THE ROLE OF TIKTOK CELEBRITY AND DESTINATION AUTHENTICITY IN INCREASING TRAVEL INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

Along with the development of the internet and social media, social media marketing is also increasingly being applied in various sectors, including the tourism sector. One of the social media that is currently widely used is TikTok. TikTok is a social media that displays short-duration content created by TikTok users so that various types of information are available according to the user's interests and needs. Social media such as TikTok plays an important role in increasing the travel intention because through TikTok celebrities or TikTok influencers, users can feel the authenticity of a tourist destination from a video so that it can influence the user's travel intentions. This research was conducted with the aim of determining the influence of TikTok celebrity involvement on travel intention with destination authenticity (object-based authenticity and existential authenticity) as a mediating variable. Data collection was carried out online using a questionnaire from Google Form and 203 answers from respondents could be used. Data analysis uses the PLS-SEM model and data is processed with SmartPLS 4.0. The results of this study show that celebrity involvement has no influence on travel intention, but has an influence when mediated by object-based authenticity and existential authenticity. Object-based authenticity has a positive effect on existential authenticity, object-based authenticity and existential authenticity have a positive effect on travel intention.

Keywords: TikTok, Celebrity Involvement, Travel Intention, Object-based Authenticity, Existential Authenticity

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, the rapid rise of the internet throughout the world has resulted in many changes in people's lives. In the digital era, everything can be done easily and quickly, such as searching for information. Social media is one of the many intermediaries that can send information quickly. In the past, social media was only used to share photos of people's personal activities, but now it has many functions. Social media allows everyone to search for anything they need, from local to international news.

Social media marketing requires the presence of influencers. These social media influencers consist of individuals who actively share their experiences with products or services on their social media platforms (Masuda et al., 2022). Influencers are usually famous celebrities before the internet was used by society (Masuda et al., 2022). With the advent of the internet, these influencers expanded to become influencers on social media, which are now familiar to the public.

Almost all industries utilize social media marketing, including tourism. In the current era of computers and the internet, the government continues to encourage the use of technology to market tourist destinations to make them better known to the general public and attract more visitors. This is because tourism is an industry that is very popular with many people (Natasia &

Tunjungsari, 2021) and is a very important sector for improving the national economy (Stephanie & Tunjungsari, 2020).

In Indonesia, the Central Statistics Agency recorded that the number of trips made by domestic tourists as of June 2023 was 433 million (Kompas, 2023). When compared to the same time period in 2022, this figure has increased by 12.57%. In April 2022, Milieu Insight conducted a survey and the survey stated that out of 1,000 respondents, 84% of Indonesians were interested in traveling domestically (DatikTravel, 2022).

Influencers on social media are very important because Indonesian people really like traveling. This is especially true for influencers who frequently cover travel topics. Based on Over 60 Millennials Travel Statistics for 2022, Millennials and Gen Z choose tourist destinations based on information they get from influencers on social media. In addition, Millennials Travel Statistics and Trends 2020-2021 data shows that 86% of Millennials and Gen Z travel to get authentic cultural experiences in the places they choose. This shows the younger generation's interest in learning about local culture and having authentic tourism experiences. Therefore, the influence of social media is very important to increase the desire to travel (Yen & Teng, 2015).

Based on data published by We Are Social in January 2023, the social media applications most widely used by Indonesians are, outside of incoming call applications such as WhatsApp, social media applications such as Instagram, Facebook and Tiktok. However, Tiktok is in first place with 29 hours of use per month. As of April 2023, Indonesia has at least 113 million TikTok users, ranking second in the world as the country with the most users (CNBC, 2023). The most users also come from the 18 to 24 year age group. This shows that the majority of TikTok users come from Gen Z and Gen Millennials.

Previous research on TikTok has focused on the case of Chinese tourism (Wang et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2022). Seeing the rapid development of Tiktok in Indonesia and the large number of celebrities appearing there, it is necessary to conduct research on the impact of celebrity involvement in Tiktok on Indonesian tourism. As far as the author knows, Indonesia has not conducted research on object-based authenticity and existential authenticity so far. Therefore, researchers want to study how celebrity involvement on Tiktok influences travel intentions which are mediated by perceived authenticity (object-based authenticity and existential authenticity).

Based on the background described by the author, the problem formulation that can be formulated is as follows:
1. Does celebrity involvement on Tiktok have a positive effect on object-based authenticity?
2. Does celebrity involvement on Tiktok have a positive effect on existential authenticity?
3. Does object-based authenticity have a positive effect on existential authenticity in the experience of using Tiktok?
4. Does object-based authenticity have a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok?
5. Does existential authenticity have a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok?
6. Does celebrity involvement on Tiktok have a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok?
7. Can object-based authenticity mediate celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention?
8. Can existential authenticity mediate celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses descriptive research with a quantitative approach. Descriptive research is designed to examine the characteristics of an object, for example a person, product, or brand (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data collection was carried out online using a questionnaire via Google Form. The sample was selected by means of non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method. The criteria set by the author are people who have watched the TikTok video from Handsome Backpacker about 6 amazing places in West Sumatra. The minimum sample size used in this research was 130 respondents in accordance with the 10-fold rule guidelines, namely 10 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2019).

The questionnaire is divided into 3 main parts, namely screening questions, respondent profiles, and 13 statements used to measure each construct. A six-point Likert scale was used for each statement (1= Strongly Disagree to 7= Strongly Agree). Data collection was carried out from October 2023 to November 2023. Of the 227 answers received by the author, there were 24 answers that did not match the criteria set by the author so only 203 respondents' answers could be used for this research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research uses the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach and the data is processed with the help of SmartPLS 4.0 software. Two test stages were carried out, namely the outer model test and the inner model test. First, an outer model test was carried out consisting of a validity test by looking at the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results, while a reliability test was done by looking at the Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability results. In this research, the results of data processing show that each variable obtained an AVE value above 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019) so that the variables can be said to be valid. An indicator can be said to be reliable if the Cronbach Alpha value is >0.7 and the composite reliability value is >0.6 in exploratory research and above 0.7 based on general guidelines, but does not exceed 0.95 (Hair et al., 2019). The results of data processing show that the indicators can be declared reliable because the Cronbach Alpha value for each variable is above 0.7 and the composite reliability value shows results above 0.6 for each variable. The following are the AVE, Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability values of each variable.

Table 1. AVE, Cronbach Alpha, and Composite Reliability Analysis Results

	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability
Celebrity Involvement	0,672	0,756	0,860
Object-based Authenticity	0,618	0,722	0,844
Existential Authenticity	0,643	0,793	0,866
Travel Intention	0,628	0,702	0,834

Next, the inner model was tested, consisting of the coefficient of determination test (R^2), predictive relevance test (Q^2), path coefficient, and effect size (f^2). For the R^2 test, all numbers are in the range 0-1 so it can be seen that there is a prediction. Then for the Q^2 test, all Q^2 values are above 0 so that the path model predictions can be accepted for each construct. The path coefficients obtained from the results of this data analysis are also all in the range 0 to +1 so it

can be concluded that all relationships between variables are positive relationships (Hair et al., 2019).

Finally, for the f2 test, the results are quite mixed. The effect that celebrity involvement has on existential authenticity and the effect of existential authenticity on travel intention has a small effect because f2 is smaller than 0.15. Then the effect from object-based authenticity to existential authenticity and the effect from object-based authenticity to travel intention are classified as medium effects (f2>0.15). A strong effect can be seen in the effect from celebrity involvement to object-based authenticity because f2 is greater than 0.35. Meanwhile, celebrity involvement has no effect at all on travel intention because f2 is less than 0.02. The following are details of the results of the coefficient of determination test (R2), predictive relevance test (Q2), path coefficient, and effect size (f2).

Table 2. Koefisien Determinasi (R²) Analysis Results

	R^2	R^2 *adjusted*
EA	0,617	0,614
OA	0,549	0,547
TI	0,577	0,572

Table 3. *Predictive Relevance* (Q²) Analysis Results

	Q^2
EA	0,496
OA	0,543
TI	0,354

Table 4. *Path Coefficient* dan *Effect Size* Analysis Results

	Path Coefficient	Effect Size (f^2)
Celebrity Involvement → *Existential Authenticity*	0,345	0,140
Celebrity Involvement → *Object-based Authenticity*	0,741	1,217
Celebrity Involvement → *Travel Intention*	0,044	0,002
Existential Authenticity → *Travel Intention*	0,214	0,041
Object-based Authenticity → *Existential Authenticity*	0,495	0,289
Object-based Authenticity → *Travel Intention*	0,551	0,251

After completing the outer model and inner model tests, the next step is to test the hypothesis. Hypothesis testing was carried out using bootstrapping techniques. In testing this hypothesis, the researcher looks at the p value and the p value must be below 0.05 for the hypothesis to be accepted. The following is a table of hypothesis test results.

Tabel 5. Hypothesis Analysis Results

	t-statistic	p-value	Hasil Uji Hipotesis
Celebrity Involvement → *Existential Authenticity*	4,795	0,000	Positive
Celebrity Involvement → *Object-based Authenticity*	15,964	0,000	Positive
Celebrity Involvement → *Travel Intention*	0,540	0,295	Negative
Existential Authenticity → *Travel Intention*	2,227	0,013	Positive
Object-based Authenticity → *Existential Authenticity*	6,936	0,000	Positive
Object-based Authenticity → *Travel Intention*	5,980	0,000	Positive
Celebrity Involvement → *Object-based Authenticity* → *Travel Intention*	5,795	0,000	Positive
Celebrity Involvement → *Existential Authenticity* → *Travel Intention*	1,875	0,030	Positive

Judging from the table above, it can be concluded that there are 7 hypotheses that are accepted because the p-value is below 0.05 and there is 1 hypothesis, namely the sixth hypothesis, namely celebrity involvement in Tiktok has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok is rejected because the value p-value does not meet the requirements, namely above 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019).   For the two mediation hypothesis tests, after obtaining the results, it can be seen that object-based authenticity and existential authenticity are classified as full mediation because without them celebrity involvement has no influence on travel intention (Subagyo, 2018 in Pungkas, 2022).

Based on the hypothesis testing that has been carried out, it can be seen that the first hypothesis, namely that celebrity involvement in Tiktok has a positive effect on object-based authenticity, is accepted. This is in accordance with research by Zhu et al. (2022) which shows that celebrity involvement has a positive and significant effect on object-based authenticity. This shows that the Tiktok celebrity or in this study the Handsome Backpacker has succeeded in conveying the objective authenticity of West Sumatra (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Previous studies show that celebrity involvement in TikTok videos is one of the factors that can shape tourists' perceptions of the authenticity of a destination. This is due to the fact that the involvement of these celebrities can increase the richness and interactivity of the video, which can instill in tourists a strong belief in object-based authenticity (Zhu et al., 2022).

The second hypothesis was accepted according to research conducted by Zhu et al. (2022) which shows that celebrity involvement in Tiktok has a positive impact on existential authenticity. However, the influence of celebrity involvement on existential authenticity is smaller than the influence on object-based authenticity. This may be due to the fact that viewers still do not see the travel experiences experienced by celebrities, even though they have been shown by celebrities. As a result, the experiences of these TikTok celebrities still need to be emphasized in this segment through TikTok videos (Zhu et al., 2022).

Furthermore, there is a third hypothesis, namely that object-based authenticity has a positive effect on existential authenticity in the experience of using TikTok. These results are in accordance with previous research which also states that object-based authenticity has a positive and significant effect on existential authenticity (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Zhang & Yin, 2020; Zhu et al., 2022, 2023)

According to previous research, object-based authenticity is the basis for establishing existential authenticity (Zhu et al., 2022). Additionally, Zhu et al. (2022) stated that when TikTok videos display objective perceptions, viewers' subjective feelings naturally increase. Therefore, it can be concluded that the existential authenticity in this video is good and can be felt by the audience, thus increasing the audience's view of existential authenticity.

The fourth hypothesis, namely that object-based authenticity has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok, is accepted in accordance with previous research (Huyen & Thu, 2023 and Zhu et al., 2022). With technological developments, searching for information has become easier. When technological developments were not as rapid as they are now, the information that could be obtained was limited to print media, television broadcasts and radio. However, the information that can be obtained from these media is very limited and cannot be selected. Therefore, with the internet, people can search for the information they want. Short videos like Tiktok are very popular recently because in a short video there is a lot of

information and in the tourism context users are presented with the authenticity of tourist destinations.

If you look at the video made by Handsome Backpacker, the video is enough to show the beauty of West Sumatra which perhaps not many people know or have seen. With direct evidence of the scenery in West Sumatra, the audience can feel object-based authenticity so that it can increase the audience's travel intention to go to West Sumatra.

The fifth hypothesis, namely that existential authenticity has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok, is accepted. These results are in line with previous research conducted by other researchers which also stated that existential authenticity has a positive and significant effect on travel intention (Huyen & Thu, 2023; Tan & Huang, 2020; Zhu et al., 2022, 2023)

Celebrities in tourist destinations can demonstrate existential authenticity through what they do and how they interact with the people there. Things like trying local food, playing local musical instruments, and interacting with local residents are some examples of interactivity that celebrities experience directly while there (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006 in Zhu et al., 2022).

The sixth hypothesis, namely that celebrity involvement in Tiktok has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok, is rejected so it can be said that in this study celebrity involvement has no influence on travel intention. This means that the audience does not have high celebrity involvement so it cannot increase travel intention (Zhu et al., 2022). This result is different from previous research which shows that celebrity involvement on Tiktok has a positive effect on travel intention (Chan et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2008; Wu & Lai, 2021; Zhu et al., 2022). If we look at the research that has been conducted, there are actually very few studies that examine the influence of celebrity involvement on travel intention, so it is difficult to find research that reveals that celebrity involvement does not have a significant effect on travel intention.

There is one study conducted by Thelen et al. (2020) which shows that celebrity involvement has a negative effect on travel intention. However, this was clearly stated by Thelen et al. (2020) that travel intention decreased drastically after the actor in the television series was involved in a scandal. However, this cannot be used as a basis for this research because Handsome Backpacker was not involved in any scandal so this is not something that does not influence travel intention.
Apart from that, research conducted by other researchers who also researched Handsome Backpacker revealed that the Tiktok travel influencer Handsome Backpacker had a positive influence on the decision to choose Bali as a tourist destination (Melati et al., 2022). Therefore, researchers draw the conclusion that the error does not lie in the selection of the Tiktok travel influencer, Handsome Backpacker.

A survey from Think With Google conducted on 12,000 people aged 13-64 years from 9 different countries showed that the involvement of famous celebrities was not the main reason for watching videos. Apart from that, the younger generation also doesn't really care who makes the short videos. As explained previously, in this research, most of the respondents came from the age range of 18-23 years, so it can be concluded that the younger generation focuses more on video content rather than who makes or who appears in the video.

The seventh hypothesis, namely that object-based authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention, is accepted. The results of this study are in accordance with research by Zhu et al. (2022) who also stated that object-based authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention. The type of mediation of object-based authenticity is full mediation because celebrity involvement is unable to influence travel intention without object-based authenticity as a mediating variable. If seen from the results of data processing, object-based authenticity has a stronger mediating influence than existential authenticity, in accordance with research by Zhu et al. (2022).

The eighth hypothesis, namely existential authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention, is accepted. The results of this study are in accordance with research by Zhu et al. (2022) who also stated that existential authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention. This type of mediation of existential authenticity is also full mediation because celebrity involvement is unable to influence travel intention without existential authenticity as a mediating variable.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that:
1. Celebrity involvement on Tiktok has a positive effect on object-based authenticity.
2. Celebrity involvement on Tiktok has a positive effect on existential authenticity.
3. Object-based authenticity has a positive effect on existential authenticity in the experience of using Tiktok.
4. Object-based authenticity has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok.
5. Existential authenticity has a positive effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok.
6. Celebrity involvement on Tiktok has no significant effect on travel intention in the experience of using Tiktok.
7. Object-based authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention.
8. Existential authenticity mediates celebrity involvement on Tiktok and travel intention.

For further research, we can research other TikTok stars besides Handsome Backpacker to find out if the involvement of stars influences travel destinations. In addition, because the amount of research that has been conducted on the variables used in this research is still very small—especially in Indonesia—these variables can be reconsidered for future research. Considering that more and more people are using social media such as TikTok, further research might also address topics related to UGC-based social media. The results of this research can be used by parties involved in creating tourism destination marketing strategies. With existing research results, TikTok celebrities can continue to improve the quality of their content and enrich the content of uploaded content so that viewers can feel the authenticity of tourist destinations which will have an impact on their travel intentions.

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