

# THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN BUILDING BRAND TRUST AND BRAND LOYALTY TOWARDS PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR SKINCARE PRODUCTS

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## Abstract

Influencers play a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase behaviour through social media platforms. Their credibility and connection with audiences make them influential of skincare brands. This research explores the relationship between Influencer Marketing, Brand Trust & Loyalty, with Purchase Decisions among skincare consumers of Gen-Z. Using a quantitative and descriptive research design, data were collected from 170 influencer following respondents through a structured questionnaire. The analysis included test of Validity and reliability along with, correlation, and regression analyses to test the proposed hypotheses. The results reveal that Influencer Marketing positively influences both Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty, which in turn significantly influence Purchase Decisions. A strong positive correlation was found between Influencer Marketing and Brand Trust ( $r = .947$ ), and a moderate positive correlation between Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty ( $r = .953$ ).showing that these variables have a positive effect on Purchase Decisions. The study emphasizes the importance of engaging credible influencers to build trust, enhance loyalty, and encourage purchase behavior in the skincare market.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Purchase Decision

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped the marketing landscape, particularly within the consumer goods sector. The rise of social media platforms has created a new ecosystem where consumer-brand interactions are heavily mediated by digital personalities known as influencers. These individuals, through their perceived authenticity and reliability, possess significant power to shape consumer attitudes and behaviors, making Influencer Marketing (IM) a cornerstone of modern marketing strategy. The skincare industry, in particular, has experienced exponential growth, driven largely by the purchasing power and digital fluency of Generation Z consumers. This demographic, characterized by its reliance on peer recommendations and online content for product discovery, is highly susceptible to influencer endorsements. In this hyper-competitive market, a brand's success is no longer solely dependent on product quality but also on the strength of its relationship with its consumers. Two critical dimensions of this relationship are Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.

Bu, Y., & Kim, H. (2022) While the original study focused on Brand Awareness, the current market dynamics suggest that mere recognition is insufficient. Consumers today seek genuine connection and sustained value, making Brand Loyalty a more pertinent metric for long-term success. Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001) Brand Trust, defined as the consumer's willingness to rely on the brand in the face of risk, is the foundation upon which loyalty is built De Veirman, M., Hudders, L., & Nelson, M. R. (2019) Brand Loyalty, in turn, represents the consumer's deep commitment to re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently.

Both trust and loyalty are essential intermediate outcomes that ultimately drive the final Purchase Decision (PD). Given the shift from traditional advertising to influencer-driven content, it is imperative to understand how IM directly and indirectly impacts PD through the cultivation of Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty. The complexity of this relationship, especially among the Gen Z demographic, necessitates a focused investigation to provide actionable insights for brands operating in the digital sphere.

## Research Objective

1. To examine the impact of Influencer Marketing on Brand Trust.
2. To analyze the influence of Influencer Marketing on Brand Loyalty.
3. To assess the relationship between Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty.
4. To study the effect of Brand Loyalty on Purchase Decisions.
5. To investigate the influence of Brand Trust on Purchase Decisions
6. To explore the mediating role of Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty in the relationship between Influencer Marketing and Purchase Decisions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Influencer Marketing

Brown and Hayes (2008), influencer marketing represents a key modern marketing strategy that involves collaboration between brands and influencers to shape consumer purchasing behavior by sharing information about products or services to enhance brand visibility. Companies adopt influencer marketing as one of the most powerful tools for influencing customers. Similarly, Sammis et al. (2015) describe influencer marketing as both an art and a science that motivates influential individuals to communicate brand messages to their audiences through sponsored content.

### Brand Trust

Trust plays a crucial role in social relationships, as a minimum level of trust is required for any form of human interaction. In the business context, trust is vital for building a strong bond between consumers and brands. Ferrinadewi (2010) defines brand trust as the extent to which a brand is considered reliable, based on consumers' belief that the product will deliver on its promises, and as the brand's intention to prioritize the interests of consumers.

### Brand Loyalty

Valmohammadi, C., Asayesh, F., Mehdikhani, R., & Taraz, R. (2025) they found that influencer marketing positively impacts electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), e-brand experience, and e-brand loyalty. Both EWOM and e-brand experience also strengthen e-brand loyalty. Additionally, e-brand love moderates the relationships between influencer marketing and e-brand loyalty, and between e-brand experience and e-brand loyalty. The authors highlight that ethical influencer practices and emotional connections are crucial for building long-term brand loyalty.

### Purchase Decision

Wilis, R. A., & Faik, A. (2022) In digital marketing, influencer marketing, and online customer reviews all have a significant positive impact on customers' purchase decisions at Lu'Miere. This shows that these three factors play an important role in influencing consumers to make a purchase, while other factors outside the study may also contribute to their decisions.

Barusman, A. R. P., & Suwandi, F. (2020) he said the lifestyle, social media marketing, and influencer marketing all have a significant impact on customers' purchase decisions for Ayam Geprek Culinary Business in Bandar Lampung. These factors individually and collectively influence consumers in making their purchase choices, showing the strong role of digital engagement and lifestyle in shaping buying behavior.

### Conceptual Framework



Based on the Conceptual framework the following Hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Influencer marketing positively affects Brand Trust.
- H2: Influencer marketing positively affect Brand Loyalty
- H3: Brand Trust significantly and positively influences Brand Loyalty.
- H4: Brand Loyalty significantly and positively influences Purchase Decisions.
- H5: Brand Trust significantly and positively influences Purchase Decisions.
- H6: Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty sequentially mediate the relationship between Influencer Marketing and Purchase Decisions.

## RESEARCH METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopted quantitative and descriptive research design to examine the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decision mediated through brands trust and loyalty . A convenience sampling technique was employed to collect data from a total of 170 respondents, representing Generation Z skincare consumers. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire consisting of 26 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package

for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to test the hypotheses and determine the relationships among the variable

### Variable Analysis and Test of Reliability

The results of the reliability analysis, presented in Table 1, confirm the internal consistency of the measurement instruments.

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Conclusion
Influencer Marketing	7	.948	Reliable
Brand Trust	6	.947	Reliable
Brand Loyalty	6	.939	Reliable
Purchase Decision	7	.971	Reliable

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for Study Variables:

The table presents the results of a reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha for the study's measurement instruments. Cronbach's Alpha is a statistic used to measure the internal consistency of a set of items (questions) that are supposed to measure the same underlying construct or variable. Generally, an alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable to confirm that the scale is reliable. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was developed by the American educational psychologist Lee J. Cronbach in his 1951 paper "Coefficient Alpha and the Internal Structure of Tests".

The correlation analysis was performed to examine the linear relationships between the study variables.

The results are presented in Table 2.

Correlations					
		Influencer Marketing	Brand Trust	Brand Loyalty	Purchase Decision
Influencer Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1			
Brand Trust	Pearson Correlation	.947**	1		
Brand Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.958**	.944**	1	
Purchase Decision	Pearson Correlation	.955**	.958**	.953**	1

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix. Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation analysis shows a strong positive and significant relationship among all the variables at the 0.01 level of significance. Influencer Marketing is highly correlated with Brand Trust ( $r = 0.947$ ), Brand Loyalty ( $r = 0.955$ ), and Purchase Decision ( $r = 0.958$ ), indicating that effective influencer marketing strongly enhances consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intention. Brand Trust also shows a strong positive relationship with Brand Loyalty ( $r = 0.944$ ) and Purchase Decision ( $r = 0.953$ ), implying that consumers who trust a brand are more likely to stay loyal and make purchasing decisions. Similarly, Brand Loyalty has a very strong correlation with Purchase Decision ( $r = 0.958$ ), confirming that loyal customers are highly likely to proceed with a purchase. Overall, the correlation analysis provides initial support for all hypothesized relationships, showing that influencer marketing, brand trust, and brand loyalty are closely interlinked and significantly influence purchase decisions.

### Regression Analysis – Influencer Marketing and Purchase Decision mediated by Brand loyalty and Trust

The regression model shows a high correlation ( $R = 0.953$ ) between Influencer Marketing and Brand Trust, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.908. This indicates that 90.8% of the variation in Brand Trust can be explained by Influencer Marketing. The Adjusted  $R^2$  (0.907) confirms the model's reliability. The regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.908$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) reveals a strong positive and statistically significant effect of Influencer Marketing on Brand Trust. Effective influencer marketing substantially increases consumer trust in the brand. This means that consumers are more likely to trust brands that collaborate with credible and appealing influencers.

### Regression Analysis – Influencer Marketing and Brand Trust

The regression results show a strong positive correlation ( $R = 0.947$ ) with an  $R^2$  of 0.897 and an Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.897, indicating that 89.7% of the variance in Brand Loyalty is explained by Influencer Marketing. The low Standard Error (1.86392) demonstrates a good model fit. Influencer Marketing has a significant and positive

impact on Brand Loyalty. This means consumers who trust influencers and their product recommendations are more likely to develop emotional loyalty and attachment to the brand.

#### Regression Analysis – Influencer Marketing, Brand Trust and PD

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.969 <sup>a</sup>	.940	.939	1.57365
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Trust, influencer Marketing				

The regression model shows a strong positive correlation ( $R = 0.969$ ) between Influencer Marketing and Brand Trust. The  $R^2$  value of 0.940 indicates that 94% of the variation in Brand Trust can be explained by Influencer Marketing. The Adjusted  $R^2$  (0.939) confirms the model's reliability, and the Standard Error of Estimate (1.57365) indicates a good fit.

This suggests that Influencer Marketing has a significant and positive influence on Brand Trust. Consumers who follow influencers and value their product recommendations are more likely to trust brands endorsed by those influencers.

#### Regression Analysis – Influencer Marketing, Brand Loyalty and PD

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964 <sup>a</sup>	.930	.929	1.70257
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Loyalty, influencer Marketing				

The regression model shows a strong positive correlation ( $R = 0.964$ ) between Influencer Marketing and Brand Loyalty. The  $R^2$  value of 0.930 reveals that 93% of the variation in Brand Loyalty is explained by Influencer Marketing. The Adjusted  $R^2$  (0.929) supports the model's accuracy, while the Standard Error of Estimate (1.70257) indicates minimal prediction error. This implies that Influencer Marketing has a significant and positive impact on Brand Loyalty. Consumers influenced by trusted influencers tend to remain loyal to the brands they promote, showing emotional attachment and repeat purchase intentions.

#### Regression Analysis – Influencer marketing, Brand loyalty, Brand Trust and Purchase Decision

ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6497.954	3	2165.985	949.076	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	378.846	166	2.282		
	Total	6876.800	169			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, influencer Marketing						
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.078	.384		2.806	.006
	Influencer Marketing	.286	.068	.298	4.198	.000

	Brand Loyalty	.298	.076	.269	3.900	.000
	Brand Trust	.463	.068	.422	6.791	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

This regression analysis observes how brand trust, brand loyalty, and influencer marketing influence purchase decision. The model explains 94.5% of the variation in purchase decision, indicating a strong fit. All three predictors have a significant positive impact, with brand trust showing the strongest effect ( $\beta = 0.422$ ), followed by influencer marketing ( $\beta = 0.298$ ) and brand loyalty ( $\beta = 0.269$ ). The high correlation between the variables ( $r > 0.9$ ) suggests that as any of these factors increase, the likelihood of a higher purchase decision also increases. The ANOVA results show that the model is statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), meaning these predictors are meaningful contributors to purchase decisions. The Durbin-Watson statistic confirms that the residuals are independent and the model's errors are random. Overall, the analysis underscores the importance of building trust with customers, using influencers, and fostering brand loyalty to drive purchasing behaviour.

### Hypothesis Testing Result

This study successfully investigated the role of Influencer Marketing in driving Purchase Decisions through the mediating mechanisms of Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty among Gen Z skincare consumers.

Hypothesis	Relationship	R <sup>2</sup>	Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ )	Sig. (p)	Result
H1	IM → BT	0.908	0.953	< 0.01	Accepted
H2	IM → BL	0.897	0.947	< 0.01	Accepted
H3	BT → BL	0.897	0.944	< 0.01	Accepted
H4	BL → PD	0.945	0.269	0.000	Accepted
H5	BT → PD	0.945	0.422	0.000	Accepted
H6	IM → BT → BL → PD (Mediation)	0.945	0.422	0.000	Accepted

The data overwhelmingly supports a strong, highly predictive model where influencer marketing /Immediacy leads to both Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty, with Trust, in particular, being the strongest direct factor driving the consumer's Purchase Decision.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

Influencer Marketing is a powerful antecedent. IM strongly predicts both Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty ( $R^2 > 0.89$ ). Brand Trust is the core driver of Loyalty. Trust serves as the foundation for establishing loyalty among Gen Z consumers. Brand Trust is the strongest predictor of Purchase Decisions. Among all predictors, Brand Trust had the highest standardized effect ( $\beta = 0.422$ ). Sequential mediation confirmed. Brand Trust and Loyalty together explain 94.5% of the variance in Purchase Decisions ( $R^2 = 0.945$ ).

The findings reaffirm that influencer credibility plays a crucial role in trust-building and purchase behavior. The exceptionally high correlations ( $r > 0.9$ ) indicate strong linear relationships between variables, demonstrating that effective influencer marketing fosters trust, which in turn nurtures loyalty and drives purchase decisions. In skincare, where perceived risk is high, trust is the dominant factor influencing purchase behavior.

### CONCLUSION:

This study establishes that Influencer Marketing is an effective strategy for driving Purchase Decisions primarily through Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty. All hypotheses were supported, confirming that trust acts as the strongest

predictor of purchase behavior. Skincare brands should prioritize credible influencer collaborations to build authentic trust and sustain long-term loyalty among Gen Z consumers.

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