

THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN BUILDING CONSUMER TRUST: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study aims to systematically examine the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust within the context of digital marketing. The rapid growth of social media has transformed marketing strategies, positioning influencers as key opinion leaders who shape consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. Consumer trust has become a critical factor, particularly in an environment characterized by information overload and skepticism toward conventional advertising. This research adopts a qualitative approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to synthesize findings from 15 national journal articles published between 2023 and 2026. The selected studies focus on influencer marketing, influencer credibility, consumer trust, and consumer behavior, including purchase intention, purchase decision, loyalty, and repurchase intention. The results of the review indicate that influencer marketing plays a significant role in building consumer trust, primarily through influencer credibility, authenticity of content, and congruence between influencers and brands. Consumer trust is consistently identified as a key mediating or moderating variable that explains how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior. Furthermore, the findings highlight that influencer marketing is particularly effective among Generation Z consumers, who actively rely on social media influencers as sources of information and recommendations. This study contributes to the digital marketing literature by emphasizing consumer trust as the central mechanism underlying the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Practically, the results suggest that companies should prioritize long-term trust-building strategies by selecting credible influencers and creating authentic, value-driven content to enhance sustainable consumer relationships.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Consumer Trust; Digital Marketing; Consumer Behavior; Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and the increasing use of social media have driven significant changes in modern marketing strategies. Companies no longer rely solely on conventional promotional media but have increasingly adopted digital marketing approaches that are interactive and relationship-oriented with consumers. One strategy that has grown rapidly in this context is influencer marketing, which involves leveraging individuals with social media influence to deliver marketing messages to their audiences. Influencers are perceived as being able to reach consumers more personally because they possess emotional closeness and established social relationships with their followers (Raharjo et al., 2023).

Consumer trust is a key factor in the success of digital marketing, particularly amid the high volume of information and the growing skepticism of consumers toward commercial advertising. Consumers tend to place greater trust in recommendations from sources perceived as credible and authentic rather than direct promotional messages from companies. In this context, influencers act as opinion leaders who are capable of shaping consumers' perceptions and beliefs about a brand or product. Previous studies indicate that influencer marketing has a positive effect on the formation of consumer trust, especially when influencers are perceived as honest, competent, and relevant to their audiences (Iwan et al., 2025).

Various empirical studies in Indonesia reveal that influencer marketing contributes significantly to consumer trust across different sectors, particularly in beauty and lifestyle products. Influencer credibility, which encompasses expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, has been shown to increase consumers' trust in promoted products (Dinnur et al., 2025). In addition, congruence between the influencer's image and the brand influences the extent to which consumers trust the information conveyed, thereby enabling promotional messages to be received more positively.

Beyond credibility, influencer characteristics and the form of marketing content delivered are also important factors in shaping consumer responses. Kharisma and Aqmala (2025) demonstrate that influencer endorsements and persuasive content marketing can enhance purchase intention, particularly when influencers are perceived as highly trustworthy by their followers. This finding confirms that the effectiveness of influencer marketing is determined not only by the influencer's level of popularity but also by message quality and the trust perceptions that are built.

The development of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has further strengthened the role of influencer marketing in shaping consumer behavior. Rifa'i and Abdurrahman (2024) find that influencer marketing characteristics, including expertise, attractiveness, and audience congruence, significantly affect consumers' online purchase intentions on the TikTok platform. These findings indicate that consumers are becoming increasingly selective in evaluating influencers as information sources before trusting the recommendations provided.

Consumer trust not only emerges as an outcome of influencer marketing strategies but also functions as a crucial mechanism that bridges the influence of influencers on consumer behavior. Several studies show that influencer marketing affects purchase intention and purchase decisions through consumer trust as an intervening variable (Amini & Auliya,

2025). In this context, trust serves as a psychological filter that determines whether promotional messages from influencers are accepted or ignored by consumers.

Putri and Kustina (2026) emphasize that consumer trust mediates the influence of influencer marketing and online customer reviews on purchase decisions, particularly for perfume products. This finding reinforces the view that trust is a central factor in explaining the effectiveness of influencer marketing, especially for experience goods that involve relatively high perceived risk.

In addition to influencing purchase decisions, influencer marketing also has implications for long-term brand value formation. Putri et al. (2026) show that brand trust acts as a mediating variable between user-generated content and influencer marketing on brand equity. This indicates that influencer marketing not only drives short-term transactions but also contributes to building brand strength through consumer trust.

Within the context of social media-based digital marketing and e-commerce, consumer trust has become an increasingly strategic element. On platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, consumers often rely on experiences, reviews, and recommendations conveyed by influencers as the basis for decision-making. Previous studies suggest that influencer marketing can enhance purchase intention and purchase decisions when supported by high levels of consumer trust (Cahyani et al., 2025).

Beyond affecting purchase intention and purchase decisions, influencer marketing also influences consumer loyalty. Consumers, particularly Generation Z, tend to exhibit higher loyalty toward brands recommended by influencers they trust. The trust that is established not only encourages initial purchases but also affects repurchase intention and the development of long-term relationships between consumers and brands (Jamil, 2025).

Although numerous studies on influencer marketing and consumer trust have been conducted, their findings remain fragmented with diverse focuses and approaches. Some studies emphasize influencer characteristics, while others highlight the role of trust as a mediating or moderating variable influencing consumer behavior. This condition indicates the need for a study that systematically summarizes and synthesizes previous research findings to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust.

Based on this background, this study aims to systematically examine the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust using a Systematic Literature Review approach. This study seeks to identify the key influencer marketing factors that affect consumer trust and to explain the role of consumer trust in mediating the influence of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of digital marketing literature and to serve as a practical reference for businesses in designing effective and sustainable influencer marketing strategies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a digital marketing strategy that leverages individuals with a certain number of followers and a particular level of influence on social media to deliver marketing messages to consumers. Influencers act as communication intermediaries between brands and audiences through content that is personal and persuasive in nature. This strategy

has developed alongside the increasing use of social media as a source of information and consumer reference in purchase decision-making (Raharjo et al., 2023). In practice, influencer marketing is used to increase brand awareness, shape positive perceptions, and strengthen relationships between consumers and brands.

Influencer Characteristics and Credibility

Influencer credibility is one of the main factors in influencer marketing. Credibility includes aspects of expertise, honesty, and attractiveness possessed by influencers in conveying information to their audiences. Influencers who are perceived as credible tend to be more trusted by consumers, making the messages delivered more easily accepted. Previous studies suggest that the level of influencer credibility influences consumers' perceptions of the reliability of the information provided and helps build trust in the promoted products or brands (Dinnur et al., 2025; Elfarida & Komaladewi, 2025).

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust refers to consumers' belief in the integrity, honesty, and ability of a party to fulfill the promises conveyed. In the context of digital marketing, trust becomes a crucial factor because consumers cannot directly evaluate products before making a purchase. Consumer trust in influencers and brands is formed through information consistency, positive experiences, and value congruence between consumers and influencers. Research indicates that consumer trust plays a central role in shaping consumers' attitudes and responses to digital marketing activities (Iwan et al., 2025).

Consumer Trust as a Mediating Variable

In several marketing studies, consumer trust is positioned as a mediating variable that links marketing activities to consumer behavior. Trust functions as a psychological mechanism that bridges exposure to marketing messages and consumer responses, such as purchase intention or purchase decisions. Previous research states that the presence of consumer trust can strengthen the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer behavior, as consumers tend to make decisions after trust in the information source has been established (Amini & Auliya, 2025).

Influencer Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior encompasses the cognitive and affective processes that consumers undergo before and after making a purchase. In the context of influencer marketing, consumer behavior is influenced by how consumers perceive influencers as sources of information. Previous studies show that influencer marketing is associated with various aspects of consumer behavior, such as purchase intention, purchase decisions, and loyalty, which are influenced by the level of consumer trust in influencers and brands (Cahyani et al., 2025; Jamil, 2025). Thus, influencer marketing is regarded as one of the key factors shaping consumer behavior in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) method. A qualitative approach is chosen because this research seeks to understand, interpret, and analyze phenomena in depth based on non-numerical data derived from literature sources, rather than to test hypotheses statistically (Sugiyono, 2020). The SLR method is applied to systematically identify, examine, and synthesize findings from previous studies relevant to the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust. Through this

approach, a comprehensive overview of research developments, patterns of relationships among variables, and key findings from prior studies can be obtained.

Data collection is conducted through documentation study by searching for and collecting relevant scientific articles from national journals. The literature search is carried out using keywords related to influencer marketing, consumer trust, purchase intention, purchase decision, and consumer loyalty. The selected articles consist of national journal publications published between 2023 and 2026 that are directly related to the focus of this study.

The data sources of this research are published national journal articles that are accessible online. Articles are selected based on inclusion criteria, namely studies that discuss influencer marketing and consumer trust, either as primary variables or as mediating or intervening variables. The exclusion criteria include articles that are not relevant to the research topic, are not available in full text, or do not meet academic quality standards.

The type of data used in this study is qualitative secondary data, consisting of information, concepts, research variables, research methods, and findings reported in journal articles. The collected data are then grouped according to thematic similarities and research focus to facilitate the analysis process.

Data analysis is conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. Each selected article is analyzed by identifying the research objectives, variables examined, methods employed, and key findings related to the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust. The analysis results are then synthesized to draw general conclusions regarding patterns and trends in research findings, as well as to identify the theoretical contributions and practical implications of influencer marketing within the context of digital marketing (Sugiyono, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The results of this study were obtained through a systematic analysis of 15 national journal articles relevant to the topic of the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust. The articles were analyzed based on research focus, main variables, research methods, and key findings related to consumer trust. A summary of the literature review results is presented in

Table 1.
Summary of Literature Review Results Related to Influencer Marketing and Consumer Trust

| No | Author & Year | Research Focus | Main Variables | Method | Key Findings |
|----|------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| 1 | Adaristi et al. (2025) | Influencer marketing and consumer trust | Influencer marketing, trust, sales | Quantitative | Influencer marketing has a significant effect on consumer trust and increased sales |

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|---|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------|--|
| 2 | Amini & Auliya (2025) | Purchase intention of skincare products | Influencer marketing, brand image, trust | Quantitative | Consumer trust mediates the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention |
| 3 | Cahyani et al. (2025) | Purchase decisions of beauty products | Influencer marketing, brand image, trust | Quantitative | Trust and influencer marketing significantly affect purchase decisions |
| 4 | Dinnur et al. (2025) | TikTok influencer credibility | Credibility, purchase intention | Quantitative | Influencer credibility increases consumer purchase intention |
| 5 | Elfarida & Komaladewi (2025) | Trust in influencers | Influencer credibility, trust, purchase intention | Quantitative | Influencer credibility has a positive effect on trust and purchase intention |
| 6 | Faoziyah et al. (2025) | Gen Z purchase decisions | Influencers, content marketing, trust | Quantitative | Consumer trust strengthens purchase decisions |
| 7 | Firdaus & Murtadlo (2025) | TikTok purchase decisions | Influencers, e-WOM, trust | Quantitative | Trust acts as an intervening variable |
| 8 | Hansopaheluwakan et al. (2025) | Cross-border e-commerce | Influencer marketing, trust | Quantitative | Influencer marketing increases cross-border consumer trust |
| 9 | Iwan et al. (2025) | Generation Z | Influencer marketing, brand awareness, trust | Quantitative | Influencer marketing builds brand awareness and trust |

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|----|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| 10 | Jamil (2025) | Gen Z consumer loyalty | Influencer marketing, loyalty | Quantitative | Influencer marketing affects loyalty through trust |
| 11 | Naibaho (2024) | Repurchase intention | Influencer marketing, trust | Quantitative | Consumer trust affects repurchase intention |
| 12 | Purwanto & Astuti (2024) | Trust as a moderator | Influencer credibility, trust | Quantitative | Trust moderates the effect of influencers on purchase intention |
| 13 | Putri et al. (2024) | Instagram purchase decisions | Influencers, trust, e-WOM | Quantitative | Trust plays a significant role in purchase decisions |
| 14 | Raharjo et al. (2023) | Influencer marketing strategy | Influencer marketing | Qualitative | Influencer marketing is effective as a digital marketing strategy |
| 15 | Salmaria et al. (2025) | Influencer storytelling | Storytelling, trust | Qualitative | Storytelling builds trust and a positive product image |

The Role of Influencer Marketing in Building Consumer Trust

Based on the results of a Systematic Literature Review of 15 national journal articles, influencer marketing has been proven to play a strategic and fundamental role in building consumer trust in the era of digital marketing. Influencer marketing is no longer understood merely as a product promotion tool, but rather as a relational mechanism that bridges corporate interests with consumers' psychological needs. Raharjo et al. (2023) emphasize that influencer marketing is effective because it delivers marketing communication that is personal, dialogic, and based on social closeness, thereby reducing the distance between brands and consumers.

The role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust is reflected in its ability to deliver marketing messages that are perceived as more authentic than conventional advertising. Consumers tend to perceive influencers as individuals who possess real experiences and personal perspectives regarding the products they promote. This is supported by the findings of Adaristi et al. (2025), which indicate that influencer marketing has a significant effect on consumer trust, which in turn leads to increased sales. These findings

confirm that trust is not merely a byproduct, but rather the core of influencer marketing effectiveness.

Furthermore, Hansopaheluwakan et al. (2025) show that the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust also applies in the context of cross-border e-commerce. In transaction environments characterized by higher levels of uncertainty and risk, influencers function as trusted sources that help reduce consumers' perceived risk. Thus, influencer marketing serves as a trust-enhancing mechanism that enables consumers to make economic decisions with greater confidence.

The Role of Influencer Credibility in the Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing

One of the key dimensions that explains the success of influencer marketing in building consumer trust is influencer credibility. Influencer credibility encompasses aspects of expertise, trustworthiness, and consistency in delivering marketing messages. Dinnur et al. (2025) found that influencer credibility on the TikTok platform has a significant effect on consumers' purchase intention. This finding indicates that consumer trust is not formed solely due to an influencer's popularity, but rather through the perception that the influencer is a reliable source of information.

Elfarida and Komaladewi (2025) reinforce this finding by demonstrating that influencer credibility has a direct effect on trust in the influencer, which in turn encourages consumers' purchase intention. This suggests that the role of influencer marketing is highly dependent on the quality of influencers as marketing communicators. Credible influencers are able to minimize consumer skepticism toward promotional messages, thereby making the persuasion process more effective.

Furthermore, Purwanto and Astuti (2024) show that consumer trust also acts as a moderating variable in the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. This finding confirms that influencer credibility does not operate in a linear manner, but is influenced by the level of trust held by consumers. Therefore, effective influencer marketing requires the selection of influencers who are not only popular, but also possess integrity and value consistency with their audiences.

The Role of Influencer Marketing as a Trigger of Trust in the Decision-Making Process

The results of the literature review indicate that influencer marketing functions as an initial trigger in the formation of consumer trust within the purchase decision-making process. A number of studies emphasize that the influence of influencer marketing on consumer behavior is not always direct, but rather operates through the formation of trust as a psychological mechanism. Amini and Auliya (2025) demonstrate that consumer trust mediates the effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention for skincare products, indicating that consumers do not immediately make purchases without first developing a sense of trust.

Cahyani et al. (2025) also find that influencer marketing and trust simultaneously have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for beauty products. This finding suggests that influencer marketing serves as an initial stimulus, while consumer trust acts as the primary filter in evaluating marketing messages. This condition is increasingly relevant in the context of digital marketing, where consumers are exposed to an overwhelming flow of information and the potential for message manipulation.

The findings of Firdaus and Muradlo (2025) as well as Putri et al. (2024) further confirm that trust functions as an intervening variable in the relationship between influencer

marketing and purchasing decisions. This indicates that influencer marketing operates through a gradual process, beginning with content exposure, followed by the formation of perceptions toward the influencer, the emergence of trust, and ultimately the purchase decision. Therefore, the role of influencer marketing is strategic in nature and cannot be separated from the dynamics of consumer trust.

The Role of Influencer Marketing in Encouraging Loyalty and Repurchase Intention

In addition to influencing initial purchase decisions, influencer marketing also plays an important role in building trust that impacts consumer loyalty and repurchase intention. Jamil (2025) found that influencer marketing affects Generation Z consumer loyalty through trust. This finding indicates that the trust built by influencers does not stop at the first transaction, but continues in the form of a long-term relationship between consumers and brands.

Naibaho (2024) shows that influencer marketing contributes to increasing repurchase intention through consumer trust. The trust that is formed makes consumers feel safe and confident to repurchase the same product without having to go through an intensive re-evaluation process. In this context, influencer marketing functions as a reinforcer of the emotional bond between consumers and brands.

The findings of Sirait et al. (2024) also indicate that the use of influencers as a marketing strategy affects consumer loyalty in e-commerce. This confirms that influencer marketing has long-term economic implications, as it is capable of creating a loyal and sustainable consumer base.

The Role of Influencer Marketing in the Context of Generation Z and Social Media

The review results show that the role of influencer marketing in building consumer trust is particularly dominant within the Generation Z segment. This generation grows up in a digital environment and has a high level of engagement with social media, making influencers a primary reference in product evaluation. Iwan et al. (2025) found that influencer marketing simultaneously plays a role in building brand awareness and consumer trust among Generation Z.

Faoziyah et al. (2025) demonstrate that among Generation Z, consumer trust strengthens the influence of influencers on purchase decisions. This indicates that Generation Z is not only responsive to influencer content, but also selective in assessing influencer credibility and honesty. Accordingly, influencers function as digital role models who shape the preferences and consumption behavior of young consumers.

Theoretical Implications of the Role of Influencer Marketing in Marketing Literature

From the perspective of economic and marketing scholarship development, the results of this systematic literature review (SLR) confirm that influencer marketing has a broader role than merely serving as a marketing communication tool. Influencer marketing functions as a consumer trust-building mechanism that explains how digital marketing activities influence consumer economic behavior (Purwanto & Astuti, 2024).

The qualitative approach adopted by Salmaria et al. (2025) shows that influencer storytelling strengthens the role of influencer marketing in building trust and a positive product image. These findings enrich the digital marketing literature by positioning influencer marketing as a relational strategy that integrates consumers' psychological, social, and economic aspects. Thus, this study provides a theoretical contribution by emphasizing

consumer trust as the core of the role of influencer marketing in the context of modern marketing.

CONCLUSION

Hasil *Systematic Literature Review* terhadap 15 artikel jurnal nasional menunjukkan bahwa influencer marketing memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam membangun kepercayaan konsumen di era pemasaran digital. Secara konsisten, penelitian-penelitian yang direview menegaskan bahwa kepercayaan konsumen merupakan mekanisme utama yang menjelaskan pengaruh influencer marketing terhadap niat beli, keputusan pembelian, loyalitas, dan niat beli ulang. Kredibilitas influencer, kualitas konten, serta kesesuaian influencer dengan merek terbukti menjadi faktor penting dalam membentuk kepercayaan tersebut, khususnya pada konsumen generasi Z yang sangat aktif di media sosial.

Secara teoretis, temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan literatur pemasaran digital dengan menempatkan kepercayaan konsumen sebagai variabel kunci dalam model influencer marketing. Influencer marketing tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai strategi komunikasi, tetapi juga sebagai pendekatan relasional yang membangun hubungan psikologis antara konsumen dan merek. Hasil review ini memperkuat kerangka konseptual yang memposisikan kepercayaan sebagai variabel mediasi maupun moderasi dalam menjelaskan pengaruh influencer terhadap perilaku konsumen, serta memperkaya pemahaman tentang peran kredibilitas dan storytelling influencer dalam pembentukan kepercayaan.

Dari sisi praktis, hasil penelitian ini memberikan implikasi bagi perusahaan dan praktisi pemasaran untuk lebih selektif dalam memilih influencer dengan mempertimbangkan aspek kredibilitas, keahlian, dan kesesuaian nilai dengan merek. Strategi influencer marketing sebaiknya tidak hanya berorientasi pada peningkatan eksposur atau popularitas, tetapi difokuskan pada pembangunan kepercayaan jangka panjang agar mampu mendorong loyalitas konsumen dan keberlanjutan merek. Konten yang autentik, informatif, dan relevan menjadi kunci keberhasilan influencer dalam memengaruhi kepercayaan konsumen.

Sebagai arah penelitian selanjutnya, penelitian mendatang disarankan untuk mengeksplorasi peran influencer marketing pada konteks lintas budaya, jenis platform media sosial yang berbeda, serta kategori produk selain produk kecantikan yang masih mendominasi penelitian saat ini. Selain itu, penggunaan pendekatan metode campuran (*mixed methods*) dan pengembangan model konseptual baru yang mengintegrasikan faktor psikologis dan teknologi diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif mengenai dinamika influencer marketing dalam membangun kepercayaan konsumen.

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