instagram for food and beverage product information searching, food blogger, and online purchase. A total minimum 180 respondents were needed for the main test to fulfil the requirement $n \times 5$ for structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis [37].

3.3. Research Analysis Method

The research was conducted in three stages. First, a pilot-test was conducted to measure samples

understanding about food bloggers as influencers, as food bloggers fit best for food and beverage topics. Data collected were analysed descriptively. Second, a pre-test was conducted with 30 samples in order to measure validity and reliability of questionnaire items. Data collected were analysed using IBM SPSS. Third, the main test was conducted to measure validity and reliability of questionnaire items, goodness-of-fit model research and hypothesis testing. Data collected were analysed using IBM AMOS.

4. RESULT

4.1. Pilot Test

Out of 62 respondents 96,8% are active Instagram users and 75.8% are in the age range of 25-35 years old. The result shows that 98,4% are familiar with the term food blogger, 95.2% understand about food blogger, 71% had interactions (see/like/follow/share) with food blogger accounts, and most of them are aware of food bloggers in Indonesia such as Mgdalenaf, Nexcarlos, Anak Jajan, Eatandtreas, Tanboykun, Farida Nurhan, KenandGrat, etc. The pilot test result concluded that the respondents are familiar, understand and aware about food bloggers. Therefore, the research continued by using food bloggers as an influencer variable.

4.2. Pre Test

Data of 30 respondents were analysed using IBM SPSS. Validity of the item indicated from Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value ≥ 0.5 , Barlett’s test of sphericity value ≤ 0.05 , anti-image matrices value ≥ 0.5 , communalities value, and component matrix value. Whereas for reliability test indicator was Cronbach’s alpha [38]. Pre-test analysis showed all 36 items fulfil the KMO, Barlett’s test of sphericity and anti-image matrices cut off value. There were 1 items of expertise dimension and 1 item of trustworthiness dimension has value $\leq 0, 5$ on communalities and 2 items of intention to purchase variable value $\leq 0, 5$ on component matrix. However, with 3 other fulfilled indicators and a small number of samples as consideration, all 36 items considered as valid and used for the next stage. As for

the reliability test, all indicators showed Cronbach alpha value above the cut off. Thus all variables considered as reliable.

4.3. Main test

A total of 374 out of 440 respondents data were analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM) technique with IBM AMOS. Demographically, 63% of respondents are in the 25-34 age group, 66% are women, 69% are holding bachelor degrees, 57% are employees and 25% are spending 4-6 hours per week on social media.

Validity of the items is indicated by the standardized loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5 and average variance extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.5 . Meanwhile, the reliability of the variables is indicated from construct reliability (CR) ≥ 0.7 and variance extracted (VE) ≥ 0.5 . Second order variables, incentives and food bloggers and their dimensions are all valid and reliable. Variables' attitude toward engagement with brands through social media and intention to engage with brands through social media also passed the validity and reliability test cut off. Whereas the variable of intention to purchase through social media has 2 out of 5 items that have SLF value ≤ 0.5 . The item with the least SLF value was then deleted. After that, the research model's validity and reliability were tested once again and resulted in better AVE, CR and VE value. Thus, for the variable of intention to purchase, the researchers decided to keep 4 items and proceed to next analysis.

Goodness-of-fit of measurement models were indicated from CMIN/df, GFI, AGFI, NFI, RFI, IFI, CFI and RMSEA. The cut off value adapted from Wijanto (2008). The measurement resulted in CMIN/df 2.464, IFI 0.921, CFI 0.921, and RMSEA 0.063 indicates good fit. Whereas GFI 0.832, AGFI 0.805, NFI 0.874 and RFI 0.862 indicate marginal fit. Overall, the research measurement model fitness indicates good fit.

An acceptable hypothesis indicated from positive SLF value (the closer SLF value to 1 resembles stronger relationship between variables), CR value $\geq 1, 96$, and P-value ≤ 0.05 . Based on the structural model analysis from AMOS shown in table 1, incentive has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards engagement with brands through social media thus H1 accepted.

Table 1. Hypothesis Testing Result

| Hypothesis | SLF | CR | P-value | Notes |
|------------|------|--------|---------|----------|
| H1 | 0.41 | 5.646 | *** | Accepted |
| H2 | 0.02 | 0.184 | 0.854 | Rejected |
| H3 | 0.8 | 12.998 | *** | Accepted |
| H4 | 0.51 | 4.16 | *** | Accepted |
| H5 | 0.95 | 15.192 | *** | Accepted |
| H6 | 0.57 | 7.736 | *** | Accepted |

Table 2. The Second Order Measurement Model Analysis (Construct Level)

| Latent Variable | Dimensions | SLF |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Incentives | Monetary | 0.742 |
| | Non-monetary | 0.706 |
| Food blogger | Attractiveness | 0.56 |
| | Trustworthiness | 0.989 |
| | Expertise | 0.804 |

Food bloggers have no effect on attitude towards engagement with brands through social media yet have strong positive and significant effect on brand influence, therefore H2 rejected and H3 accepted. Brand influence has a positive and significant effect on attitude towards engagement with brand through social media, so H4 accepted. Attitude towards engagement with brand through social media has a strong positive and significant effect on intention to engage with brand through social media, thus H5 accepted. Lastly, intention to engage with a brand through social media has positive and significant effect on intention to purchase through social media, so H6 accepted.

The closer SLF value to 1 indicates greater impact of dimension toward its latent variable. The result of second order analysis shown in table 2, identified monetary dimension has higher SLF value compared to non-monetary dimension, therefore it has more impact toward incentives variable. As for food blogger variables, trustworthiness revealed to have the highest effect by having the highest SLF value followed by expertise and attractiveness.

5. DISCUSSION

To engage with and motivate customers, a brand needs to make an interesting promotion. This study's result shows that incentives (both monetary and non-monetary) positively motivate customers to engage with brands through social media, which is in line with previous studies [8, 14, 15]. Analysis of the dimensions depict that both monetary and non-monetary incentive has strong impact with monetary incentive are slightly more attractive (0.742) compared to non-monetary incentives (0.706). Thus monetary incentives like vouchers and discounts appear to be more appealing for customers in Indonesia. Nevertheless, non-monetary incentives like free products, free travel tickets and meet and greet with brand endorsers in this case food bloggers are also engaging. Thus, food and beverage businesses can choose their preferred incentives to be given to their customers based on their capability. Another point to be taken, it's best to engage with customers in interactive ways. an earlier study [15] listed two interactive example contests and sweepstakes. Contest is when customers compete with each other using their skill to win incentive and sweepstakes or

giveaways where customers need less effort, encouraging their circle to join the fun to obtain incentives that are randomly given.

The second finding of this study relates to the usage of food blogger endorsement that strongly creates brand influence that indirectly affects attitude toward engagement with brands through social media. This result supports previous studies from [25, 26]. The analysis result of dimensions that represent credibility identifies that overall dimension having a good impact for food bloggers with trustworthiness as the most impactful dimension (0.989) followed by expertise (0.804) and attractiveness (0.56). Trustworthiness as the most crucial dimension felt by customers depict their scepticism towards influencer endorsement, especially because of the complexity of food. Instagram is a platform to share experience through picture and video, thus product placement is mostly physically appealing. However, other than presentation, taste is very important yet relative to being standardized for food and beverage products. Trustworthy food bloggers assure that their evaluation and critics about a product is honest and done fair and square by considering presentation, taste and price.

Other than trustworthiness, expertise also scores a high SLF value. Expertise of food bloggers can come from their professional background (professional chefs) or their speciality area of food (remember that influencer has their own personal brand, scope and style). Mgdalenaf is a good example of Indonesian food blogger with spicy food expertise. From the start, Magdalena (the real name of mgdalenaf) has always been interested in spicy food and has a great tolerance towards spiciness. Thus, spicy food lovers are more likely to be convinced by Magdalena's reviews than by other food bloggers. Therefore, it is better for spicy food producers to endorse their products with Magdalena.

The third finding of this study describes the importance of creating a positive attitude toward engagement with a brand through social media in building customer engagement. As attitude to engage with brand through social media strongly impacts intention to engage with brand through social media, a positive attitude will automatically create positive intention. Furthermore, this intention to engage continues to the next action of intention such as purchase behavior. The more positive the attitude toward engagement through social media demonstrated by customers, the more likely they are to purchase food and beverage products through social media. This finding supports the findings of the previous study [9]. This purchase behavior from successful engagement is important not only to increase sales, but also to increase the competitiveness of a food and beverage business in real life competition that affect the longevity of the business.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides empirical evidence about the influence of incentive and food bloggers to be implied on customer engagement strategy for food and beverage brands through Instagram. Based on this study findings, food and beverage businesses (brands) have to carefully manage their Instagram account to build engagement with their customers. Good customer engagement benefits businesses in the long run, especially for improving sales and having competitive advantage as the result of positive engagement. Customer engagement activities, such as rewarding activities through incentives (monetary and non-monetary), on the business' (brand) Instagram account can be applied. Respondents are motivated to do engagements if they feel economic benefits by doing so; thus, the most desired incentives based on this study is monetary incentive such as discount and voucher. Nonetheless, the usage of non-monetary incentives, such as free products, free travel tickets or meet and greet with the brand's endorser, are also attractive for customers. Giveaway sessions or contest sessions can be created for this (non-monetary incentives) purpose.

As for food blogger endorsement, it was found that food blogger credibility impacts brand influence that is associated with customer's attitude toward engagement. Thus it is important for the food and beverage businesses (brands) to curate and choose food bloggers carefully so it can match well with their brand and elevate the brand and its products. Food bloggers that are perceived as trustworthy by customers are the best endorser to be hired. Other than trustworthiness, respondents look on the food blogger expertise and the last is attractiveness. However, each food blogger has their own style of authenticity (personal brand), area of scope and specialization which have an impact on their prices as well as their endorsement efficacy. In order to maximize the effect of customer engagement activity, food and beverage business (brand) has to carefully plan and manage the endorsement, based on their goal, capacity and budget.

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