

Analysis of TikTok Content @bellaclrs_ as a Brand Advocate in Building Credibility

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid growth of social media, particularly TikTok, has driven changes in marketing communication strategies and the development of influencer credibility in the digital space. This study aims to analyze how credibility is constructed through TikTok content on the @bellaclrs_ account as a brand advocate for fast fashion products. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis, referring to persuasive communication theory and Source Credibility Theory, which includes expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The data were obtained from TikTok posts featuring fashion product promotions.

The findings indicate that @bellaclrs_'s credibility is consistently built through the representation of these three dimensions within the content. Expertise is reflected in the ability to present fashion references, trustworthiness is shown through message consistency and alignment, and attractiveness is conveyed through aesthetic visuals and engaging communication style. These findings suggest that influencer credibility is formed through consistent message construction in content, thereby supporting the role as a brand advocate in promoting fast fashion on TikTok.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media has significantly changed the way people communicate, access information, and make purchasing decisions. Among various platforms, TikTok has become one of the fastest-growing social media applications worldwide due to its short-video format and recommendation algorithm that enables content to spread quickly. According to DataReportal (2024), TikTok has more than 1.5 billion monthly active users worldwide. This rapid growth has strengthened TikTok's role as one of the most influential platforms for digital marketing and influencer communication. Previous studies also confirm that TikTok influencer credibility significantly affects consumer trust and purchase intention. This phenomenon demonstrates that TikTok is no longer merely an entertainment

platform but has evolved into an important medium for digital marketing and consumer engagement.

Influencer marketing has become one of the most effective promotional strategies in the fast fashion industry because consumers increasingly rely on influencers' recommendations when evaluating products and making purchase decisions. Influencer credibility plays an essential role in strengthening brand trust and customer loyalty.

Credibility is not only related to the content of the message, but also to how communicators present themselves. In social media, credibility is reflected through consistency, expertise, and honesty in delivering information to audiences. This becomes increasingly important within the context of product promotion, especially in the fast fashion industry, which is rapidly growing and highly dependent on

digital marketing strategies (Khuriyawati, 2024). Previous studies consistently demonstrate that influencer credibility significantly affects consumers' trust, engagement, purchase intention, and loyalty toward promoted brands, particularly on TikTok. The dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness remain central determinants of persuasive communication effectiveness in digital marketing.

One influencer who actively represents fast fashion brands on TikTok is @bellaclrs_, who frequently creates fashion-related content through product reviews, styling tips, daily outfit inspiration, and brand collaborations with Uniqlo. Rather than simply promoting products, the account consistently combines storytelling, visual aesthetics, and personal experiences, making it an interesting case for examining how credibility is represented through digital content.

Unlike previous studies that focus on audience responses using survey-based methods, this study applies qualitative content analysis to investigate how influencer credibility is represented directly through TikTok content. By examining communication style, storytelling, visual presentation, and persuasive strategies, this study provides a different perspective on the construction of credibility in influencer marketing.

This study applies the Source Credibility Theory proposed by Carl I. Hovland and Walter Weiss (Hovland & Weiss, 2022), which states that the effectiveness of persuasive messages is strongly influenced by the credibility of the communicator, consisting of three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. In this context, credibility is not measured based on audience perception, but rather on how these characteristics are represented within the content itself (Rahmadani, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Persuasive communication has become increasingly important in digital marketing because consumers are continuously exposed to promotional messages through social media platforms. Unlike traditional advertising, persuasive communication on TikTok relies on storytelling, visual presentation, and authentic interaction between influencers and audiences. Previous studies suggest that persuasive communication delivered through influencer-

generated content can increase audience engagement, trust, and purchase intention, particularly in the fashion industry (Fayyaz et al., 2024).

According to Hovland's persuasive communication theory, the effectiveness of communication is influenced by three main elements: the communicator, the message, and message appeal. Within TikTok, these elements are represented through influencers' communication styles, narratives, visual storytelling, and creative content presentation. Consequently, persuasive communication is not merely determined by the promotional message itself but also by how the message is delivered to audiences.

Source Credibility Theory proposed by Hovland and Weiss explains that message effectiveness depends largely on the communicator's credibility, which consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Numerous studies have confirmed that these three dimensions significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward influencer recommendations, particularly in social media marketing. For example, Fayyaz et al. (2024) found that influencer credibility positively affects purchase intention on TikTok, while Kim et al. (2023) demonstrated that trustworthy influencers generate higher consumer engagement than influencers who merely possess attractive visual appearances. Therefore, Source Credibility Theory remains highly relevant for explaining persuasive communication in digital environments.

Previous studies have primarily investigated influencer credibility using quantitative approaches, focusing on variables such as purchase intention, consumer trust, customer engagement, and brand loyalty. Although these studies consistently report positive relationships between credibility and marketing outcomes, they provide limited explanation regarding how credibility is represented within influencer-generated content itself. Therefore, qualitative content analysis offers an alternative perspective by examining communication strategies, visual representation, and storytelling used by influencers in constructing credibility.

Furthermore, communicator credibility consists of three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The expertise dimension refers to the communicator's ability to demonstrate knowledge and competence in a particular field, making the message

appear informative and convincing. Meanwhile, trustworthiness relates to the level of honesty, integrity, and sincerity of the communicator in delivering information. The attractiveness dimension does not only include physical appearance, but also encompasses communication style, personality, and visual aesthetics that are capable of attracting attention in content presentation. In this study, these three dimensions are used as indicators to identify how the credibility of @bellaclrs_ is represented in the analyzed TikTok content.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis proposed by Krippendorff (2018). Content analysis was selected because it enables researchers to systematically examine communication messages represented through visual elements, narration, language style, and persuasive strategies in social media content. The unit of analysis consisted of TikTok videos uploaded by the @bellaclrs_ account that featured promotional content for Uniqlo products as part of brand advocacy activities.

The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher identified TikTok videos that met the predetermined selection criteria. Second, each selected video was repeatedly observed to identify persuasive communication elements, including language style, storytelling, visual presentation, and message appeal. Third, the identified data were coded according to the three dimensions of Source Credibility Theory: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Finally, the coded findings were interpreted to explain how credibility was constructed through TikTok content.

After identifying these forms of persuasive communication, the analysis was then continued to examine how these elements construct the communicator's credibility. At this stage, the researcher analyzed the representation of the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness in each content as forms of credibility construction. Thus, this study does not merely view credibility as an end result, but also as a process built through persuasive communication strategies represented within media content.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted through content analysis, documentation, and literature review. Content analysis was carried out on TikTok videos uploaded by @bellaclrs_ containing elements of Uniqlo product promotion by examining video presentation techniques, editing style, music usage, narrative forms, content concepts, and persuasive communication styles used in the content. In addition, the researcher also employed documentation in the form of screenshots and archived video content to identify visual elements, captions, forms of brand collaboration, and interactions contained within the content. The literature review was conducted through the collection of references from books, journals, and other scholarly sources relevant to the research focus. The collected data were then analyzed to understand how persuasive communication and credibility are represented in the TikTok content of @bellaclrs_ as a brand advocate for Uniqlo.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis involved five stages: (1) collecting the selected TikTok videos, (2) repeatedly observing each video, (3) coding persuasive communication elements, (4) categorizing the findings based on the dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, and (5) interpreting the findings according to Source Credibility Theory. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher applied credibility through repeated observation of the selected content and compared interpretations with relevant literature. Dependability was maintained by documenting each stage of the coding process, while confirmability was achieved by ensuring that the interpretations were based on evidence identified in the analyzed TikTok content. This study analyzed only publicly available TikTok content. No personal or private information was collected, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. The research respected ethical principles regarding the use of publicly accessible digital content.

RESULT

Persuasive communication theory proposed by Carl I. Hovland emphasizes that the effectiveness of a message is influenced by the communicator, the message itself, and the appeal of the message used in the communication process. In the context of this study, the focus of analysis lies in how persuasive communication is represented in TikTok content created by @bellaclrs_ through language style,

message delivery, and visual presentation used in fashion promotion. This approach allows the researcher to understand how communication strategies are constructed to represent credibility as a brand advocate.

In this study, the communicator is positioned as the party who constructs and delivers messages through the produced content. Meanwhile, the message is represented through narration, language style, storytelling concepts, and visual message appeal displayed in TikTok videos. Through this process, the researcher found that persuasive communication on the @bellaclrs_ account does not merely function as a medium for fashion product promotion, but also as a representation of credibility built through a natural, communicative, and youth-oriented style of message delivery.

Based on the findings, the credibility of @bellaclrs_ as a brand advocate is represented through three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise is shown through the ability to explain products, provide styling tips, and relate fashion to current trends. Trustworthiness is reflected in the use of casual, honest, and non-exaggerated language when reviewing products. Meanwhile, attractiveness is represented through aesthetic visual concepts, expressive body gestures, storytelling, and humorous as well as relatable communication styles. Thus, this study demonstrates that persuasive communication and credibility are interconnected in constructing the representation of a brand advocate in TikTok content by @bellaclrs_.

Based on these findings, the analysis is further divided into two main discussions, namely persuasive communication analysis and credibility analysis. The first discussion examines how persuasive communication strategies are represented through language style and message appeal within the content. The second discussion focuses on how these persuasive elements contribute to constructing the credibility of @bellaclrs_ as a fashion influencer and brand advocate on TikTok.

Analysis of Persuasive Communication in TikTok Content by @bellaclrs_

Persuasive communication in TikTok content by @bellaclrs_ is represented through the use of casual, natural, and personal-experience-based language styles, so that promotional messages are not delivered

directly like formal advertisements. The analyzed contents show that Bella applies a soft-selling approach through product review videos, mix-and-match outfit content, and daily outfit inspirations integrated into everyday activities. Message appeal is presented through aesthetic visuals, relatable content concepts, and communicative as well as easy-to-understand delivery (Perloff et al., 2003).



Figure 1. Product review content

Based on the analysis, the language style used by Bella tends to be expressive, humorous, and conversational, as reflected in phrases such as “anti-slip anti-trace” or “for those of you who get cold easily like me.” Such language makes the product presentation feel closer, lighter, and less rigid. In addition, persuasive elements are strengthened through storytelling, the use of personal experiences, and detailed explanations regarding product functions and comfort. From the visual aspect, message appeal is represented through editing techniques such as zoom in and zoom out, expressive body gestures, specific character concepts, and themes that follow youth trends. Therefore, persuasive communication on the @bellaclrs_ account does not only function as a promotional medium, but also as a strategy to create engaging and easily accepted message delivery within fashion content on TikTok.

Analysis of @bellaclrs_ Credibility as a Fashion Influencer

The credibility of @bellaclrs_ as a fashion influencer is represented through three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Based on the findings, the expertise dimension is reflected in Bella’s ability to explain

product functions, provide styling tips, layering outfits, mix-and-match fashion ideas, and relate outfits to popular trends such as “skena” style and Korean drama-inspired fashion. Bella also demonstrates understanding of materials, clothing cuts, and outfit functions according to specific needs and conditions, so that the content presented not only displays product visuals but also practical fashion information.

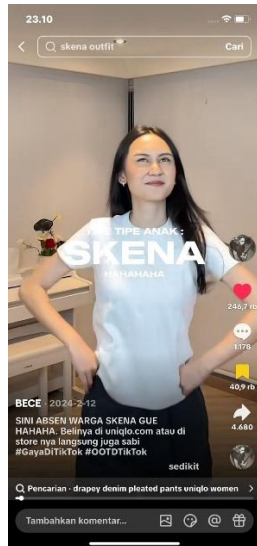


Figure 2. "skena" themed content

The trustworthiness dimension is represented through a natural, casual, and non-exaggerated communication style. Bella uses direct experiences when trying products, provides honest reviews, and conveys information in simple and communicative language. In addition, her involvement as a collaboration partner with major fast-fashion brands such as Uniqlo indicates professional trust given by the brand toward her role as a brand advocate.



Figure 3. Uniqlo brand promotional TikTok content

Meanwhile, the attractiveness dimension is reflected through Bella’s ability to package content attractively using body gestures, expressive poses, storytelling, aesthetic visual concepts, and themes relevant to youth trends. The use of concepts such as the “intern employee” character, Korean drama-inspired outfits, and “skena residents” style strengthens the visual character of the content, making it less monotonous and more attention-grabbing. Therefore, the credibility of @bellaclrs_ is constructed not only through the ability to deliver fashion-related information, but also through communication strategies and visually persuasive content presentation.

DISCUSSION

This finding is consistent with Fayyaz et al. (2024), who reported that influencer expertise positively influences consumers' trust and purchase intention on TikTok. Similarly, Kim et al. (2023) found that authentic communication enhances audience engagement because users perceive influencers as more credible. This aligns with Carl I. Hovland's concept of persuasive communication, which emphasizes that the effectiveness of a message is influenced by the communicator, the message, and the appeal of the message.

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that brands should collaborate with influencers who consistently demonstrate expertise and authentic communication rather than relying solely on follower numbers. Fashion influencers can strengthen their credibility by incorporating storytelling, honest product reviews, and educational fashion content into promotional videos. These strategies are likely to increase audience trust and improve the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns.

In this study, message appeal arises not only from product information, but also from the use of storytelling, humor, visual concepts, and approaches that follow youth trends. These strategies make the message easier to understand while strengthening the representation of personal communication styles on social media. Thus, content functions not only as a medium for promotion, but also as a form of the communicator’s identity representation in delivering persuasive messages.

In addition, the research shows that credibility as a brand advocate is built through the consistent representation of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness in the content. Expertise is represented by Bella's ability to explain product functions and outfit styling in detail, demonstrating her understanding of fashion and product characteristics. This shows that the communicator's expertise is an important part of building credibility representation on social media.

The aspect of trustworthiness is seen through a natural and understated communication style. Delivery that flows like everyday conversation creates an authentic impression in the content. Meanwhile, attractiveness is displayed not only through physical appearance, but also through communication style, body gestures, expressions, and appealing visual concepts. This demonstrates that a communicator's appeal on social media is also built through the ability to creatively and relatably package messages.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses only on one TikTok account, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study analyzes content representation without examining audience perceptions or engagement quantitatively. Future studies are encouraged to compare multiple influencers or combine qualitative content analysis with audience surveys to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of influencer credibility.

Based on these findings, this study shows that the credibility of brand advocates on social media is constructed through a combination of persuasive communication and self-representation in digital content. Credibility is visible not only from the information conveyed, but also from how the communicator constructs messages through language style, visuals, and communication approaches that suit the character of the TikTok social media platform.

CONCLUSION

This study found that TikTok content created by @bellaclrs_ represents persuasive communication through the use of natural language style, relatable storytelling, and visually appealing content presentation. Persuasive communication is constructed through soft-selling strategies in the form of product reviews, mix and match outfit content, daily

outfit inspiration, and personal experiences integrated into everyday activities. The use of casual, expressive, and humorous language makes promotional messages appear more communicative and less formal, while visual elements such as aesthetic editing, body gestures, and thematic concepts strengthen the appeal of the message conveyed in the content.

The findings also show that the credibility of @bellaclrs_ as a brand advocate is represented through three main dimensions of Source Credibility Theory, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. The expertise dimension is reflected in Bella's ability to explain product functions, styling techniques, layering outfits, and fashion trends in an informative and applicable manner. Trustworthiness is represented through honest, natural, and non-exaggerated communication, as well as the use of direct experiences in reviewing products. Meanwhile, attractiveness is constructed through expressive gestures, aesthetic visuals, storytelling, and concepts that are relevant to youth culture and current fashion trends.

Overall, this study concludes that persuasive communication and credibility are interconnected in constructing the representation of @bellaclrs_ as a fashion influencer and brand advocate on TikTok. Credibility is not only formed through product knowledge, but also through communication style, visual presentation, and the ability to package promotional messages in a relatable and engaging way within social media content.

Author contribution

Author: Conceptualisation and Research Design, Data Collection, Methodology, Supervision, Writing Entire Paper, Conceptualisation, Data Collection and Analysis, Editing and Layouting. All Authors have read the final version of the paper.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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