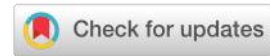




Research Article



Achieving Sustainable Consumer Protection in the Era of Social Media

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Received: October 8, 2024 / Revised: February 2, 2025/ Accepted: February 2, 2025

Abstract: The endorsement problem on Instagram is related to the rampant practice of non-transparent influencer marketing, which can mislead consumers and damage public trust in brands. Therefore, there are challenges and opportunities to achieve sustainable consumer protection in the era of social media, especially Instagram. This research explores how existing regulations can be updated to protect consumers more effectively and analyzes the role of influencers in maintaining advertising transparency in realizing Sustainable Consumer Protection. The method used is normative juridical with a conceptual approach, legislation, case studies, and comparative. The research results show that, *first* the development of technology and social media has influenced how entrepreneurs interact with consumers but also carries the risk of misleading marketing practices. Strengthening the legal framework and more effective law enforcement are needed to protect consumers from losses. In Indonesia, sustainable consumer protection can be achieved by encouraging ethical marketing practices and transparency, which align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Second*, in Thailand, despite challenges, existing regulations can support a balance between marketing innovation and sustainable consumer rights protection. *Third*, expanding regulations in Indonesia is also essential to improve consumer protection in the digital era. While endorsement practices on Instagram often lead to ethical violations, Indonesia does not yet have a specific policy regarding influencers. Therefore, increasing awareness and clear regulations will ensure more transparent, fair, and ethical marketing practices on social media platforms like Instagram.

Keywords: Consumer; Instagram; Social Media; Sustainable; Protection;



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INTRODUCTION

In light of the expanding Internet usage, social media have emerged as critical platforms for exchanging ideas, disseminating information, and producing content.¹ Social media platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, offer robust content creation and engagement tools, rendering them optimal for personal branding, brand promotion, and effective marketing.² One of the most effective business promotion instruments is social media, which is accessible to all. The most effective method of reaching many individuals, as well as an essential instrument for entrepreneurs and

¹ Madad Ali and others, 'Assessing the Impact of Green Consumption Behavior and Green Purchase Intention among Millennials toward Sustainable Environment', *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 30.9 (2022), 23335–47 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-23811-1>

² Heru Setiawan and others, 'Digitalization of Legal Transformation on Judicial Review in the Constitutional Court', *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System*, 4.2 (2024), 263–98 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i2.263>



business owners, is through social media.³ It is impossible to distinguish between business and marketing. Businesspeople are accountable for developing, implementing, and monitoring a program intended to facilitate transactions in the target market by satisfying the requirements of individuals or groups by product usage, price, promotion, and distribution. A prevalent marketing approach is to advertise products on Instagram by employing hashtags possessed by individuals with a significant following or by those who also follow the Instagram account.⁴

Successful marketing strategies employ these platforms to generate pertinent content, captivate audiences, and optimize performance through analytics. Throughout the decision-making process, social media and platforms are instrumental in influencing consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions, particularly concerning a product. It is an effective communication channel, enabling marketers to foster community building and activism around sustainability initiatives while promoting environmental awareness.⁵ Furthermore, these platforms promote environmentally friendly conduct by emphasizing interpersonal comparisons and reinforcing social norms regarding sustainability. A new class of influencers has emerged due to the extensive reach of platforms such as Instagram, which possess unparalleled influence in marketing partnerships. These influencers have amassed over 100 million followers (and counting). Jimmy Donaldson (MrBeast), 5-Minute Crafts, Khaby Lame, and Charli D'Amelio are prominent social media influencers who compete for advertiser revenues and have audiences that exceed those of most countries. Hired celebrities frequently serve as brand advocates in consumer decisions because of their authority and/or relationship with their audience. When brand advocates are at a loss for ideas, they often turn to celebrities to increase sales.⁶

As social media usage continues to expand, human interaction is evolving. These platforms offer the potential for one-on-one interactions and the direct engagement of groups, organizations, and governments with individuals, as well as for informal communication and commercial, social, political, and educational purposes. Over the past decade, the average daily time spent on social media has increased from 90 to 147 minutes in 2022, which accounts for 15% of the average daily waking hours. The Philippines has the highest daily time spent on social media, at 233 minutes (24%), while the United States has the lowest at 120 minutes (13%). Social media is a socializing agent for user interaction and allows brands to improve purchasing behavior by signaling three social media activities: consuming, contributing, and creating. This emphasizes the interactive nature of social media as a platform for

³ Yongbo Sun and Jiayuan Xing, 'The Impact of Social Media Information Sharing on the Green Purchase Intention among Generation Z', *Sustainability*, 14.11 (2022), 6879 <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14116879>

⁴ Fransiska Murwaningtyas, Muhamad Harisudin, and Heru Irianto, 'Effect of Celebrity Endorser Through Social Media on Organic Cosmetic Purchasing Intention Mediated with Attitude', *KnE Social Sciences*, 2020 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v4i3.6393>

⁵ Li Zhao, Stacy H. Lee, and Lauren Reiter Copeland, 'Social Media and Chinese Consumers' Environmentally Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intentions', *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 31.4 (2019), 855–74 <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-08-2017-0183>

⁶ Le Thanh Truc, 'Greening the Future: How Social Networks and Media Shapes Youth's Eco-Friendly Purchases', *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 10.4 (2024), 100410 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100410>



effective consumer-brand interaction (CBI). This phenomenon has been identified as a significant factor in strengthening the relationship between consumers and brands. This, in turn, contributes to the improvement of consumer behavioral intentions concerning loyalty, purchasing, and positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).⁷

The interaction between eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) and social media has influenced the influencer culture. Therefore, at present, the method of product sales is not limited to the company's social media platforms; instead, they may employ the influencer model. It is no longer possible to deny that the social media revolution has had a significant impact. For example, numerous public figures frequently make endorsements on social media. Public figures are required to evaluate the product appropriately based on their perceptions. However, the reality at present is the opposite, in which a public figure is endorsed to promote a product using the word or phrase created or recited by the seller. The public figure in question must be genuinely interested in the product and would like to review it based on their perceptions. The individual in question's business is primarily conducted through online media. The company commences selling cosmetics, food, bone broth, vitamins, toothpaste, soap, watches, smartphones, and other items. They typically employ endorsement marketing techniques on social media platforms such as Instagram to ensure the public recognizes their products. The activities that Influencers engage in when promoting products are capable of capturing the attention of consumers with their creative ideas. Consequently, influencers are not required to consistently employ a flexing or varying narrative when creating promotional content.⁸

The Internet has completely transformed the way we communicate. The increased availability and accessibility of information have led to a revolution in existing platforms and business models. The Internet has become almost ubiquitous in the modern business environment, resulting in the absence of any large or small businesses that can surpass its significance. With the continued growth of customer and social media engagement, as well as the variety and form of user interaction, the Internet has become more user-friendly and efficient than it was previously. However, the experience demonstrates that social media offers benefits and risks, frequently increasing users' reluctance to disclose their identities. There are numerous reasons for the negative impact of the Internet, mainly social media platforms such as Instagram, on product promotion, including user skepticism, regulatory effects, and privacy concerns. Although Instagram is a visually appealing platform with the potential to

⁷ Ganesh Dash, Kip Kiefer, and Justin Paul, 'Marketing-to-Millennials: Marketing 4.0, Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention', *Journal of Business Research*, 122 (2021), 608–20 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.10.016>

⁸ Kafferine Yamagishi and others, 'The Impact of Social Media Marketing Strategies on Promoting Sustainability of Tourism with Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping: A Case of Kalanggaman Island (Philippines)', *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 23.10 (2021), 14998–30 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-01283-6>



increase brand awareness, its effectiveness in facilitating real-time purchases is inconsistent due to various factors.⁹

At present, numerous consumers express significant skepticism regarding influencers, frequently questioning their credibility and trustworthiness. Subsequently, dissatisfaction with the feasibility and capability of physically demonstrating products resulted in a preference for traditional purchasing methods over Instagram promotion. In addition, the Federal Trade Commission's regulations that require clear sponsorship agreements have influenced consumers' engagement with influencer content, as consumers are increasingly distinguishing between authentic and fabricated sources. This lack of clarity can lead to a lack of trust, affecting the effectiveness of the platform's promotional campaigns.¹⁰

Despite Instagram's potential to enhance awareness, the high user engagement rate indicates that users are engaging with the advertisement, which increases the likelihood of a conversion. Furthermore, promotional content frequently detracts from the audience's attention, as educational content is not effectively communicated, resulting in diminished customer satisfaction. Similarly, Instagram has the potential to serve as an effective marketing tool, particularly in industries such as fashion, where an increase in usage is correlated with a higher purchase frequency. However, the widespread skepticism and regulatory uncertainty have resulted in a significant disadvantage for businesses that use Instagram for product promotion.¹¹

In reality, the Endorsement Technique via Instagram is frequently exploited to maximize promotion without regard for the product's authenticity, legality, or the genuine benefits it provides to consumers. The consumer's perception of a product significantly influences their decision to purchase it. Business actors occasionally employ various strategies to pique consumer interest in their products. One such strategy is to provide inaccurate information, such as making grandiose promises about the quality and utility of a product that does not align with the facts. For example, Putra Sirega, the owner of the psstore Instagram account, employed influencers to endorse the goods owned by the business actor. The business actor claimed that the goods were original and sold at a lower price than ordinary stores, with the slogan "Official Handphones, Popular Prices." However, the cell phones that the store promoted and sold were illegal. The IMEI number of the cell phones was not registered with the Ministry of Industry, which is evidence of their illegality. A

⁹ Devi Natali Setiawati and Tongam Sirait, 'Influence of Social Media Marketing Instagram and Brand Awareness on Purchase Decisions of PT. Mepro's Products', *Journal of World Science*, 3.7 (2024), 860–74 <https://doi.org/10.58344/jws.v3i7.690>

¹⁰ Ivana Krsmanović, Tijana Urošević, and Anica Nikitović, 'The Influence of Instagram Promotions on Young People's Purchasing Decisions: A Study on Persuasion, Credibility, and Influencer Impact', in *10th International Scientific Conference Technics, Informatic, and Education* (University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Čačak, 2024), pp. 220–27 <https://doi.org/10.46793/TIE24.220K>

¹¹ Ahmed Minhas, 'Instagram, Influencers, and Native Advertising: Examining Follower Engagement with Influencer Content', 2022 <https://doi.org/10.32920/ryerson.14654355.v1>



misleading advertisement is a new order placed in mass media, such as newspapers or magazines, to encourage or persuade the public about the products or services sold.¹²

However, the news content is not yet known to be true. The adverse consequence is that consumers will incur losses due to their incorrect selection or acquisition of products or services that do not meet the conditions stated by the business actor. Consequently, consumers must be safeguarded by the law. The rights and obligations of consumers and business actors are regulated in Chapter III of the UUPK, which spans from Article 4 to Article 7. This chapter is responsible for safeguarding consumers from misleading advertisements. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has the potential to supervise the actions of influencers who engage in endorsements as an advertising business. It is anticipated that a supervisory body will be established to oversee the endorsement actions of influencers, thereby preventing the harm of many consumers. The sanctions imposed on influencers are intended to serve as a deterrent, preventing them from repeating the same behavior in the future. It is well-known that the KPI has previously imposed sanctions on advertisements that violate community laws and regulations.¹³

Nevertheless, rules and regulations in effect do not ensure legal protection for parties involved in online purchasing and selling transactions, as well as one party who is exempt from liability. The absence of rigorous regulations enables influencers to exploit their platforms without accountability, disseminating misleading advertising. This indeed disrupts the sustainable marketing of products on social media.¹⁴ At the same time, Thailand has implemented numerous laws, including the Electronic Transactions Act of 2001 and the Consumer Protection Act of 1979, that pertain to consumer rights in e-commerce. Thailand has a distinct advantage over Indonesia in terms of consumer protection in the era of social media, mainly due to the regulatory framework and consumer awareness initiatives that are in place.¹⁵ Thailand's Consumer Protection Act promotes a more dynamic market by allowing for more creative advertising while holding businesses accountable. In contrast, Indonesia's regulations are more stringent, which may stifle innovation in advertising.¹⁶ The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) offers a flexible approach to advertising that enables businesses to engage in creative activities while safeguarding consumer rights. There

¹² Jiyoung Lee and others, 'Do Influencers Influence? A Meta-Analytic Comparison of Celebrities and Social Media Influencers Effects', *Social Media + Society*, 10.3 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241269269>

¹³ Candy Lim Chiu and Han-Chiang Ho, 'Impact of Celebrity, Micro-Celebrity, and Virtual Influencers on Chinese Gen Z's Purchase Intention Through Social Media', *Sage Open*, 13.1 (2023) <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231164034>

¹⁴ Jasmina Ilicic and Cynthia M. Webster, 'Effects of Multiple Endorsements and Consumer–Celebrity Attachment on Attitude and Purchase Intention', *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 19.4 (2011), 230–37 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2011.07.005>

¹⁵ Achmad Zulfa Andikata and Bambang Eko Turisno, 'Consumer Protection Law in the Digital Era', *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 7.07 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i07-03>

¹⁶ Juanita Tiffany Putri, 'Advertising Regulations in Consumer Protection Law (Comparison of Consumer Protection Law in Indonesia and Thailand)', *JISIP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan)*, 8.1 (2024), 436 <https://doi.org/10.58258/jisip.v8i1.6407>



are ongoing endeavors to enhance consumer education regarding rights and protections, which empowers consumers in digital transactions.¹⁷

Previous research by Anabel Gutierrez et al. shows that to increase purchase intentions substantially, brands must establish strong relationships through high-quality consumer-brand interactions while carefully managing consumers' privacy expectations. While effective privacy management positively mediates the relationship between social media and purchase intentions, it neglects privacy, which is the weakest link.¹⁸ Subsequently, research conducted by Widia Ningsih indicates that businesses can enhance consumer trust on Instagram by employing verified insignia, transparency in reviews, and engaging content that demonstrates expertise. Fostering a trustworthy consumer environment in social commerce necessitates an effective communication strategy. However, integrating social media into commerce provides convenience and poses risks that require ongoing efforts to enhance consumer protection and ethical standards in advertising.¹⁹ Additionally, Azharia et al.'s research indicates that influencers significantly influence consumer behavior; however, ethical dilemmas arise concerning sponsored content transparency.²⁰ Subsequently, research conducted by Jason Weismueller et al. demonstrated that advertising disclosure substantially influences the source credibility subdimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which in turn positively influence consumer purchase intentions. As evidenced by empirical findings, consumer purchase intentions are substantially increased by source attractiveness, source trustworthiness, and source expertise. Conversely, advertising disclosure indirectly influences consumer purchase intentions by influencing source attractiveness. Additionally, the findings indicated that the number of followers positively impacts the source's attractiveness, trustworthiness, and purchase intentions.²¹ Previous research has concentrated on the impact of advertising, influencers, and consumer-brand relationships on purchase intentions. This study will emphasize the importance of sustainability in consumer protection on social media, particularly Instagram. This includes long-term transparency, ethical regulation, and platform responsibility. This investigation will investigate the potential of sustainable consumer protection policies to establish enduring trust in the social commerce ecosystem.²²

¹⁷ Kanyarat Sukhawatthanakun, 'Thai Consumer Perspective on Marketing Ethics of Consumer Products', *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, 10.2 (2022), 213–22 <https://doi.org/10.18488/73.v10i2.3012>

¹⁸ Anabel Gutierrez and others, 'Retailers, Don't Ignore Me on Social Media! The Importance of Consumer-Brand Interactions in Raising Purchase Intention - Privacy the Achilles Heel', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 72 (2023), 103272 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103272>

¹⁹ Widia Ningsih and Aisyah Nurjanah, 'Utilization of Instagram Social Media as an Effort to Strengthen Customer Trust (Instagram Case Study @greenpublisher)', *American Journal of Economic and Management Business (AJEMB)*, 2.6 (2023), 231–37 <https://doi.org/10.58631/ajemb.v2i6.45>

²⁰ Azharia and others, 'Etika Periklanan Pada Media Sosial Instagram Di Era Influencer', *HUMANUS: Jurnal Sosiohumaniora Nusantara*, 1.3 (2024), 435–43 <https://doi.org/10.62180/ycrcy705>

²¹ Jason Weismueller and others, 'Influencer Endorsements: How Advertising Disclosure and Source Credibility Affect Consumer Purchase Intention on Social Media', *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 28.4 (2020), 160–70 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.03.002>

²² Rina Arum Prastyanti and Ridhima Sharma, 'Establishing Consumer Trust Through Data Protection Law as a Competitive Advantage in Indonesia and India', *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System*, 4.2 (2024), 354–90 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i2.200>



To promote sustainable consumer protection in the digital age, the government must encourage policies that support responsible businesses, thereby fostering equitable economic growth by SDG 8. To achieve the objective of SFG's 12 of responsible consumption and production, the Instagram platform can also enhance advertising transparency and encourage advertising that adheres to ethical and environmentally sustainable standards. Furthermore, deceitful advertising erodes public confidence in the digital system and contributes to economic injustice.²³ Consequently, consumers must be more aware of the law and collaborate to report advertisements that violate the regulations, as outlined in SDG 16. Consequently, sustainable consumer protection is crucial because consumers are more inclined to be loyal to brands or platforms that prioritize their rights and are transparent and honest. The absence of robust safeguards increases the likelihood of consumer manipulation, privacy abuse, and data exploitation. Transparency in marketing and the prevention of unethical practices are guaranteed by sustainable consumer protection. Ultimately, this contributes to the development of a digital economy that is more dependable and trustworthy. This research is significant because it offers critical insights into the methods for ensuring consumer safety and protection in a social media-based commerce ecosystem. This study has the potential to contribute to the development of more sustainable, transparent, and ethical business strategies and regulations, given the growing dependence of individuals on Instagram and other digital platforms for purchasing.

METHOD

In this research, the author uses a normative legal method to identify the primary laws and regulations used in e-commerce and data protection, especially regarding significant data regulation, especially support regulation.²⁴ The researcher uses a conceptual approach, regulatory legislation, case studies, and comparisons to validate data and compare consumer protection laws and e-commerce laws with those in Thailand in regulating and protecting consumers from business ethics support through Instagram; this paper will provide recommendations based on the findings of this study. This method will also be used to conclude the quality and effectiveness of the law. The dogmatic approach is used here because it is the best way to interpret and explain how consumer protection law and trade law regulate consumer protection issues over business ethics support using Instagram.²⁵

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Consumer Legal Protection for Achieving Sustainable Protection on Instagram in Indonesia

Entrepreneurs have adopted digital platforms, including e-commerce, corporate websites, and social media, as indispensable instruments for business operations. For

²³ Ahmad Dwi Nuryanto, Reza Octavia Kusumaningtyas, and Bukhadyrov Habibullo, 'The Imperative of Social Justice on the Insolvency and Workers' Wage', *Journal of Sustainable Development and Regulatory Issues (JSDERI)*, 2.3 (2024), 209–32 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jsderi.v2i3.48>

²⁴ Ni Komang Sutrisni and others, 'The Compliance of Governance on Family Data Protection Regulation', *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System*, 4.3 (2024), 706–41 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i3.293>

²⁵ Abdul Kadir Jaelani and others, 'Green Legality Certificate on Agrarian Reform: Indonesian Experience', *KnE Social Sciences*, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i21.14713>



instance, social media is not only a marketing tool but also a platform for direct interaction with consumers, brand development, and the acquisition of valuable feedback. Entrepreneurs can directly communicate their values, visions, and stories to their audiences, so brands established on social media frequently have a greater appeal. This is also substantiated by visual and interactive content, which has the potential to capture the attention of consumers more effectively than conventional marketing strategies. For instance, numerous brands utilize Instagram to distribute images and videos of their merchandise, providing consumers with a more comprehensive understanding of their offerings. The rapid advancement of telecommunications and information technology has significantly influenced consumer behavior, including making market transactions and determining choices.²⁶

Furthermore, the development of information technology is gaining momentum and has reached a wide range of demographics, including children, adolescents, adults, and older people. All of these groups are eager to comprehend and learn about the advancements in this field, particularly in the context of social media applications. Business actors' marketing strategies have been altered due to the development and expansion of information and communication technology. This is further substantiated by the presence of influencers, a substantial increase in the number of purchases, and public attention in e-commerce in Indonesia due to the influence of influencers, who demonstrate that consumer behavior is influenced by the persuasive promotional techniques they employ on social media. This undoubtedly positively affects social conditions for sellers and e-commerce service providers, as their profits will increase due to the increase in purchases. However, it hurts consumers, who will act in a consumptive manner. Using influencers in marketing strategies has demonstrated how entrepreneurs can leverage the popularity and influence of specific individuals to advertise their products. This illustrates how entrepreneurs can promptly modify their approach to capitalize on emerging market opportunities.²⁷

Social media influencers have emerged as dynamic third-party endorsements by employing most social media platforms, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Social media influencers are appropriate for disseminating the most recent promotional and product information to their online followers. Influencers on social media typically communicate with their followers by consistently providing them with the most recent information. Marketing management must understand social media influencers' persuasive power to identify those pertinent to a brand or organization. Instagram is a smartphone application that serves a unique purpose as a digital media platform. It is nearly identical to Twitter's functionality; however, the distinction lies in the image capture feature, which includes a form or multiple locations for users to input information. The Instagram application offers a variety of unique features that provide users with a variety of conveniences, including the ability to share daily activities and information and conduct a variety of businesses.

²⁶ Zhi-xing Xu, Ying Zhu, and Song Yang, 'Tackling False Advertising and Strengthening Consumer Protection in Emerging Economies', *Journal of General Management*, 2022 <https://doi.org/10.1177/03063070221145859>

²⁷ Natalia Yannopoulou and others, 'How Disinformation Affects Sales: Examining the Advertising Campaign of a Socially Responsible Brand', *Journal of Business Research*, 182 (2024), 114789 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114789>



Instagram is a critical marketing tool for businesses, as informants regard it as an effective promotional tool; Instagram serves as a communication link between businesses and their clients. In reality, Instagram has a significant effect on the growth of their business.²⁸

With the advertiser's consent, advertising companies and/or media creatively translate the initiative into advertising language to be broadcast or included in the media as product information for consumers. Business actors in advertising their products in print or electronic media must have good intentions and fulfill their achievements properly. Suppose consumers buy products advertised by business actors that do not match the contents of the truth displayed in the advertisement. In that case, the business actor did not perform correctly. Thus, it can be stated that consumers have used the advertised goods and do not match those offered by the business actor in their advertisement; then, consumers can sue the business actor based on Article 1365 of the Civil Code. In general, advertising liability that can harm consumers is the responsibility of all parties involved in making the advertisement, both advertisers, advertising companies, and advertising media. Regarding the form of responsibility, it can be in the form of product liability, professional liability, or both, depending on the extent to which the business actor is involved in making the advertisement.²⁹

Legal protection efforts and consumer and business actors' intelligence must be socialized because many consumers do not understand how good products should be purchased.³⁰ Business actors who trade their goods must also be wise, not only thinking about profit but not thinking about the negative impacts on consumers and the authenticity of the products they sell after further reviewing the efforts that consumers must make if business actors harm them. With this loss, consumers have the right to recover the losses they suffer, so consumers have legal standing to resolve disputes in the consumer sector; of course, this refers to the provisions of Article 45 paragraph (1) of the Consumer Protection Law (Law No. 8 of 1999) "every consumer who is harmed can sue business actors through an institution tasked with resolving disputes between consumers and business actors or through a court in the general court environment."³¹

In general, claims for compensation for losses experienced by consumers due to the use of products or as a result of advertising sales carried out by business actors, whether in the form of material, physical, or life losses, can be based on two categories, namely claims based on breach of contract and claims based on unlawful

²⁸ Angélica Silvério, Júlia Saraiva de Sousa, and Ihgor Jean Rego, 'Consumer Rights in the Era of Social Media: Misleading Advertising', *Revista Ibero-Americana de Humanidades, Ciências e Educação*, 10.5 (2024), 1406–19 <https://doi.org/10.51891/rease.v10i5.13866>

²⁹ Rossella C. Gambetti and Silvia Biraghi, 'Branded Activism: Navigating the Tension between Culture and Market in Social Media', *Futures*, 145 (2023), 103080 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2022.103080>

³⁰ Abdul Kadir Jaelani and Reza Octavia Kusumaningtyas, 'The Interests and the Conflict Vortex in Wadas Village: A Karl Marx Perspective', 2024, pp. 42–48 https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-315-3_8

³¹ Wenying Tan and Eun-Ju Lee, 'Neuroimaging Insights into Breaches of Consumer Privacy: Unveiling Implicit Brain Mechanisms', *Journal of Business Research*, 182 (2024), 114815 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114815>



acts. Claims based on breach of contract must first require the defendant and plaintiff (consumer and business actor) to be bound by an agreement. Compensation based on breach of contract is due to failure to fulfill the principal obligation or additional obligation in the form of responsibility for the central performance or a guarantee obligation in the agreement. In a lawsuit based on a breach of contract, the obligation to compensate for losses is none other than because of the application of a clause in the agreement. Claims based on unlawful acts: these claims are not based on the contents of the agreement or are not bound by the agreement, so claims can be made by the parties who have been harmed. To fulfill compensation claims, the compensation must be based on or be the result of an unlawful act, which must have the following elements: the existence of an illegal act, the existence of a loss, the existence of an error, the existence of a causal relationship between the unlawful act and the loss. The endorsement party or third party, as a partner with the business actor, should also be able to sort and choose products that are marketed through Instagram so as not to be involved in cases of illegal premium account sales.³²

In addition to the potential to cause material injury to consumers, the dissemination of misleading product information about goods and services through advertising can also jeopardize their health and life and undermine consumer confidence in the information provided by business actors. Consequently, consumers are entitled to hold business actors accountable for disseminating misleading advertisements. Advertisements are unilateral endeavors by business actors to visually or audibly describe products or services, emphasizing the product's benefits. In reality, advertising is necessary to actively or significantly attract readers, listeners, or observers of advertisements. In reality, the Consumer Protection Law explicitly stipulates that consumers are entitled to obtain information that is as accurate and transparent as possible regarding specific products. Consequently, producers must ensure that information is disseminated clearly and comprehensively to safeguard consumers.³³

This pertains to Articles 9, 10, 12, 13, and 20 of Law No. 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, which governs the prohibition of business actors from offering, promoting, advertising, or making false or misleading statements concerning their products or services. It is emphasized in Article 8 paragraph (1) letter f that producers are prohibited from placing excessive advertisements and are not by the conditions of their products and services, which state, "not by the promises stated in the label, label information, advertisement, or sales promotion of the goods and/or services." To achieve this, the advertisements must be consistent with the facts, which includes the product's quality. The facts employed as information can persuade the public to purchase the product or service based on its benefits and applications. Even though the product or service is marketed online, business actors may be accountable for the quality, quantity, and flavor of the products or services they sell. Nevertheless, in the

³² Ridwan Arifin and others, 'Protecting the Consumer Rights in the Digital Economic Era: Future Challenges in Indonesia', *Jambura Law Review*, 3 (2021), 135–60 <https://doi.org/10.33756/jlr.v3i0.9635>

³³ Steven J. Greenland, Ninh Nguyen, and Carolyn Strong, 'Irresponsible Marketing and the Need to Support Pro-Sustainable Production and Consumption', *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 2023, 1–5 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2023.2230487>



present day, numerous business actors disregard the regulations intended to safeguard consumers, even though they have established the rules for the conduct of ethics by Law Number 8 of 1999, which pertains to consumer protection.³⁴

Criminal law does not explicitly specify that providing false information through advertising media is regulated in addition to the Consumer Protection Law. Nevertheless, Chapter XXV (twenty-five) of the second Book of the Criminal Code contains various provisions about the crime of fraud, which is more commonly known as fraud. This chapter is composed of twenty Articles. Providing false information can be classified as fraud in buying and selling when linked to the act's impact on consumers, as stipulated in Article 378 of the Criminal Code. Fraud in the form of misleading information through advertising can occur by providing false statements regarding the advertised product's conditions, guarantees, and other aspects to persuade consumers to choose and purchase the business actor's product. Consequently, the Information Technology Law regulates the liability or sanctions of business actors who market misleading products online, in addition to the Consumer Protection Law and the Criminal Code. This is elucidated in Article 28 of Law No. 11 of 2008, amended to Law No. 19 of 2016 concerning Electronic Information Technology. Specifically, "(1) Any person intentionally and without the right to spread false and misleading news that results in consumer losses in Electronic Transactions. (2) Any person intentionally and without the right to spread information intended to cause hatred or hostility towards individuals and/or certain community groups based on ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group (SARA)."³⁵

The State must take decisive action against business actors who violate regulations and behave unethically, as outlined in the Criminal Code and the Consumer Protection Law, to ensure the seamless operation of online buy-and-sell processes. So that the public can feel secure and at ease while engaging in online transactions and that the State protects them. Consumer protection necessitates enhancing consumer awareness, knowledge, concern, ability, and independence to prevent, resolve, and protect consumer protection issues. Additionally, business actors must adopt a responsible approach to producing, distributing, and promoting their goods and services. Issues in practice: Indonesia's consumer protection mechanism, implemented in 1999, has failed to guarantee optimal consumer protection. In the absence of concrete action to prevent and resolve consumer protection issues, violations in practice continue to occur and repeat themselves, particularly about the circulation of misleading advertisements on Instagram social media.³⁶

³⁴ Nofrizal and others, 'Changes and Determinants of Consumer Shopping Behavior in E-Commerce and Social Media Product Muslimah', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 70 (2023), 103146 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2022.103146>

³⁵ Novi Fitriani and others, 'Does Social Media Affect Performance in E-Commerce Business? The Role of Customer Management', *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 9.4 (2023), 100171 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2023.100171>

³⁶ Ainul Millah Al-Mumtaza AL-MUMTAZA and Muhammad RUSTAMAJI, 'Consumer Legal Protection On The Implementation Of E-Commerce Using Instagram With A Pre-Order System During The Covid-19 Pandemic', *International Journal of Environmental, Sustainability, and Social Science*, 3.1 (2022), 59–64 <https://doi.org/10.38142/ijess.v3i1.158>



Economic growth, responsible consumption, and strong institutions are the primary objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 12, and 16, respectively, closely associated with consumer protection against misleading advertising on Instagram. Social media's advent has exacerbated deceptive advertising, requiring a multifaceted strategy to safeguard consumer rights and advance ethical marketing practices. As per SDG's objective 8, sustainable economic development necessitates the implementation of effective consumer protection laws that can enhance market efficiency and cultivate a fair competitive environment.³⁷ In addition, the prevalence of fraudulent advertising on platforms such as Instagram contributes to unsustainable consumption patterns by encouraging consumers to purchase either hazardous or ineffective products. Given this, promoting transparency in advertising practices is imperative to guarantee that consumers make well-informed decisions consistent with the principles of responsible consumption. In addition, it is essential to fortify the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard consumer rights and combat misleading advertising. Institutional integrity can be improved by fostering a culture of accountability and ethical marketing through collaborative efforts among governments, businesses, and consumers, as per SDG's objective 16. Conversely, while consumer protection is crucial, some contend that excessive regulation can impede marketing innovation and creativity, potentially impeding economic growth. A critical challenge remains the delicate balance between the necessity for dynamic marketing strategies and regulation.

Consumer Legal Protection for Achieving Sustainable Protection on Instagram in Thailand

Social media is a global phenomenon that enables individuals to communicate with one another. The internet's rapid integration and social media's emergence have significantly influenced brand communication with consumers. Furthermore, social media is a globally utilized platform, enabling businesses in the contemporary market to achieve a significantly higher level of consumer engagement than ever before. The likelihood of social media influencing consumer purchase intentions increases as more individuals utilize it to research products and services. Consequently, companies and their identities have embraced social media marketing due to its increased opportunities. Social media marketing is a strategy that uses social media websites and application platforms to advertise and sell products or services. This marketing approach is implemented to enhance consumer engagement across various platforms. The long-term influence of traditional media on consumers, particularly the younger generation, has begun to be replaced by social media. Social media marketing is now recognized as a critical instrument for attracting new customers, as customer behavior has evolved as they have become more engaged and dedicated. The impact of social media as a marketing medium on Generation X and Y has been examined.

³⁷ Achsania Hendratmi and others, 'Toward SDG's 8: How Sustainability Livelihood Affecting Survival Strategy of Woman Entrepreneurs in Indonesia', *World Development Sustainability*, 5 (2024), 100175 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wds.2024.100175>



Conversely, Gen Z has been designated the most extensive online consumer demographic due to their early exposure to technology and the internet.³⁸

At the commencement of 2023, Thailand had 61.21 million internet users, with an internet penetration rate of 85.3 percent. In January 2023, 52.25 million individuals in Thailand were active on social media platforms, which accounts for 72.8 percent of the country's total population. As of January 2023, Thailand had 52.25 million social media users. It is crucial to acknowledge that the number of social media users in Thailand at the beginning of 2023 is equivalent to 72.8 percent of the total population. However, it is also essential to consider that social media users may not represent unique individuals. At the outset of 2023, the advertising planning tool of the leading social media platforms reported that 49.40 million individuals aged 18 and older were utilizing social media in Thailand. This figure represents 84.8 percent of the total population aged 18 and older. In January 2023, 85.4 percent of Thailand's internet user base (regardless of age) utilized at least one social media platform. At that time, 52.3 percent of Thai social media users were female, while 47.7 percent were male.³⁹

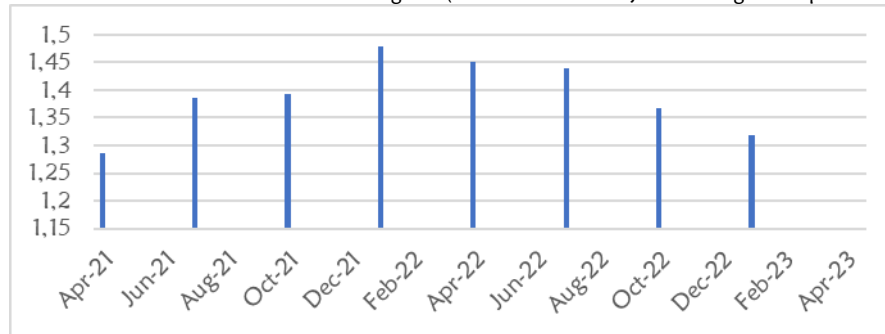
According to data published by the advertising tool Meta, Instagram had 17.35 million users in Thailand at the beginning of 2023. According to the company's recently revised figures, Instagram's advertising reach in Thailand was equivalent to 24.2 percent of the total population at the beginning of the year. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that 27.8 percent of Thailand's "eligible" audience utilized Instagram in 2023, even though Instagram's platform is restricted to individuals aged 13 and older. It is also important to mention that Instagram's advertising reach in Thailand at the beginning of 2023 was equivalent to 28.3 percent of the local internet user base, irrespective of age. Females comprised 60.9 percent of Instagram's advertising audience in Thailand at the commencement of 2023, while males comprised 39.1 percent. In April 2023, advertisers were able to reach 1.628 billion users on Instagram, making it the fourth most "active" social media platform in the globe. Additionally, Instagram's prospective advertising reach has expanded at an unprecedented rate in the past three months, as evidenced by data published in the company's self-serve advertising tool. In the three months preceding April 2023, the total number of users that marketers can reach with Instagram ads increased by approximately 310 million (+23.5%). According to the most recent data, approximately 20.3% of the global population currently utilizes Instagram. Nevertheless, the "qualified" Instagram usage rate is likely to be greater than these figures, as the company restricts its platform to individuals aged 13 and older.⁴⁰

³⁸ Wilert Puriwat and Suchart Tripopsakul, 'Understanding Digital Social Responsibility in the Social Media Context: Evidence from Thailand', *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 7.1 (2021), e0257 <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2022.v7i1.257>

³⁹ Ying Dai, Surachai Traiwannakij, and Kowin Viwathpongpan, 'The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Intention and Customer Loyalty on E-Commerce Websites', *KnE Social Sciences*, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v9i29.17285>

⁴⁰ Tanawat Teepapal, 'AI-Driven Personalization: Unraveling Consumer Perceptions in Social Media Engagement', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 165 (2025), 108549 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2024.108549>

Figure 1. Total Potential Audience Reach of Ads on Instagram (in Millions of Users) and Change in Reported Reach Over Time



Sources: Meta's Advertising Resources, Kepios Analysis

The diagram depicts the reported advertising reach of Instagram in millions of users from April 2021 to April 2023. Initially, Instagram's advertising reach experienced consistent growth, rising from 1.287 million users in April 2021 to 1.478 million in January 2022. Notable increases of 7.7% in July 2021 and 6.1% in October 2021 were observed. Nevertheless, the platform experienced a gradual decline throughout the year after reaching its apex in early 2022. In October 2022, the reach had decreased to 1.386 million users, and the downward trend persisted until January 2023, when it reached its lowest point at 1.318 million users—a 4.9% decrease from the previous quarter. Changes in user engagement, advertising strategies, or reporting methodologies may have contributed to this decline. It was unexpected that Instagram's advertising reach experienced a substantial rebound in April 2023, increasing by an impressive 23.5% to 1.628 million users. This rapid increase implies that Instagram's advertising audience is about to expand again, potentially due to platform optimizations, enhanced targeting capabilities, or an increase in user activity. In general, the data illustrates Instagram's fluctuating advertising reach, which has experienced periods of growth, decline, and recovery over two years.

Businesses can now advertise and promote their products and services globally to increase brand recognition through this communication platform. By utilizing social media, businesses can address and improve customer dissatisfaction and maintain customer trust and confidence by responding to positive and negative feedback. Nevertheless, social media marketing is a prevalent strategy for enhancing brand communication with customers. Social media marketing can be highly effective in shaping consumer perceptions of products through promotional messages and influencing customer purchasing decisions.⁴¹ The dissemination of circulating advertisements is frequently facilitated by social media platforms, which can result in consumers making poor purchasing decisions.⁴² The dynamics of consumer-to-consumer commerce, the necessity for digital social responsibility, and the circulating advertisements in Thailand are all contributing to the growing threat to consumer rights in the social media era. The emergence of social media has not only

⁴¹ Wutthiya Aekthanate Srisathan and others, 'Trust and Website Conversion in Consumer Responses to Green Product Purchasing: A New Perspective through the Lens of Innovative Website Design's Technology Integration', *Heliyon*, 10.1 (2024), e23764 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e23764>

⁴² Dinda Agustin Wulandari, Abdul Kadir Jaelani, and Hilaire Tegnani, 'Income Tax Regulations for Child Content Creators of TikTok Platform: Inefficacy of Indonesian Legal Frameworks', *Journal of Sustainable Development and Regulatory Issues (JSDEI)*, 2.2 (2024), 169–91 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jsderi.v2i2.35>



empowered consumers but has also exposed them to the risks associated with deceptive marketing practices. To effectively safeguard consumer rights, this situation necessitates a multifaceted approach. Although social media has facilitated the empowerment of consumers in Thailand, it also presents substantial obstacles that necessitate ongoing regulatory and educational initiatives to effectively safeguard consumer rights. Companies must prioritize customer fulfillment when entering a market that is characterized by heightened consumer awareness. This will likely result in more proactive compliance with consumer protection laws. Thailand's consumer rights future appears to be becoming more dynamic as a result of the convergence of a variety of factors that are influencing the legal and practical landscape for protection and redress.⁴³

In Thailand, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are becoming more closely associated with consumer rights in the social media era. Social media functions as an advocacy platform, enabling consumers to advocate for sustainable practices and demand accountability and transparency from businesses. This dynamic cultivates a more informed public that has the potential to impact corporate behavior and policymaking. Ensuring a fair and equitable marketplace for all individuals involved in the purchase of products and services necessitates the protection of consumer rights in Thailand. The Consumer Protection Act of 1979, in conjunction with a variety of other laws and regulations that have been modified over time to accommodate changing market dynamics, is the primary legal framework that governs consumer protection in the country. The objective of this exhaustive framework is to safeguard the fundamental rights of consumers, thereby enabling them to make well-informed decisions when purchasing products or services. The right to information, the right to choose, and the right to safety are among the fundamental principles that underpin consumer rights in Thailand. These principles empower consumers by enabling them to access clear and accurate information about products, be aware of their options, and ensure that the goods they purchase satisfy established safety standards. Legal protections are essential for the overall health of the economy, as they promote transparency and fairness, which in turn fosters trust between consumers and businesses.⁴⁴

Additionally, consumer rights are essential for promoting ethical business practices and equitable competition in the marketplace. Trust and contentment are the foundations of a loyal customer base, which is why businesses that prioritize consumer rights are more likely to succeed. In the event of a dispute, the enforcement of these rights also provides consumers with an opportunity to seek redress for cases of unjust treatment or deceptive practices. In summary, the comprehension of consumer rights in Thailand is crucial for the protection of individual consumers and the promotion of a fair and efficient market environment. The legal framework that has been established offers the requisite safeguards to increase consumer confidence,

⁴³ Shidarta and Imelda Martinelli, 'Consumer Rights to Information in the Middle of Media Hegemony', ed. by T.N. Mursitama and others, *E3S Web of Conferences*, 388 (2023), 04028 <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202338804028>

⁴⁴ Manuel Herrador and Manh Lai Van, 'Circular Economy Strategies in the ASEAN Region: A Comparative Study', *Science of The Total Environment*, 908 (2024), 168280 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.168280>



thereby ensuring that all individuals can engage in commerce with confidence and that responsible business practices are reinforced. This, in turn, contributes to Thailand's general economic growth.⁴⁵

The Consumer Protection Act B.E. 2522 (1979) and its subsequent amendments predominantly govern the consumer protection landscape in Thailand. This Act establishes a comprehensive framework that is designed to safeguard the rights and welfare of consumers from exploitation, fraud, and unjust business practices. The Act establishes the legal framework for consumers, guaranteeing that they are treated equitably in the marketplace. The Consumer Protection Act delineates a variety of fundamental rights, such as the right to information, the right to safety, and the right to make a choice. In particular, the right to safety safeguards consumers from products that may constitute a health risk or hazard. Moreover, the right to information guarantees that consumers are provided with truthful and precise information regarding the products and services they are offered, thereby enabling them to make well-informed decisions.⁴⁶

The Office of the Consumer Protection Board (OCPB) is another critical component of the legal framework. This entity is essential in the enforcement of the Consumer Protection Act, as it supervises compliance, investigates complaints, and facilitates mediation and dispute resolution between consumers and businesses. The OCPB is also tasked with the responsibility of educating the public about their rights and increasing consumer awareness to ensure that consumers are proactive in safeguarding their interests. Furthermore, the Consumer Protection Act is supplemented by a variety of regulations, such as the Thai Trade Competition Act, which addresses concerns regarding discriminatory trade practices, monopolies, and cartels. Consumers in Thailand can confidently engage in economic activities, knowing that their rights are recognized and protected by law as a result of the strong environment created by these laws. In Thailand, these fundamental safeguards collectively empower consumers, enabling them to confidently navigate the marketplace and safeguard their interests against unscrupulous trading practices. The principle that consumers should be regarded with respect and dignity in their transactions is bolstered by the rights to information, security, and choice, which foster a fair trading environment.⁴⁷

In Thailand, the effective preservation of consumer rights is impeded by several significant challenges. These regulations are frequently not enforced despite the existence of numerous laws that are intended to safeguard consumers. A situation in which perpetrators can act with impunity is created by the absence of sufficient enforcement mechanisms, which erodes consumer confidence in the market. Many consumers are discouraged from pursuing claims against companies due to

⁴⁵ Rosalba Roccatello and others, 'Insect-Based Feed in Aquaculture: A Consumer Attitudes Study', *Aquaculture*, 582 (2024), 740512 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2023.740512>

⁴⁶ Yeheskiel Minggus Tiranda and Lutfi Trisandi Rizki, 'The Legal Ethics in Financial Technology: How Is It Regulated?', *Jurnal Akta*, 9.3 (2022), 260 <https://doi.org/10.30659/akta.v9i3.24000>

⁴⁷ Bahagiawati Amirhusin, 'Genetically Modified Organism Status, Regulation, Approval, Labeling, and Consumer Perception in ASEAN', in *GMOs and Political Stance* (Elsevier, 2023), pp. 129–50 <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-823903-2.00016-0>



bureaucratic red tape and slow judicial processes that make it difficult to seek redress for their grievances.

Additionally, consumers are less informed about their rights. The protections provided by Thai consumer law are often not completely understood by many individuals, which can lead to exploitation by unscrupulous businesses. Consumer confidence is not the only thing that is affected by this knowledge divide; it also restricts their capacity to take action when they are wronged. It is imperative to implement educational initiatives that are designed to educate the public about their legal rights and resources in order to empower consumers and improve their capacity to assert their rights.⁴⁸

Additionally, Thailand faces substantial obstacles due to potential deficiencies in its legal framework. In certain market segments, consumers may be left vulnerable due to the inadequate coverage of specific products and services by current consumer protection laws. This may encompass sectors such as e-commerce, where the rapid expansion has exceeded regulatory constraints, thereby restricting the protection of online consumers. In addition, the application of laws across jurisdictions is frequently inconsistent, which leads to unequal consumer protection based on their geographic location. The necessity for immediate reform of consumer protection mechanisms is underscored by the cumulative effect of these challenges. To guarantee comprehensive consumer protection in Thailand, the government and pertinent stakeholders must collaborate to establish a more robust framework that enhances enforcement effectiveness, raises consumer awareness, and addresses extant legal deficiencies.

Ethical Violations Policy in Instagram Endorsement Practices

Celebrity endorsements function as product users, offering testimonials or support to the public regarding the quality and advantages of the advertised product. This approach encourages the public to choose and support the product, ultimately leading to its purchase or use. Nevertheless, numerous celebrity endorsements constitute ethical violations by presenting misleading advertisements. The proliferation of influencer marketing has led to a significant concern regarding ethical violations in Instagram endorsement practices. Illegal advertising practices and the propagation of offensive content, including those that violate SARA (ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-group), are among these violations.⁴⁹

The majority of local social media influencers who were reviewed for the study do not exhibit the recognition that they have specific obligations to be truthful with their followers when they provide endorsements for marketers. Some may even deceive their followers by claiming in their reviews that they are frequent consumers of the product or that they frequent specific services, which is demonstrably false. Consumers are misled into believing that these social media influencers are providing an unbiased

⁴⁸ Panya Issarawornrawanich and Suneerat Wuttichindanon, 'Corporate Social Responsibility Practices and Disclosures in Thailand', *Social Responsibility Journal*, 15.3 (2019), 318–32 <https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-02-2017-0038>

⁴⁹ Sona Klucarova, 'Everything They Touch Turns to Gold: Disabled Social Media Influencers and Perceptions of Product Luxury', *Journal of Business Research*, 182 (2024), 114794 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.114794>



assessment of particular products or services when, in reality, they are merely endorsing them for marketers due to the absence of disclosure regarding the partnerships between marketers and influencers. Deception and misinformation are the consequences of a lack of disclosure, which can lead to consumers and followers being misled in their purchasing decisions.⁵⁰

Ethical violations are not limited to advertising; they also encompass detrimental social interactions, as evidenced by remarks on Instagram accounts that may violate moral standards. The digital space's ethical compliance is complex, indicating that some users adhere to ethical practices while others may not, resulting in a diverse compliance landscape. Alternatively, some contend that the rapid advancement of social media and influencer marketing may surpass the current ethical standards, necessitating continuous regulatory revisions to address emergent challenges effectively.⁵¹ This endorsement is a form of collaboration between business actors and influencers. Consequently, influencers should be accountable for the promotions they execute. What is the extent of influencers' liability if their endorsements harm consumers? The UUPK does not have any regulations that govern influencers who perform endorsements. This is because influencers are not classified as business actors or advertising business actors.⁵²

Nevertheless, the responsibilities of these influencers are equivalent to those of advertising agencies, which include advertising or promoting the products of business actors. Additionally, influencers are not regulated by the Broadcasting Law. Nevertheless, endorsements made by influencers on social media can be classified as electronic transaction violations, allowing them to enter the criminal justice system. Article 28, paragraph (1) of the ITE Law states, "Any person who intentionally and without the right spreads false and misleading news that results in consumer losses in Electronic Transactions."

Per Article 17 paragraph (2) of Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, celebrity/influencer endorsements that engage in activities prohibited in Article 17 paragraph (1) of the Consumer Protection Law must be revoked, or their circulation must be halted. In the case above, criminal acts committed by celebrity endorsements are also regulated by Article 9 of the ITE Law. Celebrity endorsements, as business actors who offer products through the Electronic System, specifically through Instagram social media, must provide complete and accurate information about the products offered. A maximum fine of IDR 1,000,000,000.00 (one billion rupiah) and/or imprisonment for a maximum of 6 (6) years will be imposed on celebrity endorsements who produce and publish misleading advertisements and not reality, resulting in consumer losses. This is governed by Article 45A paragraph (1) of

⁵⁰ Hanna Kerr, Richard Booth, and Kimberley Jackson, 'Exploring the Characteristics and Behaviors of Nurses Who Have Attained Microcelebrity Status on Instagram: Content Analysis', *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22.5 (2020), e16540 <https://doi.org/10.2196/16540>

⁵¹ Lidia Gil-Muñana and Carolina Sáez-Linero, 'Is This an Ad? How Influencers Disclose Paid Content after a Change in the Law', *Metadados Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 11.2 (2023), m231102a16 <https://doi.org/10.17502/mrcs.v11i2.731>

⁵² Luke Cox and Tim Piatkowski, 'Influencers and "Brain Building" Smart Drugs: A Content Analysis of Services and Market Activities of Nootropic Influencers over Social Media', *Performance Enhancement & Health*, 12.4 (2024), 100289 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.peh.2024.100289>



Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE). The celebrity endorsement has been classified as aiding in the commission of deception by online merchants who utilize their services, as the celebrity endorsement party was previously aware that the request for advertising content did not align with reality.⁵³

Celebrity endorsements promote products based on their personal experiences and the information provided by the online merchant. Therefore, the celebrity endorsement cannot be held accountable for any harmful consequences that may result for consumers. For instance, if the online merchant whose product is advertised commits fraud, such as the goods not matching those advertised, the celebrity endorsement cannot be held accountable.⁵⁴ This is because the celebrity endorsement was unaware of the online merchant's original intention when agreeing to the agreement and creating the advertisement. In this instance, the celebrity endorsement is ineligible for the article of assistance allegation, as it does not intentionally assist the perpetrator of the crime or fraud. Nevertheless, suppose the celebrity endorsement is aware that the advertised online merchant's product is a fraud. In that case, the celebrity endorsement must promptly remove the advertisement and clearly state that the advertised online merchant is a fraud.⁵⁵

The ethical violations policy in Instagram endorsement practices is a matter of great concern, particularly as influencer marketing expands. The lack of transparency in sponsored content disclosures presents substantial ethical challenges, necessitating stricter guidelines and enforcement mechanisms to safeguard consumers. Proposed reforms include heightened penalties for non-compliance and increased collaboration between brands, influencers, and platforms to guarantee accurate disclosure. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines are also inadequately detailed, resulting in influencers' varied interpretations of the appropriate method for disclosing sponsorships. A multifaceted regulatory approach is necessary, which combines platform governance with a robust legal framework to improve consumer protection.⁵⁶

Honest communication and transparency are key components of ethical marketing. This is primarily translated into implementing appropriate disclosure practices in the influencer world. Influencers are obligated to directly disclose their affiliation with the brands they promote to prevent their audience from being misled. The disclosures should be unambiguous and prominent, avoiding the use of ambiguous language.

⁵³ Ni Luh Gede Astariyani, Mariko Hattori, and Willy Naresta Hanum, 'The Validity of Sanctions Arrangements in Regional Regulations', *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System*, 4.3 (2024), 682–705 <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v4i3.313>

⁵⁴ Pengyi Shen, Xuan Nie, and Congcong Tong, 'Does Disclosing Commercial Intention Benefit Brands? Mediating Role of Perceived Manipulative Intent and Perceived Authenticity in Influencer Hidden Advertising', *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 2024 <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-01-2024-0052>

⁵⁵ Andrea Ghermandi and others, 'Social Media Data for Environmental Sustainability: A Critical Review of Opportunities, Threats, and Ethical Use', *One Earth*, 6.3 (2023), 236–50 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.02.008>

⁵⁶ Felix Pflücke, 'Making Influencers Honest: The Role of Social Media Platforms in Regulating Disclosures', in *The Regulation of Social Media Influencers* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020) <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788978286.00023>



Effective disclosure practices are a critical component of establishing trust with the audience and ensuring the transparency of influencer campaigns.⁵⁷

Influencer marketing can flourish due to consumer trust. By being transparent about their endorsements and authentic in their recommendations, influencers cultivate high trust with their audience when they engage in ethical advertising. Ultimately, consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by this trust. In summary, influencer marketing is sustained by two fundamental principles: legality and ethics. By comprehending and adhering to the law, campaigns can be structured within a legal framework, thereby preventing legal pitfalls. Concurrently, implementing ethical principles, including transparency, disclosure, and authenticity, guarantees that these campaigns are effective and that the target audience trusts them. Collectively, these components generate successful campaigns and foster a sustainable marketing environment conducive to the long-term success of both brands and influencers.

CONCLUSION

The research and discussion results show that information technology and social media development have changed how entrepreneurs interact with consumers, relying on influencers and platforms like Instagram to market products. However, misleading marketing practices and advertising that is not in reality can harm consumers, who are entitled to legal protection under the Consumer Protection Act. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the legal framework and law enforcement mechanisms to protect consumer rights and encourage ethical marketing practices. Consumer protection in Indonesia can realize sustainability by protecting consumers from misleading marketing practices, such as false advertising, that can harm them regarding material and health. This aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8, 12, and 16, which aim for sustainable economic growth, responsible consumption, and strengthening transparent and accountable institutions. By maintaining the legal framework and enforcing regulations that protect consumers, the market can run reasonably and efficiently, support more responsible and sustainable consumption behavior, and encourage ethical marketing innovation that does not harm consumers. Meanwhile, consumer protection in Thailand faces significant challenges with the development of social media, which influences consumer purchasing decisions and increases the risk of misleading marketing. However, Thailand's Consumer Protection Act allows for more creative advertising while holding businesses accountable, encouraging a balance between innovation and consumer rights. Under existing regulations, although influencers are not explicitly regulated by Indonesian law, they are still liable for advertisements that may harm consumers, with potential criminal sanctions if proven to be misleading. To ensure adequate consumer protection, stricter regulations, transparency in brand relationship disclosures, and applying ethical principles in influencer marketing are needed. Therefore, further efforts are required in public education, regulatory reform, and law enforcement to ensure better consumer protection in this digital era.

⁵⁷ Hui Xu and Yang Wu, 'Do Virtual Endorsers Have a Country-of-Origin Effect? From the Perspective of Congruent Explanations', *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 206 (2024), 123530 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2024.123530>



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