

Consumer Perceptions of Influencer Authenticity: A Sharia Economic Law Perspective on Generation Z

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Abstract

This study examines how Generation Z consumers in urban Indonesia (West Java) perceive influencer authenticity in online fashion marketing through the lens of Sharia Economic Law. While prior studies have extensively explored influencer authenticity, limited attention has been given to its integration with Islamic legal-ethical principles, particularly within a normative-empirical framework. Moreover, existing research tends to overlook how authenticity is operationalized within Sharia-based ethical boundaries in digital marketing contexts. Addressing this gap, the study draws on fiqh al-mu'āmalāt concepts, including transparency (bayān), honesty (sidq), and the prohibition of deception (tadlīs). A qualitative case study approach was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with 20 social media users aged 18–25. Data were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework with NVivo support. The findings identify five key dimensions of perceived authenticity: transparency and consistency, trustworthiness, relatability (homophily), parasocial interaction, and alignment with Sharia-compliant values. Authenticity functions as a mediating construct linking influencer attributes to consumer trust and ethical judgment. The results further indicate that micro influencers are perceived as more authentic and ethically aligned than celebrity endorsers, while inadequate sponsorship disclosure raises concerns related to gharar and tadlīs. This study contributes theoretically by proposing an integrated authenticity framework grounded in Sharia Economic Law, extending existing influencer marketing literature beyond secular perspectives. As a research implication, it highlights the need to reconceptualize authenticity as a legally and ethically bounded construct in digital marketing contexts. Practically, the findings inform the development of transparent and Sharia-compliant marketing strategies in Muslim-majority markets.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing; Authenticity; Sharia Economic Law; Consumer Trust; Transparency; Generation Z.

Abstrak

Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana konsumen Generasi Z di perkotaan Indonesia (Jawa Barat) memandang keaslian influencer dalam pemasaran fashion online melalui lensa Hukum Ekonomi Syariah. Sementara penelitian sebelumnya telah mengeksplorasi keaslian influencer, perhatian terbatas telah diberikan pada integrasinya dengan

prinsip-prinsip hukum-etika Islam, terutama dalam kerangka normatif-empiris. Selain itu, penelitian yang ada cenderung mengabaikan bagaimana keaslian dioperasionalkan dalam batas-batas etika berbasis Syariah dalam konteks pemasaran digital. Mengatasi kesenjangan ini, penelitian ini mengacu pada konsep fiqh al-mu'āmalāt, termasuk transparansi (bayān), kejujuran (ṣidq), dan larangan penipuan (tadlīs). Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan, melibatkan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan 20 pengguna media sosial berusia 18-25 tahun. Data dianalisis secara tematik menggunakan kerangka kerja Braun dan Clarke (2006) dengan dukungan NVivo. Temuan ini mengidentifikasi lima dimensi utama dari keaslian yang dirasakan: transparansi dan konsistensi, kepercayaan, keterkaitan (homofili), interaksi parasosial, dan keselarasan dengan nilai-nilai yang sesuai dengan Syariah. Keaslian berfungsi sebagai konstruksi mediasi yang menghubungkan atribut influencer dengan kepercayaan konsumen dan penilaian etis. Hasilnya lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa influencer mikro dianggap lebih otentik dan selaras secara etis daripada endorser selebriti, sementara pengungkapan sponsorship yang tidak memadai menimbulkan kekhawatiran terkait dengan gharar dan tadlīs. Studi ini berkontribusi secara teoritis dengan mengusulkan kerangka kerja keaslian terpadu yang didasarkan pada Hukum Ekonomi Syariah, memperluas literatur pemasaran influencer yang ada di luar perspektif sekuler. Sebagai implikasi penelitian, ini menyoroti perlunya mengkonseptualisasikan ulang keaslian sebagai konstruksi yang terikat secara hukum dan etis dalam konteks pemasaran digital. Secara praktis, temuan ini menginformasikan pengembangan strategi pemasaran yang transparan dan sesuai dengan Syariah di pasar mayoritas Muslim.

Kata Kunci: Pemasaran Influencer; Keaslian; Hukum Ekonomi Syariah; Kepercayaan Konsumen; Transparansi; Generasi Z.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of communication technologies has significantly reshaped how companies engage with consumers, particularly in Indonesia as one of the largest social media markets in the Muslim world. In this context, social media not only functions as a promotional platform but also facilitates the formation of interactive and emotionally driven relationships between brands, influencers, and consumers. Influencer marketing has consequently emerged as a dominant strategy, leveraging individuals with substantial follower bases to communicate brand messages in a more personalized manner. Prior studies suggest that influencer marketing is more effective than traditional advertising in fostering engagement due to its perceived authenticity and relational proximity (Handranata & Kalila, 2025). However, within the Indonesian context where consumer behavior is closely intertwined with religious and ethical considerations the growing reliance on influencers raises important questions regarding compliance

with Sharia Economic Law, particularly in relation to transparency, honesty, and the avoidance of deceptive practices in digital promotion.

One of the most critical elements determining the effectiveness of influencer marketing is the perception of authenticity. While prior studies emphasize its role in fostering trust, they often conceptualize authenticity primarily in psychological and relational terms. For instance, Ünalmiş (2024) highlights authenticity as a key driver of trust in response to increasing skepticism toward commercialized content, whereas Obreja (2023) associates it with behavioral consistency, communication style, and transparency among Generation Z audiences. However, such perspectives tend to reduce authenticity to a subjective perception, overlooking its normative and ethical dimensions. In contexts such as Indonesia, where consumer behavior is strongly influenced by religious values, authenticity cannot be understood solely as a relational construct but must also be evaluated against Sharia-based principles, including truthfulness, transparency, and the prohibition of deceptive practices. This indicates a conceptual limitation in existing literature, which has yet to fully integrate authenticity within a legally and ethically grounded framework.

Generation Z holds a strategic position in digital marketing, particularly in Indonesia, where this cohort constitutes a dominant segment of active social media users with increasing purchasing power. Prior studies consistently show that trust in influencers significantly shapes their purchase intentions, with authenticity acting as a reinforcing factor (Singh, 2024). In addition, relatability defined as the influencer's ability to appear close and genuine in everyday life has been identified as a key driver of engagement in the fashion sector (Wang, 2025). However, the strong reliance of Generation Z on influencer-generated content also raises critical legal and ethical concerns, particularly when persuasive communication blurs the boundary between personal expression and commercial intent. From the perspective of Sharia Economic Law, such ambiguity may lead to elements of *gharar* (uncertainty) and *tadlīs* (deception), especially in cases of undisclosed endorsements or misleading representations. Therefore, understanding how authenticity is perceived by Generation Z is not merely a matter of marketing effectiveness, but also a legal imperative to ensure that digital promotional practices adhere to principles of transparency, honesty, and fairness within Sharia-compliant transactions.

The online fashion industry represents one of the most intensive arenas for influencer marketing practices, particularly in Indonesia's

rapidly expanding digital economy. While prior studies highlight that perceived authenticity enhances consumer trust and brand attachment, these discussions remain largely confined to marketing performance outcomes (Ünalımsı, 2024; Obreja, 2023). In the context of Sharia Economic Law, however, the issue extends beyond effectiveness to the legality and ethical validity of promotional practices. Fashion related influencer content is often highly curated to project aspirational lifestyles, blurring the distinction between genuine personal expression and commercial endorsement. Such practices raise significant concerns regarding compliance with fundamental Sharia principles, particularly the obligation of transparency (*bayān*) and the prohibition of deceptive conduct (*tadlīs*).

For Generation Z audiences, the tension between expected authenticity and the reality of commercially driven content is not merely a matter of trust erosion but may indicate the presence of *gharar* (uncertainty) in digital transactions. When sponsorship disclosure is unclear or when representations are selectively constructed to exaggerate product value, influencer marketing risks violating the requirement of truthful representation (*ṣidq*) in *mu‘āmalāt*. Therefore, the challenge within the online fashion sector should not be viewed solely as a strategic issue for maintaining consumer engagement, but as a critical legal concern requiring the alignment of digital promotional practices with Sharia compliant standards.

In addition, statistical evidence underscores the economic significance of fashion e-commerce in Indonesia. According to ECDB (2024) and Mordor Intelligence (2025), the sector generated approximately USD 14.98 billion in revenue in 2024 and is projected to exceed USD 35 billion by 2030. While this rapid expansion reflects the growing reliance on digital platforms and the increasing influence of social media-driven marketing, it also raises critical regulatory concerns. The accelerated growth of the digital fashion economy has not been accompanied by equally robust legal safeguards, creating a condition of rapid growth without adequate legal safeguards in influencer-driven promotional practices.

In the context of Sharia Economic Law, this imbalance poses significant risks, particularly regarding the enforcement of transparency (*bayān*), truthfulness (*ṣidq*), and the prohibition of deceptive practices (*tadlīs*) in online transactions. As influencer marketing becomes a dominant mechanism shaping consumer behavior, the absence of clear regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms may allow

ethically questionable practices such as undisclosed endorsements or misleading representations to proliferate. Therefore, the expansion of Indonesia's fashion e-commerce sector should not only be viewed as an economic opportunity but also as a pressing legal issue requiring stronger alignment between digital marketing practices and Sharia-compliant regulatory standards.

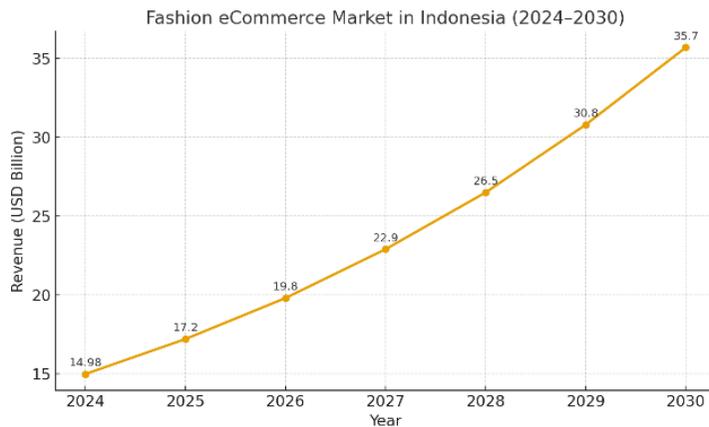


Figure 1. Fashion eCommerce Market in Indonesia (2024–2030)
Source: ECDB (2024); Mordor Intelligence (2025).

The academic literature on influencer marketing has grown substantially; however, it remains largely dominated by quantitative approaches that examine relationships among variables such as credibility, trust, authenticity, and purchase intention (Singh, 2024; Handranata & Kalila, 2025). While these studies provide important statistical insights, they tend to conceptualize authenticity as a measurable construct, thereby overlooking its deeper normative and contextual dimensions. In particular, there is a lack of normative-legal analysis in influencer marketing, as existing research rarely evaluates authenticity in relation to legal and ethical frameworks governing commercial conduct. As a result, the question of whether influencer practices comply with principles such as transparency, truthfulness, and the prohibition of deception remains insufficiently addressed.

Qualitative inquiry offers a valuable approach to addressing this limitation, as it enables the exploration of how authenticity is interpreted and negotiated within specific socio-cultural and legal contexts. In the case of Indonesia, where consumer behavior is closely intertwined with religious values, understanding authenticity requires not only capturing subjective perceptions but also situating them within the framework of Sharia Economic Law. Ünalmiş (2024) and Obreja (2023) highlight that

perceptions of authenticity vary across individuals, shaped by expectations of sincerity, lifestyle congruence, and openness. However, these insights remain largely descriptive unless linked to normative standards that define acceptable and lawful promotional practices. Therefore, integrating qualitative perspectives with a Sharia-based legal framework is essential to advance a more comprehensive understanding of authenticity in influencer marketing.

Furthermore, most existing research has focused on developed country contexts, particularly in Europe and North America, while studies in emerging economies such as Indonesia remain limited. This gap is significant, as Indonesia represents one of the largest social media markets globally, with Generation Z as its dominant user base. The rapid expansion of the online fashion industry, coupled with the widespread reliance on influencer marketing, makes Indonesia a highly relevant context for examining how authenticity is perceived and constructed. A focused investigation into Indonesian Generation Z is therefore both timely and necessary, particularly given the interplay between digital consumption and religious-ethical considerations in everyday transactions.

From a practical standpoint, understanding consumer perceptions of authenticity can assist brands and digital marketing practitioners in designing more responsible and effective influencer collaborations. However, beyond its practical relevance, this study offers a distinct theoretical contribution by integrating qualitative inquiry with Sharia based legal analysis. This combination represents a key novelty, as it moves beyond dominant quantitative and marketing-oriented approaches by embedding consumer perceptions within a normative-legal framework. By doing so, the study not only explores how authenticity is socially constructed, but also evaluates how such constructions align with principles of transparency, truthfulness, and the prohibition of deceptive practices in Sharia Economic Law. Consequently, this research advances the literature by bridging interpretive consumer insights with legal-ethical evaluation, providing a more comprehensive framework for understanding authenticity in influencer marketing.

In light of these considerations, this study addresses the identified gaps by examining how Indonesian Generation Z perceives authenticity in online fashion influencer marketing within a Sharia Economic Law framework. Rather than focusing solely on its impact on consumer trust and attitudes, this study seeks to explore how authenticity is interpreted,

constructed, and evaluated by consumers in relation to both social interaction and normative-legal expectations.

To achieve this objective, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do Indonesian Generation Z consumers define and interpret authenticity in online fashion influencers?
2. What indicators do they use to evaluate the authenticity of influencer content?
3. How do these perceptions relate to principles of Sharia Economic Law, particularly transparency, truthfulness, and the avoidance of deceptive practices?
4. How does perceived authenticity influence their trust, attitudes, and engagement with influencers and brands?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to develop a more comprehensive understanding of authenticity that integrates consumer perception with legal ethical evaluation in digital marketing contexts.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, this study develops a conceptual framework that integrates authenticity, trust, homophily, and parasocial relationships as central constructs in explaining the effectiveness of influencer marketing among Generation Z consumers in the online fashion industry. The framework emphasizes that authenticity perception is not an isolated variable but is shaped by external drivers such as influencer type, content strategies, cultural context, and value alignment.

First, the type of influencer and the strategies they employ in creating content significantly influence how authenticity is perceived. Micro- and nano-influencers, for instance, tend to produce content that is more personal, relatable, and interactive compared to celebrity influencers, which enhances perceptions of genuineness and credibility (De Veirman et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2020). Similarly, content strategies that emphasize informativeness, emotional storytelling, and transparency in sponsorship disclosure further reinforce authenticity (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Kim & Kim, 2021).

Second, cultural factors and value alignment act as contextual determinants of authenticity. In collectivist and value-driven societies, such as Indonesia, Generation Z audiences are particularly sensitive to whether influencers demonstrate transparency and share values related to sustainability, inclusivity, or social justice. When influencers embody values that resonate with their audiences, authenticity perceptions and

brand credibility are significantly strengthened (El-Shihy, 2025; Xiao et al., 2018).

Authenticity perception then serves as a critical antecedent to trust and homophily. Trust, rooted in the source credibility framework, reflects followers' confidence in an influencer's honesty, expertise, and intentions (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Homophily, defined as the perceived similarity between influencer and follower, further reinforces authenticity and enhances social identification (Erdogan, 1999; Ki & Kim, 2019). Together, trust and homophily create fertile ground for parasocial relationships to develop.

Parasocial relationships represent one-sided but emotionally meaningful connections between influencers and followers (Horton & Wohl, 1956). These relationships amplify the effects of authenticity and trust, creating stronger emotional attachment and identification with both the influencer and the endorsed brand (Labrecque, 2014; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Finally, trust and parasocial relationships jointly influence consumer attitudes, which encompass evaluations of both influencers and the promoted brands. Positive consumer attitudes subsequently drive purchase intention and brand loyalty. In the online fashion industry, where symbolic consumption and identity expression are central, these outcomes are particularly critical for long-term brand success (Duffett, 2025).

Thus, the proposed conceptual framework positions authenticity perception as the pivotal construct linking influencer characteristics, cultural and value alignment, and consumer outcomes. It highlights a sequential process in which influencer type and content strategies, together with cultural values, shape authenticity; authenticity fosters trust and homophily; trust and homophily reinforce parasocial relationships; and these relationships ultimately drive consumer attitudes and purchase behavior.

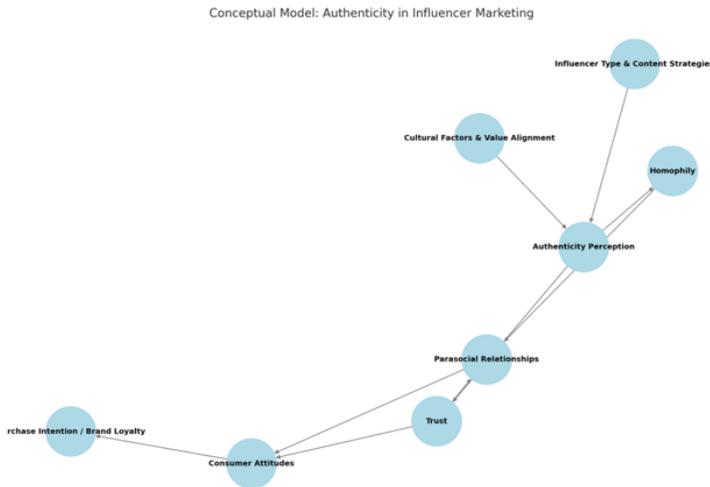


Figure 2. Conceptual Model: Authenticity in Influencer Marketing
Source: Developed by the Author, 2025

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore how Generation Z consumers in Indonesia construct and interpret authenticity in online fashion influencer marketing within the framework of Sharia Economic Law. A qualitative design is appropriate for capturing subjective meanings, lived experiences, and context dependent interpretations of authenticity as a socially constructed phenomenon (Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are obtained from in-depth interviews with Generation Z consumers (aged 18–25) who actively engage with fashion influencers on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Secondary data consist of digital content produced by selected influencers, including posts, videos, and promotional materials, which are analyzed to contextualize and triangulate participants' responses.

A purposive sampling technique is applied to select participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely active social media users who frequently interact with influencer-generated fashion content. A total of 15–20 participants are targeted, following recommendations for achieving data saturation in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2006). Data collection is conducted through semi structured in depth interviews, allowing flexibility to explore participants' perceptions while maintaining consistency across responses

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interview protocol focuses on key constructs such as authenticity, trust, transparency, relatability, and perceptions of ethical compliance in influencer practices. In addition, document analysis of influencer content is conducted to examine how authenticity is performed and represented in digital contexts, thereby strengthening data triangulation and contextual depth (Bowen, 2009).

Data are analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, which involves data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. NVivo software is utilized to facilitate systematic coding, data organization, and traceability of analytical processes (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). To ensure research rigor, the study adopts trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility is enhanced through triangulation of interview and document data as well as member checking with selected participants. Transferability is supported by providing rich contextual descriptions, while dependability and confirmability are ensured through maintaining an audit trail and practicing researcher reflexivity throughout the analytical process.

RESULT AND

Conceptualizing Authenticity: Transparency, Consistency, and Sharia Compliant Disclosure

Participants conceptualized authenticity as being “real,” consistent, and transparent across both personal and sponsored content. Authenticity was not merely understood as a personal trait but as a form of accountable communication, particularly in commercial contexts. From a Sharia Economic Law perspective, this aligns with the principles of *ṣidq* (*truthfulness*) and *bayān* (*clear disclosure*), which require that promotional messages be honest and free from ambiguity.

Participants strongly emphasized the importance of disclosing paid partnerships, viewing undisclosed endorsements as deceptive practices that undermine credibility. Such practices reflect concerns related to *tadlīs* (*misrepresentation*) and *gharar* (*uncertainty*), indicating that authenticity is not only socially constructed but also normatively regulated. When influencers appeared overly staged or excessively commercialized, participants reported disengagement, suggesting that authenticity is compromised when economic motives obscure genuine self representation.

Indicators of Authenticity: Trust, Relatability, and Perceived Sincerity

Participants identified several key indicators used to evaluate authenticity, including trustworthiness, relatability (*homophily*), and perceived sincerity. Trust emerged as a central evaluative mechanism, built through consistent honesty, demonstrated expertise, and openness about product limitations. Influencers who acknowledged imperfections or provided balanced reviews were perceived as more credible and ethically responsible.

Relatability also played a significant role, with participants expressing stronger identification with influencers who shared similar cultural values, lifestyles, and consumption patterns. This perceived similarity enhanced engagement and reduced skepticism. However, participants were also aware that such relatability could be strategically constructed, raising concerns about the authenticity of performed identities. Overall, authenticity was assessed through a combination of behavioral consistency, emotional resonance, and perceived moral integrity.

Authenticity within Sharia Economic Law: Ethical Boundaries and Legal Implications

From the perspective of Sharia Economic Law, participants' perceptions of authenticity reflect deeper normative expectations regarding ethical conduct in digital marketing. Transparency in sponsorship disclosure and avoidance of misleading claims were considered essential to prevent elements of *gharar* (*uncertainty*) and *tadlis* (*deception*).

Participants implicitly evaluated influencer practices against principles such as *ṣidq* (*truthfulness*) and *amānah* (*trustworthiness*), indicating that authenticity carries legal ethical implications beyond subjective perception. Moreover, parasocial relationships where influencers are perceived as “friends” were found to intensify ethical risks, as emotional closeness may obscure commercial intent. This creates a condition where persuasive communication may unintentionally violate Sharia principles if not accompanied by clear disclosure. Thus, authenticity functions not only as a social construct but also as a normative boundary that defines the legitimacy of influencer marketing practices.

Implications of Authenticity: Trust, Engagement, and Ethical Consumer Response

Perceived authenticity significantly influenced participants' trust, attitudes, and engagement with influencers and brands. Authentic influencers were more likely to generate positive emotional connections, increase message acceptance, and strengthen purchase intentions. Conversely, perceptions of inauthenticity particularly due to excessive commercialization or lack of transparency led to skepticism, disengagement, and reduced trust.

Participants also demonstrated a heightened sensitivity to ethical alignment, preferring influencers whose content reflected honesty, cultural relevance, and socially responsible values. In this sense, consumer responses were shaped not only by affective attachment but also by ethical evaluation. Authenticity therefore operates as a mediating construct linking influencer characteristics to both behavioral outcomes and perceptions of ethical legitimacy in digital transactions.

DISCUSSION

This study examines how Indonesian Generation Z constructs and evaluates authenticity in online fashion influencer marketing within a Sharia Economic Law framework. The findings demonstrate that authenticity is not merely a psychological or relational construct but also a normative-legal standard that governs ethical digital market practices.

Conceptualizing Authenticity: From Perception to Legal-Ethical Obligation

The findings reveal that participants conceptualize authenticity as consistency, transparency, and truthful self-representation. While prior studies frame authenticity primarily as a driver of credibility and engagement, this study advances the understanding by situating authenticity within a normative legal context.

From the perspective of Sharia Economic Law, authenticity reflects the principles of *ṣidq* (*truthfulness*) and *bayān* (*clear disclosure*), where commercial communication must be free from ambiguity. Participants' strong rejection of undisclosed endorsements indicates that authenticity is interpreted not merely as a desirable trait but as a moral obligation. This shifts the conceptualization of authenticity from a marketing attribute to a criterion for assessing the permissibility (*ḥalāl*) of influencer practices.

Indicators of Authenticity: Trust, Relatability, and Moral Evaluation

The study identifies trust, relatability (*homophily*), and perceived sincerity as key indicators through which authenticity is evaluated. Unlike dominant literature that treats these constructs as psychological

predictors of consumer behavior, the findings suggest that they also function as mechanisms of moral evaluation.

Trust, in particular, is reinterpreted as *amānah* (trustworthiness), a foundational principle in Islamic commercial ethics. Influencers are perceived as ethically legitimate only when they demonstrate honesty, disclose limitations, and avoid exaggeration. Similarly, relatability enhances engagement but must be grounded in genuine representation. When similarity is strategically constructed, it risks becoming a form of implicit manipulation, raising ethical concerns regarding the authenticity of communication.

Authenticity within Sharia Economic Law: Ethical Boundaries and Legal Risks

The findings further demonstrate that authenticity operates as a boundary marker between permissible and impermissible marketing practices. Participants implicitly evaluate influencer content against Sharia principles, particularly in relation to *gharar* (*uncertainty*) and *tadlīs* (*deception*).

Parasocial relationships, while enhancing emotional engagement, introduce significant ethical risks. Emotional closeness may obscure the commercial intent of influencer content, leading to hidden persuasion and reduced consumer awareness. From a Sharia perspective, this condition creates potential violations of transparency requirements and undermines informed consent in transactions.

Thus, authenticity functions as a regulatory mechanism that ensures influencer marketing remains aligned with ethical and legal standards, rather than merely serving as a tool for increasing engagement.

Implications of Authenticity: Trust, Engagement, and Ethical Legitimacy

Perceived authenticity significantly shapes consumer trust, attitudes, and engagement with influencers and brands. However, this study extends existing literature by demonstrating that consumer responses are not solely driven by emotional attachment but also by ethical considerations.

Participants showed a strong preference for influencers whose content aligns with broader values such as honesty, cultural relevance, and social responsibility. This aligns with the concept of *maṣlaḥah* (public interest), where economic activities are expected to promote societal welfare. Consequently, authenticity emerges as a mediating

construct that links influencer characteristics to both behavioral outcomes and perceptions of ethical legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that authenticity in influencer marketing, as perceived by Indonesian Generation Z, extends beyond a psychological or relational construct and operates as a normative-legal standard grounded in Sharia Economic Law. Authenticity manifested through transparency, consistency, and truthful representation functions as a key mechanism linking influencer characteristics to consumer trust, engagement, and ethical judgment. The findings show that the absence of clear disclosure and the presence of exaggerated or ambiguous claims may introduce elements of *tadlīs* (misrepresentation) and *gharar* (uncertainty), thereby undermining both consumer trust and the legal permissibility of digital marketing practices. Accordingly, authenticity should be understood not merely as a driver of effectiveness, but as a criterion for determining the ethical legitimacy of influencer-based transactions in Muslim-majority contexts.

From a regulatory perspective, the study highlights the urgent need to address the condition of rapid digital market growth without adequate legal safeguards. Regulators should establish clearer and enforceable standards for influencer marketing, particularly regarding mandatory sponsorship disclosure, standardized labeling of paid content, and accountability mechanisms for misleading representations. In parallel, industry actors should adopt self-regulatory codes aligned with Sharia principles to ensure transparency and fairness in digital promotion. For future research, further studies are needed to develop measurable indicators of Sharia-compliant authenticity, conduct comparative analyses across different cultural and regulatory contexts, and integrate quantitative validation to strengthen the generalizability of the proposed normative-empirical framework.

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