

The Effect of Attractiveness of Virtual Influencer Towards the Consumer Attitudes in Developing Intention to Purchase – A Case Study of Fast Food Restaurant

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ABSTRACT

Arbie SEO's performance has marked an astonishing success in the Richeese Factory promotional campaign. However, despite high engagement on social media, most audience interactions and attention focus solely on Arbie SEO rather than the promoted products or the brand, which raises concerns about the actual impact of virtual influencers in developing consumer purchase intention. This study explores the effect of virtual influencer attractiveness on consumer attitudes and purchase intention, using Arbie SEO as a case study. A quantitative method was employed through a structured questionnaire targeting Gen Z respondents located in Jabodetabek and Bandung. The collected data were further processed using the SEM-PLS method. The findings of this study show that the virtual influencer's attractiveness (Arbie SEO) has a significant and positive impact on purchase intention both directly and indirectly. Consumer attitudes play a mediating role in the attractiveness aspect in triggering consumer purchase intention. In the case of Arbie SEO, its attractiveness has been proven to have a direct effect on purchase intention, whereas most previous studies state that attractiveness alone does not have a direct effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, this research offers strategic business recommendations for utilizing the high engagement of Arbie SEO to translate attention into actual purchasing actions.

KEYWORDS



Virtual Influencer Attractiveness; Consumer Attitude; Purchase Intention; Social Media Marketing; Arbie SEO.

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of technology has fundamentally transformed human lives, with artificial intelligence (AI) becoming increasingly integrated into daily activities and business operations (Chakraborty, 2020). The achievements of technological development for the last two decades are mainly focused on building-based machines and algorithms to create their own consciousness as this consciousness is called artificial intelligence or in short of AI (Hassani et al., 2020). Artificial consciousness enables the machines to continuously learn things and do problem-solving, therefore in such a certain level of learning they can imitate the human's works in day-to-day business therefore making AI to be implemented into various industries not only in marketing (Verma et al., 2021). In the early 2000s, AI had only existed in search engines or gaming systems (Forbus, 2010), but nowadays as AI expands their applications towards business scenarios especially marketing as they are used in data analytics especially in customer experiences management or even market data intelligence (Verma et al., 2021). Moreover, one of AI's abilities is to produce a computer-generated imagery or CGI and even mimicking the human characteristics that these functions used in marketing activities known as virtual influencer (Jhawar et al., 2023).

Virtual influencers are AI-generated avatars designed to replicate human appearance and behavior, utilizing social media platforms for promotional activities. Their primary strength lies in the ability to customize characteristics to match brand requirements (Gerlich, 2023). The evolution of virtual influencers began in 1932 with Cynthia the “Gaba Girl” mannequin, who became a magazine photoshoot “model.” This was followed by Max Headroom in the 1980s, the first computer-generated TV personality parodying news and talk show hosts. The 2000s witnessed the creation of the first virtual idol, Hatsune Miku, a voice synthesizer developed by Crypton Future Media. In late 2016, two significant developments occurred: Kizuna AI emerged as a virtual idol primarily on YouTube, initiating the Virtual YouTuber industry trend, and simultaneously, Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela) gained widespread recognition as a virtual influencer on Instagram, becoming a brand ambassador for prestigious brands such as Prada and Calvin Klein (Rasmussen, n.d.).

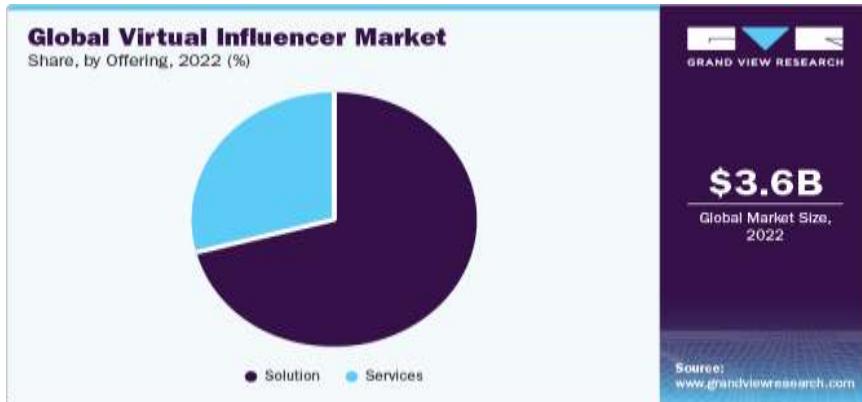


Figure 1. Global Virtual Influencer Market Size (Grand View Research, 2022)

The global market size for virtual influencer market per 2022 (see figure 1) reach approximately \$3.6 billion where 69% of the market offer solutions towards marketing campaigns using virtual influencer and the highest revenue held by fashion and lifestyle segment for over 34% (Grand View Research, n.d.). The rise of virtual influencer caused by their primary reasons to give brands full control over their algorithms to be fine-tuned to suit the needs of their clients while also they cost less real-life expenses and their behaviour far from controversial or scandals that risk brand reputation (Gerlich, 2023). Furthermore, the biggest market share of virtual influencers market held by North America for 44% in 2022 (Grand View Research, n.d.) while Asia-Pacific has the fastest growing market where in recent 2023 valuation of forecast, the market will witness a market revenue growth (CAGR) of 39.5% (KBV Research, n.d.).

Virtual influencers are increasingly used to substitute human works in advertising activities of one's businesses (Franke et al., 2023). Virtual influencer's eco-system not only focuses on creating persona or budgeting but also included tailoring activities towards language processing, speech or image recognition, problem solving and machine learning that resulting in suitable and relevant marketing strategies towards specific (Laszkiewicz & Kalinska-Kula, 2023). Virtual Influencers are so relevant as they seek to engage with customers through storytelling (narratives) about their personal lives just like real humans (Zeng et al., 2024).

Capturing the trend, Richeese Factory is known for their fast-food franchises that specializes in a chicken covered in cheese cream sauce and spicy sauce, they recruit Arbie_SO

as their brand ambassadors that handling both of Richeese Factory and Richeese Nabati (See Figure 1.4), however as per 2024 and earlier month of 2025, Arbie SEO focused on promoting Richeese Factory as it can be seen from her social media content activity even though Arbie SEO still actives to promote Richeese Nabati. Arbie_SEO is an Indonesian metahuman that was created by Aelke Mariskha in early 2023 for social media purposes and Aelke Mariskha, the creator is also one of the Indonesian Instagram influencers that also the creator of the previous virtual influencer Thalasya_POV (Hoiriyah, n.d.). Arbie_SEO itself is not actually a fully digital man-made character as she is using the human body to capture the human movement realistically and using the metaverse to actually make Arbie_SEO live (Noviana, n.d.). In addition to that, a concept of Metaverse is a simulation technology system that simulates the real world that is related to humans and its environment including the society that is not limited to the physical world restrictions (Wibawa et al., 2022).



Figure 2. Arbie_SEO as Richeese on A Mission Event Guest

Richeese saw an opportunity to recruit Arbie_SEO as one of their brand ambassadors to participate in the advancement of digitalization by introducing Arbie_SEO in her first offline event at Bandung in 2023 (See Figure 2). The reason behind the recruitment of Arbie_SEO as Richeese Factory brand ambassador initiated by the event of the creation of an advertisement for Richeese instant noodle products that used virtual influencer Digidiva which was solely to replace the role of humans and capture the AI trend (Digidiva, 2023). Globally, the trend of virtual influencers cannot be underestimated due to in 2023 their market value estimated to reach \$6.1B (Grand View Research, n.d.). In America itself as the biggest market of virtual influencers, 35% of the total American consumers sample made a purchase after hearing good advice and promotion from virtual influencers where 40% of them are a mix of Gen Z and Millennial (Mutani, n.d.). Bandung was also chosen as the first place to introduce Arbie_SEO as Richeese Factory virtual influencer due to the concentration of Gen Z in Bandung due to the existence of certain top universities including the culinary tourism choices.

The recent research conducted by the We Are Social in 2024 towards social media growth user in Indonesia finds that the total number of Indonesian social media user reach 49,9% of the total population of 278,7 Million in 2024, with 64,8% of the social media user dominated by the age of 18-34 years old with the most used social media platforms is Instagram while

TikTok still in the 4th place, yet TikTok still become the most Indonesia user spend time the most (Kemp, 2024). The native advertising itself can be said as a sponsored content where the brand appears to match the content without explicitly being introduced to the audience (Yoon et al., 2023). While in the promotional marketing content, there needs to be a series of benefits to the brand as one of the impacts of the social media conversations (Du Plessis, 2017).

The phenomenon related to the concept of attractiveness and the attitude received by Arbie SEO as the virtual influencer. While attractiveness of the virtual influencer itself is not only orienting towards the physical appearance but also includes the social connection that is shared between the influencer and the audiences (Kim & Park, 2023). While consumer attitudes refer to the evaluation of feelings or tendencies towards what they like or dislike (Mucha, 2024). Attitude is a complex element that consists of three components of cognitive (trust), affection (emotion), and action of intention towards objects (Husic-Mehmedovic & Cicic, 2012). Although, the attractiveness of one's virtual influencers plays crucial roles in influencing consumer responses towards virtual influencers itself by affecting their attitudes towards the promotion brought by virtual influencers (Park et al., 2024).

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The existing research that focuses on virtual influences has shown that as the effect of virtual influencer's attractiveness has positive significant effect on Gen Z's emotional attachment therefore impacting on developing purchase intention while the trustworthiness of virtual influence raise a question where it is has insignificant effect towards purchase intention therefore the answer of their trustworthiness (trust towards virtual influencer) is questionable (Chiu & Ho, 2023). The same study also conducted in the research scheme where the audiences, mostly Gen Z, found that virtual influencer does not have any direct influence towards purchase intentions, but it does have influence towards emotional attachment that they start to develop purchase intention towards the brands (Kim & Park, 2023). Outstandingly, another study shows an unexpected result that virtual influencer has an impact on consumer attitudes where consumers perceive trustworthiness and even has high preference (tendency of certain emotion) over human influencers that led to likelihood to purchase specific products (Gerlich, 2023). However, the recent study also stated that anthropomorphism or the appearance of virtual influencer does not have significant influence to develop customer's purchase intention but the parasocial interaction that shown between the influencer and their audiences (can retrieved from comment section as media to interact) is a pivotal factor to determine the consumer purchase intention (Zaharia & Asici, 2024). Therefore, it can be said that the interaction

between influencer and their audiences determine on how the audiences develop the purchase intention as previously mentioned by Du Plessis (2017), the social media content of one's promotion needs to include brand as part of the conversation (interaction) but however most of the comments (interaction) on Arbie SEO social media post mostly focused on the appearances of Arbie SEO. Attractiveness is truly an important factor, but it does not necessarily affect the purchase intention, instead it is affecting the consumer attitudes which in turn influences the purchase intention (Su, 2024). Furthermore, the fact that virtual influencer's attractiveness in most of the study shows insignificant effect on influencing purchase intention, the studies indicate that it may depend on different product categories (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Franke et al., 2023; Kim & Park, 2023; Su, 2024).

Reflecting on the Arbie SEO case, despite achieving outstanding social media campaign results and attracting substantial attention, questions remain regarding her success in affecting audience attitudes and purchase intentions toward Richeese Factory products. As previously mentioned, promotional benefits should include brands becoming part of social media conversations; however, reality demonstrates that audiences focus more on Arbie SEO's appearance, with minimal or ambiguous signals indicating attraction toward promoted Richeese Factory products.

Investigating this issue provides valuable insights not only for Richeese Factory but also for other companies and brands seeking to understand virtual influencer benefits. The Arbie SEO case at Richeese Factory highlights that high social media engagement may be insufficient for campaign success if brands fail to remain central to marketing activity benefits. This research offers insights for Richeese Factory to evaluate virtual influencer marketing strategies. By understanding how Arbie SEO's attractiveness influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, Richeese Factory can make informed decisions regarding strategy improvement, adjustment, or replacement. Moreover, for other brands planning to adopt virtual influencers, this study provides assessment frameworks and decision-making foundations by uncovering how virtual influencer attractiveness affects consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

Furthermore, this study contributes to existing literature by examining the virtual influencer phenomenon in emerging markets, specifically Indonesia's Gen Z demographic. While most virtual influencer research focuses on developed markets, this study provides empirical evidence from Southeast Asian contexts, addressing the research gap regarding cultural and market-specific responses to virtual influencers. Additionally, by investigating fast food restaurant contexts, this research extends understanding of how virtual influencer attractiveness operates across different product categories—an area identified as requiring further investigation in previous studies.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach to analyze relationships between variables and test hypotheses. This method aligns with the research objective of testing how Arbie SEO's attractiveness impacts consumer attitudes, ultimately affecting purchase intentions toward Richeese Factory products. The quantitative method enables statistical modeling and tools to measure variable relationships. This research utilizes Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to analyze datasets, identify patterns, and test

hypotheses. This approach facilitates examination of chain relationships between variables to understand social phenomena.

Primary data were collected through surveys using structured questionnaires distributed to target respondents via Google Forms. The questionnaire comprises questions related to research constructs, derived from previous research and modified to match research needs. The list of questions (items) is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Constructs and Items

Construct (Variables)	Items (Indicators)
Virtual Influencer Attractiveness (Author, 2025 adapted from Kim & Park, 2023)	1. I was attracted to Arbie SEO because she looks so human even though she is artificial (VIATT1) 2. I find Arbie SEO's appearance unusual because it feels so real and unreal at the same time (VIATT2) 3. I was attracted to Arbie SEO because she made me curious what she really looks like (VIATT3) 4. I was fascinated by how Arbie SEO interacts like human naturally despite being an AI (VIATT4)
Consumer Attitudes (Immanue & S., 2021; Onem & Selim Selvi, 2024)	1. When I see Arbie SEO Post, I feel that she is an expert (ATT1) 2. I feel Arbie SEO is a qualified influencer (ATT2) 3. I believe Arbie SEO provide relevant information in promoting products (ATT3) 4. I feel excited when Arbie SEO promoting the products (ATT4)
Purchase Intention (Kim & Park, 2023; Jayasingh et al., 2025)	1. I will buy the Richeese Factory products that promoted by Arbie SEO if possible (PI1) 2. I intend to buy Richeese Factory products from Arbie SEO promotion in near future (PI2) 3. I will buy the promoted products if Arbie SEO started to endorse a new product of Richeese Factory (PI3) 4. It is likely I develop willingness to purchase when I see Arbie SEO promotes the product (PI4)

The population on this study are those who are the users of TikTok in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) and Bandung. Moreover, the Area of Jabodetabek being chosen as the base of location where most of the business including the Richeese Factory branch is easy to find and to reach by the people which opens up to the opportunity in gaining the audience that already knows Richeese Factory. Moreover, Bandung were also chosen as the first event on introducing Arbie SEO was held in Bandung while also Bandung is one of the cities in Indonesia that has highly concentrated of Gen Z due to the existence of many universities across the city which makes Bandung suitable for reaching the Gen Z that already knows and even interact with such technology including Artificial Intelligence (AI). TikTok were also chosen due to the highest performance of Arbie SEO comes from TikTok.

As previously mentioned, this research will use nonprobability sampling – purposive sampling which this technique allows the data collection to concentrate towards the certain requirements that the research needs therefore closing the sample to do not even have the same probability to be chosen as the sample for this research due to certain requirements. Moreover, the criteria of the sample that needed in this research are:

1. Generation Z (Born in 1997-2012)
2. Already know Richeese Factory
3. Have an experience of buying food from endorsed influencer

Determining the total of sample needed in this research, the author will use the calculation method by Hair et al. (2017), where the method emphasizes if the total of the population is unknown therefore the total sample can be calculated by the total of the items multiplied by ten. In this case, even though there is the data of total number Gen Z on certain city although certain city according to the data of BPS still not updated per 2021, but as the population in this research is the user of TikTok in Jabodetabek and Bandung therefore there is no specific number on how much is the user of TikTok in Jabodetabek and Bandung. Therefore, the calculation of the total sample can be seen as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Samples} &= \text{Total Items} \times 10 \\ \text{Samples} &= 12 \times 10 \\ \text{Samples} &= 120\end{aligned}$$

To avoid the error input test, the sample were added by 9 therefore making the total samples of 129

Moreover, in order to making sure that the samples are already knows that Arbie SEO is virtual influencer and what is virtual influencer, before the samples fill the questionnaire, they will need to read the introduction of Arbie SEO and virtual influencer made by the Author in the questionnaire and they need to fill the confirmation question as if they already understand towards Arbie SEO as virtual influencers.

The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) through SmartPLS software. The reason for using SEM-PLS is because this model is suitable for research with an exploratory approach, and is able to analyze complex relationships between latent variables and their indicators.

The analysis was conducted in two stages:

- Outer Model Analysis (Measurement Model): to test convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability.
- Inner Model (Structural Model) Analysis: to test the relationship between constructs, including direct and indirect effects (mediation effects) and hypothesis testing.

The measurement model also includes Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and path coefficient and t-statistic tests for each tested path of influence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristic

The activity of collecting data in this research were conducted by spreading questionnaire towards the population. The sampling method of nonprobability sampling – purposive sampling was used in this research. The requirement that are needed in this research is Gen Z (those who born in 1997-2012), already know Richeese Factory and having experience of buying food from endorsed influencer. The questionnaire was shared among the population which the population are the users of TikTok in Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) and Bandung. 129 samples were gathered in this survey (questionnaire) activity with the specified characteristics that retrieved can be seen as below:

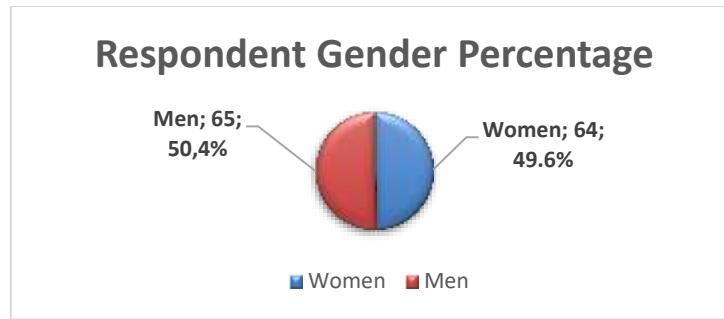


Figure 3. Respondent Gender Percentage

Based on the Figure 3, it is known that man is more prominent in total rather than woman in this research therefore it is also can be said that in this case of research, the user of TikTok in Jabodetabek and Bandung are dominated by men. Moreover, the percentage of distribution of respondent's region was also obtained from this questionnaire that can be seen as follows:

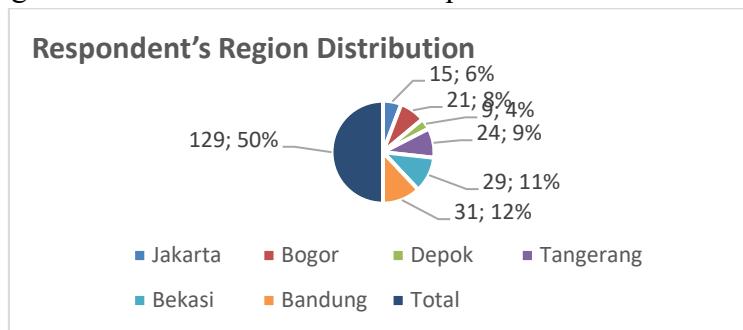


Figure 4. Respondent's Region Distribution

Based on Figure 4, the respondent is dominantly coming from Bandung and followed by those who come from Bekasi and Tangerang as the most three highest frequency that comes from those places. Therefore, it can be said that the population of user TikTok in this research dominantly comes from Bandung, Bekasi, and Tangerang and with Bandung who have more concentrated Gen Z if based on the retrieved samples from the questionnaire. The fact that Bandung (in this case) has a highest frequency of Gen Z already being noticed by Richeese Factory as the fact that Arbie SEO's first introduction as part of Richeese Factory were held in an offline scheme event in Bandung.

Outer Model (Measurement) Analysis

Table 2. Validity Test Results

		Loading Factors	AVE
VI Attractiveness	VIATT1 <- VI Attractiveness	0.804	0.662
	VIATT2 <- VI Attractiveness	0.830	
	VIATT3 <- VI Attractiveness	0.875	
	VIATT4 <- VI Attractiveness	0.740	
Consumer Attitude	ATT1 <- Consumer Attitudes	0.765	0.617
	ATT2 <- Consumer Attitudes	0.739	
	ATT3 <- Consumer Attitudes	0.819	
	ATT4 <- Consumer Attitudes	0.815	
Purchase Intention	PI1 <- Purchase Intention	0.809	0.620
	PI2 <- Purchase Intention	0.785	

PI3 <- Purchase Intention	0.750		
PI4 <- Purchase Intention	0.803		
Cross Loading Factors			
VI Attractiveness	Consumer Attitudes	Purchase Intention	
VIATT1	0.804	0.651	0.571
VIATT2	0.830	0.624	0.626
VIATT3	0.875	0.699	0.709
VIATT4	0.740	0.534	0.543
ATT1	0.543	0.765	0.595
ATT2	0.540	0.739	0.553
ATT3	0.633	0.819	0.662
ATT4	0.699	0.815	0.670
PI1	0.620	0.687	0.809
PI2	0.583	0.578	0.785
PI3	0.585	0.624	0.750
PI4	0.592	0.600	0.803

Based on the validity test, the value of loading factors of each the items (indicators) show a value of Loading Factors $LF \geq 0.7$ which indicates a validity of the indicators that can reflect its variable. Furthermore, the findings are also enhanced by the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which has $AVE \geq 0.5$ for all the variables which can be said that the variables of this research are able to explain more than half of its items therefore making it valid to use. Moreover, to further support the findings, the cross-loading factors also need to assess the correlation of items towards their actual variables which in the cross-loading factors, the value of loading factors of each item towards its actual variables needs to be greater than the value of loading factors to other variables. The results show that the loading factors of each variable towards its actual variables show a greater value than the value of loading factors towards other variables which indicate that the used items are correlated to its actual variables rather than other variables.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

	Composite reliability	Results
VI Attractiveness	0.886	Reliable
Consumer Attitudes	0.865	Reliable
Purchase Intention	0.867	Reliable

Based on the reliability test results, it is shown that each of the variables have a value of Composite Reliability ≥ 0.6 which the value indicates that the instrument is reliable to use and even having a consistent result even if it has to being used multiple times.

Inner Model (Structural) Analysis

The assessment towards inner model or the structural model are conducted to determine how well the exogen variable predicts the existing endogenous variable. The primary focus of inner model analysis is to assess the multicollinearity issues and predictive power along with predictive relevance. The test on multicollinearity issues is based on the value of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) that should be maintained below 5. The predictive power also assessed to determine the power of exogen variable to predict endogen variables which can be assessed

through the value of R^2 . In addition, the predictive relevance also being assessed to assess the ability of endogenous variables to be able being predicted by the exogenous variables by using the value of $Q^2 > 0$. Therefore, the inner model analysis using data from 129 samples can be seen as below:

Table 4. Structural Model Testing

	VIF
VI Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	2.496
Consumer Attitudes -> Purchase Intention	2.496
VI Attractiveness -> Consumer Attitudes	1.000
R-square	Q-Square
Consumer Attitudes	0.599
Purchase Intention	0.680
	0.565

Based on the result of structural model test, it is shown that the value of Variance Inflation Factor is maintained below 5 which therefore it can be said that the model of the research that using 129 samples data is having no multicollinearity issue. Moreover, the value of R^2 is both shown to have in range of 0.50-0.74 which categorized in having moderate power. Therefore, it can be said that the exogenous variable which is Virtual Influencer Attractiveness has a moderate effect in predicting both Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intention variables. Furthermore, the assessment of predictive relevance aspect which focusing on the value of Q^2 where the test results show that both endogenous variable which is Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intention shows $Q^2 > 0$ which indicate that both of the endogenous variables are able to be predicted by the exogenous variables (Virtual Influencer Attractiveness) therefore making it having a predictive relevance effect.

Mediating Effect Analysis

Table 5. Indirect Effects and Total Effects

Indirect Effects	ATT	PI	VIATT
ATT			
PI			
VIATT	0.401		

Table 6. Total Effects

Total Effects	ATT	PI	VIATT
ATT	0.517		
PI			
VIATT	0.774	0.757	

Therefore, based on the value shown, the VAF can be calculated as follows:

$$VAF = \text{Indirect Effects} / \text{Total Effects}$$

$$VAF = 0.401 / 0.757$$

$$VAF = 0.530$$

Based on the calculation, it is known that the value of VAF is 0.530 which the number indicates a partial mediating effect as the number still in the range of (0.2 – 0.79). Therefore, it can be said that the effect of Virtual Influencer Attractiveness towards Purchase Intention is defined by 0.530 or 53% through the existence of mediator variable while the rest of 47% of Virtual Influencer Attractiveness effects towards Purchase Intention is a direct effect.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results

Path Relation		Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	Virtual Influencer Attractiveness -> Consumer Attitudes	0.774	10.795	0.000	Accepted
H2	Consumer Attitudes -> Purchase Intention	0.517	5.709	0.000	Accepted
H3	Virtual Influencer Attractiveness-> Purchase Intention	0.356	3.665	0.000	Accepted
H4	Virtual Influencer Attractiveness -> Consumer Attitudes -> Purchase Intention (indirect effect)	0.401	4.899	0.000	Accepted

According to the table of 7, the hypothesis of H1 which stated “H1: Virtual Influencer’s Attractiveness has an effect on Consumer Attitudes” has a results of path coefficient of 0.774, with T Statistic of $10.795 > 1.96$ and P-value $0.000 < 0.05$ which resulting in accepted hypothesis with the defined relationship of Virtual Influencer’s Attractiveness are having a positive and significant effects on Consumer Attitudes. Therefore, it can be said that the Attractiveness of Arbie SEO is proven to have significant and positive effect towards consumer attitudes, especially towards Gen Z. The relationship is meaning as the Gen Z (in this case as the respondents) are attracted towards Arbie SEO’s attractiveness they show a positive attitude towards Arbie SEO. The findings also further supported by Kim & Park (2023), Chiu & Ho (2023), and Su (2024) who also emphasizes that virtual influencer attractiveness is positively impacts consumer attitudes. This is due to the virtual influencer attractiveness tend to drive engagement which the engagement itself is a part of a positive attitude’s responses [30]. The outcome of this study reinforces those previous study that claims virtual influencer attractiveness are affecting positively in shaping positive consumer attitudes and therefore the findings also added a context especially the findings in the context of Indonesian Gen Z specifically those in Jabodetabek where they are having positive consumer attitudes as they being attracted by virtual influencer (in this case is Arbie SEO).

The hypothesis of H2 which stated “H2: Consumer Attitudes have an effect on Purchase Intention” has a results of path coefficient value of 0.517, T-statistic of $5.709 > 1.96$, and P-value $0.000 < 0.05$ which resulting in accepted hypothesis; therefore, it can be said that in the case of Arbie SEO with the samples of Gen Z in Jabodetabek, as the consumer shown a positive attitude towards virtual influencer (Arbie SEO) were also express their intention to purchase Richeese Factory products. This finding supports the base theory of reasoned action which behavioural intention is a direct result of shown attitudes. Moreover, the findings support the previous study where consumer who forming a positive attitude towards virtual influencer, they also forming an intention to purchase the products that promoted by the virtual influencer (Kim & Park, 2023; Yang et al., 2024; Rungruangjit et al., 2024; X. Wang & Zhang, 2025).

The hypothesis of H3 that stated “H3: Virtual Influencer’s Attractiveness has an effect on Purchase Intention” has results of path coefficient value of 0.356 with the T-statistic of $3.665 > 1.96$ and P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ which resulting in accepted hypothesis; therefore it can be said that in the case of Arbie SEO and Gen Z across the Jabodetabek, the virtual influencer attractiveness are found to have direct significant and positive effect towards

purchase intention which as the consumer are being attracted to Arbie SEO they directly developing intention to purchase product that promoted by Arbie SEO. These findings are surprisingly different if compared to previous study where most of the study results stated that Virtual Influencer Attractiveness are not having a direct effect in developing purchase intention and rather need a mediator such as attitude for examples (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Kim & Park, 2023; Su, 2024; Volles et al., 2024; Jayasingh et al., 2025; X. Wang & Zhang, 2025). Therefore, this finding can be said to be a novelty by adding a newfound in the relationship of direct affect between virtual influencer attractiveness and purchase intention. The findings of this testing are also answering the statement of Franke et al. (2023) where in his research it is known that the effect of Virtual Influencer's Attractiveness especially directly towards Purchase Intention may vary across the product types.

The hypothesis of H4 which stated “H4: Virtual Influencer's Attractiveness has an indirect effect on Purchase Intention through Consumer Attitudes” has the results of path coefficient value of 0.401 with T-statistic of $4.899 > 1.96$ along with P-values $0.000 < 0.05$ which indicates that hypothesis accepted; therefore it can be said that virtual influencer attractiveness not only having a direct influence as stated in H3, but also having an indirect effect toward purchase intention through the mediating effect of Consumer Attitudes. The mediating effect also to be known to have a partial mediating effect which through the calculation of mediating power it is defined that 0.53 or 53% of virtual attractiveness effect towards purchase intention are through the mediating effect of consumer attitude while the rest of 47% is a direct effect. This finding supports the previous study where most of the studies state that virtual influencer attractiveness is having an indirect effect towards purchase intention through the shown consumer attitudes (Chiu & Ho, 2023; Kim & Park, 2023; Volles et al., 2024; Jayasingh et al., 2025; Wang & Zhang, 2025). Even past studies stated that virtual influencer can drive attention but their ability to drive purchase directly is limited and sometimes relies on their ability to create emotional or cognitive engagement (part of consumer attitude aspects) (Lou et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the all four hypotheses of this research were all accepted and even has astonishing results in the H3 where this hypothesis focusing on the direct effect of virtual influencer attractiveness towards purchase intention that most of the previous study are claiming that they found that virtual influencer attractiveness is not having a direct influence towards purchase intention and rather having affect if there is a mediating variable. However, in this research, the effect of Arbie SEO's attractiveness is surprisingly affecting directly consumers' intention to purchase Richeese Factory products that are being promoted by Arbie SEO. Therefore, in general, this finding is not only adding a new insight for Richeese Factory but also generally for the virtual influencer market especially in Indonesia's Gen Z market (in this case across the Jabodetabek area) where visual appeal is highly valued even directly affecting their intention to purchase.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the impact of virtual influencer Arbie SEO's attractiveness on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions among Generation Z in Jabodetabek and Bandung, prompted by her Richeese Factory campaign drawing over 98% of social media comments focused on her rather than the products. Using SEM-PLS analysis on data from 129

respondents, all four hypotheses were confirmed: Arbie SEO's visual realism and social appeal positively influence consumer attitudes, which in turn drive purchase intentions; her attractiveness also exerts a direct positive effect on purchase intention (contrary to prior studies) and an indirect effect mediated by attitudes. Despite excessive attention on the influencer, her appeal effectively shapes buying behavior, suggesting Richeese Factory leverage this by strategizing to convert attention into purchases. For future research, scholars could explore comparative effects of Arbie SEO across diverse demographics or product categories, or longitudinally track actual purchase conversions post-campaign to validate long-term efficacy.

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