

The Role of Influencers in Shaping Consumer Interest in Purchasing Online Shop Products (Case Study of Binjai District, Langkat Regency)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Influencer role, purchase interest, online promotion, digital marketing.	This study aims to understand the role of influencers in shaping consumer interest in purchasing products from on line shops in Binjai District , Langkat Regency. Along with the development of technology and social media, influencers have become an essential elements in marketing strategies . This research uses a qualitative method with in-depth interviews conducted with two influencers , several on line sellers , and consumers . The results show that influencers play a significant role in building trust , educate , and inspiring their audience . The success of promotions heavily depends on the quality of content created by influencers and their interactions with the audience . It is recommended for companies and brands to choose influencers who have credibility and an audience that align with the promoted products , and for influencers to maintain an authentic relationship with their followers to make the promotion more effective.
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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including people's consumption patterns. The internet has become the main *platform that supports electronic commerce (e- commerce)* activities . In Indonesia, the trend of *online shopping* is increasing along with easy internet access, a variety of *e- commerce platforms* , and changes in consumer behavior that increasingly prefer digital transactions because of their practicality and efficiency. This is due to the internet's ability to connect more individuals, entrepreneurs, and organizations, which ultimately drives system change, both directly and indirectly ([Pramudita & Misidawati , 2024](#)).

In this context, social media plays an important role as an effective digital marketing tool. Social media not only functions as a means of interaction, but also as a promising virtual market. Consumers can easily search for and obtain information about a product through uploads, reviews, and recommendations from members of their network. This has a major impact on forming purchasing decisions, where consumers tend to trust information obtained from their social networks more than conventional advertising or promotions ([Wijayanto & Cakranegara, 2024](#)). One of the main actors in the marketing strategy through social media is *influencers* , namely individuals who have a great influence on *the audience* through the content they create on social media *platforms* . *Influencers* are considered "digital opinion

leaders" who are able to shape consumer perceptions, beliefs, and interests in a product or service. The level of consumer trust in *influencers* has been shown to be a key factor influencing purchasing decisions (Anggitasari & Ahmadi, 2025).

Influencers have a big role in the process of spreading information by word of mouth (*word of mouth*). *of mouth*) digitally, where this has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. *Electronic Word of Mouth* on social media has a significant influence on the formation of brand image and consumer purchasing interest (Febrianti & Ahmadi, 2024). In addition, *influencer credibility* , content quality, and *audience engagement* are key factors that influence consumer purchasing interest through social media (Alfiannor , 2024).

In Binjai District, Langkat Regency, the *online shopping phenomenon* has also experienced a significant increase. People in this area, as in various other regions, have begun to switch to using digital *platforms* to meet their needs. This is in line with the increasing number of local and national *influencers who promote products online* . The role of *influencers* in building product appeal through creative content, product reviews, and personal testimonials is considered very effective in attracting consumer attention.

However, the effectiveness of using *influencers* as a marketing strategy does not always provide the same results for every *online merchant* . In fact, implementing the right and effective marketing strategy will have a positive impact on business actors in facing existing competition (Harahap & Munthe, 2022). Based on initial interviews with several *online merchants* in Binjai District, significant differences were found in their sales results after using *influencer services* . A women's accessories trader reported an increase in sales of up to 50% after using the services of a local *influencer* who has a large following on the Instagram *platform* . He said that the audience's trust in *influencers* and an attractive promotional style played a major role in this success (Fitria and Christina, 2023).

On the other hand, a snack seller in the same area admitted that he failed to increase his sales even though he had paid *influencers* . According to him, the content created by *influencers* was less relevant to their target *audience* , so the promotion did not have a significant impact on consumer interest. This is in accordance with previous research findings that *influencer relevance and credibility* are important elements in determining the effectiveness of marketing campaigns through social media (Alfiannor , 2024).

In addition, other studies also highlight the importance of the fit between *influencers* and target *audiences* in increasing the success of product promotions (Ainur & Sonni, 2024). This phenomenon shows a research gap that needs to be filled to better understand how *influencers actually play a role in shaping consumer interest in buying online products*, especially in the Binjai District area.

Some questions that arise include: to what extent is the level of effectiveness of *influencers* in shaping consumer interest, and what factors influence the success or failure of promotions through *influencers* . This study aims to identify and analyze the role of *influencers* in shaping consumer interest in buying *online products* in Binjai District, Langkat Regency. This study is expected to provide in-depth insight into the relationship between digital marketing strategies through *influencers* and consumer interest. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to be a reference for business actors, especially MSMEs in the area, and to design more effective marketing strategies in the digital era .

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the role of *influencers* in shaping consumer interest in buying *online products* in Binjai District, Langkat Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the objectives of the study, namely to understand the phenomenon in depth and explore the experiences and perceptions of the research subjects. The qualitative approach aims to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants with a focus on the meaning generated from their interactions and experiences (Sugiyono, 2018).

The research subjects in this study consist of three parts, namely consumers who live in Binjai District and have purchased *online products based on influencer* recommendations, *online traders* who use *influencer services* as part of their marketing strategy, and *the influencers* themselves. Determination of subjects was carried out using *purposive sampling techniques*, namely selecting individuals who are considered to have relevant and in-depth information related to the focus of the study. The subjects or informants in this study can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Research Subjects

No	Name	Information
1	Princess Mesyha Khairani	<i>Influencers</i>
2	Widia Afrilina	<i>Influencers</i>
3	Holy Wulandari	Cosmetics <i>Online</i> Trader
4	Dita Pristia Ramadhani	<i>Online</i> Fashion Trader
5	Winda Syahputri	Consumer

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as a key instrument (Sugiyono, 2018). In addition, the researcher uses an interview guideline to direct the interview process with the research subjects so that the data needed for this study is obtained.

influencer social media that are often used by consumers in Binjai District to identify the promotional patterns carried out. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with influencers, and consumers to explore their experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of influencer content on purchasing decisions. Third, interviews were also conducted with online merchants who had used influencer services to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the strategy.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques. This analysis process involves collecting, organizing, and interpreting data in depth to identify key themes that emerge from the interview results. The analysis stages consist of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018). In data reduction, irrelevant information is filtered, while important information is grouped into certain categories. The summarized data is then presented in the form of a descriptive narrative to facilitate interpretation and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

In this study, the author interviewed two *influencers* who have experience in promoting products through social media, namely Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina. Putri Mesyha Khairani, who started her career as an *influencer* at the age of 22, has had more than three years of experience in promoting various products, such as room decoration, culinary, fashion, and cosmetics. Meanwhile, Widia Afrilina, who has been an *influencer* for almost two years, focuses more on promoting beauty, fashion, and health products. Although both have slightly different product focuses, both have similarities in terms of their activities as *influencers*, namely creating creative content, interacting with *audiences*, and collaborating with various brands to promote products.

Putri Mesyha Khairani explained that her activities as an *influencer* are not only limited to creating content, but also editing videos and finding creative ideas for the content she creates. In addition, she also often promotes products through *platforms* such as *TikTok*, *Shopee*, and *Instagram*, as she expressed as follows:

"I often introduce products, especially those that are trending, it attracts more buyers."
(Putri Mesyha Khairani).

On the other hand, Widia Afrilina focuses more on beauty and health products and more often provides honest reviews of the products she promotes. Widia Afrilina added the following statement:

"I always try to provide honest and informative reviews about the products I promote."
(Widia Afrilina)

Both *influencers* agreed that direct interaction with *the audience* through the comments column and private messages is very important to build a closer relationship with their followers. In addition, this interview also revealed that the influence of *influencers* on consumer purchasing interest in the digital world is very large. Putri Mesyha Khairani emphasized that attractive visualization and clear delivery of product information in the content can influence *the audience's* interest and purchasing decisions. As her statement below:

"In its content, the visualization is strong, there are inspirations and ideas, such as *aesthetic bedroom inspiration* or *aesthetic living room*. In addition, detailed product information is also placed in the video." (Putri Mesyha Khairani).

This shows that content that is able to provide inspiration and ideas can make *the audience* feel more interested and motivated to buy the promoted product. Widia Afrilina also stated the importance of providing clear and honest reviews about the quality and use of the product to help *the audience* feel confident before buying. Here is the statement made by Widia Afrilina:

"My content usually emphasizes the quality aspect of the product and how to use it, which can make *the audience* feel more confident to buy." (Widia Afrilina).

Both *influencers* agreed that in addition to providing clear product information, they also try to educate *their audience* on how to use the product properly, so that consumers feel more informed. *Online merchants* also recognize the importance of *influencers* in increasing consumer purchasing interest.

Then, in an interview with Putri Mesyha Khairani, she explained that as an influencer, she has several important roles in shaping consumer interest in purchasing online products. shop in Binjai District. First, she focuses on building trust with potential consumers, because trust is the main key in online transactions. Second, she plays a role in educating consumers about the products being marketed, providing clear and reliable information so that consumers feel more confident in buying. Third, Putri also tries to inspire potential consumers by sharing personal experiences and creative ideas that can encourage them to buy the products offered. For more details, see the following interview excerpt:

"As an influencer, I build trust by providing honest and transparent reviews of the products I promote. I make sure that every product I recommend has gone through an in-depth review process, and I only promote items that I truly trust in their quality. This includes showing my personal experience when using the product, so that the audience feels more confident that I am speaking from the heart, not just for promotional purposes." (Putri Mesyha Khairani).

Meanwhile, the role played by Widia Afrilina in building consumer interest in buying *online products* in Binjai District is:

"I play a role in building consumer interest by providing honest and informative reviews. In addition, I educate the audience about the benefits of the products I promote and inspire them with relevant content that suits their needs. To build consumer interest, I always provide reviews based on personal experience. I also make sure not to just promote the product, but to provide detailed explanations about the benefits and how to use the product. By educating the audience, I help them understand the product and how it can be useful in their daily lives. Meanwhile, by inspiring *the audience*, I show how the products I promote can improve their quality of life, both in terms of appearance and well-being." (Widia Afrilina).

From the quote above, it is clear that Widia Afrilina plays a role in building consumer interest in *online products* in Binjai District by providing honest and informative reviews. She educates *the audience* about the benefits and how to use the product, and inspires them with relevant content. Through this approach, Widia helps consumers understand how the product can improve their quality of life, both in terms of appearance and well-being, thus encouraging them to build interest and make purchases. Suci Wulandari, an *online* cosmetic trader who has used the services of *influencers*, explains that *influencers* have an important role in introducing products in a more interesting and convincing way, here is Suci Wulandar's statement:

"The role of influencers is very large in shaping consumer purchasing interest. They can introduce products in a more interesting and convincing way because they have followers who already trust their opinions." (Suci Wulandari).

The statement is in line with the views of Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina who believe that the success of a promotion is greatly influenced by the trust that has been built between *the influencer* and his *audience*. The success of a promotion through *influencers* can be measured in various ways, one of which is the interaction received by the posted content. Putri Mesyha Khairani revealed that she measures the success of a promotion by looking at the number of viewers, likes, comments, and shares of the content she creates.

"If it's already crowded, it means the product promotion was successful." (Widia Afrilina).

On the other hand, it relies more on direct *feedback from the audience* in the form of DMs or comments to assess whether the promotion he did was successful or not.

"I usually receive a lot of *feedback from the audience* in the form of DMs or comments. From there I know whether my promotion is successful or not." (Widia Afrilina).

The success of the promotion also depends heavily on the quality of the content produced by *the influencer*, the relevance of the promoted product to *the audience* they have, and the credibility of *the influencer* itself. Dita Pristia Ramadhani, an *online trader* fashion states that:

"The success of a promotion is greatly influenced by the quality of the content and the fit between the product and *the audience. influencer*." (Dita Pristia Ramadhani)

On the other hand, factors that can cause failure in product promotion also need to be considered. If the promoted product does not match *the audience's expectations* or is not relevant to their needs, then the promotion is likely to be ineffective. Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina also mentioned that one of their biggest challenges is ensuring that the products they promote truly meet *the audience's expectations*.

"I make sure that every product I recommend has gone through a thorough review process, and I only promote items whose quality I truly believe in." (Putri Mesyha Khairani).

Widia Afrilina added that:

"I feel quite influential in increasing consumer interest, because I always try to provide honest and informative reviews about the products I promote." (Widia Afrilina)

From the description above, this study shows that *influencers* have a very significant role in shaping consumer purchasing interest in products promoted online. The success of the promotion is greatly influenced by factors such as honesty in providing reviews, product relevance to *the audience*, and the quality of interesting and informative content. *Influencers* also play a major role in building consumer trust by providing honest and in-depth information about the products they promote. This underlines the importance of the role of *influencers* in today's digital marketing world.

Discussion

In this study, the role of *influencers* in influencing consumer purchasing interest through social media has proven to be very significant. Based on interviews with two *influencers*, Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina, it can be concluded that they both have quite extensive experience in promoting various products on social media, although with different focuses. Putri Mesyha Khairani promotes more room decoration and culinary products, while Widia Afrilina focuses more on beauty and health products. However, both have similar patterns in carrying out their activities as *influencers*, namely creating interesting content, interacting with *audiences*, and collaborating with various brands to promote products.

As explained by Azzahra et al., influencers have the ability to influence other people's purchasing decisions thanks to their authority, status, and knowledge, as well as the relationships they have with their audiences or followers. They become important assets in social relationships because they are able to work together to achieve marketing goals

(Azzahra et al., 2024). This statement emphasizes that influencers have the power to influence consumer purchasing interest thanks to their authority, status, and knowledge. In addition, the relationships they build with their audiences allow them to create emotional attachments that can encourage consumers to make purchases. As assets in social relationships, influencers are able to collaborate with brands to achieve marketing goals, which in turn can significantly increase consumer purchasing interest.

Influencer marketing is a growing approach in the digital world, where companies work with individuals who have influence over their audience to promote products. The success of influencer marketing is highly dependent on their ability to create relevant and engaging content and build close relationships with their audience. This can be seen from how Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina always try to create creative content that suits their audience, as expressed by Putri Mesyha Khairani regarding the promotion of room decoration products with very strong and inspiring visuals, as well as honest reviews from Widia Afrilina who always provides complete information about the quality of the products being promoted.

From interviews with informants, it can be seen that *audiences* tend to trust the opinions of *influencers* who are considered credible and have close personal relationships with their followers. According to Zed & Asral, the credibility of *influencers* can reach the *audience* beyond, and build more personal relationships with your audience. (Zed & Asral, 2024). Influencer credibility can be built through honesty, consistency, and authentic interactions with the audience.

Both influencers interviewed in this study emphasized the importance of providing clear and honest information about the products they promote. This is in line with Ohanian's theory of source credibility which states that an influencer's credibility consists of three main components, namely expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Putri & Purworini, 2024). In this context, Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina try to build audience trust through honest reviews, direct interactions, and displaying products whose quality they believe in.

The success of promotion through influencers is also measured through indicators such as the number of interactions on the content, including likes, comments, and shares. Putri Mesyha Khairani said that if a content has a lot of interactions, it is an indication that the product promotion is successful. This opinion is in line with the theory of social media effectiveness according to Kaplan and Haenlein, which explains that metrics such as the number of user interactions can be the main indicators of the success of a marketing campaign through social media (Aulia, 2024). In addition, direct feedback from the audience, either in the form of comments or private messages, is also one way for Widia Afrilina to assess the success of the promotion she is doing.

However, not all promotions go smoothly. As expressed by both *influencers*, the biggest challenge they face is ensuring that the products they promote are in line with *audience expectations* and relevant to their needs. This leads to the theory of product relevance conveyed by Rohmawati & Ahmadi, namely that marketing through the help of *influencers* on social media has a direct influence on purchasing decisions, especially when the content or products presented are in line with the target audience. *Influencers* who succeed in conveying brand messages in an effective way to their followers often speed up the consumer decision-making process, because consumers feel more connected to the

product and are confident that the product can meet their needs (Rohmawati & Ahmadi, 2024). If *the audience* feels that the promoted product does not match their needs or expectations, then the promotion is likely to be unsuccessful.

In addition, other factors that influence the success of a promotion are the quality of content created by *influencers*. Interesting and informative content will more easily get *the audience's attention* and encourage them to make a purchase. This is in line with the theory put forward by Ramadiansyah & Pratiwi, which states that interesting visual content can increase public awareness of a product and encourage their interest in buying (Ramadiansyah & Pratiwi, 2024). Interesting content can increase *the audience's interest* in the product being promoted. In this context, the two *influencers*, Putri Mesyha Khairani and Widia Afrilina, always try to create content that is not only visually attractive but also provides complete and useful information about the products they promote. Based on the description of this discussion, this study shows that marketing through *influencers* can increase consumer purchasing interest in an effective way, especially if supported by factors such as credibility, product relevance, content quality, and authentic interactions between *influencers* and *audiences*. Through a more personal and creative approach, *influencers* can influence consumer purchasing decisions, so they have an important role in today's digital marketing world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, the role of *influencers in shaping consumer interest in purchasing online products* shop in Binjai District, Langkat Regency is very large. *Influencers* act as a liaison between brands and consumers, providing a significant influence in increasing trust and purchasing interest. As *influencers*, they have a role in building trust by providing honest and transparent reviews, educating *audiences* with useful information about products, and inspiring them with relevant creative ideas. These three roles, namely building trust, educating, and inspiring, help potential consumers feel more confident and informed in making *online product purchasing decisions*.

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