

**THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN FORMING PUBLIC OPINION AMONG GENERATION Z (SURVEY ON MA BINAUL AHKLAQ STUDENTS)**

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**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian dilakukan untuk menganalisis pengaruh influencer marketing dalam membentuk opini publik, dengan fokus pada Generasi Z di MA Binaul Ahklaq. Di era digital yang didominasi media sosial, influencer telah menjadi kekuatan penting dalam membentuk persepsi, sikap, dan perilaku konsumen, terutama di kalangan Generasi Z yang sangat aktif di platform digital. Penelitian ini akan mengkaji bagaimana influencer membangun kredibilitas dan kepercayaan di mata audiens mereka, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi efektivitas influencer dalam membentuk opini publik, serta bagaimana Generasi Z merespons pesan yang disampaikan oleh influencer. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode penelitian deskriptif asosiatif, dengan bentuk hubungan kausal, lalu jenis data kuantitatif dan skala ordinal. Responden yang diambil dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa dan siswi MA Binaul Ahklaq yang diambil sampel 68 responden. Selanjutnya diolah menggunakan uji validitas, uji realibilitas, uji korelasi sederhana, uji koefisien determinasi, uji signifikan parsial (uji t), dan uji hipotesis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh influencer marketing terhadap opini publik dengan nilai t-hitung  $7.727 > t\text{-tabel } 1.668$ , maka  $H_0$  ditolak dan  $H_a$  terima yang berarti influencer marketing (variabel X) berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap opini publik (variabel Y) di kalangan generasi Z, dengan koefisien korelasi terdapat pengaruh "kuat" yaitu sebesar 0,689. Sedangkan hasil koefisien determinasi sebesar 48% dan sisanya sebesar 52% dipengaruhi oleh faktor lain diluar variabel yang diteliti.

**Kata Kunci:** Influencer Marketing; Opini Publik; Generasi Z.

**ABSTRACT**

*The study was conducted to analyze the influence of influencer marketing in shaping public opinion, focusing on Generation Z at MA Binaul Ahklaq. In the digital era dominated by social media, influencers have become a significant force in shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behavior, especially among Generation Z, who are highly active on digital platforms. This study will examine how influencers build credibility and trust in the eyes of their audience, the factors that influence the effectiveness of influencers in shaping public opinion, and how Generation Z responds to messages conveyed by influencers. The research method employed is the associative descriptive research method, which involves a causal relationship and utilizes quantitative data types and ordinal scales. The respondents in this study were*

*students of MA Binaul Ahklaq, sampled from a total of 68 respondents. Furthermore, it was processed using validity tests, reliability tests, simple correlation tests, determination coefficient tests, partial significance tests (t-tests), and hypothesis tests. The results of the study show that influencer marketing has a significant influence on public opinion, with a t-count value of 7.727 greater than the t-table value of 1.668; therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.  $H_a$  is accepted, which means that influencer marketing (variable X) has a positive and significant effect on public opinion (variable Y) among Generation Z, with a correlation coefficient of "strong" influence of 0.689. While the results of the determination coefficient are 48%, other factors outside the variables influence the remaining 52%.*

**Keywords:** *Influencer Marketing; Public Opinion; Generation Z.*

## A. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, influencer marketing has become a very popular marketing strategy. Influencers with large followings and a high level of trust from their audiences have the power to influence public opinion about a particular product, brand, or issue. Research on this topic aims to understand how this influence mechanism works and its impact on society.

Influencers with large followings and a high level of trust from their audiences have become central figures in the social media landscape. They are not only considered celebrities or popular figures, but also credible sources of information and trusted recommendations. Influencers' ability to build strong relationships with their audiences makes them valuable assets for marketers seeking to effectively reach their target market.

The development of information technology has given rise to various social media platforms that serve not only as a means of communication but also as a marketing tool and a means of shaping public opinion. TikTok is one platform that has experienced rapid growth in recent years. This short-video-based app is extremely popular, especially among Generation Z, known as digital natives—a generation that grew up and developed amidst advances in digital technology.

In the TikTok ecosystem, influencers play a crucial role as actors who can create trends, shape perceptions, and even influence audience decisions and preferences on a variety of issues, from lifestyle and product consumption to social views. This is supported by research conducted by Yuliana (2023) in the journal

Digital Society, titled "The Power of Influencers in Influencing Generation Z Preferences on TikTok."

The study reveals that the influence of influencers on TikTok extends beyond their number of followers to encompass their ability to deliver authentic, relevant, and entertaining content. Influencers who can build emotional connections and demonstrate authenticity in their message delivery have proven more effective in influencing Generation Z's preferences. Content delivered through short video formats with a natural and relatable style makes messages more easily accepted and believed by audiences.

Furthermore, the study also highlights that Generation Z is more likely to trust recommendations from influencers they consider "friends" or "digital role models" compared to conventional advertising. Trust and personal connection are two key elements that make influencers powerful agents in shaping the consumption preferences and opinions of the younger generation.

Thus, the findings of this study confirm that influencer marketing, particularly on the TikTok platform, has a significant impact on the behavior and choices of Generation Z. This phenomenon is important to study further, considering that the power of influencers influences not only economic aspects (such as purchasing) but also social and cultural aspects, including shaping public opinion in the digital age.

Generation Z, or those born between 1995 and 2000, is a crucial demographic for today's marketing. They grew up in the digital age, are highly active on social media, and have unique preferences and behaviors compared to other generations. Generation Z is also known as digital natives, who rely heavily on the internet and social media in their daily lives.

Research into the role of influencer marketing in shaping public opinion among Generation Z is crucial to understanding how this marketing strategy works in the digital age. A deep understanding of Generation Z's preferences, behaviors, and values will help marketers design more effective and relevant influencer marketing campaigns.

The background outlined above shows that influencer marketing has become a significant force in shaping public opinion, especially among Generation

Z. Research on this topic will provide valuable insights for marketers, consumers, and policymakers in understanding the dynamics of influencer marketing in the digital era.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Influencer Marketing**

Influencer marketing is the process of identifying and engaging individuals who influence a specific target audience to participate in a product campaign, thereby increasing reach, sales, and consumer relationships (Sudha & Sheena, 2017, p. 16). Individuals who act as influencers are typically able to influence the desires and needs of the target consumer community, specifically how they choose a product to meet their needs. This attraction enables an influencer to be part of a promotional strategy in marketing, or what is often referred to today as influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is expected to increase sales of a product by influencing the target consumer community in terms of how they behave when deciding to purchase a product. "Influencer marketing is the process of identifying and activating individuals who influence a specific target audience to become part of a product campaign to increase reach, sales, and relationships with consumers." (Sudha & Sheena, 2017 : 16).

### **2. Public Opinion**

The term public opinion can be used to refer to any collection of opinions expressed by individuals. According to Santoso Sastropetro, the term public opinion is often used to refer to the collective opinions of a large number of people. Etymologically, public opinion is a translation of the English word "public opinion." Public opinion comes from the Latin words "opinari" and "publicus." Opinari means to think or guess, while "publicus" means to belong to the broader community. Put, opinion can be interpreted as opinion (Santoso 1990: 49). However, at least there is an expression of that opinion, either verbally or non-verbally. As long as the opinion has not been expressed, it is a personal opinion. According to Leonard W. Dood, an issue is only considered public opinion after the public has expressed it (Cangara 2019 : 158)

### **3. Public Opinion Development**

As explained above, public opinion is a borrowing of the English word "public opinion." Initially, public opinion was widely known and used in Europe and the United States in the late 18th century. The term was primarily used about social life at that time. The term "public opinion," in its modern sense, was first used by Machiavelli.

According to Machiavelli, a wise person will not ignore public opinion on specific issues, such as the distribution of positions and promotions. Meanwhile, Rousseau once called public opinion the "queen of the world," because kings could not conquer public opinion during the authoritarian era of the 17th and 18th centuries, unless they were willing to be bought and become their slaves. He also stated that the law must stem from the general will. Advances in science, technology, and the market economy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to a widespread awareness that the voice of the people should be given greater consideration in decision-making, particularly in the political sphere. This is driven by the emergence of demands from the public who also want to participate in determining their fate in social, economic, and political life, especially in the formulation of public policies or decisions concerning the public interest.

#### **4. Gen Z**

Current students at MA Binaul Ahklaq are considered to be Generation Z. According to Stillman (2018), Generation Z is the generation born between 1995 and 2000. Generation Z is a generation born and raised in an era of rapid technological advancements. According to Noordiono (2016), rapid technological advancements influence Generation Z, where this generation feels that the flow of information obtained through the internet is overwhelming. Generation Z is also considered an independent generation. This is due to the ease of accessing information obtained from technology and the internet, making Generation Z capable of making decisions without involving others. One example is in making purchasing decisions; Generation Z relies heavily on technology to access information about the latest trends, which in turn influences how consumers view brands and products. Based on these theories and literature studies, the influence of influencer marketing in shaping public opinion among Generation Z is evident, especially in the current digital era.

### C. RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is descriptive quantitative research. Quantitative research is defined as a systematic investigation of a phenomenon by collecting measurable data using statistical techniques. Quantitative writing methods seek to dig deeper into information by examining and understanding the subject as a whole. Meanwhile, the analysis method in this study employs a descriptive quantitative approach, which involves describing or depicting an object being studied through sample or population data, without the intention of drawing generalizable conclusions (Sugiyono, 2020, p. 206). The steps of this case study research begin with defining the problem, determining the research design and other research instruments, collecting data from the population and related samples, and finally writing the case study research report. The data collection technique employed was a survey, which included 68 respondents. This research approach is quantitative research, namely research that, from data collection to interpretation and presentation of results, requires a large amount of numerical data. Likewise, the understanding and conclusions of the research will be enhanced if accompanied by tables, graphs, charts, images, or other visual displays (Suharsimi, 2022).

### D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results analyze the X (Influencer Marketing) and Y (Public Opinion) variables and their relationship to the research object. These variables are then analyzed using a literature review or relevant expert opinion theory. The researcher then presents a discussion of the research results as follows:

**Table 1.** Correlation Test Table

Correlations		Influencer Marketing	Opini Publik
Influencer Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	,689**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	68	68
Public Opinion	Pearson Correlation	,689**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	68	68

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 1. Simple Correlation Test

The correlation test is used to determine the level of relationship between two variables, in this case, influencer marketing (X) and public opinion (Y). Correlation values range from -1 to +1, with:

0.00–0.199: very weak

0.20–0.399: weak

0.40–0.599: moderate

0.60–0.799: strong

0,80–1,000: very strong

The correlation test results showed a correlation value of 0.689, indicating a strong and positive relationship between influencer marketing and public opinion. This means that the greater the influence of influencer marketing, the stronger public opinion becomes, particularly among Generation Z.

The correlation coefficient ranges from 0.600 to 0.799, indicating a strong positive correlation between influencer marketing and public opinion among Generation Z. This suggests that an increase in influencer marketing will lead to an increase in public opinion, and a decrease in influencer marketing will result in a decrease in public opinion.

## 2. Validity Test

The validity test aims to determine the extent to which each item in the questionnaire is capable of measuring the intended variable. In this study, each item was evaluated using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique. An item is declared valid if the calculated  $r$  value is greater than the table  $r$  value at a significance level of 5% (0.05).

Based on the validity test results, all statement items in the research instrument had calculated  $r$  values greater than the table  $r$  value. This indicates that all questions compiled by the researcher have a good ability to measure the concepts of influencer marketing variables (X) and public opinion (Y). Therefore, it can be concluded that the questionnaire instrument used in this study is valid and suitable for data collection purposes.

### 3. Coefficient of Determination Test

To determine the extent of the influence of influencer marketing (Variable X) on public opinion (Variable Y) among Generation Z in Tasikmalaya, a determination test or coefficient of determination calculation was conducted using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{KD} &= r^2 \times 100\% \\ &= 0.689^2 \times 100\% \\ &= 0.474 \text{ or } 48\% \end{aligned}$$

From the calculation above, it can be said that the contribution of influencer marketing (Variable X) to public opinion (Variable Y) among Generation Z in Tasikmalaya is 48%, with the remaining 52% influenced by other factors not examined, such as internal/personal factors (perception, family, motivation and involvement, knowledge, attitudes, learning, age group, and lifestyle), external factors (culture, social class, and group membership), and situational factors (physical environment and time) (Kotler, as quoted by Sangadji and Sopiah, 2013:41).

### 4. Coefficient of Determination Test ( $R^2$ )

The coefficient of determination test aims to determine the extent to which the independent variable (influencer marketing) contributes to or influences the dependent variable (public opinion). The  $R^2$  value obtained in this study was 0.48, or 48%.

This suggests that 48% of the variation in public opinion can be attributed to influencer marketing activities. The remaining 52% is attributed to other variables outside the research model, such as the influence of mass media, personal experience, social environment, or other factors not within the scope of this study. Thus, although influencer marketing has a significant influence on public opinion, other factors also contribute to shaping public opinion as a whole.

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Testing

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Unstandardized Coefficients						
Model		B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients		
				Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	14,180	5,162		2,747	,008
	Influencer Marketing	,534	,069	,689	7,727	,000

a. Dependent Variable : Public Opinion

In the table above, it can be seen that the t-count value of influencer marketing is 7.727, which means the t-count value is  $7.727 > t\text{-table } 1.668$  and the sig value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, which means influencer marketing (variable X) has a positive and significant effect on public opinion (variable Y) among generation Z.

### 5. Partial Significance Test (t-Test)

A t-test was conducted to measure whether the partial influence of influencer marketing on public opinion was significant. The t-test results showed a calculated t-value of 7.727, whereas the t-table value at the specified degree of freedom (df) was 1.668.

Because the calculated t-value  $>$  the table t-value,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, indicating a statistically significant influence between influencer marketing and public opinion. In other words, influencer marketing significantly contributes to the formation of public opinion among Generation Z. These results demonstrate that influencer marketing strategies are not only visually appealing or communicative but also effective in shaping public perceptions and attitudes toward a product, issue, or brand.

### 6. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis in this study states:

$H_0$  (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant influence between influencer marketing and public opinion.

$H_a$  (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant influence between influencer marketing and public opinion.

Based on the results of the t-test and correlation coefficient, it can be concluded that hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. This means that

influencer marketing has been statistically proven to have a significant and positive influence on public opinion among Generation Z. This influence is positive because the stronger and more engaging the influencer marketing strategy used, the more positive the public opinion formed.

## E. CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine the influence of influencer marketing in shaping public opinion among generation z at MA Binaul Ahklaq with the calculation result of the t-value of influencer marketing of 7.727 which means the t-value of  $7.727 > t\text{-table } 1.668$  and the sig value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , this indicates that influencer marketing influences the fluctuations in purchasing decisions in the sense that business actors can improve strategies through influencer marketing then purchasing decisions will also increase and vice versa.

Based on the conclusions above, several suggestions need to be conveyed based on the results of this study: 1) Business actors can improve their marketing strategies through influencers, namely by paying more attention to how influencers can improve their ability to gather information on consumer needs about the business they are currently running, one of which is by improving communication with consumers in creative ways to create unique and memorable experiences on all social and personal media used as promotional tools; 2) Business actors can improve better relationships with consumers so that consumers can know things related to products, starting from prices, product benefits, product variations and the expected convenient place of purchase. Thus, consumers will have a reason to choose the product used to meet their needs; 3) The influence of influencer marketing in shaping public opinion among Generation Z has a strong correlation. This means that if influencer marketing increases, public opinion will also increase; likewise, if influencer marketing decreases, public opinion will also decrease. Therefore, companies must continually improve their marketing strategies by utilizing influencer marketing promotions, such as employing consumer influence techniques, including persuasion, inspiration, and consultation techniques, as well as visual techniques. To increase the number of existing purchases and achieve maximum results. Thus, effective influencer marketing is expected to garner high

and maximum public opinion.

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