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THE INFLUENCE OF INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY AND EXPERTISE ON REPURCHASE INTENTION OF HMNS PERFUME: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER TRUST

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how influencer credibility and expertise shape repurchase intention among consumers of HMNS perfume, with consumer trust positioned as a mediating variable. The fragrance sector has grown rapidly, and digital influencers now play a central role in how consumers form opinions and make choices about scent products. Data were gathered through an online survey involving 144 respondents who had purchased HMNS perfume and had encountered influencer content on social media. The analysis relied on SEM-PLS with SmartPLS 4. The results show that influencer credibility ($\beta = 0.354$, $t = 5.346$, $p < 0.001$) and expertise ($\beta = 0.465$, $t = 7.417$, $p < 0.001$) both have positive and significant effects on consumer trust. Consumer trust, in turn, significantly influences repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.508$, $t = 8.906$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, consumer trust significantly mediates the relationship between credibility ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 4.311$, $p < 0.001$) and expertise ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 5.733$, $p < 0.001$) on repurchase intention. The model explains 36.7% of the variance in consumer trust and 25.8% of the variance in repurchase intention. These findings suggest that HMNS should work with influencers who are not only well-known but also genuinely credible and knowledgeable about fragrance. Trust turns out to be the key pathway through which influencer qualities lead to repeat purchase intention. This study adds to the influencer marketing literature by showing how trust mediates these relationships for experience-based products like perfume.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global perfume market has grown substantially in recent years, and consumer habits have shifted toward digital discovery and purchase. More recent estimates from (Zion Market Research, 2025) on the *Fragrance Ingredients Market* indicate that the market for fragrance ingredients the core components of perfume was valued at approximately USD 10.85 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 14.17 billion by 2034, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.7% from 2025 to 2034. This growth is not confined to luxury European brands. Local Indonesian brands like HMNS have successfully captured domestic market share.

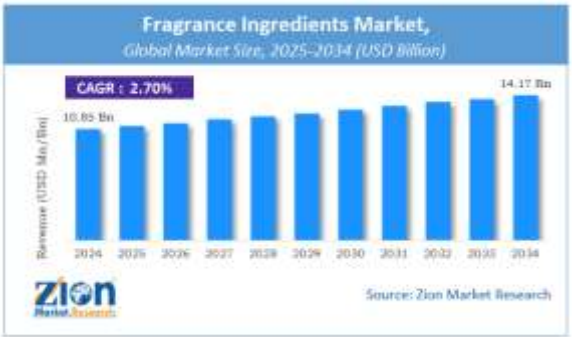

Figure 1. Global Perfume Market Prediction 2022-2030

(The image shows revenue in USD billion from 2024 to 2034, with a CAGR of 2.7%.)
Source: https://www.zionmarketresearch.com/report/perfume-market (2025)

The data in Figure 1 illustrates the steady upward trajectory of the global fragrance ingredients market, with revenue projected to grow from USD 10.85 billion in 2024 to USD 14.17 billion in 2034. This consistent growth signals a promising opportunity for fragrance brands, including local players like HMNS, to expand their market presence. However, this growth also intensifies competition, making effective marketing strategies particularly through digital influencers increasingly critical.

One local brand that has ridden this wave is HMNS. A Marketchac report put HMNS in the top three perfume brands by revenue and e-commerce trends between May and July 2024 (Gavrila, 2025). (Waskita, 2025) describes HMNS as a highly sought-after local perfume brand, well-liked in Indonesia for its quality products, premium ingredients (70% local raw materials), variety of scents for men and women, and attractive product design. Founded in 2019, HMNS (pronounced HUMANS) set out to make high-quality, luxurious fragrances at prices ordinary Indonesians can afford democratizing good scent for many.

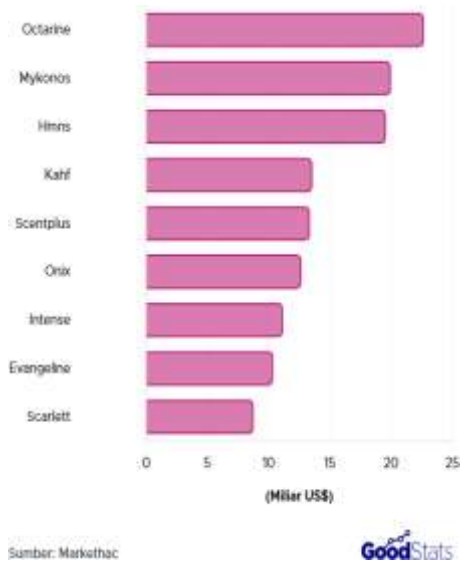

Figure 2. Top 10 Best-Selling Local Perfume Brands on E-Commerce (May–July 2024

(Data on the Top 10 Best-Selling Local Perfume Brands on E-Commerce May–July 2024)

(Source: https://data.goodstats.id/statistic/top-10-parfum-lokal-terlaris-tren-omzet-fantastis-di-

pasar-indonesia-blvRx (2025)

The data in Figure 2 confirms HMNS's position among the top three local perfume brands by e-commerce revenue during the May–July 2024 period. This ranking demonstrates that HMNS is not merely a niche player but a significant market force in Indonesia's fragrance industry, making it a relevant and timely subject for examining how influencer marketing drives consumer behavior.

Consumer trust becomes especially relevant here, since the story built through influencer credibility and expertise gets reinforced by HMNS's positive brand image. Consumers often need some personal validation before they start trusting a perfume brand, and that trust then shapes their buying choices. This study therefore asks whether influencer credibility and expertise around perfume products can affect consumer trust, which then leads to repurchase intention or whether they might instead put people off buying. For experience-based products such as perfume, consumers often face uncertainty because scent cannot be fully evaluated before purchase. In this context, digital influencers serve as crucial information sources. Consumers rely on recommendations from influencers they perceive as trustworthy and knowledgeable to reduce perceived risk. (Lou & Yuan, 2019) demonstrated that influencer credibility comprising trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity to followers positively affects followers' trust in branded content, which subsequently influences brand awareness and purchase intentions. Recent studies in Indonesian context also confirm that influencer credibility significantly shapes consumer trust in social media marketing (Nathaniel et al, 2026).

However, the effectiveness of influencer marketing is not guaranteed. A key challenge is the phenomenon of "overclaiming," where influencers exaggerate product benefits, which can erode consumer trust and lead to post-purchase dissonance (Laurencia et al, 2025). This creates a paradox: consumers demand transparency, yet the pressure to create engaging content often pushes influencers toward hyperbole.

While prior research has established that influencer credibility and expertise affect purchase intentions, there is a need for deeper understanding of the mechanism through which these attributes lead to repurchase intention, specifically for local brands in the Indonesian fragrance market. This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of consumer trust. Trust is theorized as a psychological state that reduces uncertainty and risk, particularly when the consumer cannot fully verify product claims before use (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Commitment-Trust Theory positions trust as the central variable in relationship marketing, and contemporary applications continue to validate its relevance in digital contexts. (Sullivan & Kim, 2018) demonstrated that online trust is a major determinant of repurchase intention, mediating the effects of perceived value and product evaluations.

Theoretically, trust serves as the bridge between influencer characteristics and repurchase intention through three interconnected mechanisms. First, Source Credibility Theory suggests that credible sources are more persuasive because they reduce receiver uncertainty (Umeogu, 2012). Second, trust acts as the psychological mechanism that converts cognitive assessments of a message source into behavioral intentions when consumers trust the influencer's expertise, this trust transfers to the brand and lowers perceived risk in repurchase decisions (Fernandes, 2024). Third, expertise-based trust becomes particularly critical for experience products like perfume, where the consumer cannot fully verify product claims before purchase (Gefen, 2000). In this sense, trust is not merely an outcome but the pathway through which influencer attributes translate into action.

While earlier studies have looked at how influencer credibility and expertise affect purchase intentions, this study offers three specific contributions. First, it applies Source Credibility Theory to the context of local Indonesian fragrance brands a setting that remains underexplored despite the rapid growth of Indonesia's beauty and fragrance market. Second, rather than treating trust as a parallel outcome, this study positions consumer trust as the mediating mechanism that explains why credibility and expertise lead to repurchase intention, particularly for experience-based products where pre-purchase evaluation is limited. Recent evidence from emerging Southeast Asian markets suggests that expertise is becoming the dominant credibility cue in algorithm-driven environments (Phuong & Anh, 2026). Third, by focusing on HMNS a brand that actively collaborates with influencers this study provides context-specific empirical evidence that cannot be generalized from studies on global brands.

This study focuses specifically on consumers who have purchased HMNS perfume and have been exposed to influencer content promoting it. The research questions are: (1) Does influencer credibility significantly affect consumer trust in HMNS? (2) Does influencer expertise significantly affect consumer trust in HMNS? (3) Does consumer trust significantly affect repurchase intention? (4) Does consumer trust mediate the effect of influencer credibility on repurchase intention? (5) Does consumer trust mediate the effect of

influencer expertise on repurchase intention?

2. METHODS

Research Design and Sampling

This study employs a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative approach is appropriate for testing hypotheses and analyzing relationships between variables using structured data (Creswell and Creswell, 2023). The population consists of Indonesian consumers who have purchased HMNS perfume and have been exposed to influencer marketing content on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Because the total population is unknown, it is categorized as infinite. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used, as recommended when the population is unknown and specific criteria are required (Asman, 2021). Inclusion criteria were: (1) respondents who know or follow an influencer who has promoted HMNS perfume; (2) respondents who have purchased HMNS perfume at least once; and (3) respondents aged at least 17 years. Data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms via WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok. A total of 144 valid responses were obtained.

Measurement

Variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The measurement scales for each variable are grounded in established literature:

- **Influencer Credibility (X1)**: Measured using three dimensions trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness based on Source Credibility (Ohanian, 1990). scale is a validated instrument with strong construct reliabilities (α = 0.89–0.90 for each dimension). In this study, the indicators were adapted from (Salsabila & Zulfiningrum, 2025).
- **Influencer Expertise (X2)**: Measured using three dimensions to inform, to persuade, and to entertain based on (Sugiharto and Ramadhana, 2018). Their study found that influencer credibility significantly affects brand attitude ($t = 7.334$, $p < 0.05$), with attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness as key dimensions.
- **Repurchase Decision (Y)**: Measured using three dimensions ability, benevolence, and integrity based on (Mayer et al., 1995). Their integrative model is a foundational framework for understanding trust in organizational and marketing contexts.
- **Consumer Trust (Z):** Measured using four indicators repurchase intention, behavioral loyalty, willingness to recommend, and primary choice based on (Zeithaml et al, 1996). Their behavioral consequences model is widely used in service marketing research. This study measures repurchase intention the consumer's stated likelihood to buy again rather than actual repurchase behavior. This distinction matters because intention reflects motivational willingness, while actual behavior involves additional barriers such as availability, habit, and situational factors.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares approach (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS 4.0 (Sarstedt et al., 2024). PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for predictive and exploratory research with small to medium sample sizes and non-normal data distributions (Hair et al., 2017). The analysis followed a two-step process.

First, the measurement model was assessed for convergent validity (outer loadings > 0.70; AVE > 0.50), discriminant validity (HTMT < 0.90 and Fornell-Larcker criterion), and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70). Second, the structural model was assessed by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2) and testing hypotheses through path coefficient and specific indirect effect analysis. Bootstrapping was performed with 5,000 sub-samples to obtain accurate estimates, following (Hair et al, 2022). A relationship is considered significant if the t-statistic ≥ 1.96 (two-tailed) or p-value ≤ 0.05 (Binalay et al, 2016).

The estimated model is a full mediation model, where influencer credibility (X1) and expertise (X2) influence repurchase intention (Y) indirectly through consumer trust (Z). This model specification is based on Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which argues that trust is the primary mechanism through which source characteristics translate into behavioral intentions (Fernandes, 2024). For experience-based products like perfume, where sensory attributes cannot be fully verified before purchase, trust serves as a crucial psychological bridge between influencer recommendation and consumer action (Gefen, 2000). It is important to note that this study focuses specifically on influencers who have promoted HMNS perfume, not influencers in general. This scope means the findings describe how HMNS consumers respond to influencers associated with this particular brand, rather than providing a universal model of influencer marketing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondent Characteristic

The study involved 144 respondents. The sample was predominantly male (59.7%), aged 17–25 years (57.6%), and composed of students (38.9%) and private employees (34.0%). The majority of respondents were active social media users, which aligns with the study's focus on influencer marketing.

Tabel 1 Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	**59,70%**
	Female	**40,30%**
Age	17–25 years	**57,60%**
	26–35 years	**41,70%**
	>35 years	**0,70%**
Occupation	Student/University Student	**38,90%**
	Private Employee	**34,00%**
	Entrepreneur	**13,20%**
	Civil Servant	**11,10%**
	Unemployed	**0,70%**
	Farmer	**0,70%**
	Others	**1,40%**
Total		**144 (100,0%)**

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Regarding exposure to influencer content and purchase frequency, all respondents met the inclusion criteria: they had purchased HMNS perfume at least once and had been exposed to influencer marketing content on social media (TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube). However, the survey instrument did not capture granular data on purchase frequency (e.g., number of purchases per year) or daily exposure duration to influencer content. This limitation is acknowledged, and future research could incorporate more detailed behavioral measures.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive analysis showed that respondents rated Influencer Credibility (mean = 3.933) and Influencer Expertise (mean = 3.821) relatively high. Consumer Trust received a moderate rating (mean = 3.443), while Repurchase Intention (mean = 2.248) was comparatively lower, indicating that while respondents recognized influencer qualities, their intention to repurchase was moderate.

Tabel 2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Indicator	Mean
X1.1	3.868
X1.2	4.007
X1.3	3.931
X1.4	3.924
Average X1	**3.933**
X2.1	3.778
X2.2	3.799
X2.3	3.819
X2.4	3.889
Average X2	**3.821**
Z1	3.458
Z2	3.389
Z3	3.472
Z4	3.451
Average Z	3.443
Y1	2.243

Y2	2.285
Y3	2.208
Y4	2.257
Average Y	2.248

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Measurement Model Assessment

Convergent validity was established as all outer loadings exceeded 0.70 (ranging from 0.727 to 0.838). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was confirmed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, with all values below 0.90 (highest value: 0.643 between Z and Y), following the threshold recommended by Henseler et al. (2015). The Fornell-Larcker criterion was also met, with the square root of AVE for each construct exceeding its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70 for all constructs.

Tabel 3 Outer Loadings

	Influencer Credibility (X1)	Influencer Expertise (X2)	Repurchase Decision (Y)	Consumer Trust (Z)	Ket
X1.1	0,824				Valid
X1.2	0,771				Valid
X1.3	0,747				Valid
X1.4	0,770				Valid
X2.1		0,838			Valid
X2.2		0,837			Valid
X2.3		0,727			Valid
X2.4		0,741			Valid
Y1			0,774		Valid
Y2			0,793		Valid
Y3			0,800		Valid
Y4			0,733		Valid
Z1				0,826	Valid
Z2				0,767	Valid
Z3				0,776	Valid
Z4				0,728	Valid

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Tabel 4 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values

Variable	AVE	Ket
Influencer Expertise (X2)	0,620	Valid
Consumer Trust (Z)	0,601	Valid
Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,601	Valid
Influencer Credibility (X1)	0,606	Valid

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Table 5. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Influencer Expertise (X2)	Consumer Trust (Z)	Repurchase Decision (Y)	Influencer Credibility (X1)
Influencer Expertise (X2)				
Consumer Trust (Z)	0,612			
Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,339	0,643		
Influencer Credibility (X1)	0,116	0,498	0,343	

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Table 6. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Influencer Expertise (X2)	Consument Trust (Z)	Repurchase Decision (Y)	Influencer Credibility (X1)
Influencer Expertise (X2)	**0,787**			
Consumer Trust (Z)	0,492	**0,775**		
Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,264	0,508	0,775	
Influencer Credibility (X1)	0,074	0,389	0,263	**0,779**

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Table 7. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Ket
Influencer Expertise (X2)	0,796	0,867	Reliabel
Consumer Trust (Z)	0,778	0,857	Reliabel
Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,779	0,858	Reliabel
Influencer Credibility (X1)	0,783	0,860	Reliabel

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Structural Model Assessment

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for Consumer Trust (Z) was 0.367, indicating that 36.7% of the variance in trust is explained by credibility and expertise. For Repurchase Intention (Y), R^2 was 0.258, indicating that 25.8% of the variance is explained by the model.

Table 8. R-Square Values

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Consumer Trust (Z)	0,367	0,358
Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,258	0,253

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

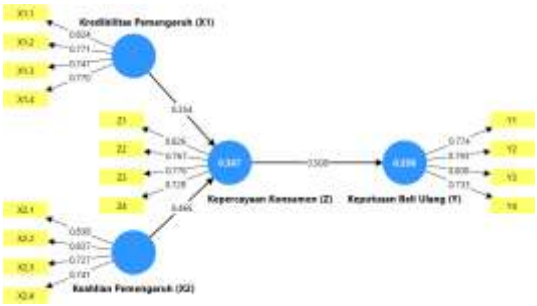

Figure 3. Outer Model

(Insert the outer model image from your SmartPLS output here.)

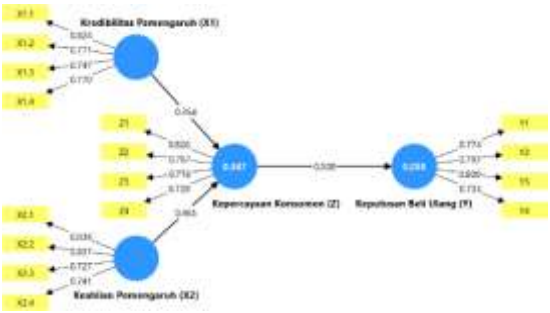

Figure 4. Bootstrapping Model Results

(Insert the bootstrapping model image from your SmartPLS output here.)

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the path coefficient analysis and specific indirect effects are presented in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9. Path Coefficients

Variable	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Ket
Influencer Expertise (X2) -> Consumer Trust (Z)	0,465	7,417	0,000	Accepted
Consumer Trust (Z) -> Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,508	8,906	0,000	Accepted
Influencer Credibility (X1) -> Consumer Trust (Z)	0,354	5,346	0,000	Accepted

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Table 10. Path Coefficients

Variable	Original sample (O)	T statistics	P values	Ket
Influencer Expertise (X2) -> Consumer Trust (Z) -> Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,236	5,733	0,000	Accepted
Influencer Credibility (X1) -> Consumer Trust (Z) -> Repurchase Decision (Y)	0,180	4,311	0,000	Accepted

Source: Primary data processed SMARTPLS (2026)

Structural Model Assessment

The Influence of Influencer Credibility and Expertise on Consumer Trust (H1 & H2): The findings confirm that both credibility and expertise significantly enhance consumer trust in HMNS perfume. This supports Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al, 1953), which states that the persuasiveness of a message depends on the source's perceived credibility (Han & Balabanis, 2024). For a fragrance product, where scent is subjective and cannot be experienced digitally, consumers rely heavily on the influencer's ability to describe and validate the product. An influencer who is perceived as honest (credibility) and knowledgeable (expertise) reduces the consumer's uncertainty, thereby building trust. This finding aligns with (Adrianto & Kurnia, 2021) and (Nathaniel et al, 2026), who found that influencer credibility and expertise are antecedents of brand trust. (Lou & Yuan, 2019)also demonstrated that influencer credibility positively affects followers' trust in branded content. The Influence of Consumer Trust on Repurchase Intention (H3): Consumer trust was found to have a strong positive effect on repurchase intention. This is consistent with (Gefen, 2000) and (Razati et al., 2024), who argue that trust reduces perceived risk and facilitates repeat transactions. (Sullivan & Kim, 2018) similarly found that online trust is a major determinant of repurchase intention in e-commerce environments. For HMNS, this implies that when consumers trust the brand (partly through trusted influencers), they are more likely to repurchase. Trust acts as a psychological bridge between the influencer's recommendation and the consumer's actual behavioral intention, especially for an experience product where post-purchase evaluation is critical. The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust (H4 & H5): The study confirms that consumer trust mediates the relationship between influencer attributes and repurchase intention. This means that credibility and expertise do not directly drive repurchase intention; instead, they build trust, which in turn drives the intention to buy again. This finding extends the literature by showing that for experience-based products like perfume, trust is not just a parallel outcome but a necessary mediating mechanism. It supports the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework: influencer attributes act as a

stimulus, consumer trust is the organism's internal state, and repurchase intention is the response. (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) Commitment-Trust Theory also supports this mediating pathway, positioning trust as the central variable linking marketing communications to behavioral outcomes. This insight is particularly valuable for HMNS, as it suggests that marketing efforts should focus on building trust through credible and expert influencers rather than just pushing for immediate sales.

Robustness of the Model and Extension of Knowledge

The robustness of the findings is supported by several empirical indicators. First, the measurement model demonstrates strong convergent and discriminant validity: all outer loadings exceed 0.70, AVE values are above 0.50, and the HTMT ratio (highest = 0.643) is well below the 0.90 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015). Second, the model's predictive power is moderate (R^2 Z = 0.367; R^2 Y = 0.258), consistent with studies on repurchase intention in experience goods where other factors also play a role. Third, the bootstrapping procedure (5,000 sub-samples) confirms that all path coefficients are significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that the findings are not sensitive to sampling variation.

This study extends existing knowledge on influencer marketing in three ways. First, it empirically validates that trust fully mediates the relationship between influencer attributes and repurchase intention, rather than merely running in parallel. This is a stronger test of the trust mechanism than studies that only examine direct effects. Second, the context local Indonesian fragrance brand (HMNS) provides evidence from an emerging market, where consumer trust in influencers may function differently than in developed markets due to varying levels of institutional trust (Alharthi et al., 2026). Third, the findings support the SOR framework in the context of digital influencer marketing: influencer credibility and expertise (S) activate consumer trust (O), which in turn drives repurchase intention (R). This integrative view advances the literature beyond simple direct-effect models and offers a theoretically grounded explanation for why influencer marketing works for experience products.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that influencer credibility and expertise positively and significantly influence consumer trust in HMNS perfume. Consumer trust, in turn, significantly drives repurchase intention. Furthermore, consumer trust fully mediates the relationship between influencer credibility and expertise on repurchase intention. These findings underscore the importance of trust as a key mechanism in influencer marketing for experience goods.

Theoretical Implications: This study contributes to the influencer marketing literature by empirically validating the mediating role of trust in the relationship between influencer characteristics and repurchase intention, specifically in the context of a local Indonesian fragrance brand. It extends Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al, 1953) by demonstrating that trust is the crucial pathway through which credibility and expertise translate into behavioral intentions. The findings also support the Commitment-Trust Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) in the context of digital influencer marketing.

Practical Implications: For HMNS, the findings suggest that selecting influencers should not be based solely on popularity or follower count. Instead, the brand should prioritize influencers who are perceived as credible and knowledgeable about fragrance. Collaborations should focus on authentic, transparent, and informative content that highlights the actual qualities of the perfume. This approach will build consumer trust, which is essential for driving repurchase behavior and long-term loyalty.

Limitations and Future Research: This study is limited to a single brand (HMNS) and a specific product category (perfume). Future research could replicate the model across multiple local brands or other experience goods to test generalizability. Additionally, this study measured repurchase intention, not actual repurchase behavior. Future studies could incorporate longitudinal designs to observe actual repeat purchases. Other variables such as customer satisfaction, brand image, and price sensitivity could also be integrated into the model to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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