ABSTRACT

Social media influencers have become a common strategy for enhancing brand exposure and encouraging purchase intention. However, in the case of Linds Café & Resto in the City of Semarang, although collaborations with influencers succeeded in increasing digital interactions such as likes, comments, and follower growth, these improvements have not fully contributed to higher purchase intention or sales. This study aims to analyze the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention, with brand awareness and brand engagement as mediating variables among culinary business consumers in Semarang City, using Linds Cafe & Resto as the research focus. This research employs a quantitative approach with data collected through a questionnaire administered to 110 respondents who had previously seen promotional content related to Linds Cafe & Resto on social media. Data were analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) through the SmartPLS application. The results show that social media influencers do not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention. However, social media influencers are proven to have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention when mediated by brand awareness and brand engagement. These findings emphasize that the effectiveness of influencers in driving consumer purchase intention does not occur directly, but rather through increased consumer awareness and engagement with the brand. Therefore, Linds Café & Resto needs to optimize its influencer campaigns by delivering more informative and persuasive content with a clear call to action, complemented by other promotional strategies to generate a real increase in purchase intention.

Keywords: *Social media Influencer, Purchase Intention, Brand Engagement, Brand Awareness, Food and Beverage Industry*