

The Role of Influencer Marketing in Digital Campaigns for Men's Skincare Health Products

Muhamad Rifki Maulana¹, Eko Purwanto², Indra Miftahul Fadli³

Universitas Muhammadiyah Tangerang, Indonesia

Email: muhamadrifki2809@gmail.com¹, eko.purwanto@umt.ac.id², indramiftahulf212@gmail.com³

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ABSTRACT

Recent advancements in healthcare technology have fueled the growth of Indonesia's skincare industry, particularly in men's skincare, reflecting evolving perceptions of masculinity. This study analyzes the role of influencer marketing in digital campaigns for men's skincare products, examining its impact on consumer perceptions, brand awareness, purchase intentions, and decisions. Employing a qualitative literature review, this research examines scientific journals, articles, reports, books, and other relevant publications on influencer marketing, digital campaigns, and men's skincare consumer behavior. Descriptive analysis focusing on key themes and findings from existing studies provides a comprehensive understanding of influencers' roles in shaping perceptions and purchase decisions through digital marketing strategies. This study addresses the gap in existing research by specifically focusing on the Indonesian men's skincare market and the unique role of influencer marketing within this context. The findings contribute to a practical understanding of effective influencer marketing strategies within the digital communication and consumer behavior fields.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, advances in health technology have brought significant progress, particularly in the skincare industry. This development can be found in a report (Hikmat, 2023) which states that the cosmetics and health care industry in Indonesia has experienced a significant increase. In the first semester of 2023, there was an increase of around 5%, and it is predicted that it will continue to grow until it reaches 9% by 2026. The initial demand of the market has led to the emergence of several new cosmetic products that aim to meet the needs of consumers. One of the most prominent phenomena in the skincare industry is the shift in public perception of masculinity, largely due to the media and rapidly changing public sentiment.

According to (Utari & Amy Istiqlala Sophia Hikmah, 2024), although masculinity plays a minor role in the aforementioned characteristics, skincare products are now more proactive in communicating the importance of skincare to individuals. This effort also challenges long-held stereotypes about masculinity and expands the definition in a more inclusive direction. This phenomenon is due to the emergence of new products specifically designed to meet modern needs, as described by Indocare B2B Services (2021). These products address quality, effectiveness and durability, which are the three main factors in consumers' choice of skincare products. Products such as moisturizers, face washes, and anti-aging products are becoming increasingly recognized by people who understand the importance of maintaining good health as part of their daily routine. This awareness has positively contributed to the growth of the skincare industry for men. Research conducted by (Kristiana, 2022) also revealed that the way masculinity is portrayed on social media has a negative impact on self-perception and self-confidence. The results of this study show that consumers are more closely related to those (influencers) who use relevant and authentic masculinity.

Consumer behavior is increasingly influenced by the use of social media in society, especially regarding self-esteem. Social media does not completely suppress the desire to purchase skincare products, but self-perception influenced by social media exposure is an important factor in purchasing decisions. Social media platforms such as Instagram also help dispel traditional myths about masculinity aimed at metrosexuals, encouraging more people to take care of their skin and use skincare product (Putranto et al., 2022). In this situation, influencer marketing becomes an effective tool to influence consumers' personal opinions through engaging and highly credible content strategies. As a result, purchase intention among young men is driven by trust and emotional connection with influencers, especially those who are relevant and (Azmat et al., 2024). Therefore, many skincare companies have started collaborating with influencers to enlighten the public about their own feelings and perspectives, as well as to provide new insights into masculinity. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the role of influencer marketing in digital campaigns for men's skincare health products, specifically in shaping consumer perceptions, increasing brand awareness, and influencing purchase intentions and decisions.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review methodology. Data was gathered through a comprehensive review of various sources including scientific journals, articles, research reports, books, and other publications relevant to influencer marketing, digital campaigns, and male consumer behavior in the skincare market. The selection criteria included peer-reviewed publications focusing on influencer marketing, digital skincare campaigns, and male consumer behavior in relevant markets (primarily Indonesia and studies with comparable cultural contexts). A total of 17 sources were analyzed. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the research questions. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of how influencers shape perceptions and purchasing decisions within the digital marketing landscape for men's skincare.

3. Results and Discussion

The men's skincare industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth in recent years. (Hendijani, 2023) noted that more and more Indonesian men are realizing the importance of skincare, especially among the millennial generation who are now more open to self-care. According to this study, skincare is now considered part of a man's lifestyle, no longer a product only for women. Men's skincare products are increasingly available, with a variety of options tailored to the needs of men's thicker and oilier skin.

This market growth is reflected in the increasing sales of men's skincare products, such as face creams, which have reportedly more than doubled in recent years. Despite being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the local cosmetics industry has shown resilience and continues to expand, signaling that demand for male skincare products remains strong (Dwiyanisa, 2022). Some of the main factors driving this trend include cultural changes, increasing acceptance of metrosexuality, and shifting perceptions of masculinity. Men are now more open to self-care routines without feeling their masculine identity is threatened. In addition, social media such as Instagram also plays a major role in influencing consumption behavior, with trends and endorsements from influencers directly increasing awareness and interest in skincare products (Nawiyah et al., 2023).

Social media, particularly Instagram, plays a huge role in shaping the way men view skincare as part of their identity and self-image. These platforms often feature certain beauty standards, which indirectly create new social expectations for men's appearance. Visual representations shown through influencer posts and product advertisements often reflect the modern ideal of masculinity, including clean and well-groomed skin, which is increasingly accepted as a symbol of confidence for men today (Santos et al., 2024).

In the context of marketing, Instagram is a strategic medium for brands to convey messages and instill self-care habits in male consumers. Companies leverage user-generated content as well as support from influencers to reinforce the normalization of skincare routines. This strategy has proven to be effective in influencing perceptions and purchase intention, especially since self-image and social pressure are the two main factors that motivate men to use skincare products (Dettano & Boragnio, 2022).

However, the psychological impact of social media exposure cannot be ignored. The idealized images that are constantly displayed can trigger anxiety, body dissatisfaction, and compulsive behavior towards skincare products. Phenomena such as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) towards beauty trends also reinforce skincare addiction, suggesting that the relationship between social media and male self-care is complex - it can support positive habits but also trigger negative impacts if not managed healthily (Jaffer et al., 2024).

Influencers who display authenticity and emotional relevance are proven to be more effective in building trust among young men, specifically Generation Z. This demographic group is highly connected to social media and tends to respond more positively to content that has emotional depth. The emotional attachment between the influencer and the audience creates a sense of closeness that makes product promotion feel more natural and genuine. Influencers who are able to build an emotional connection with their audience, through personal narratives or authentic communication styles, are usually more successful in attracting attention and shaping positive brand perceptions (Baghel, 2023).

Besides emotional connection, authenticity and credibility are also key determinants in the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Influencers who are perceived as genuine and less commercialized are more trusted by their followers. This trust is an important asset in driving purchase intentions, as young male consumers tend to be more open to recommendations from figures they perceive as real and relevant in their daily lives (Yang & Wang, 2024). Conversely, if influencers are perceived to have too many commercial partnerships without maintaining their personal integrity, the effectiveness of the campaign may decrease due to skepticism among the audience. Therefore, maintaining a balance between promotion and authenticity is a key challenge in building a sustainable digital marketing strategy.

Influencer marketing has proven to be an effective method to deliver brand messages in a more personalized and emotional way, especially to male consumers. The success of this strategy lies in the influencer's ability to deliver messages that feel authentic and relevant to the audience's lives. In sectors such as beauty and fashion, the involvement of influencers who represent modern masculinity, such as "beauty boys," is able to challenge traditional gender norms while expanding the market reach to male segments that were previously under-served by beauty campaigns (Frankel, 2020).

Emotional aspects are crucial in shaping loyalty and purchase decisions. Influencers who are able to build a sense of emotional attachment and community among their followers can create a deeper and more sustainable relationship with the male audience. Trust in the influencer, which is influenced by authenticity, personal experience and value congruence with the brand, contributes greatly to strengthening the brand image in the minds of consumers. Influencer credibility also directly influences attitudes towards the brand as well as purchase intentions, making the selection of influencers aligned with brand identity a crucial aspect of digital marketing campaigns (HOANG & Anh HUA, 2024).

On the other hand, the content should be emotionally relevant and communicative to the male audience. Personal stories, authentic experiences, and narratives that depict the real transformation of using the product can increase engagement and build cognitive trust. The alignment between the influencer's persona and the brand's message will maximize the campaign's impact, as consumers will be more receptive to messages from figures they consider representative. However, not all men respond positively to influencer marketing. Some are still more comfortable with traditional advertising approaches, making it important for brands to adopt a balanced marketing strategy, combining multiple channels to reach diverse audiences (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2024).

Key indicators of a successful digital campaign in marketing men's skincare products include content effectiveness, user engagement on social media, and positive brand perception. Interesting and relevant content can increase consumer awareness and purchase intent, while engagement on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok strengthens the relationship between the brand and the audience. The brand image established through consistent digital campaigns also contributes to consumer loyalty towards men's skincare products (Vidyanata et al., 2024).

4. Conclusion

The men's skincare industry in Indonesia is showing rapid growth, influenced by increasing awareness of the importance of self-care and shifting perceptions of masculinity. In this regard, influencer marketing plays a central role in effectively delivering brand messages to male consumers,

especially the younger generation who are active on social media. Influencers who display authenticity and have an emotional connection with the audience are able to shape a positive image of the product, strengthen relationships with consumers and influence purchasing decisions. Aside from being an extension of the brand, they also play a role in shaping new social norms about men's self-care.

However, the impact of social media is not always positive. Excessive exposure to idealized standards of appearance can create social pressure and affect mental health. Therefore, influencer marketing strategies need to be designed wisely and ethically, taking into account the diversity of the audience and their values. Companies should collaborate with value-relevant and authentic influencers so that digital campaigns not only result in increased sales, but also support healthy and inclusive self-identity formation among men.

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