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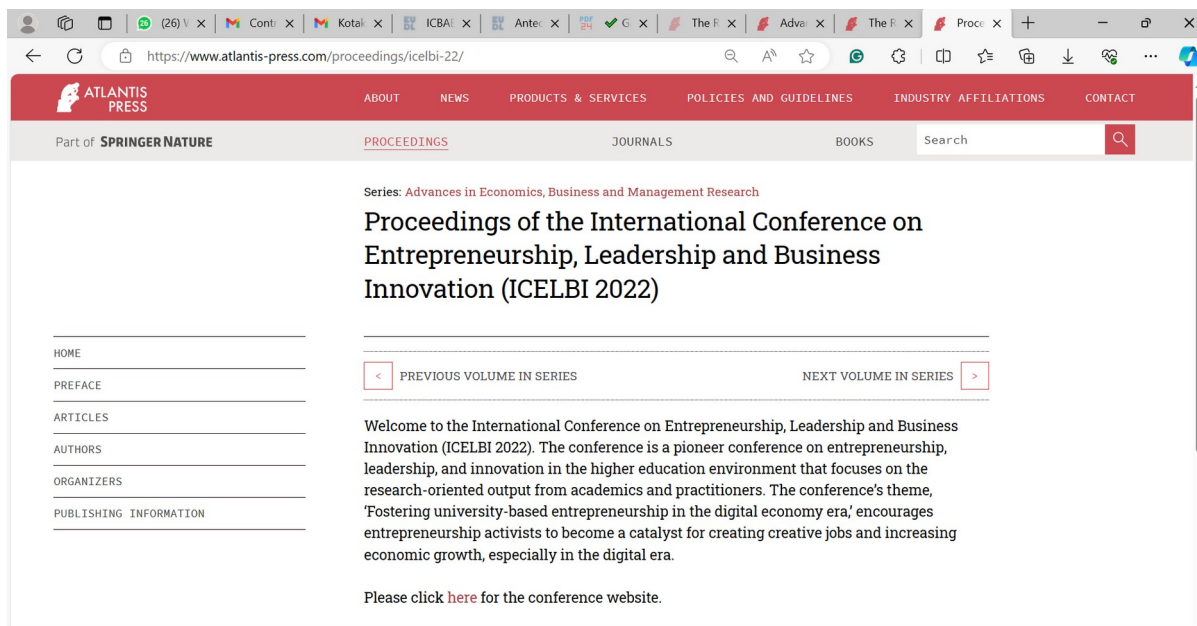
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The Role of Source Congruence in Effective Marketing Communications

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Abstract

The study aims to build a more comprehensive model of the relationship between the source's characteristics and the purchase intention by involving several variables that are considered moderating and mediating variables in the relationship between the two variables. The respondent is the individual who follows influencers, whether they are celebrities or non-celebrities, on social media and often reads the influencers' content in the last six months. SEM processes the data obtained. The results show that groups of consumers who have a higher level of conformity, both in Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics, Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics, and Congruence Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics, have a better perception of the influencers' character and have a higher purchase intention in this group. In addition, the results of the study also show that the influencers who have expertise related to the product are considered honest in conveying the message, attractive, and have a positive influence on the positive attitude of consumers towards the influencers. The subsequent impact of a positive perception of the influencers is the emergence of consumers' positive attitudes towards the product or brand being promoted. Furthermore, the consumers' positive attitude towards the product has increased their interest in buying the product or brand.

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Abstract. The study aims to build a more comprehensive model of the relationship between the source's characteristics and the purchase intention by involving several variables that are considered moderating and mediating variables in the relationship between the two variables. The respondent is the individual who follows influencers, whether they are celebrities or non-celebrities, on social media and often reads the influencers' content in the last six months. SEM processes the data obtained. The results show that groups of consumers who have a higher level of conformity, both in Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics, Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics, and Congruence Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics, have a better perception of the influencers' character and have a higher purchase intention in this group. In addition, the results of the study also show that the influencers who have expertise related to the product are considered honest in conveying the message, attractive, and have a positive influence on the positive attitude of consumers towards the influencers. The subsequent impact of a positive perception of the influencers is the emergence of consumers' positive attitudes towards the product or brand being promoted. Furthermore, the consumers' positive attitude towards the product has increased their interest in buying the product or brand.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Influencer, Source Credibility, Congruence.

1 Introduction

Recently, digitalization has developed rapidly in Indonesia through e-commerce, mobile banking, and others [1], [2]. Digitization also encourages the emergence of marketing communications using websites, email, and social media [3]. The development of social media marketing eventually gave rise to the message source phenomenon, which has a strong influence on consumers [4], [5]. They are called endorsers, influencers, celebrities, vloggers, bloggers, and so on [6]–[8]. For this reason, marketers need to understand how to choose a message source suitable for their product or service [4]. One of the early concepts of message source explains the importance of communicators so that consumers trust the company [9]. Therefore, companies need to use message sources whose characters match their products, are perceived by consumers as trustworthy, have expertise that follows the products being promoted, and

are also attractive according to their followers [7], [10]–[12].   When consumers have a positive perception of the selected message source, a positive attitude will also arise towards the product or service being promoted [13]. So that it is expected to generate consumer interest to buy products or services [4], [13].

Based on the results of previous studies, it appears that there is a lack of consistency regarding the relationship between source characteristics and consumer purchase intention [14]–[17]. Trustworthy, attractive, competent, and expertise influence consumers' desire to buy products [7], [17], [18]. However, it is interesting that one of the critical studies at the beginning of the discussion about message sources still questions the credibility of message sources [19]. Other studies have seen that the transparency or honesty of influencers is an essential factor in influencing consumers' willingness to buy products they recommend [20]. In addition, it was also found that an interactive relationship between influencers and their followers must first be formed before they can give influence; it is not enough to have the attributes above [21].

This causes the thought that other variables can strengthen the role of the three attributes above. One possibility that will encourage the strength of the three attributes is the congruence factor. Compatibility often reinforces certain behaviors; for example, a match in one's self-image can encourage the desire to convey positive news [22], and a match between the values held by a donor and the donor's organization can strengthen the desire to donate [23]. Appropriate self-image or self-image congruity is also very important for leisure travelers to select hotels [24]. Based on the various studies above, the concept was developed that compatibility can moderate the role of message source characteristics in influencing consumer desires in certain behaviors.

2   Hypotheses Development

The selection of influencers is an essential factor in influencing the effectiveness of marketing communications [9], [19], [25]. Opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of consumers towards an object, such as a product or brand, will be significantly influenced by the information submitted by influencers that consumers think are trustworthy [16]. Consumers will be more motivated to buy certain products or brands if there is a match between the influencers and the product offered [16], [26].

Interestingly, the research results on the effect of various dimensions of the influencers' characteristics on the consumer's desire to buy differ. For example, one study found that attractiveness did not have a significant effect on consumers' purchase intentions [10]. Meanwhile, other studies have found that attractiveness has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions [27]. Different dimensions, such as expertise, have a strong influence on consumer purchase intentions [16]. Meanwhile, the expertise dimension has a strong influence on the influencers who are knowledgeable compared to celebrities [17].

Variations in the results of this study indicate that the direct relationship model of the influencers' characteristics to the purchase intention of consumers has yet to be able to describe the condition of the data or the actual phenomenon. The model needs to be developed by involving other variables estimated to be mediating and moderating variables of the relationship between the influencers' characteristics and the consumer's purchase intention.

Based on the results of the literature study, several variables that can be moderating variables of the relationship between the two variables are the Congruence variable or

the match between Source Characteristics and Brand Characteristics (SC vs. BC) and Customer Characteristics (SC vs. CC), as well as the match between Customer Characteristics and Brand Characteristics (CC vs. BC) [22], [23], [28]–[30]. The influence of influencers' characteristics on consumer purchase intentions will vary depending on the suitability of the various variables above, so these variables will be used as moderating variables in the new model built into this study.

H1: Effect of Source's Characteristics on Purchase Intention moderated by Congruence of Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (SC vs. BC)

H2: Effect of Source's Characteristics on Purchase Intention moderated by Congruence of Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics (SC vs. CC)

H3:Effect of Source's Characteristics on Purchase Intention moderated by Congruence of Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (CC vs. BC)

Conceptual Framework
Based on the results of the literature study, the relationship of several variables in this study can be seen in the following figure:
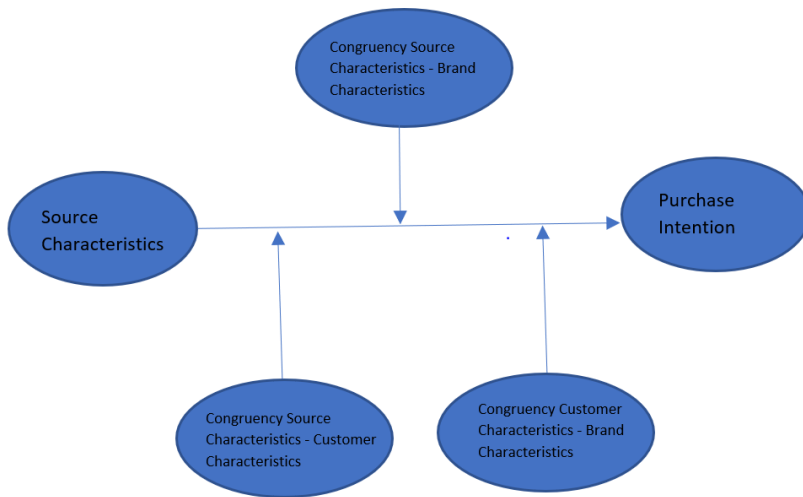
Fig 1. Consequences of source's characteristics.

3   Methods

The research design is a hypothesis test. The proposed hypothesis relates to the relationship between the influencers' characteristics and the consumers' purchase intention, which is moderated by Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (SC vs. BC), Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics (SC vs. CC), and Congruence Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (CC vs. BC) and the role of Attitude to Influencers and Attitude to Brand as mediating variables. The respondent is individual consumers with the following criteria: following an influencer on social media and often reading content submitted by that influencer in the last six months. After collecting data for three months, 227 respondents were obtained, but in the end, only 193 could be processed further.

The variables in this study will be measured by modifying the instruments of previous researchers, namely [7], [10], [11], [16], [17], [27], [31], [32]. The instrument has been tested for validity using confirmatory analysis and reliability using Cronbach alpha [33]. The results show that some indicators are invalid, so they are not used in further processing. So, only valid and reliable indicators are used in this study.

Table 1. Validity testing result.

No	Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Conclusion
1.	Source's Characteristics			
	Attractiveness	1. The influencer has a charming appearance	0.549	Valid
		2. The influencer has high charisma	0.403	Valid
	Trustworthiness	1. The influencer has an honest character	0.613	Valid
		2. The influencer has a sincere character	0.659	Valid
		3. The influencer has a trustworthy character	0.575	Valid
	Expertise	1. The influencer has expertise in the field related to the brand being promoted	0.442	Valid
		2. The influencer has experience in using the brand being promoted	0.533	Valid
		3. The influencer has much knowledge in the field related to the brand being promoted	0.509	Valid
2.	Attitudes toward Source	1. Like the influencer	0.845	Valid
		2. Interested in the influencer	0.703	Valid
		3. Trust the influencer	0.620	Valid
3.	Attitudes toward Brand	1. Like the brand being promoted	0.766	Valid

No.	Variable	Indicator	Value	Status
		2. Interested in the brand being promoted	0.838	Valid
4.	Congruency Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics	Matching the character of the influencer with the character of the brand being promoted		
		1. The influencer's character matches the brand's character	0.775	Valid
		2. The similarity of the influencer character with the brand	0.850	Valid
		3. The brand's character represents the influencer	0.224	Valid
5.	Congruency Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics	Compatibility of the influencer's character with the consumer's character		
		1. The influencer's character matches the consumer's character	0.624	Valid
		2. The similarity of the influencer's character with the consumer's character	0.834	Valid
		3. Influencer's character reflects the customer	0.734	Valid
		4. The influencer's character represents the customer	0.823	Valid
		5. Having the same self-image	0.525	Valid
6.	Congruency of Customer Characteristics with Brand Characteristics	Matching customers' character with the brand being		

		promoted		
		1. The customer's character matches the brand's character	0.535	Valid
		2. The similarity of the customer's character with the brand	0.771	Valid
		3. The brand's character reflects the customer	0.590	Valid
		4. The brand's character represents the customer	0.705	Valid
		5. The brand can express oneself		
			0.656	Valid
7.	Purchase Intention	1. Intent of buying	0.798	Valid
		2. Interested in buying	0.830	Valid
		3. Consider as a primary option	0.095	Valid

Based on the last confirmatory test in Table 1, all the indicators from seven variables are already valid because factor loading from all indicators is more than 0.40.

Table 2. Reliability testing result.

No.	Variable	CA	Conclusion
1.	Source's Characteristics (Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise)	0.618	Reliable
2.	Attitudes toward Source	0.552	Reliable
3.	Attitudes toward Brand	0.501	Reliable
4.	Congruency Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics	0.527	Reliable
5.	Congruency Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics	0.759	Reliable
6.	Congruency of Customer Characteristics with Brand Characteristics	0.653	Reliable
7.	Purchase Intention	0.500	Reliable

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that all variables are reliable because their value is more than 0.60.

The data analysis method that will be used is the Structured Equation Model (SEM) with Amos. SEM is considered appropriate because the proposed model is quite complex, involving both mediating and intervening variables [34]. In addition,

the variables in this study are unobservable, so they are following the assumptions in using SEM.

Before testing the hypothesis, the model suitability test (Goodness of Fit / GOF) was carried out. GOF test results show that the research model is a reasonable fit. From the GOF test results, it appears that the RMSEA value is close to 1; CMIN/DF is at the GOF, AIC, and ECVI limits, indicating that the default model value is close to the saturated model value. These values meet the requirements of the feasibility of a model so that hypothesis testing can be carried out [34].

Table 3. Goodness of fit models.

Measurement	Value	Criteria GOF	Conclusion
Chi-Square	p-value = 0.000	p-value > 0.05	Poor GOF
RMSEA	0.11	≤ 0,1	GOF
CMIN/DF	3.645	Lower limit 1 Upper limit 5	GOF
AIC	Default Model: 258,956 Saturated Model: 180.000 Indipendenc Model: 529,809	The default value of the model is close to the saturated value of the model	GOF
ECVI	Default Model: 1,328 Saturated Model: 0,923 Indipendenc Model: 2,717	The default value of the model is close to the saturated value of the model	GOF

SEM Multi Group will be used to test the role of moderating variables. The model will be divided into several groups according to the number of moderating variables group. In this study, the 3 Congruence variables will be divided into two groups (high and low congruence levels). In general, differences between the groups under comparison will be evaluated. If there is a difference, it will be seen how the difference occurs by looking at the output of each group.

4   Results and Discussion

4.1   Results

Descriptive Statistics
Descriptive statistics can describe the variables tested in this study. The mean (average) for each variable is Source Characteristic 4.002; Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics 3,942; Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics 3,784; Congruence Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics 3,891.

The results above illustrate the opinion of respondents that the characteristics of influencers are considered attractive, trustworthy, and expert. In addition, influencers are considered to have character compatibility with the brand being promoted and suitability with the character of the target consumer. Consequently, respondents feel that there is a match between the brand's character and the consumers' character. Respondents' attitudes towards the influencers and the promoted brand have also been assessed as suitable. These conditions may cause consumers to be interested in buying brands that are promoted by the influencers. To prove the relationship between the

variables in the study will be discussed in the section on the results of the hypothesis test below.

4.2   Discussion

Hypothesis Test Results and Discussion
SEM multi-group will be used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, namely the role of three moderating variables consisting of (a) Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (SC vs. BC); (b) Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics (SC vs. CC) and (c) Congruence Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (CC vs. BC) in moderating the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention.

The model was divided into two groups for comparison. The first model is a model that shows the influence of source characteristics on purchase intention for the high SC vs. BC, SC vs. CC, and CC vs. BC groups. Then, the second model is a model that shows the influence of source characteristics on purchase intention for the low SC vs. BC, SC vs. CC, and CC vs. BC groups. The results of testing hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, seen in the output of the notes for model and unconstrained fit summary models, show a probability level 0.000. This shows differences in the effect of source characteristics on purchase intention between the two groups on hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. It can be concluded that Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are all supported.

In more detail, the difference in the effect of source characteristics on the purchase intention of the two groups in hypothesis 1 can be seen as follows:

Table 4. Average SC and PI based on Congruence Source Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (CSC-BC) level.

Group Level CSC-BC	Average SC	Average PI	Conclusion
High	4.971	4.045	Groups with high congruence in source characteristics with brand characteristics are better at assessing influencer characteristics and have higher purchase intention.
Low	3.911	3.375	

From the table, it can be seen that the group of respondents who feel that there is a high match between the characteristics of the influencer and the character of the brand being promoted is better at assessing the characteristics of the influencer and has a higher buying interest than the group who feels that the congruence between the characteristics of the influencer and the character of the brand being promoted is low. This indicates that the level of Congruence between Source Characteristics and Brand Characteristics can moderate the effect of source characteristics on purchase intention.

Based on the results of this study, managers can increase consumer buying interest by adjusting the characteristics of the influencers to the characteristics of the product being promoted. This can be done by choosing the influencers that have similar characteristics to the brand being promoted. The brand's characteristics must be determined in advance based on the tastes of the target consumers. Thus, the influencers' characteristics must follow the characteristics of the brand being promoted. The similarity of brand characteristics can be related to the expertise, experience, hobbies, and work of the influencers. The higher the level of conformity between the influencers'

characteristics and the characteristics of the product being promoted, the greater the effect on consumer buying interest.

Furthermore, the difference in the effect of source characteristics on the purchase intention of the two groups in hypothesis 2 can be seen as follows:

Table 5. Average SC and PI based on Congruence Source Characteristics with the Customer Characteristics (CSC CC)evel

Group Level CSC-CC	Average SC	Average PI	Conclusion
High	4.141	3.993	Groups with high congruence characteristics with customer characteristics are better at assessing influencer characteristics and have higher purchase intention.
Low	3.547	3.641	

From the table, the influence of source characteristics on purchase intention is more significant for the group that considers the level of compatibility of the influencers' characteristics with the consumer's character. This shows that the level of Congruence between Source Characteristics and Customer Characteristics can moderate the effect of source characteristics on purchase intention.

Managers can increase consumer buying interest by adjusting the influencers' characteristics to the consumers' characteristics that are being targeted. This can be done by choosing influencers with similar characteristics to the target consumer. Similarities can be related to skills, experience, knowledge, hobbies, work, personality, and lifestyle. The higher the level of conformity between the influencers and the consumers' characteristics of the consumers that are being targeted, the greater the effect on consumer buying interest.

Finally, the difference in the effect of source characteristics on the purchase intention of the two groups in hypothesis 3 can be seen as follows:

Table 6. Average SC and PI based on the Congruence of Customer Characteristics with the Brand Characteristics (CCC-BC-BC) level.

Group Level CCC-BC	Average SC	Average PI	Conclusion
High	4.141	3.993	Groups with high congruence of customer and brand characteristics are better at assessing influencer characteristics and have higher purchase intention.
Low	3.547	3.641	

From the table, it can be seen that the group of respondents who feel there is a high congruence between consumer characteristics and the character of the brand being promoted is better at assessing the characteristics of influencers and has a higher buying interest than the group who feels that the suitability between consumer characteristics and the character of the brand being promoted is low. This proves that the level of Congruence between Customer Characteristics the Brand Characteristics can moderate the effect of source characteristics on purchase intention.

Designing the promoted brand's characteristics in accordance with the consumers' characteristics that are being targeted will raise consumer buying interest. Managers

can dig up information about the profile of the target market segment through segmentation and targeting research. Based on the survey results, managers can design products according to the wants and needs of people in the target segment. Furthermore, marketers can develop an effective marketing communication program, including choosing the right influencers. The higher the level of conformity between the influencers' characteristics and the characteristics of the product being promoted, the greater the effect on consumer buying interest.

5   Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

According to the results of the study, it is proven that all hypotheses are supported. This study is limited to the role of Congruence Source Characteristics with Brand Characteristics, Congruence Source Characteristics with Customer Characteristics, and Congruence Customer Characteristics with Brand Characteristics as moderating variables in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. In addition, this study only focuses on attitude (attitude to source, brand attitude) as a mediating variable in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. Several other variables can also act as moderating and mediating variables. There are still many other variables that need to be considered for further research so that the research model can better represent the actual phenomenon. Future research is expected to overcome the limitations of the problem as described previously. Other variables, such as e-WOM [35] and created spokesperson [36], also have a role in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. By adding these variables, the research model will become more comprehensive.

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The Roles of Source Characteristics in Building an Effective Digital Marketing Communication

by Fatik Rahayu Et Al

The Roles of Source Characteristics in Building an Effective Digital Marketing Communication

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Abstract. Studies have been conducted to analyze the role of source characteristics on purchase intention, yet results remain inconsistent. This present study was conducted to explore the intervening roles of some variables (attitude toward sources and attitude toward the brand) in mediating the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. Purposive sampling was administered to select respondents who had seen marketing communication in social media. SEM analysis was employed to determine the model of the relationship. The results showed that attitude toward sources and the brand intervened with the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. This study offers novel insights into the relationship model between source characteristics and purchase intention.

Keywords: Source Characteristics; Purchase Intention; Moderating Effect; Mediating Effect

1 Introduction

The rapid advancement of information technology brought conceptual and practical development in the marketing sector. There have been new conceptual marketing terms that reflects digitalization such as e-WOM, e-SERVQUAL, e-Value, e-Satisfaction and so on [1]–[3]. Online marketing or digital marketing has been a trend currently [4], [5]. This practice is accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the marketing communication strategy through digital media, or digital marketing, is considered the most appropriate method [6]. Digital marketing is a form of marketing communication that includes online marketing, mobile marketing, social media marketing, and e-WOM [7].

Conventional marketing communications through newspapers or magazines, brochures, printed catalogs are now considered less environmentally friendly [8]. In addition, digital marketing, also online purchase [6], [9] reduces air pollution from fuel consumption [6], [10]. As such, this study is expected to support green society by making digital marketing run effectively. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people share product information through social media marketing [11]. They are referred to as endorsers, influencers, celebrities, vloggers, bloggers, and so forth [11], [12]. Marketers are recommended to select the best strategy for conveying messages, allowing marketing communications through digital media to run effectively [12]. Sources should be attractive, have characters that match the product

being marketed, expertise related to the product, and honesty in conveying the message [12], [13] to generate a positive perception and positive consumer attitude towards the product or brand being promoted [14]. Furthermore, the positive attitude of consumers towards the product is expected to raise purchase intention [15].

Prior studies have identified an inconsistent relationship between source characteristics (source credibility) and consumer purchase intention. Gupta *et al.* (2015) succeeded in reviewing several studies on the influence of source credibility or characteristics on purchase intention from 1951 to 2013, indicating the effect of source characteristics on purchase intention. However, other researchers did not find any significant influence of source characteristics on purchase intention [17]–[20]. Studies from 2014 to 2020 mainly developed the dimensions of source credibility or characteristics and added other variables known to affect purchase intention ([21], [22], [23], [24], [25], and [26]). Almost all of the hypotheses tested in these studies showed direct effects of two related variables. Only a small part of these studies examined possible moderating variables in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. Thus, there is still a gap regarding the role of mediating variables in the relationship model between source characteristics and purchase intention.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Source Characteristics

Factors that affect the effectiveness of marketing communications include accuracy in selecting product sources [27], as validated by many researchers starting from 1951. Some researchers believed that reliable sources would affect consumer beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behavior towards a product or company [12], [18], [19], [28]. Audiences' degree of trust in product sources is determined by three dimensions: likeability, expertise, and trustworthiness [27]. Other researchers analyzed several dimensions of source characteristics, and findings confirmed that likeability is interchangeable with attractiveness [14]. Most studies used three main dimensions: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness ([22][22], [23], [24], [25], and [26]). Some researchers used different names or terms of these three main dimensions [25] and added other dimensions [29].

2.2 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention can be defined as the intention of consumers to buy a product [30]. Meanwhile, [31] stated that purchase intention was a tendency of a consumer to buy and take actions toward assessing an object. In addition, [31] also found purchase interest as the final stage of a complex purchase decision process. Similarly, [27] consider purchase intention as a response that arises after receiving a stimulus from the product that consumers see. This stimulus will then generate people's interest in trying out the product before growing the intention to buy the product.

2.3 Previous Studies

Studies on the effects of source characteristics on purchase intention show inconsistency in findings. One study found that attractiveness influenced purchase intention, while expertise did not affect Purchase Intention [32]. Other studies found that source credibility positively

affected purchase behavior [33]. Others stated that attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness affected purchase intention [34]. Gupta et al. (2015) revealed that attractiveness and trustworthiness affected purchase intention, yet expertise did not. Of the four source characteristics (attractiveness, product relevancy, trustworthiness, and expertise), only attractiveness was not found to affect purchase intention [21]. [14] and [29] explained that attractiveness did not affect purchase intentions. This inconsistency becomes evident as [35] found trustworthiness did not affect purchase intentions, and [21] found only one dimension of trustworthiness (credibility) affected purchase intention. Inconsistent results show that the direct relationship model of source characteristics and purchase intention could not describe the actual condition. Therefore, the current model needs to be developed by involving other variables that might share mediating and moderating roles in the relationship between source characteristics and consumers' purchase intention.

2.4 Model Development

Based on the literature review, some variables might be mediating the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention, including attitude toward sources and the brand. The model of the relationship examined in this study is illustrated as follows.
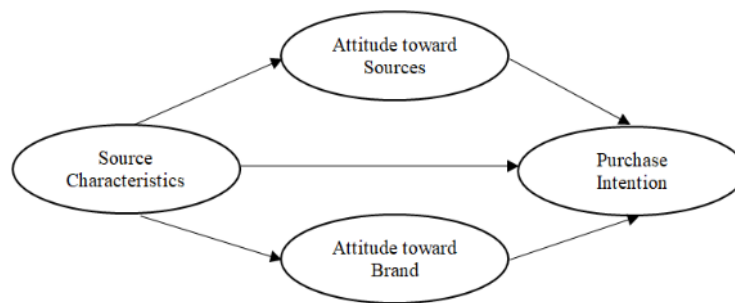
Fig. 1. The Consequences of Source Characteristics

2.5 Hypotheses Formulation

[25] showed that source characteristics did not directly affect purchase intention. However, source characteristics affected consumers' attitude to the brand and attitude to advertising, through which purchase intention could be affected. [25] did not examine the indirect effect of source characteristics on purchase intention through the attitude to the brand and advertising variables. Likewise, [14] only confirmed the direct influence of product source characteristics on attitude to the brand and the direct influence of attitude to the brand on purchase intention. Hence, it is assumed in this present study that attitude to source and attitude to the brand can be the mediating variables in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention.

H1: The influence of source characteristics on purchase intention is mediated by attitude toward sources

H2: The influence of source characteristics on purchase intention is mediated by attitude toward the brand

3 Methodology

This study tested the relationship between source characteristics and consumers' purchase intention through attitude toward sources and brands. Respondents or units of analysis were individuals or consumers who often saw marketing communications conveyed by celebrities or non-celebrities on social media and those who followed specific social media influencers in the last six months. Filter questions were put in the questionnaire to allow only those who met the criteria to complete the questionnaires or ensure that the respondents meet these criteria. This study used 18 indicators.

The variables in this study were measured by modifying the instruments of previous researchers [13], [16], [21]–[24], [26], [29]. The instrument was tried out to 50 students (pilot study) to test the clarity of the indicators used in this study to ensure that readers understood the meaning of each statement. The accuracy of each indicator in measuring the variables was statistically measured using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Furthermore, internal consistency between indicators in measuring a variable was tested using the Cronbach Alpha correlation. The results of those tests showed that each variable in this study was valid and reliable.

Table 1. Results of Validity and Reliability Tests

Variable/Dimension/Indicator	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Conclusion
Source Characteristics		0.874	Reliable
Attractiveness			
Source has strong attractiveness	0.690		Valid
Source has a charming look	0.608		Valid
Source has a strong charisma	0.705		Valid
Trustworthiness			
Source is honest	0.782		Valid
Source is sincere	0.769		Valid
Source is trustworthy	0.694		Valid
Expertise			
Source has the skills/expertise in the brand being promoted	0.637		Valid
Source has experienced using the brand being promoted	0.732		Valid
Source has broad knowledge regarding the brand being promoted	0.732		Valid
Attitudes to Source		0.819	Reliable
Liking the source	0.867		Valid
Interested in the source	0.907		Valid
Trusting the source	0.816		Valid
Attitudes toward Brand		0.860	Reliable
Liking the brand being promoted	0.890		Valid
Interested in the brand being promoted	0.889		Valid
Trusting the brand being promoted	0.877		Valid
Purchase Intention		0.854	Reliable
Having the intention to buy the brand being promoted	0.891		Valid
Interested in buying the brand being promoted	0.920		Valid
When planning to buy similar products, the brand being promoted is put into consideration	0.829		Valid

Structured Equation Model (SEM) using Amos was employed in data analysis. Before hypothesis testing, the model suitability test (Goodness of Fit, GOF) was first carried out. GOF test results showed that the proposed model was quite fit, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Model Testing

Measurement	Value	GOF Limit	Conclusion
Chi Square	p value = 0.000	P value > 0.05	Poor GOF
CMIN/DF	4.436		Marginal GOF
RMR	0.066	Small, close to 0	GOF
AIC	Default Model: 1042.001 Saturated Model: 550.000 Independence Model: 3319.963	Default model value close to the saturated model value	GOF
ECVI	Default Model: 5.236 Saturated Model: 2.764 Independence Model: 16.683	Default model value close to the saturated model value	GOF

As seen in Table 2, the small RMR value is close to 0; AIC and ECVI show that the model default value is close to the saturated model value. These values have met the requirements for the feasibility of a model. Thus, hypothesis testing could proceed [36].

4 Results and Discussions

The first hypothesis states that attitude to source variable mediated the relationship between endorsers' characteristics and purchase intention was tested. The model was divided into two to be compared. The first model only shows the direct effect of source characteristics on purchase intention. In the second model, attitude to sources is the mediating variable between source characteristics and purchase intention. The results of the first hypothesis testing are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the First Hypothesis Testing

Model	Estimate	p-value	Conclusion
Model 1:			
Source characteristics influence the purchase intention	0.703	0.000	Positive influence
Model 2:			
Source characteristics influence the attitude to sources	0.775	0.000	Significant
Attitude to sources influence purchase intention	0.364	0.02	Significant
Source characteristics influence purchase intention	0.432	0.000	Significant yet weak

The first hypothesis was tested using two models, as shown in Table 1 As presented in the table, source characteristics influence purchase intention in model one (p-value = 0.000) and remain significant in model two (p-value = 0.000, with a slight decrease in the influence strength from 0.703 to 0.432). Source characteristics also affect the attitude to sources (p-value = 000), and the attitude to endorsers also affects purchase intention (p-value = 0.02). Thus, hypothesis one that source characteristics influence purchase intention through attitude to sources was accepted. In model two, attitude to sources was partially mediated, indicating that source characteristics could directly affect purchase intention and indirectly influence sources through attitude.

As explained, attitude towards sources can mediate the influence of source characteristics on purchase intention. Therefore, managers can directly develop consumers' purchase intentions by selecting attractive, trustworthy sources with relevant expertise to the product being promoted. In addition to increasing consumers' purchase intentions directly, this strategy will also generate positive attitudes among consumers towards sources themselves,

increasing consumers' purchase intentions. This study found the explanation on findings by Singh *et al.* (2018) that there was no direct influence of source characteristics on purchase intention. Likewise, [13] also found that source characteristics did not always share a direct influence on purchase intention.

Hypothesis two states that attitude to the brand mediates the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. It was tested by dividing the model into two for comparison. The first model only shows the direct influence of source characteristics on purchase intention. The second model includes attitude to the brand as a variable that mediates the influence of source characteristics on purchase intention. Table 4 shows the results of the second hypothesis testing as follows.

Table 4. Results of the Second Hypothesis Testing

Model	Estimate	p-value	Conclusion
Model 1:			
Source characteristics influence purchase intention	0.703	0.000	Positive influence
Model 2:			
Source characteristics influence attitude to the brand	0.681	0.000	Significant
Attitude to the brand influences purchase intention	0.549	0.000	Significant
Source characteristics influence purchase intention	0.337	0.000	Significant yet weak

Table 4 illustrates that source characteristics affect purchase intention in model one (p-value = 0.000), and the influence remains significant in model two (p-value = 0.000, with weaker regression strength from 0.703 to 0.337. There is an influence of source characteristics on attitude to the brand (p-value = 000), and attitude to the brand also influences purchase intention (p-value = 0.000). Thus, the second hypothesis was accepted. In this case, attitude to the brand has a partial mediating role, meaning that source characteristics can directly influence purchase intention and indirectly influence it through attitude to the brand.

It can be understood that the more attractive, the more trustworthy, and the more expert the sources, the more positive consumers' attitudes towards the brand will be. This condition, in turn, increases consumers' willingness to purchase the product from the brand. In this study, attitude towards the promoted brand shows a partial mediating role. It means that the source characteristics can either directly or indirectly influence consumers' intention to buy a product through consumer attitudes towards the brand of the product being promoted. Therefore, managers can improve consumers' purchase intentions by carefully selecting sources who are attractive, trustworthy, and have relevant expertise related to the product being promoted.

This study explained why Singh *et al.* (2018) did not find any direct influence of source characteristics on purchase intention. The findings complement [14] that confirmed only the influence of source characteristics on attitude to the brand and the attitude to the brand on purchase intention (without testing the indirect effect).

5 Conclusions

The data analysis confirmed that the two hypotheses proposed were accepted. Source characteristics influenced purchase intention through attitude towards sources and consumers' attitude towards the brand. The more attractive, trustworthy, and expert the sources, the more positive the consumers' attitude towards sources will be. Consumers' more positive attitudes towards sources will lead to a higher intention to buy the product or brand.

This study proposes several managerial implications. First, managers can increase purchase intention by selecting more attractive, trustworthy product sources with a stronger expertise in promoting the product or brand. Product sources are considered more attractive when they have strong charisma and charming look—this will bring consumers' positive attitude towards sources. Second, managers should choose sources with a good track record (honest, trustworthy, and never involved in criminal or other crimes). Messages should be designed in such a way as to ensure that sources are sincere. The honesty and sincerity of sources will also increase the consumers' positive attitude towards the brand being promoted. Third, managers can also employ sources with sound expertise, knowledge, and experience related to the product or brand being promoted. Hence, consumers will grow positive attitudes to both the brand and sources.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Researchers

This study only focuses on attitude (attitude to sources and brand) as mediating variables in the relationship between source characteristics and purchase intention. Other variables might also act as mediating variables. Future researchers are encouraged to overcome this limitation. Other variables such as e-WOM (Kudeshia *and* Kumar, 2017)*,* created spokesperson (Sertoglu *Et al.*, 2014)*,* brand credibility, or consumer involvement (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018) are also assumed to add up to the understanding of sources' role in influencing consumers' purchase interest and purchase decisions.

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