

The Role Of Influencer Marketing and Brand Image In Forming Skincare Product Purchase Decisions: A Literature Review Study

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Abstract: This research is motivated by the increasing use of social media as a source of consumer information in selecting skincare products. Increasingly fierce competition among skincare brands means that companies cannot rely solely on product quality but also need to build credible digital marketing communications and a strong brand image. This study aims to examine the role of influencer marketing and brand image in shaping skincare product purchasing decisions based on previous research. The method used is a literature review study with a descriptive qualitative approach. The research data comes from eleven national scientific articles relevant to the topics of influencer marketing, brand image, purchase intention, and skincare or cosmetic product purchasing decisions. The articles were analyzed through the stages of identification, selection, content evaluation, grouping of findings, and narrative synthesis. The results of the study indicate that influencer marketing plays a role in attracting attention, building trust, and strengthening consumer purchasing interest through credibility, image congruence, and influencer closeness to the audience. Meanwhile, brand image serves as the basis for consumer confidence in the quality, safety, and reputation of the brand. This study also found that brand trust, online customer reviews, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth are supporting variables that strengthen purchasing decisions. Thus, influencer marketing and brand image do not work separately, but complement each other in the process of forming skincare product purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Brand Image; Purchasing Decision; Skincare; Literature Review.

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1. Introduction

As the public increasingly focuses on health and skincare, the skincare sector is changing. Skincare products are no longer only considered a supplementary need, but a core element of lifestyle, self-identity and everyday consuming behaviors. This dynamic is leading to more severe competition between local and global brands. In this case enterprises need not only to supply quality products, but also to be able to establish effective marketing communications and a positive picture of the brand in the minds of consumers. The changing consumer behavior in the digital era is changing the marketing techniques of skincare products.

Today's consumers are more likely to search for information on social media before purchasing a product. They read reviews, check out the testimonials of other users, compare businesses and hear what the influencers have to say. Andayani and Pujianto's research on Bangun found that influencer marketing and brand image have a positive relation with Glad2Glow skincare purchasing decisions [1]. The results indicate that digital communication and perception of the brand are important aspects of the purchase process of beauty products.

The power of influencer marketing is that it leverages systems of social trust. Consumers are more likely to respond to formal advertising by firms than to experiences promoted by influencers. In skincare, trust is key because the product used is directly tied to the skin health, safety and outcomes. Amelia, et al [2], showed that influencer marketing, online customer reviews, and brand image affected the purchasing decisions of Scarlett Whitening on Shopee. Brand image is also an important component in the development of buying decisions.

Brand image assists consumers to mitigate the perceived risk especially if they have never experienced the product directly. Ndaru, Rahayu and Sundjoto proved that brand image, influencer marketing, and online customer evaluations affected the purchasing decisions of Wardah skincare through TikTok [3]. The results indicate that a strong brand image can help build consumer confidence when buying skincare products.

The relationship between influencer marketing and brand image is not so simple to segregate. Influencers who are consistent with the brand can reinforce favorable connections with the company, and a strong brand image can increase the credibility of influencer communications. Haffiyah and Curatman proved that influencer marketing and brand image have an impact on purchase intention of Skintific skincare products [4]. Thus, purchase decisions are not made only in the heat of the moment due to special offers, but are the result of a psychological process that involves attention, trust, perceived quality and brand image.

However, past studies on influencer marketing and brand image have predominately been quantitative in nature, exploring statistical relationships between variables. These studies are valuable, but do not explain in full the broad patterns, mechanisms and interrelationships between findings across different investigations. The study is designed as a literature review to understand the effect of influencer marketing and brand image on the buying choice of skincare products. This study is designed to give a theoretical contribution to the development of digital marketing research and practical information for skincare firms to construct more effective brand communication strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing may be viewed as a marketing technique that uses digital characters to transmit product messages to audiences who are socially connected with them [2]. In the beauty market, influencers are not only the carriers of knowledge but also the carriers of experience, which customers believe is more personal. The utilization of influencer recommendations is vital because customers generally look for evidence of use, testimonials and visual explanations before buying beauty items [5].

It's not just about following with influencer marketing. Other significant aspects are trustworthiness, compatibility between the influencer's image and the brand, communication style and capacity to generate trust. The study of Suryono et al. reveals that influencer personal branding can improve brand confidence through visual representation, message consistency and symbolic connections with audiences [6].

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is the perception of a brand held by the consumer, which is produced by experience, information, reputation and marketing communications [3]. Brand image in a skincare context is associated with the consumers' view of the safety, quality, effectiveness and trustworthiness of the products. Skincare products have a bigger personal risk than typical consumer goods [7], and so consumers tend to choose businesses with a strong image.

Brand image also acts as a differentiator when consumers are confronted with many choices of brands. In the face of abundant product information, brand image helps buyers simplify the evaluation process. Puspitarini and Listyawati [8], proved that the decision of teens in buying a skincare product is impacted by brand image, personal branding of influencers and product quality.

2.3 Purchase Decision

The purchase decision is the result of a consumer's deliberation process before the selection and purchase of a certain product. In skincare products, this process involves need awareness, information search, brand appraisal, conviction in product quality, and purchasing action. Rohmawati and Ahmadi's research discovered that there is a correlation between influencer marketing and the brand awareness and purchasing choice of The Originote products [9].

Multiple sources of information impact skin care product purchase decisions. Consumers are influenced not only by official marketing but also by customer reviews, influencer recommendations, brand reputation, and other users' experience. Therefore, purchase decisions are best understood as a complex process, not a simple response to advertising.

2.4 The Relationship Between Influencer Marketing, Brand Image, and Purchasing Decisions

Influencer marketing and brand image complementing each other. Influencer marketing is important to draw attention and create initial trust and brand image helps to increase consumer confidence in the reputation of the product. According to Haffiyah and Curatman, these characteristics were significant in determining the intention to purchase Skintific skincare products [4].

In addition to these two core variables, other studies have found supporting variables such as brand trust, online customer reviews, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth. Permata and Komariyatin [10], found that brand trust mediated the interaction between influencer marketing and online customer reviews on purchase decision of Scora skincare items on TikTok Shop. Oktavia et al., also found that brand image, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth were correlated with the purchase choice for local skincare brand Emina, utilizing online influencer marketing as a mediator [8].

3. Research Method

This research uses a literature review with qualitative descriptive technique. This method is chosen since the study did not conduct primary data collection from the respondents, but reviewed and synthesized the findings of prior studies on influencer marketing, brand image, buy intention, and purchase decisions of skincare or cosmetic items. Thus, the term "influence" in this study is understood as the conclusions of past research and not as the outcome of actual statistical testing carried out by the researchers.

Data used were secondary data from relevant national scientific papers. The articles were selected according to the following inclusion criteria: (1) discussing at least two main variables: influencer marketing, brand image, purchase intention, brand trust, online customer reviews, or purchasing decisions; (2) having relevant skincare, cosmetic, or beauty products as the research object; (3) published in scientific journals or academic proceedings; and (4) having methodological information and research results that can be analyzed. Articles that were not relevant to beauty product purchasing behavior, that did not discuss key variables or that did not clearly indicate the research technique were not used as main sources.

The data gathering approach was performed by finding articles using the keywords "influencer marketing", "brand image", "skincare purchase decision", "purchase intention skincare", "online customer review", "brand trust", and "electronic word of mouth". Articles were then picked based on the adequacy of the title, abstract, research technique, study object and main findings. Eleven papers were directly relevant to the research objective and used for analysis from this approach.

Content analysis and narrative synthesis were employed as data analysis methods. The analysis was done in five steps. The researcher first determined the focus of each article. Second, the researcher described the objects and research techniques. Third, the researcher categorized the findings based on the main and supporting variables. Fourth, the researcher compared the findings to determine similarities and discrepancies. Fifth, a synthesis was de-

veloped by the researcher to describe the effect of influencer marketing and brand image in the purchasing decision of skincare products.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Summary of Reviewed Articles

Based on the literature selection process, eleven articles served as the basis for this study. These articles discussed influencer marketing, brand image, purchase intention, brand trust, online customer reviews, brand awareness, electronic word of mouth, and purchasing decisions for skincare and cosmetic products. A summary of the articles reviewed is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the articles reviewed

No.	Author	Methods	Key Findings
1.	Bangun, et al. [1]	Correlational quantitative	Influencer marketing and brand image are positively related to Glad2Glow skincare purchase decisions.
2.	Amelia, et al. [2]	Quantitative with SmartPLS	Influencer marketing, online customer reviews, and brand image explain variations in Scarlett Whitening purchase decisions.
3.	Ndaru, et al. [3]	Descriptive quantitative	Brand image, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews play a role in Wardah's purchase decisions via TikTok.
4.	Haffiyah & Curatman [4]	Descriptive quantitative	Influencer marketing and brand image play a role in shaping purchase intentions for Skintific products.
5.	Rimbano et al. [11]	Literature review study	Influencer marketing, endorsements, and brand image are important elements in cosmetic purchase intention.
6.	Harahap et.al [5]	Descriptive qualitative	Influencers play a role in enhancing brand image and driving purchase decisions through online marketing.
7.	Permata & Komariyatin [10]	Quantitative with PLS-SEM	Brand trust mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and online customer reviews and purchase decisions for Scora products.
8.	Oktavia et al. [7]	Quantitative SEM/PLS	Brand image, brand trust, and e-WOM are related to purchase decisions through online influencer marketing.
9.	Puspitarini & Listyawati [8]	Quantitative with case study	Influencer personal branding and product quality have a positive influence on MS Glow purchase decisions.
10.	Rohmawati & Ahmadi [9]	Descriptive quantitative	Influencer marketing is related to brand awareness and purchase decisions for The Originote products.
11.	Suryono et al. [6]	Phenomenological and semiotic qualitative	Influencer personal branding can build brand credibility through visual communication and digital representation.

Journal Synthesis Results (2025)

4.2 General Pattern of Literature Findings

The results of the study indicated that most of the previous studies think that influencer marketing and brand image are essential variables to shape the purchasing decision of the skincare products. These discoveries are always found in brands such as Glad2Glow, Scarlett Whitening, Wardah, Skintific, Scora, Emina, MS Glow, and The Originote. Although most of the publications follow a quantitative approach, the pattern of data offers a basis for understanding that the decision to buy skincare products is influenced by not only product quality but also digital communication and brand perception.

When it comes to skincare, purchase decisions are not exclusively determined by utility. Consumers also examine safety, skin compatibility, brand reputation, experiences of others

and the influencers recommending the product. Thus influencer marketing and brand image work on two different but connected sides. Influencer marketing is good at getting attention and building trust at the beginning while brand image is better at giving consumers confidence in the brand.

4.3 The Role of Influencer Marketing in Purchasing Decisions

Influencer marketing is a bridge between brands to the consumer. Moreover, influencers do not only provide knowledge about the product, but also provide a social atmosphere that makes the product seem more relevant for consumers' life [2]. This is especially critical with skin care items as consumers want to see proof of use before they buy. Product messaging that include reviews, how-tos, testimonials, and human experiences feel more tangible than traditional advertising [5].

Credibility, familiarity, and image congruence are the pillars of influencer marketing. Credibility is what makes the viewers trust the given information to be credible. Closeness builds a social bond between audiences and the influencer. Image congruence helps marketing feel more natural as the influencer's character matches the brand's branding. Even if the influencer has a significant following, influencer promotions might be ineffective if any of these qualities are lacking.

The findings of Amelia, et al. [2], reveal that influencer marketing, online customer reviews, and brand image influence purchasing decisions on Scarlett Whitening. This shows influencer recommendations don't function in isolation. Consumers are still looking for validation from other customer reviews and brand repute. Influencer marketing is therefore best understood as the first trigger that captures the consumers' attention on a product.

4.4 The Role of Brand Image in Purchasing Decisions

The concept of brand image is consumers' perception of a brand. In the context of skincare, brand image involves perception regarding product quality, safety of the ingredients, efficacy of use, reputation of the company and the brand's fit to the demand of the consumers [3]. The skincare products involve subjective risks connected to skin compatibility and usage results, therefore a good brand image might decrease consumer doubts [7].

Brand image, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews are factors that impact the purchasing decision of Wardah skincare on TikTok [3], according to Ndaru, Rahayu, and Sundjoto. These results imply that customers consider not just the advertising messaging but also the perception of the brand in the digital environment. When the brand has a good reputation, influencer messages and user reviews will more easily reinforce the purchasing decisions.

Brand image also functions as a cushion for consumers when they encounter a lot of product options. The skincare market is full of brands, making it hard for consumers to tell the products apart. In these circumstances, brand image allows consumers to simplify their choices. products that are perceived as safe, trustworthy and suitable for skin needs are easier to select than products that do not have good reputation.

4.5 The Relationship Between Influencer Marketing and Brand Image

Younger consumers are seeing growing importance in the relationship. This generation is generally engaged on social media and consumption behaviors are impacted by trends, digital communities and self-identity. Partially, Puspitarini and Listyawati [8], demonstrated that influencer personal branding and product quality significantly influenced the purchase decisions for MS Glow items, while the brand image was not always the main aspect. This finding is crucial because it shows that brand image must be reinforced by appropriate promotional figures and product quality that consumers actually perceive.

On the other side, Harahap et al. [11], did qualitative research and confirmed that influencers can improve brand image and impact purchase choice through online

marketing. The findings support the view that influencer marketing is not only a promotional activity but also a part of the process of molding brand perception. Positive for the brand image in the minds of consumers is the ability of influencers to continuously demonstrate the experience of using products that match with the brand identity.

4.6 Supporting Variables in the Purchasing Decision Process

In addition to influencer marketing and brand image, various publications also highlight the existence of supporting elements that reinforce the process of purchasing decision. These factors are trust in the brand, online customer feedback, brand awareness and e-word of mouth. These four criteria imply that skincare consumers are not reliant on one source of information. They mix information from influencers, experiences of other users, reputation of the brand and digital interactions before buying.

Permata and Komariyatin [10], found that brand trust mediates the interaction between influencer marketing and online customer reviews on the purchase decision for Scora skincare items on TikTok Shop. This is a significant discovery since it indicates that attention from consumers does not necessarily lead immediately to a purchase. Trust in the brand is more likely to lead to purchase decisions if influencer promotions and consumer reviews are effective.

Oktavia et al. [7], also revealed that purchasing choice of local skincare brand Emina using online influencer marketing as a mediator was associated with brand image, brand trust and electronic word of mouth. Meanwhile, Rohmawati and Ahmadi [9], showed that influencer marketing can be associated with brand recognition and purchase decisions for The Originote items. Both studies show that purchase decisions are derived from a multi-layered process which starts from brand awareness, social validation, trust and finally the act of purchasing.

4.7 Synthesis of Discussion

Reviewed publications generally show that influencer marketing is an initial driver in the purchasing decision process and brand image is a motivator for consumer confidence. The material in influencer marketing is individualized and easily accessible and grabs the attention of the consumers. Then, brand image enhances the evaluation of consumers on the quality and reputation of the brand. When these two parts work together, the consumer is more likely to buy.

This synthesis also implies that skincare firms should not select influencers based only on their number of followers. Popularity is crucial, but it's not enough. More important aspects are the relevance of the influencer for the target market, the credibility of the message, consistency of product use and the influencer's capacity to provide authentic communication. Good influencers can improve a brand image, bad can ruin consumer opinions of the brand.

Brand image cannot be developed by short-term promotional initiatives alone. It needs constant product quality, clear positioning, good communication design, responsive customer service and good user experience. If the influencer's statements are not aligned with the product experience, it might damage the brand image. Hence, influencer marketing initiatives should be perceived as part of a larger company plan rather than a short-term promotional activity.

5. Conclusions

The literature research findings indicated that influencer marketing and brand image are very important factors in the purchase decisions of skincare products. Influencer marketing is an important factor to attract attention, to develop initial trust and to increase consumer interest with the credibility and proximity of the in-fluencer to the audience. Meanwhile, brand image plays a part in enhancing consumer confidence on the quality, safety, reputation and value of the brand. They compliment each other in the process of decision making of purchase.

This study also reveals that the purchasing choice of skincare is not only impacted by influencer advertisements and brand image but also by supporting variables such as brand trust, online customer reviews, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth. Thus, the buying decisions are a complex process as the buyers combine many sources of information before buying. Skincare companies should identify influencers that align with their brand, ensure product quality, enhance brand image and monitor user feedback on a regular basis.

The study contains limitations as scientific papers pertaining to the areas influencer marketing, brand image and purchase decision for skincare or cosmetic items were used. Moreover, the majority of the publications studied were quantitative in nature, hence this study does not fully capture the richness of the consumer experience. Further research is advised in a qualitative field approach such as in-depth interviews or case studies, and to compare micro influencers, macro influencers and celebrity influencers so that the mechanisms of brand image formation and purchasing decisions can be understood more comprehensively.

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