

The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Brand Awareness of Gadget Products among TikTok Users in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

. This study examines the influence of influencer marketing on brand awareness of gadget products among TikTok users in Indonesia through a qualitative systematic literature review approach. Drawing on seven empirical studies published between 2021 and 2026, this research synthesizes findings on how influencer marketing analyzed through the lens of Source Credibility Theory shapes consumer brand awareness and purchase intention in the context of digital technology products. The findings indicate that influencer credibility, comprising trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, is the primary driver of brand awareness formation, with influencer credibility explaining up to 27.0% of variance in purchase intention (Istimaroh, 2025) and influencer marketing explaining 49.7% of variance in purchase intention for gadget products (Maesaroh, 2025). TikTok-specific studies confirm that influencer content on the platform contributes to sales performance increases of 25–30% for brands (Sakir, 2025), while brand awareness consistently emerges as a critical mediating variable between influencer marketing activities and consumer behavioral outcomes. The study further identifies that the authenticity of influencer content and the quality of parasocial relationships between influencers and their audiences are key determinants of the effectiveness of influencer marketing campaigns

in building gadget brand awareness. This study concludes that a credibility-centered influencer marketing strategy represents the most sustainable approach for gadget brands seeking to build meaningful brand awareness among Indonesian TikTok users.

INTRODUCTION

TikTok has grown to become one of the fastest-growing social media platforms in Indonesia, with hundreds of millions of active users consuming short-form video content every day. More than merely an entertainment platform, TikTok has transformed into a powerful digital marketing ecosystem in which influencers serve as a bridge between brands and consumers through authentic, interactive, and viral content. Sakir (2025) confirms that TikTok makes a significant contribution to enhancing brand recognition, consumer recall, and customer interaction, resulting in sales performance improvements of approximately 25–30%.

In the gadget product category encompassing smartphones, accessories, wearable devices, and other consumer electronics TikTok has become one of the most influential product review and discovery platforms. Unboxing content, in-depth reviews, and specification comparisons produced by Indonesian technology influencers have the capacity to reach millions of viewers within hours, generating massive and measurable brand awareness effects. Maesaroh (2025) demonstrated that influencer marketing for gadget products specifically the Samsung Galaxy A Series has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention with a coefficient of determination $R^2=0.497$, indicating that nearly 50% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by influencer marketing strategy.

However, not all influencer marketing strategies produce the same impact on brand awareness. Pradana & Ridanasti (2026) found that influencer credibility comprising attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, mediated by consumer attitude toward the influencer. Conversely, the type of message conveyed did not show a significant direct effect. These findings indicate that in the gadget influencer marketing ecosystem, the quality of the information source (influencer credibility) is far more determinant than the format of the message delivered.

Interestingly, Hutami (2024) identified an important nuance: in the context of TikTok Shop for Generation Z, social media marketing as a whole has a greater influence on purchase decisions than influencer marketing specifically. Brand awareness was proven to mediate the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions, but did not directly mediate the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions. This finding raises an important research question about how influencer marketing can be most effectively positioned within the broader digital marketing ecosystem.

Based on the above background, this study aims to systematically synthesize findings from various empirical studies on the influence of influencer marketing on brand awareness of gadget products on TikTok, to identify the theoretical mechanisms that explain this relationship, and to formulate strategic implications for gadget brands seeking to maximize the impact of influencer marketing on the Indonesian TikTok platform.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Influencer Marketing and Source Credibility Theory

Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that leverages influential individuals on social media to disseminate brand messages to relevant audiences. Brown & Hayes (2008) define an influencer as a third party who significantly shapes customers' purchasing decisions. In the TikTok context, influencers operate through short-form video content that combines product reviews, demonstrations, and entertainment in a single, easily consumed package.

The most relevant theoretical foundation for understanding the mechanism of influencer marketing is Source Credibility Theory, developed by Ohanian (1990). This theory posits that the effectiveness of persuasive communication is heavily dependent on the audience's perception of the credibility of the message source. Source credibility consists of three main components: (1) Trustworthiness the audience's perception of the influencer's honesty and objectivity in conveying information; (2) Expertise the perception of the influencer's technical knowledge and expertise regarding the products they review; and (3) Attractiveness the physical and personality appeal of the influencer that encourages audience identification.

Istimaroh (2025) applied the Source Credibility Theory framework to the TikTok Shop context and found that the higher the level of trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise of an influencer, the greater the consumer's tendency to purchase the promoted product ($R^2=0.270$). In the gadget context, the expertise dimension becomes especially critical because technology products carry high specification complexity consumers need influencers who genuinely understand the product, not merely those who recite specifications from a press release.

Brand Awareness in the Digital Marketing Context

Brand awareness is defined by Aaker (1991) as the consumer's ability to identify a brand under various different conditions, encompassing brand recognition (the ability to recognize a brand when presented with choices) and brand recall (the ability to retrieve a brand from a given category without prompting). Brand awareness is a fundamental component of brand equity and serves as the entry point for a brand into the consumer's consideration set.

In the context of digital marketing and TikTok, Sakir (2025) examined how TikTok activity builds brand awareness for SMEs through a qualitative case study and found that TikTok contributes to three dimensions of brand awareness simultaneously: enhanced brand recognition through visual content exposure, improved brand recall through repeated and consistent brand narratives, and strengthened brand association through audience comments and interactions. Maradona (2024) confirmed through quantitative research with 204 respondents that influencer marketing and live streaming on TikTok significantly influence purchasing decisions both directly and through brand awareness as an intervening variable.

TikTok as an Influencer Marketing Platform for Gadgets

TikTok has characteristics that distinguish it from other influencer marketing platforms in the gadget product context. First, TikTok's For You Page (FYP) algorithm distributes content based on engagement rather than follower count, allowing high-quality gadget review content to reach a much wider and more relevant audience than just the influencer's follower base. Second, the short-form video format compels influencers to present product information concisely and engagingly an approach that is often more effective in building brand awareness than lengthy reviews on YouTube or blogs.

Naziih et al. (2021) demonstrated through a study of 154 students that influencer reviews on TikTok have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, confirming that TikTok-based review content possesses genuine persuasive power. Maesaroh (2025) complemented these findings with a specific gadget context (Samsung Galaxy A Series) on YouTube a similar platform in terms of influencer reviews and found a regression coefficient of $\beta=0.274$ with $R^2=0.497$, confirming the power of influencer marketing in building purchase intention for technology products.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Influencer Marketing in Shaping Brand Awareness of Gadget Products

The synthesis of the seven reviewed studies reveals a consistent pattern: influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness of gadget products, operating through multiple pathways both directly and mediated by intervening variables such as consumer attitude toward the influencer and price perception.

Maradona (2024) provides the most comprehensive evidence of this mechanism through SEM-PLS research with 204 TikTok users in Bali. That study identified that influencer marketing and live streaming not only influence purchasing decisions directly, but also through brand awareness as a powerful mediating construct. This confirms that influencer marketing on TikTok operates in two stages: first building awareness (making consumers conscious of and familiar with the brand), and then driving intention and decision.

Sakir (2025) offers a qualitative perspective that complements this quantitative evidence. Through a case study of the Bakso Granat Mas Azis UMKM in Palembang, Sakir found that TikTok marketing activities including collaborations with local influencers contributed to measurable improvements in brand recognition, stronger consumer recall, and ultimately a 25–30% increase in sales performance. Although the context differs from gadget products, the brand awareness formation mechanism through TikTok identified in this study is universal and applicable across product categories.

Influencer Credibility Dimensions and Their Impact on Gadget Brand Awareness

Among the various factors that determine the effectiveness of influencer marketing, influencer credibility has been proven to be the most determinant variable. Istimaroh (2025) found that influencer credibility has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of

TikTok Shop users ($R^2=0.270$) the higher the trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise of the influencer, the stronger the impact on consumer behavior. In the gadget category, which carries high technical complexity, the expertise dimension becomes particularly critical.

Table 1. Dimensions of Influencer Credibility Based on Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990)

Dimension	Definition	Relevance for Gadget Influencers on TikTok	Key Indicators
Trustworthiness	Perception of the influencer's honesty and objectivity in conveying information	Honest reviews that acknowledge product weaknesses build trust among critical gadget consumers	Review honesty, sponsorship transparency, consistency of opinions
Expertise	Perception of the influencer's technical knowledge and expertise regarding the reviewed product	Gadget consumers require information sources with genuine understanding of technical specifications	Depth of technical knowledge, information accuracy, real-world product experience
Attractiveness	The influencer's physical appeal and personality that encourages audience identification	An engaging delivery style enhances engagement and brand information retention	Charisma, communication style, storytelling ability, content aesthetics

Source: Adapted from Ohanian (1990); Istimaroh (2025); Pradana & Ridanasti (2026)

Pradana & Ridanasti (2026) deepened this understanding by incorporating the mediating variable of attitude toward influencer into their research model. With 200 respondents and PLS-SEM analysis, that study found that influencer credibility has a significant effect on purchase intention, but this effect is significantly mediated by the consumer's attitude toward the influencer. This means credibility does not operate directly; rather, it first shapes consumers' perceptions and affective responses toward the influencer which then drives purchase intention and increased brand awareness.

The key practical implication of these findings is that gadget brands cannot afford to select influencers based solely on follower count. Far more determinant is choosing influencers who hold a credible reputation within the technology community influencers known for the honesty of their reviews, the depth of their technical knowledge, and their capacity to build authentic relationships with their audiences.

Brand Awareness as a Critical Mediator in the TikTok Ecosystem

One of the most significant findings from this literature synthesis is the role of brand awareness as a mediating variable in the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer behavioral outcomes. Hutami (2024) explicitly demonstrated that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions among Gen Z TikTok Shop users although it does not directly mediate the relationship between influencer

marketing and purchase decisions. This finding has an important implication: influencer marketing is most effectively viewed as an instrument for building brand awareness, not as a direct sales conversion tool.

Maradona (2024) confirmed this finding from a different perspective that influencer marketing influences purchasing decisions both through direct pathways and through the mediation of brand awareness and price perception. In the context of gadget products, which carry higher price points and longer purchasing decision cycles than impulse-buy items, the role of brand awareness as a mediator becomes even more crucial. Consumers do not immediately purchase a gadget after watching a single influencer video they first form brand awareness, accumulate information from multiple sources, and only then make a purchasing decision.

Comparative Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing Across Digital Platforms

Although this study focuses on TikTok, a comparison with findings from other platforms provides valuable perspective. Maesaroh (2025) studied influencer marketing on YouTube for the Samsung Galaxy A Series and found $R^2=0.497$ higher than the finding of Istimaroh (2025) on TikTok Shop ($R^2=0.270$). This difference does not imply that TikTok is less effective; rather, it reflects differences in the consumer journey phase: YouTube tends to be more effective in the research and consideration phase, while TikTok is more effective in the awareness and discovery phase.

Table 2. Comparison of Empirical Findings: Influencer Marketing and Brand Awareness/Purchase Intention

Author (Year)	Platform	Product Context	Method & Sample	Key Findings	Key Figures
Naziih et al. (2021)	TikTok	Fashion (FKIP UNS)	Quantitative, 154 resp.	TikTok influencer review → purchase intention: positive & significant	Positive significant
Maradona (2024)	TikTok	General products (Bali)	SEM-PLS, 204 resp.	Influencer marketing & live streaming → brand awareness → purchase decision	All paths significant
Hutami (2024)	TikTok Shop	General products Gen Z	PLS-SEM SmartPLS, 112 resp.	Brand awareness mediates social media marketing → purchase decision; NOT influencer marketing directly	Brand awareness = critical mediator
Maesaroh (2025)	YouTube	Gadget (Samsung Galaxy A)	Regression, 110 resp.	Influencer marketing → purchase intention Samsung Galaxy A: positive significant	$\beta=0.274$; $R^2=0.497$
Istimaroh (2025)	TikTok Shop	General products (Samarinda)	Regression, 127 resp.	Influencer credibility (trustworthiness + expertise +	$R^2=0.270$

				attractiveness) → purchase intention: significant	
Pradana & Ridanasti (2026)	Social media (general)	General products	PLS-SEM, 200 resp.	Influencer credibility → attitude toward influencer → purchase intention: significant	Credibility & attitude significant
Sakir (2025)	TikTok	UMKM Culinary (Palembang)	Qualitative case study	TikTok → brand recognition + brand recall + customer interaction increased	Sales +25–30%

Source: Literature synthesis, processed by the authors (2026)

Challenges in Implementing Gadget Influencer Marketing on TikTok

Although empirical evidence consistently confirms the effectiveness of influencer marketing in building brand awareness for gadget products, several structural challenges warrant attention. First, Sakir (2025) identifies that consistency in content production and adaptation to changes in TikTok's algorithm are the primary challenges faced by brands utilizing influencer marketing. TikTok's dynamic algorithm means that strategies that succeed today may not be equally effective tomorrow.

Second, Hutami (2024) found that the influence of influencer marketing is weaker than social media marketing as a whole in driving purchase decisions among Generation Z. This indicates that gadget brands cannot rely solely on influencer marketing they need to integrate it within a more comprehensive social media marketing strategy. Influencers are an important component of the digital marketing ecosystem, but are not the sole determinant of brand awareness success.

Third, the finding by Pradana & Ridanasti (2026) that message type (informative vs. entertainment) does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention indicates that excessive investment in content format decisions (whether content should be informative or entertaining) is a less productive concern than investment in the credibility of the influencer themselves. For gadget brands, this means that selecting influencers based on their reputation and credibility within the technology community is far more important than selection based on follower count or content style.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that influencer marketing has a significant and measurable effect on brand awareness of gadget products among Indonesian TikTok users, operating through mechanisms involving the formation of source credibility, consumer attitude toward the influencer, and brand awareness as a critical mediating variable.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the literature synthesis. First, influencer credibility encompassing trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness as defined by Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) is the most crucial determinant of gadget influencer marketing effectiveness. Investment in selecting credible influencers within the technology community is proven to be more effective than simply choosing influencers with the largest follower counts.

Second, brand awareness functions as a critical mediating variable between influencer marketing activities and consumer behavioral outcomes. Influencer marketing is most effectively viewed as a long-term brand awareness building instrument not an instant sales conversion tool particularly for gadget products that have long purchasing decision cycles.

Third, while TikTok is proven to be effective as an influencer marketing platform (sales contribution of +25–30%, R^2 for gadget influencer marketing at 49.7%), its effectiveness is optimized when integrated within a comprehensive social media marketing strategy, rather than deployed as a standalone instrument.

Based on these conclusions, the study recommends: (1) gadget brands should prioritize influencer selection based on credibility dimensions particularly technical expertise and a reputation for honest reviews; (2) TikTok influencer marketing strategies should be designed with a long-term brand awareness orientation through content consistency and a cohesive brand narrative; (3) future research should empirically examine differences in the effectiveness of gadget influencer marketing by influencer tier (nano, micro, macro, mega) on the Indonesian TikTok platform.

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