

The Power of Influencers as Comparative Models of Social Models in the Selection of Local Fashion Brands

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Abstract: The community environment in general will affect individuals in making a decision. This decision includes the decision to love local fashion products which are considered by some, especially young people, to be less prestigious than foreign brands. Several local fashion brands always follow the development of global fashion trends to increase the love of young people for local brands. This research was conducted on young people in several big cities in Central Java as many as 100 samples were selected by purposive sampling method. This study aims to determine the model of social comparison among young people in terms of choosing local fashion brands and to find out the influencers of young people in choosing local fashion brands. This study examines the social comparison model, young people's preference for local brands and the power of influencers. The results showed that young people have a model to compare the opinions of people they believe to make decisions. Young people compare and choose friends over others in choosing local fashion brands.

Keywords: Social Model, Influencers, Young Adult, Local Fashion Brands

1 Introduction

Fashion trends in the world are increasingly showing significant developments according to the times. This development gave rise to new trends that developed from ideas, developing technology to how a person looks. The ever-changing development shows interest for those involved in it and is considered modern if it can keep up with the times. Especially for teenagers who do not want to be outdated in terms of appearance. One of the dominant developments seen is the way of dressing or fashion which is often loved by young people today. The appearance includes clothes, pants, dresses, skirts, and other accessories as well as various things related to them. By combining these things, of course, they will create their style or fashion value for them. Fashion seems to have become a characteristic and their personality. By the meaning of fashion itself, which is unique and dares to be different. This is a positive influence from the development of fashion among teenagers, which also makes them creative and dare to present their identity according to their passion.

Some of the previous research on youth and fashion comes from the subcultural theory of The Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies [1]. However, this theory has been criticized because it has a narrow focus and some gaps question the relevance of the theory to the multicultural, post-colonial world [2]. where society is more easily changed [3]. Fashion makes it easy for young people to change their identity due to the influence of various factors.

Through fashion, young people can express themselves and their identity and use style as a means of communicating individual identity [4]. Young people are people who have a unique character with all the variations of their differences. The interest of most young people in an object causes them to dig further about the object they like. Likewise, the character formed from generation Z as a presentation of young people who have characters that can be explained as research from Bencsik and Machova [5] divides the behavioral characteristics of different age groups from several perspectives, relationships, life goals, self-realization, mastery of IT, living values. Likewise, the character possessed by Generation Z, among others, has a tendency to have a commitment that is not strong enough, is less consistent, is less aware of his existence. This gen Z character reinforces that young people are still looking for self-identity so that it is easy for them to change and compare themselves with others.

Young people who like to compare themselves with others have both positive and negative benefits. Positively, they will be motivated to follow the lifestyle of others, especially people they trust and believe are good people; On the other hand, it is negative which gives rise to negative behavior if they compare themselves excessively and become insecure. Comparison can arise from various things such as appearance that trigger him to make comparisons. This comparison can occur when teenagers use the point of view of their friends to judge themselves. The behavior of comparing oneself between one individual and another who happens to like imported products will influence that individual to follow suit. However, the problem is that not all objects that are imitated produce correct behavior for those who imitate them.

Social comparison is comparing oneself with others which is the basis of psychology that influences people's judgments, experiences, and behavior. People will continue to engage in social comparisons when confronted with information about how other people are, what others can and cannot do and what others have achieved and possessed [6]. According to Festinger [7], they can know about themselves when comparing them with other people's characteristics both advantages and disadvantages. There are 2 (two) things that humans tend to compare, namely opinion and ability. Humans have the urge to judge their own opinions and abilities by comparing the opinions or abilities of others.

Previous research supports the statement that a person's perception of the popularity of a particular influencer will trigger comparisons with that influencer [8][9]. This study refers to the role of influencers who intend to provide comfort to the recipient of the influence. Influencers come from close circles so it is easy to trust the recommendations of the person concerned. Previous research has mostly provided views on the influence of influencers on purchasing decisions, so far there has been no research on the power of influencers to provide the best comparisons and recommendations to increase the confidence of the recipients of influence.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Social Comparison

In the theory of Social Comparison Festinger [7] emphasizes a person's desire to know themselves so that people need to have a strong basis to have a stable and accurate view. The person will seek informative feedback on their characteristics and abilities and they will use objective standards for self-evaluation. One of the main motives in social comparison is the need for accurate self-evaluation [10].

Someone who has a high social comparison orientation will tend to respond positively to the type he admires. They want to emulate the admired influencer and aspire to be like him [11]. Gilbert [12] states that social comparison is distinguished up and down. Upward social comparison is like comparing yourself with other people who are considered better in certain respects. Downward social comparison is like comparing yourself with others who are considered inferior. When a person considers himself inferior to others, anxiety arises, and will always feel he has a low self-image while interacting with other people [13].

2.2 Influencer

Influencers in the world of marketing are a major research topic [14]. Influencer marketing comes from the increase in the use of online celebrities or so-called influencer marketers [15]. The main target of influencers is youth or millennials [16]. Influencers are people who support brands, experts, pioneers in their fields, are recognized and trusted by opinion leaders who have the characteristics of being supporters of independently shaping audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of social networks to publish the resulting content [17].

Influencers about motivation to improve self-image can be related to the opinion of Barasch and Berger [18] which states that people will share when they believe that information is valuable to the recipient. This sharing motivation is driven by 5 (five) main factors, namely impression management, emotion, information acquisition, social bonding, and persuasion of others [18]. These motives are considered valuable for the sharer, which is by the main human goal to maintain a positive image of oneself and maintain positive social relationships [19]. Social Influence is a change in preferences or behavior resulting from observations, actions, conclusions, perspectives, and social norms about other people more broadly [20].

3 Method

3.1 Survey Instruments

This research is a quantitative descriptive type with the factors studied are influencers, social comparison models, local fashion brands. The study used a Likert measurement scale from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”). This study also uses demographic descriptions that include age, occupation, experience in fashion.

3.2 Sample

The population of this study is teenagers aged 17-25 years who have bought local fashion products located in Central Java. Central Java is a province that has potential for fashion, especially batik so that people have a habit of loving local culture. The sampling technique used was the purposive sampling technique with predetermined characteristics. Its characteristics are buyers and users of local or national fashion brands aged 17-25 years.

3.3 Data Analysis

To analyze the data, this study used SPSS to describe the profile of adolescents aged 17-25 years related to their perception of local fashion brands.

4 Result

4.1 Respondent Profile

Respondents have experience with fashion by 91.84%. Experience with fashion determines how respondents perceive fashion needs and how important fashion is for respondents. The age of the respondents is 17-27 years with the highest range in the age of 20-23 years. The largest respondents' occupations are college students and university students. Respondents received a lot of information from local fashion brands from the internet by 64.6%.

4.2 Influencers

Respondents' perceptions of influencers are explained by who the influencers influence in appearance and choosing local brands, reasons for following influencers, following influencer developments, proximity to influencers, power to compare themselves with influencers, self-evaluation.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Criterion	Characteristic	Valid %
Experience in fashion Experience	Experience	91.84
	Have no experience	8.16
Age	17-19 years	12,24
	20-23 years	83.63
	24-27 years	4.08
	Student	71.43
Occupation	civil servant	0.68
	entrepreneur	4.76
	Private sector employee	14.29
	Housewife	0.68
	Other	8.16
Information about fashion brand local	Internet	64.6
	Family	19.7
	Celebrity	11.6
	Social media	2.1
Local brands that are often bought	TV	2.0
	Merche, emima, wardah, nivea, yongki komaladi, triset, Nevada, fladeo, mostly, distro, Adorable project, meccanism, my	

Note: sample size =147

Table 2. Respondent's Perception of Influencer (%)

Description	Description Distribution of answers
Influencer	Family (15.65%); Celebrity/celebgram (31.29%); Friends (43.54%); Self (4.76%); Information media (2.76%); Others (2.04%)
Reasons to follow influencers	Proximity (9.52%); Influencer appearance (70.7%); Own choice (0.68%); Transactional reasons (4.08%); Tempted by promotion (14.29%); Others (1.36%).

Description	Description Distribution of answers
Keeping up with influencers	Rarely (66.7%); often (21.1%); never (12.2%)
Get to know influencers	Maybe (37.4%); no (20.4%); yes (42.2%)
The power of comparing yourself to influencers	Very low(5.4%); low (16.3%); sufficient (43.5%); high (29.9%); very high (4.8%)
Evaluation after getting an influencer recommendation	Evaluation after getting an influencer recommendation

Most of the influencers who are considered influential for respondents are friends at 43.54%. Friends are considered influential because they are of the same age and taste in appearance. Next for influential influencers are celebrities with 31.29%. Celebrities or celebrities contribute a lot to a person's appearance because they idolize the celebrity.

The reason for following the advice of the influencers they chose was because of the appearance seen by the subjects followed by a distribution of 70.7%. The next is for promotional reasons or being tempted by promotion of 14.29%. This result is different from appearance reasons because if they are tempted to promote, it means that they do not prioritize appearance only but because of promotion or advertising encouragement.

Respondents rarely follow the development of influencers (66.7%) because automatically they are close and know influencers because the findings of this study show that friends are their influencers. The intensity of meeting with friends is also frequent so that one does not need hard effort to always follow the development of influencers. Likewise with the introduction of influencers where someone already knows their influencer very well.

Social comparison is triggered by the condition of someone inconsistent, especially in young people. With this condition, if the individual is very familiar with the influencer, the stronger they will compare themselves to that person (influencer). This research shows that people are quite able to compare themselves to influencers because most are their friends.

They evaluate after getting recommendations from influencers whether there is a change in appearance style that leads to local fashion brands. Most stated that they had evaluated that they were much better after following the advice of their influencers in wearing local fashion brands.

5 Conclusion

Young people as a generation that has a character that is easy to change will always follow developments, especially fashion. Likewise, everything related to appearance or confidence with the fashion worn. Fashion has a function that is very synonymous with self-identity, therefore fashion products for young people are closely related to brands. Fashion represents the status of individuals in society so that wearing a certain fashion will change the individual's image in the eyes of others [21]. So foreign fashion brands change the view of young people for quality and image, but not all of them have such a stigma because young people also have a preference for local fashion brands.

Teenagers compare themselves with others to wear local fashion brands with the consideration that influencers are people they trust. This study shows the results that teenagers are concerned about local fashion brands that are worn with the influence of friends' influencers. A friend is someone who is very close to an individual because of common interests. Friendship relationships or friendships have an important influence on happiness and

life satisfaction through appreciation, emotional support, and friendly relationships [22]. According to Mendelson and About [23] the functions of friendship are as follows: (a) stimulating friendship, (b) helping, (c) intimacy, (d) reliable alliances, (e) self-validation, and (f) emotional security.

Celebrities also have a contribution in instilling a mindset to use local fashion brands as long as the celebrity reviews or endorses local fashion brands. Celebrity influence examines personality strengths that mediate cognitive, emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral outcomes. This model is based on the psychological concepts of Para social relationships and identification. The parasocial relationship is a very close relationship that is felt by an individual who knows himself and the character [24]. Identification refers to the psychological process of a person adopting another person's behavior to establish and maintain a desired relationship with that person [25].

Following the development of influencers greatly contributes to a person's high trust so that his behavior will follow the influencer, one of which is in terms of appearance. Influencers not only have the power to directly influence someone's decisions but followers still value them as a reliable source of information [26]. influencers are considered more credible and relatable than traditional female celebrities, and their product reviews have a significant impact on young women's behavior. In this study, it was even the other way around because it was found that friends were their influencers so that the development was directly known to the followers.

Young people are very concerned about foreign brands when buying fashion in the form of cosmetics and skincare. They pay attention to facial care and buy foreign brands because they believe in quality and do not contain excessive chemicals. In contrast to clothes, young people tend to choose local brands because they rarely buy clothes.

Local fashion companies need to pay closer attention to the preferences of young people because young people are more influenced by their peers or friends in appearance. Young people make social comparisons themselves with people who are considered very close. In addition, celebgram also affects the social comparison of young people. The company has been very effective in doing fashion endorsements to celebgrams to promote products to young people. Fashion companies, especially local cosmetics and skincare brands, need to make stronger persuasion to influence young people.

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