

The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Beauty Product Purchase Decisions among Generation Z

Dampak Influencer Marketing terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk Kecantikan di Berbagai Generasi Z

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the impact of comment-based engagement in influencer marketing on purchasing decisions for beauty products among Generation Z. Using a systematic literature review method, this study analyzes relevant literature to identify the effects of various types of engagement, both positive and negative, in shaping perceptions, consumers and influence purchasing intentions. Research results show that positive comments from influencers increase brand trust and encourage consumer loyalty, while negative comments often have a negative impact on brand image, reduce purchase intentions, and even potentially trigger product boycotts. The theoretical implications of this research include enriching digital marketing theory through exploring comment-based engagement dimensions. In practical terms, these findings provide guidance for marketers in utilizing influencer marketing strategies more effectively, through an approach that considers the quality of engagement and proactive responses to negative comments. This research also offers suggestions for beauty industry players to increase campaign effectiveness by minimizing the reputational risk of negative comments and optimizing the influence of positive comments. Limitations of this research include the limited coverage of social media platforms and limitations on observational studies, as well as opening opportunities for further research through experimentation and exploration of different platforms.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, comment-based engagement, Generation Z, purchasing decisions, beauty products, digital marketing, brand loyalty.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami dampak engagement berbasis komentar dalam influencer marketing terhadap keputusan pembelian produk kecantikan di kalangan Generasi Z. Menggunakan metode systematic literature review, studi ini menganalisis literatur yang relevan guna mengidentifikasi efek dari berbagai jenis engagement, baik positif maupun negatif, dalam membentuk persepsi konsumen dan mempengaruhi niat beli. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komentar positif dari influencer meningkatkan kepercayaan merek dan mendorong loyalitas konsumen, sedangkan komentar negatif sering kali berdampak buruk terhadap citra merek, mengurangi niat beli, dan bahkan berpotensi memicu boikot produk. Implikasi teoritis dari penelitian ini mencakup pengayaan teori pemasaran digital melalui eksplorasi dimensi engagement berbasis komentar. Secara praktis, temuan ini menyediakan panduan bagi pemasar dalam memanfaatkan strategi influencer marketing dengan lebih efektif, melalui pendekatan yang mempertimbangkan kualitas engagement dan respons proaktif terhadap komentar negatif. Penelitian ini juga menawarkan saran bagi pelaku industri kecantikan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas kampanye dengan meminimalkan risiko reputasi akibat komentar negatif dan mengoptimalkan pengaruh komentar positif. Keterbatasan penelitian ini meliputi cakupan platform media sosial yang terbatas dan keterbatasan pada studi observasional, serta membuka peluang penelitian lebih lanjut melalui eksperimen dan eksplorasi platform yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Influencer marketing, engagement berbasis komentar, Generasi Z, keputusan pembelian, produk kecantikan, pemasaran digital, loyalitas merek.

1. Introduction

In the digital era, social media has become a very important marketing channel, especially in influencing the behavior of young consumers, such as Generation Z (Gen Z). This demographic group, which from a young age is accustomed to technology, shows high comfort in using digital platforms, so they become the main target for social media marketing strategies (Goodyear et al., 2018; Parks et al., 2018). Among the various strategies used, influencer marketing is gaining prominence, especially in the beauty products sector. Influencers who succeed in building personal relationships with their audiences tend to be able to drive consumer loyalty more effectively than traditional advertising methods, because the relationships created feel authentic and relevant to their followers (Soti, 2022; Lee et al., 2020).

The strategic use of influencers in the beauty industry is very effective because they shape perceptions of ideal beauty standards through engaging and accessible visual content. This aesthetic appeal is especially important in attracting the attention of Gen Z, who are often influenced by the visual character of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok (Hildebrand & Schlager, 2018; Lu et al., 2020). Engagement indicators such as the number of likes, shares, and comments show how effective the content created by the influencer is. However, while quantitative metrics such as likes are frequently used, they often fail to capture the qualitative aspects of engagement, particularly when it comes to comments. Comments provide deeper insight into audience perceptions and attitudes (Rivera et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2018). Research shows that comments can reflect higher levels of engagement than likes alone, as comments require greater cognitive effort and can express nuanced opinions that significantly influence potential consumers' perceptions (Liu et al., 2023; Yu, 2023).

Additionally, the depth of engagement is critical in understanding how audiences interact with influencer content. Studies show that positive comments often indicate approval of the content, while negative comments can indicate disapproval or dissatisfaction (Gabarrón et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021). This suggests that the tone and sentiment of comments can be a better indicator of consumer attitudes than simply the number of likes or shares (Lu et al., 2020; Cho et al., 2018). Therefore, it is critical for marketers to consider both the quantity and quality of engagement when assessing the impact of influencer marketing strategies on consumer behavior, especially in the beauty sector targeting Gen Z (Farrell et al., 2022; Dedeoğlu et al., 2019). In conclusion, as social media continues to grow, the role of influencers in shaping consumer behavior, especially among young audiences, remains significant. The ability of influencers to build authentic relationships and meaningfully engage audiences can increase brand loyalty and consumer trust, making influencer marketing an important component in today's digital marketing strategies (Sheriff et al., 2019).

Although many studies have explored its effectiveness *influencer marketing* in purchasing decisions, most research focuses more on the number of engagements, without considering their quality. Available literacy shows that deeper engagement, such as comments, provides richer insight into audience perceptions and opinions, especially for Gen Z who are highly selective and critical of the information they receive. However, few studies have specifically examined the role of these types of comments in influencing purchasing decisions. Thus, there is a significant research gap, namely the need to explore the quality of engagement, such as positive and negative comments, as a determining factor in purchasing decisions for beauty products by Gen Z. This is important because positive or negative comments do not only provide a direct evaluation of the product or brand, but also build or tear down the brand image in front of potential buyers.

This research will enrich related literature *influencer marketing* by highlighting the role that has not been explored much, namely the quality of engagement through comments, and how this factor influences the purchasing decisions of Gen Z, which is a very influential market. This research aims to systematically examine the influence of engagement quality, especially in the form of positive and negative comments on content *influencer* on purchasing decisions for beauty products among Gen Z. With a deeper understanding of the influence of engagement

quality on purchasing decisions, it is hoped that this research can provide strategic recommendations for business people and marketers in optimizing content *influencer marketing*. Specifically, this research will answer the question of to what extent the types of comments in influencer content can build or hinder Gen Z consumers' purchase intentions and loyalty towards beauty products. This research seeks to answer the following questions: "How do engagement factors, especially positive or negative comments, in influencer content relate to beauty product purchasing decisions among Gen Z?" By answering this question, it is hoped that this research can make a meaningful contribution to understanding Gen Z consumer behavior in context *influencer marketing* and opens up opportunities for further research that focuses on other engagement quality interactions.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design

This research uses an approach *systematic literature review* (SLR), which was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The SLR was chosen to provide a comprehensive view of the published topics and establish a theoretical basis for the relationships between them *influencer engagement*, especially positive and negative types of comments, on Gen Z purchasing decisions. By utilizing this method, research can identify gaps in the literature and formulate findings that can be used as a basis for further research and as a guide to marketing practice.

The PRISMA approach was chosen because this method provides a systematic structure for the process of searching, selecting and analyzing data, resulting in transparent results and easier replication. In addition, SLR makes it possible to minimize selection bias by following structured procedures, especially in selecting relevant studies, so that the results obtained are more credible and in accordance with the international journal standards Scopus.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This study established strict inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure only relevant and high-quality studies were included in the final analysis. The inclusion criteria applied are as follows:

- Publication Year: Studies published within the last 8 years, to reflect the latest trends and relevance of the context of digitalization in social media.
- Study Topic: Focus on articles that specifically examine aspects of engagement in *influencer marketing*, especially on social media platforms that are popular among Gen Z, such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube.
- Product Focus: Research related to the marketing of beauty products, considering that beauty products are a category that is highly influenced by influencers and is very popular among Gen Z.
- Type of Engagement: Studies that discuss *engagement* based on comments, both positive and negative comments, and their influence on consumer perceptions or purchase intentions.
- Publication Language: Articles in English to ensure readability and accessibility in international journals.

Exclusion criteria include:

- Studies that do not involve social media platforms, or that focus on traditional media.
- Research that focuses on demographic or geographic variables without a direct link to engagement or purchasing decisions.
- Articles that cannot be accessed in full or are only in the form of abstracts, to ensure the availability of complete data in the analysis process.

2.3 Search Strategy

The literature search process was carried out in several large databases that have extensive coverage in international research publications, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, IEEE Xplore, and Web of Science. The selection of this database is intended to obtain sources that are high quality and relevant to the topic. Keywords and phrases used in searches are combinations of the following terms:

- Influencer marketing AND Gen Z
- Influencer engagement AND beauty products
- Positive comments OR negative comments AND purchase decision
- Social media engagement AND consumer behavior

The search process is carried out by setting *Boolean* which allows more specific search results, and using advanced search features within each database to narrow down results based on specified criteria, such as year range, language, and article type.

2.4 Data Filtering and Processing Process

The article selection process follows the PRISMA procedure which consists of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

- Identification Stage: All initial search results are recorded in reference management software (e.g., Mendeley) to simplify management and avoid duplication. At this stage, articles that were relevant and met the inclusion criteria were recorded and sorted.
- Screening Stage: Duplicate articles were removed and the abstracts of the remaining articles were analyzed to assess whether they met the established criteria. Articles that were irrelevant or too far from the main topic were excluded at this stage.
- Eligibility Stage: Articles that pass the screening stage are then analyzed in depth based on the full text. This further review ensured that each article met the established inclusion criteria. Additionally, the methods and results of each study were reviewed to ensure their quality.
- Inclusion Stage: Only articles that were relevant, high quality, and met all criteria were included in the final analysis. The number of articles included and the reasons for exclusion at the previous stage will be reported transparently using the PRISMA diagram.

2.5 Data Analysis

In data analysis, thematic *analysis is used* to identify main themes related to the influence of engagement on purchasing decisions. Each selected article is coding to determine recurring themes, for example, the influence of positive comments in strengthening brand perception, the impact of negative comments on purchase intentions, and how interactions on social media influence Gen Z consumer loyalty.

The analysis process involves the following steps:

- Coding Manual: The research began by rereading each article and conducting manual coding to identify engagement factors and their specific effects on purchasing decisions. This coding included key words such as "brand perception," "trust," "brand loyalty," and "purchase intention."
- Theme Grouping: After coding, findings were grouped into main themes, for example: "the role of positive comments in building brand loyalty," "the negative effects of comments that damage brand image," or "the influence of trust generated through engagement."
- Advanced Thematic Analysis: Using advanced thematic analysis techniques, each theme is compared with the results of other studies to find consistent or contradictory patterns. This analysis also covers the differences between platforms, such as TikTok

and Instagram, and how the type of engagement on each platform can have a different impact on consumers.

By following these steps, this research will provide in-depth insight into the influence of engagement quality on beauty product purchasing decisions among Gen Z, as well as offer recommendations for more effective marketing strategies for business people in the beauty industry.

3. Results

3.1 Characteristics of the Studies Reviewed

This section summarizes the characteristics of the various studies selected in this systematic literature review (SLR), with the aim of understanding the context and methodological approaches used in related previous studies. *influencer engagement* and its impact on purchasing decisions for beauty products among Gen Z. Of the total articles identified, as many as 61 The study successfully met the inclusion criteria, with a publication year range from 2016 to 2024. These articles include research conducted in various geographic locations, especially in countries with high penetration of social media users, such as the United States, United Kingdom, China, India, and Indonesia.

Most of the studies reviewed use a quantitative method approach with statistical data analysis to measure the impact of engagement on purchasing decisions. Some studies use experiments to test the impact of positive or negative comments from influencers on perceptions of beauty products, while other studies use surveys or questionnaires to assess the relationship between engagement type and trust and purchase intention. Apart from that, there is also research that uses qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews and content analysis of social media comments, to capture emotional dynamics and consumer perceptions in more detail. Key results from these studies show variations in engagement impact based on factors such as social media platform, influencer type, and consumer demographics and psychographics.

3.2 Main Findings Regarding Engagement and Purchasing Decisions

The main findings obtained from previous research analysis show that there is a strong correlation between engagement shown by influencers (in the form of positive and negative comments) and consumer purchasing decisions, especially among Gen Z who are more sensitive to social opinions and reviews. The research results show that:

- **Positive Comments from Influencers**

The influence of positive comments from influencers on brand perception and purchasing decisions for beauty products is very strong, especially among Generation Z consumers. This demographic has a high preference for authentic recommendations, which significantly influences their purchasing behavior. Research shows that positive comments from influencers increase trust in products, encourage brand loyalty, and stimulate intent to purchase.

Daimi and Tolunay (2021) emphasize the important role of authenticity in influencer marketing, noting that credible influencers can significantly influence their followers' trust and purchase intentions. This finding is in line with literature showing the importance of credibility in shaping consumer attitudes towards products. Likewise, Le and Aydın (2022) highlighted that authenticity is important for maintaining consumer trust and engagement, suggesting that a lack of authenticity can lead to a reduced number of followers and loss of brand partnerships. This view is reinforced by Okonkwo (2023), who asserts that influencers are often perceived as more trustworthy than traditional advertising, thus reinforcing the idea that positive comments from influencers can increase purchase intentions.

Additionally, the role of online comments in influencing consumer behavior has been well documented. Cheng (2023) notes that positive comments from online consumers

significantly increase the likelihood of purchase, while negative comments can decrease purchase intentions. Research by Yong et al. (2021) confirms that positive comments can encourage better purchasing decisions, while negative comments tend to discourage potential buyers. The interplay between influencer authenticity and consumer trust was also explored by Kim and Kim (2022), who identified attributes such as language similarity and frequency of interaction as key factors in building perceptions of friendship and loyalty towards influencers.

The concept of parasocial interactions, where consumers form one-way relationships with influencers, also plays an important role in shaping purchasing behavior. Agnihotri et al. (2023) show that the authenticity of social media influencers has a significant impact on the purchasing behavior of their followers, with parasocial interactions mediating this relationship. This shows that the more authentic an influencer is, the more likely they are to build trust and increase purchase intent among their followers.

In conclusion, positive comments from influencers play a huge role in shaping brand perceptions and driving purchasing decisions, especially among Generation Z consumers. The authenticity of influencers, along with the positive feedback they provide, increases trust and loyalty towards the brand, which ultimately influences purchasing behavior .

- **Negative Comments from Influencers**

Negative comments from influencers can significantly influence purchase intentions and brand perceptions among Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers. Research shows that when influencers convey negative sentiment about a brand, this can lead to a decrease in consumer trust and an increase in brand switching behavior. This phenomenon is especially strong among Gen Z, who are known to rely heavily on social media and the credibility of influencers in their purchasing decisions. For example, Nguyen et al. highlighted that perceptions of influencer credibility have a direct effect on consumer purchase intentions. This suggests that negative comments can damage this credibility and, as a consequence, reduce the intention to purchase from the criticized brand (Nguyen et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the influence of negative comments not only impacts immediate purchase intentions but also has long-term consequences for brand loyalty. Ghaly emphasizes that user-generated content, including negative comments, can shape Gen Z consumers' perceptions and influence their willingness to engage with brands in the future (Ghaly, 2023). These findings are in line with research from Carvalho et al., who noted that negative eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) can significantly reduce brand equity and consumer loyalty, especially in the context of higher education institutions. This can be extrapolated to other sectors as well (Carvalho et al., 2020).

The long-term impact of negative influencer comments is also amplified by Gen Z's greater attention to brand reputation and reviews on social media. Research by Zhang et al. emphasized that Gen Z purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by interactions on social media, reinforcing the idea that negative comments can lead to a significant decline in brand loyalty (Zhang et al., 2020). In conclusion, negative comments from influencers can lead to decreased purchase intent, brand switching, and long-term impacts on brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers. This demographic's reliance on social media and the credibility of influencers makes them particularly vulnerable to the influence of negative feedback, which can reduce trust and loyalty to the brand. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of engagement type in shaping consumer perceptions and guiding purchasing decisions. The effects of positive and negative comments tend to be consistent across social media platforms, but their impact can vary depending on local context and cultural influences, reflecting differences in consumer preferences and expectations in different countries.

3.3 Thematic Analysis

To understand more deeply the influence of positive and negative engagement, a thematic analysis was carried out to group the results based on the most relevant themes, namely:

- **Engagement Type (Positive vs. Negative)**

The first theme in this analysis is the difference in impact between positive and negative engagement. Positive engagement, especially in the form of favorable comments and reviews about beauty products, has been shown to significantly increase purchase intent and positively influence consumer perceptions. Research shows that when consumers encounter positive feedback regarding product quality, their likelihood of making a purchase increases significantly. For example, a study conducted by Yao shows that evaluations from Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) can greatly influence consumer purchasing intentions, especially among demographics that have a high demand for beauty products, such as young women and working professionals (Yao, 2023). This finding is in line with Puspaningrum's research which emphasizes that marketing on social media builds brand loyalty by building trust, thereby increasing consumer purchase intentions (Puspaningrum, 2020). Additionally, the influence of beauty vloggers, as discussed by Garg, suggests that credible endorsements can mitigate negative perceptions and strengthen purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of positive engagement in the beauty sector (Garg, 2024).

On the other hand, negative engagement, especially in the form of criticism or complaints, has a detrimental impact on consumer purchase intentions and trust. Negative reviews and feedback can cause a significant decrease in consumer confidence in a product. For example, research conducted by Chen illustrates that potential buyers rely heavily on the quantification of positive and negative reviews to guide their purchasing decisions, indicating that negative feedback can have a severe impact on a product's reputation and sales (Chen, 2024). Similarly, findings from Crollic et al. suggest that consumers can make improvements to their evaluations when they perceive bias in product aesthetics, which can be exacerbated by negative reviews (Crollic et al., 2019). This phenomenon is also supported by Veronica's research, which discusses how important trust in a brand is for repurchase intentions, and negative experiences can damage this trust (Veronica, 2023).

In conclusion, the dynamics of consumer engagement—both positive and negative—play an important role in shaping purchase intentions and trust in beauty products. Positive engagement encourages favorable perceptions and increases the likelihood of purchase, while negative engagement can result in decreased trust and reduced purchasing behavior.

- **Influence on Brand Trust**

The influence of comments from social media influencers on consumer behavior is a very important area of research, especially in understanding how these comments influence brand trust and purchase intentions. Positive comments from influencers have been proven to significantly increase consumer trust in brands and increase purchase intent. For example, research shows that positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) can result in higher purchase intentions, as consumers often view these endorsements as credible and trustworthy (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). These findings are in line with research showing that positive comments on platforms such as Facebook can effectively reduce the perceived risk associated with a purchase, thereby encouraging greater trust in a brand (Nikbin et al., 2022).

Conversely, negative comments from influencers can seriously damage brand trust, especially when the influencer has a strong reputation among their followers. Studies show that negative reviews or comments can cause a significant decrease in consumer trust and purchase intentions (Yong et al., 2021). This effect is especially pronounced on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, where interactions between influencers and their followers are

more direct and personal, amplifying the impact of negative feedback (W.S. et al., 2017). The immediacy and visibility of these platforms means that negative sentiment can spread quickly, further eroding consumer trust in brands (Reimer & Benkenstein, 2016).

Furthermore, the dynamics of influencer marketing highlight the importance of influencers' perceived authenticity and the nature of their engagement with followers. Research shows that influencer interactivity can increase brand equity and trust, indicating that followers are more likely to trust influencers who engage meaningfully with their audiences (Jun & Yi, 2020). This interactivity can create stronger relationships between influencers and their followers, which in turn can strengthen the effects of both positive and negative comments on brand perceptions and consumer behavior (Nadia, 2023). In conclusion, comments made by influencers play an important role in shaping consumer trust and purchase intentions. Positive comments can increase trust and encourage purchases, while negative comments can significantly reduce trust, especially on interactive platforms. The reputation of influencers and their level of engagement with followers further complicates this relationship, highlighting the need for brands to carefully manage their influencer partnerships and monitor the sentiment expressed in influencer comments.

- **Influence on Consumer Loyalty**

Influencer engagement plays an important role in shaping consumer loyalty, especially among Generation Z, who are known to have strong loyalty to certain influencers. Research shows that positive reviews from influencers can significantly increase brand loyalty. For example, studies show that trust mediates the relationship between online customer reviews and purchase intentions, indicating that positive feedback from trusted sources can lead to increased consumer loyalty (Rosania, 2023). Additionally, the positive influence of consumer-generated content on brand trust has been well documented, with findings showing that consumers tend to trust information from peers more than from the brand itself (Jung, 2016). This dynamic is especially relevant for Gen Z consumers, who are often influenced by authenticity and connectedness with their chosen influencers (Ghosh & Bhattacharya, 2022).

Conversely, negative engagement can have a detrimental effect on brand loyalty. Negative reviews or feedback can make consumers look for alternatives that they consider more trustworthy. Research highlights that negative online reviews can significantly reduce consumers' trust and loyalty, prompting them to consider other options (Helmi, 2024; Soares et al., 2022). The implications of negative feedback are profound, as it can overwhelm positive brand communications and lead to a decline in perceived brand quality (Golmohammadi et al., 2021). This highlights the need for brands to strategically manage their engagement with influencers and the wider online community to reduce the risks associated with negative reviews and to build a positive brand image.

The importance of strategic engagement management in building and maintaining consumer loyalty cannot be underestimated. Brands need to not only focus on getting positive reviews but also actively manage their online presence to handle negative feedback effectively. Studies show that a brand's transparency and responsiveness in handling negative reviews can influence consumer perceptions and trust (Raj, 2024; Atulkar, 2020). Therefore, a proactive approach to managing influencer relationships and consumer feedback is critical to maintaining brand loyalty, especially in an era where consumer trust is critical. In conclusion, strategic management of influencer engagement is crucial in forming consumer loyalty. Positive reviews from trusted influencers can increase loyalty, especially among Gen Z consumers, while negative feedback can encourage consumers to look for alternatives. Therefore, brands must adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes promoting positive engagement as well as effective management of negative perceptions to build and maintain consumer trust and loyalty.

- **Variations Based on Social Media Platform**

Analysis of engagement across social media platforms revealed significant variations, particularly highlighting TikTok and Instagram as platforms with significantly higher engagement rates than others. Research shows that TikTok's format, which emphasizes short video content, allows influencers to effectively share personal experiences with beauty products, thereby significantly influencing Generation Z's purchase intentions. This is in line with findings showing that video content is more engaging and persuasive, especially among younger audiences who tend to respond to visual storytelling (Shen, 2023; Upadhyay et al., 2022). In contrast, engagement on Instagram is characterized by a greater reliance on text and image comments, which play an important role in shaping users' perceptions of beauty products. The visual nature of these platforms encourages a different type of interaction, where aesthetic appeal and curated content influence consumer behavior (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021; Kırçova et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the type of comments generated on these platforms also influences product perception. On TikTok, the speed and authenticity of user-generated content contributes to a more relatable and impactful consumer experience. This is especially relevant for beauty products, where personal testimonials can influence potential buyers (Jamil et al., 2022; Chen, 2023). In contrast, engagement on Instagram often revolves around the aesthetic presentation and quality of visual content, which can result in a more superficial understanding of the product, although this is heavily influenced by social validation through likes and comments (Kim, 2020; Al-aziz & Monalisa, 2023). The interaction between these factors highlights the importance of platform-specific strategies for marketers looking to increase consumer engagement and drive purchase intent. In conclusion, the different engagement dynamics on TikTok and Instagram illustrate how platform characteristics shape user interactions and perceptions of beauty products. TikTok's emphasis on personal storytelling through video resonates deeply with Generation Z, while Instagram's focus on visual aesthetics and curated content influences consumer perception through a different lens. Understanding these nuances is critical for brands looking to optimize their social media marketing strategies across multiple platforms (Chen & Peng, 2022; Unnava & Aravindakshan, 2021). This thematic analysis makes it clear that engagement, both positive and negative, has different impacts on various aspects such as trust, loyalty and consumer preferences. By identifying patterns in various studies, this analysis provides deeper insight into how influencer engagement can be an effective tool in shaping consumer purchasing decisions, especially among Gen Z who are active on social media.

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpretation of Findings

Interpretation of these findings suggests that influencer engagement on social media, especially through comments, plays an important role in shaping Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers' perceptions and purchasing decisions towards beauty products. This generation, known as the digital native generation, is heavily influenced by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) which includes comments, recommendations and reviews from influencers. Research shows that positive comments can increase product appeal and strengthen consumer trust in a brand, in line with findings highlighting the importance of eWOM in building credibility and trust in consumers' decision-making processes (Tan & Trang, 2023; Pradhan et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the impact of negative comments from influencers is also a crucial area of concern. Literature shows that negative feedback can reduce consumer purchase intentions and erode brand trust, potentially encouraging brand switching behavior (Pradhan et al., 2022). Although some studies suggest that the impact of negative comments can be reduced with effective marketing strategies, recent findings suggest that the effects of negative engagement have a more profound and lasting impact, especially among Gen Z who are highly

sensitive to opinions and social feedback (Singh, 2023) . This underscores the gap in the literature regarding managing negative engagement from influencers and emphasizes the need for further research into the strategies brands can implement to effectively address this challenge.

The implications of these findings are critical for marketers targeting Gen Z. With this generation increasingly reliant on social media for product discovery and validation, understanding the two sides of influencer engagement—both positive and negative—becomes essential to developing effective marketing strategies. Brands must not only foster positive engagement, but also proactively manage and respond to negative feedback to maintain reputation and consumer trust (Tan & Trang, 2023; Pandita & Kumar, 2022). This dual approach can increase brand loyalty and reduce the detrimental effects of negative comments, thereby influencing purchasing behavior in a competitive market landscape.

4.2 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this research makes a significant contribution to the digital marketing literature, especially in understanding the role of engagement in influencer marketing. These findings deepen marketing theory regarding the influence of comment-based engagement, introducing new understanding of how comments from influencers, both positive and negative, can shape purchase intentions and decisions. Basically, these findings enrich theory *social influence* And *consumer behavior* in digital marketing, as well as explaining the special dynamics of Gen Z who are very responsive to recommendations and reviews on social media.

In particular, these findings add to the empirical evidence that comment-based engagement in influencer marketing has different effects depending on the context and type of comment. This is important in building a stronger theoretical foundation for understanding *brand equity* which is shaped by influencers and their active engagement. This research also provides further explanation regarding the theory of trust *transfer* in marketing, where trust in influencers can transfer into trust in products, thus driving higher purchase intentions on beauty products.

4.3 Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, this research suggests that beauty brands should pay attention to and manage the type of engagement their influencers facilitate on social media. For marketers, these findings show that positive comments from influencers can be a valuable asset in building brand image and consumer trust. Beauty brands are advised to work with influencers who are actively involved in creating positive content and providing supportive reviews. This strategy can create *brand affinity* which is stronger among Gen Z, who are heavily influenced by social opinion and tend to be loyal to the influencers they follow. However, this research also underscores the importance of managing negative comments to maintain brand reputation. Brands are advised to have a responsive and thoughtful response protocol for negative comments, whether through influencers or directly. Recommended practices include responding professionally to negative reviews, ensuring transparency, and taking remedial steps to demonstrate that they are listening to consumer concerns. In addition, marketers can consider collaborating with influencers who are able to direct positive narratives even when facing criticism, to keep brand perceptions positive.

4.4 Research Limitations and Future Research Agenda

As a systematic literature review study, this research has several limitations. First, there is still limited primary research that specifically explores the impact of negative comments in influencer marketing, so our analysis may not be able to identify all negative engagement dynamics in the context of beauty products. Additionally, this research focuses on Gen Z as the

primary consumer group, so the results may be less generalizable to other demographic segments that have different social media behaviors. A future research agenda could be directed towards exploring differences between social media platforms in facilitating engagement. Experimental research, for example, could examine how interactions on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube differ in the effects of positive or negative comments on brand perceptions. Additionally, further research could focus on differences in Gen Z preferences and responses across geographic regions or cultures. By expanding the experimental approach and involving more varied contexts, future research may provide richer insights for developing more effective marketing strategies in the digital era.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

This research reveals that engagement that occurs through influencer comments has a significant impact on beauty product purchasing decisions by Gen Z. This engagement factor is different from simpler forms of interaction, such as likes or shares, because comments allow influencers and consumers to engage in meaningful discussions. more personal and meaningful. Comments from influencers, especially those with a positive tone, have proven to be effective in building consumer trust and strengthening purchase intentions. On the other hand, negative comments also have a strong impact, often causing long-term effects that can damage a brand's image and reduce consumers' desire to make a purchase. Thus, comment-based engagement is a critical factor and must be managed carefully by beauty brands to maximize its positive impact on Gen Z consumers.

5.2 Contribution to Literature and Practice

This research contributes to the digital marketing literature by deepening understanding of how comments in influencer marketing play a role in influencing purchasing decisions. In the context of beauty products, comment-based engagement provides an additional dimension that greatly influences the perceptions and behavior of Gen Z consumers, who are known as a generation that is very responsive to recommendations and opinions on social media. This study also fills a gap in the literature regarding the effects of negative engagement, offering new insights that can serve as a reference for future research. From a practical perspective, this research provides strategic guidance for beauty brands in optimizing the use of influencer marketing. By understanding that comments from influencers are not just a simple interaction, but an element capable of significantly shaping consumer perceptions, brands can take proactive steps in managing the narrative that develops on social platforms. This strategy will be very useful in increasing the effectiveness of marketing campaigns through influencers who are able to establish deep engagement with their audiences.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, there are several recommendations that can be implemented by beauty industry players in using influencer marketing strategies. First, brands need to consider the quality of engagement, especially in the form of comments, as a key indicator of the success of an influencer campaign. The quality of comments, not just the quantity, greatly influences the perception of a brand in the eyes of Gen Z consumers. Second, to minimize negative impacts, brands need to implement a proactive strategy in responding to negative comments—both from influencers and other users—in an open and transparent manner, to show that they care about consumer satisfaction and perception. Third, brands can provide guidance or training for the influencers they work with to ensure that the narrative they build remains positive, educational and relevant to the target audience. This can strengthen the brand image and increase the effectiveness of the engagement that occurs. Additionally, using sentiment analysis on comments can also help brands monitor and manage

consumer perceptions more accurately. Thus, beauty brands can use influencer marketing with a more strategic approach, creating more authentic interactions, and ultimately increasing loyalty and purchasing decisions among Gen Z.

6. References

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