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# The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Generation Z's Purchase Decisions on Instagram

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**Abstract:** The development of digital technology and the widespread use of social media have established Influencer Marketing as a dominant marketing strategy, particularly among Generation Z. This study aims to analyze and synthesize empirical research findings regarding the influence of Influencer Marketing on Generation Z's purchase decisions, with a specific focus on the Instagram platform. The method employed is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which involves collecting and analyzing relevant scholarly journals from leading databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest within the last five years (2020 2025). The reviewed studies examine topics such as influencer credibility, content quality, and Gen Z's purchase intention. The synthesis results reveal that influencer credibility particularly trustworthiness and expertise is a key determinant that significantly affects purchase decisions. However, most studies agree that this influence is moderated by the type of content and the level of skepticism exhibited by Gen Z. This review provides a clearer theoretical framework for understanding the mechanisms of influencer impact and offers practical recommendations for marketers targeting this generation on Instagram.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Purchase Decision.

## Introduction

The rapid growth of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, has fundamentally transformed the marketing landscape. Influencer Marketing has emerged as one of the most effective digital marketing strategies, leveraging individuals with strong credibility and extensive reach to promote products (Lengkawati & Saputra, 2021). This strategy is rooted in the Source Credibility Theory, which posits that the effectiveness of promotional messages depends greatly on the audience's perception of the source's Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness (Kuswoyo et al., 2022).

This shift in consumption patterns is especially evident among Generation Z individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who are known as digital natives and rely heavily on digital information when making decisions, including purchase decisions (Salam et al.,

2024). Generation Z has unique characteristics; they seek authentic interactions and are often more skeptical of traditional advertising. Instagram, with its visual content formats such as photos, Stories, and Reels, serves as a primary space for these interactions.

Generation Z uses Instagram not only as a social platform but also as a key source of product information and recommendations (Khairunnisa et al., 2024; Doloksaribu & Simanjuntak, 2024). Influencer endorsements on Instagram are considered highly effective due to their interactive nature and perceived authenticity, which surpass traditional advertising (Cut Puspita & Handayani, 2021). Research indicates that most Gen Z users follow influencer accounts to obtain product recommendations, which often lead to strong purchase intentions or actual buying decisions (Rudi et al., 2025). Given the significant role of Instagram and Generation Z, a deeper analysis is required to understand the mechanisms of influencer impact comprehensively.

## Research Objectives

The objectives of this Literature Review are as follows:

1. To identify and systematically examine empirical findings from various studies that link Influencer Marketing to Purchase Decisions.

2. To synthesize the key dimensions of Influencer Marketing (Credibility and Content) that most significantly influence Generation Z on Instagram.

3. To provide a new conceptual framework that integrates conflicting (pro and contra) findings within the existing literature.

## Research Methods

This study employs a Descriptive Narrative approach, which is the most appropriate method for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting all available research findings relevant to the research questions, subject area, or phenomenon under investigation. This method ensures that the synthesis process is conducted transparently and systematically. The literature search was carried out using major academic databases, primarily Google Scholar.

## Result and Discussion

A. Results

Description of Literature and Variables A total of ten empirical journal articles were analyzed for this synthesis. Most of the studies included in this review employed quantitative methods, with the dominant analytical techniques being Multiple Linear Regression and Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to examine causal relationships. The findings across the literature show a strong consensus that Influencer Marketing plays a significant role. For instance, the study by Cut Puspita & Handayani (2021), which focused on Gen Z high school students, found that influencer endorsements on Instagram have a direct, positive, and significant effect on Purchase Decisions. This finding is reinforced by Purnama & Putra (2025), who concluded that Influencer Marketing and Content Quality simultaneously have a significant impact on consumer Purchase Decisions on Instagram. Furthermore, Rudi et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of combining social media influencer sources with content marketing messages to stimulate Generation Z's Purchase Intention. Based on thematic analysis of the included literature, three main dimensions of Influencer Marketing were identified as the most frequently measured and synthesized predictors of Gen Z's Purchase Decisions.

The first and strongest dimension is Credibility. Kuswoyo et al. (2022) found that Credibility comprising Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness strongly influences Purchase Intention, although this relationship is mediated by Brand Image. Similarly, Syafutri et al. (2025) found that Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, and Expertise affect Purchase Intention through Consumer Attitude as a mediating variable.

The second key dimension is Content Quality. Khairunnisa et al. (2024), focusing on skincare and makeup products, showed that in-depth and informative influencer reviews significantly influence Gen Z, with most expressing interest in purchasing after viewing such reviews.

The third dimension is Attractiveness. Although visual attractiveness plays a role, studies indicate that its influence is stronger in enhancing initial Brand Awareness. In contrast, Trustworthiness and Expertise particularly for knowledge based products are more dominant in driving actual purchase decisions, as highlighted by Khairunnisa et al. (2024). Doloksaribu & Simanjuntak (2024) also noted that the effect of Instagram influencers on Gen Z's Purchase Preferences is reinforced by a positive Brand Image.

B. Discussion

The literature consistently supports the hypothesis that Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant impact on Generation Z's Purchase Decisions. The findings of Cut Puspita & Handayani (2021) reveal a direct relationship, where influencer endorsements directly influence purchase decisions. However, more recent findings highlight the complexity of this relationship through mediating factors:

a) The Mediating Role of Brand Image: Kuswowo et al. (2022) found that influencer credibility Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness does not exert a dominant direct effect on Purchase Intention but must be mediated through Brand Image. This indicates that influencers serve as social confirmation for Gen Z, reinforcing an existing or developing brand image. When the Brand Image is positive and validated by a credible influencer, Purchase Decisions increase (Doloksaribu & Simanjuntak, 2024).

b) The Mediating Role of Consumer Attitude: Syafutri et al. (2025) extended this perspective by showing that influencer credibility also influences Purchase Intention through Consumer Attitude toward the influencer. When Gen Z holds a positive attitude toward an influencer regarding lifestyle, persona, or content the promotional effect becomes stronger.

Generation Z and Instagram: A Unique Interaction Pattern The influence of Influencer Marketing on Gen Z on Instagram exhibits several unique characteristics distinguishing it from other generations:

**The Power of Authenticity Against Skepticism:**

Gen Z has grown up surrounded by digital advertising and tends to be more skeptical of paid promotions. Therefore, Trust derived from influencer authenticity and transparency becomes crucial (Kuswowo et al., 2022). Micro influencers are considered more effective in building long-term loyalty because they are perceived as more authentic and personal compared to macro influencers who focus more on reach (Anggraini & Ahmadi, 2025).

**The Power of Interactive Content:**

Instagram, through features such as Reels and Stories, enables two-way interaction and engaging short video formats. These video formats which highlight visuals, product demonstrations, and personal narratives have been found to be more effective in influencing Gen Z's Purchase Decisions than static photo posts (Purnama & Putra, 2025). The success of such content depends on informative and relevant Content Quality (Rudi et al., 2025).

**Conclusion**

This literature review concludes that Influencer Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's purchase decisions on Instagram. This influence is driven primarily by the dimension of Influencer Credibility, where trust in the influencer's authenticity becomes a crucial factor in overcoming Gen Z's inherent skepticism. Generation Z's purchase decisions are often not the direct result of endorsements but are gradually mediated by Consumer Attitudes and Brand Image constructed through the influencer's presence. This study contributes to the fields of Digital Marketing and Consumer Psychology by providing an integrated synthesis that reinforces the Source Credibility Model within the specific context of Generation Z on Instagram. The findings address existing gaps by proposing the role of dual mediation Consumer Attitude and Brand Image as a critical bridge between influencer credibility and Gen Z's purchase decisions.

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