The Influence of Perceived Authenticity on Consumer Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review in Marketing (2020–2025)

Fenina Berliana Putri[1], Ratih Hurriyati[2], Bambang Widjajanta[3], Puspo Dewi Dirgantari[4], Ratu Hedy[5]

[1] Horizon University, Karawang, Indonesia
[2,3,4,5] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia
feninaberlianaputri@gmail.com

Abstract. In recent years, the concept of perceived authenticity has garnered increasing attention in the marketing field, particularly for its role in shaping consumer responses to brands, content, and influencers. As digital marketing continues to evolve, authenticity is viewed not only as a strategic communication tool but also as a psychological factor that influences consumer behavior. This study presents a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aimed at mapping and examining how perceived authenticity has been explored in marketing, specifically in relation to consumer behavior, between 2020 and 2025. Adopting the methodological framework of Watase et al., the review analyzes 42 peer-reviewed journal articles sourced from leading academic databases such as Scopus and Web of Science. It addresses two key research questions: (1) What are the prevailing trends and characteristics of research on perceived authenticity in marketing from 2020 to 2025? and (2) In what ways does perceived authenticity affect consumer behavior in marketing contexts, based on current literature? The findings highlight a growing scholarly interest in perceived authenticity, particularly within digital marketing domains such as influencer marketing, brand messaging, and social media branding. Moreover, the review reveals that perceived authenticity plays a significant role in influencing consumer outcomes like trust, purchase intention, loyalty, and emotional connection. This study contributes to the field by offering a comprehensive synthesis of current research trends and identifying areas for future exploration, especially within specialized sectors such as beauty, skincare, and e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Perceived Authenticity, Consumer Behavior, Marketing, Purchase Intention, Systematic Literature Review.

1 Introduction

In today's increasingly saturated and digitally driven marketplace, consumers are constantly inundated with branded content, influencer promotions, and advertising

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claims. Amid this overwhelming environment, perceived authenticity has emerged as a critical psychological and strategic factor in marketing, significantly influencing how consumers assess, trust, and engage with brands [1]. In this context, authenticity refers to the consumer's perception of a brand, product, or communication as genuine, honest, and aligned with its core values [2]. As digital marketing continues to evolve, authenticity is no longer viewed as a fixed attribute of a brand but rather as a dynamic, co-created experience between marketers and consumers.

The concept of perceived authenticity has been examined across various marketing domains, including influencer marketing [3], brand storytelling [4], packaging and visual identity [5], and social media branding [6]. In each of these contexts, authenticity plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior by fostering trust, emotional connection, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty [7]. For instance, consumers are more likely to follow the recommendations of influencers perceived as authentic and to support brands that demonstrate consistency in values and transparent communication [8].

Despite the growing academic interest in authenticity, the existing literature remains fragmented. Researchers have approached the topic from diverse disciplinary perspectives, including psychology, branding, communication, and consumer culture, resulting in varied conceptualizations and methodological approaches [9]. Although most studies support the positive influence of authenticity on consumer behavior, the specific mechanisms through which this effect occurs often vary by context and target audience.

To address this fragmentation, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is essential to synthesize existing knowledge, clarify foundational concepts, and identify emerging trends in the research. This study employs the methodological framework proposed by Watase to explore the role of perceived authenticity in marketing, particularly in shaping consumer behavior from 2020 to 2025. It analyzes 42 peer-reviewed journal articles sourced from Scopus and Web of Science, ensuring a comprehensive review of the most relevant and influential research.

This study is guided by two primary research questions:

1. What are the prevailing trends and characteristics in research on perceived authenticity in marketing between 2020 and 2025?
2. How does perceived authenticity influence consumer behavior in marketing contexts, according to current literature?

By addressing these questions, this review aims to deliver a structured and critical synthesis of the literature, offering valuable insights into the role of authenticity in modern marketing strategies. The findings will be particularly relevant for practitioners and scholars in dynamic industries such as beauty, skincare, and e- commerce, where authenticity serves as a key driver of consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

2 Research Methods

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scholarly works investigating the role of perceived authenticity in shaping consumer behavior within marketing contexts. The research followed the methodological framework proposed by Watase and complied with the PRISMA guidelines to ensure a transparent, objective, and replicable review process. The Scopus database was selected as the primary data source due to its broad indexing of reputable international journals. Using the keyword "Perceived Authenticity," the search was restricted to publications from 2020 to 2025, yielding a total of 266 records.

3 Result and Discussion

The study found out that from this initial pool, no duplicate records were found. However, 64 articles were excluded automatically due to not meeting the required publication years or journal quality (limited to Q1 and Q2), and an additional 22 articles were removed for other reasons related to relevance. This left 180 records, which were then screened based on titles and abstracts. Of these, 138 articles were excluded for not meeting the core criteria, resulting in 42 studies selected for full-text retrieval and assessment.

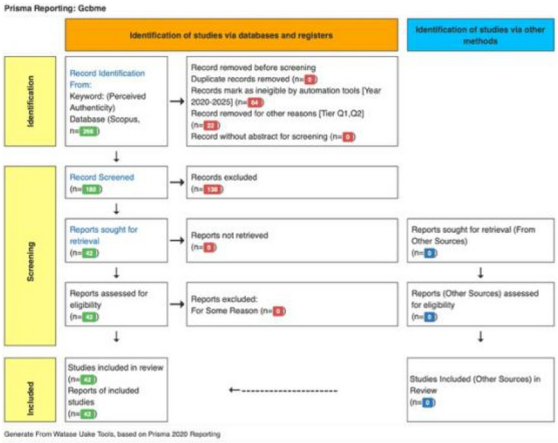

Fig. 1. Prisma Reporting

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All 42 full-text articles were found eligible and were subsequently included in the final review. No reports were excluded at this stage, and no additional studies were

identified through other sources. The screening and selection process was documented using the PRISMA flow diagram, with tools provided by Watase Uake, ensuring methodological rigor throughout the review.



Fig. 2. Word Cloud of Frequently Appearing Terms in Perceived Authenticity (2020–2025)

The keyword analysis shows that perceived authenticity is most frequently associated with variables such as purchase intention, brand attitude, brand trust, and brand transparency. Other prominent themes include customer loyalty, behavioral intention, and perceived value, indicating that perceptions of authenticity have a direct impact on consumer decision-making and brand commitment. Additionally, concepts such as emotional attachment, word of mouth, aura aesthetics, and existential authenticity highlight that authenticity is not only cognitive but also emotional and symbolic. These findings reinforce that in modern marketing contexts, particularly in digital and service sectors, perceived authenticity serves as a crucial foundation for building long-term relationships between brands and consumers.

The review findings indicate that perceived authenticity is frequently linked to increased brand trust, purchase intention, and consumer engagement, particularly in digital settings such as social media and influencer marketing. Many studies emphasize the importance of credibility, transparency, and value alignment in shaping perceptions of authenticity. The concept also proves relevant across various industries, including beauty products, traditional foods, and cultural tourism. Overall, the findings suggest that perceived authenticity is a key factor influencing consumer behavior in contemporary marketing.

3.1 Theoretical Analysis in Perceived Authenticity Research

Table 1. Classification of Theory

No	Theory	Citation	Total Article	Authors
1	Self-Determination Theory	221	3	**[10]; [11]; [12]**
2	Signaling Theory	84	3	**[13]; [14]; [15]**
3	Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)	49	2	**[16]; [17]**
4	Self-discrepancy theory	26	2	**[18]; [19]**
5	Constructive Authenticity	71	1	**[20]**
6	Meaning Transfer Model	57	1	**[21]**
7	Narrative Rhetoric Theory	57	1	**[22]**
8	Attribution Theory	45	1	**[23]**
9	Psychological Ownership Theory	44	1	**[24]**
10	**Existentialism vs Essentialism (theories of self/authenticity)**	**37**	**1**	**[25]**

Table 1 summarizes the top 10 most-cited theories in brand authenticity research from 2020 to 2025, based on Watase's classification. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) leads with 221 citations across three studies, highlighting the role of intrinsic motivation. Signaling Theory, also used in three articles with 84 citations, emphasizes how communication shapes authenticity perceptions, especially in digital and influencer marketing. Other cited theories include ELM and Self-Discrepancy Theory, focusing on cognitive and self-concept influences. Less common theories like Constructive Authenticity and Meaning Transfer explore symbolic and narrative aspects.

Overall, the research reflects a multidisciplinary approach. Authenticity is seen not as a fixed brand trait but as a perception shaped by consumer motivation, cognition, and interpretation, supporting a psychological and strategic communication lens in modern marketing.

3.2 Geographical Context

Based on the analysis of 42 reviewed articles, insights into their geographical distribution are illustrated in Figure 3.

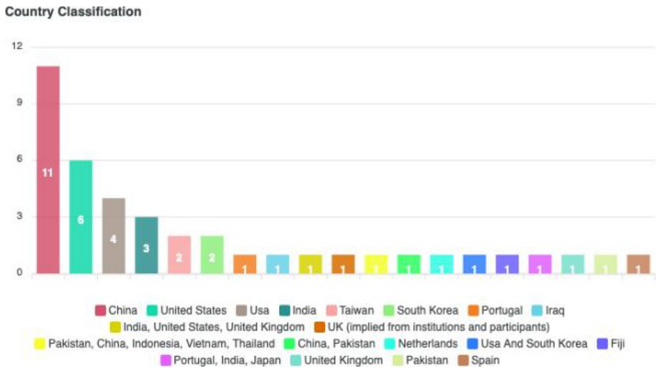

Fig. 3. Country Classification

The analysis of geographical context reveals that the majority of studies on perceived authenticity in consumer behavior were conducted in China (11 articles), followed by the United States (6 articles) and India (4 articles). Additional studies originated from countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, Portugal, and Iraq. Furthermore, several collaborative studies involved multiple countries, including partnerships such as Pakistan– China and India–US–UK. The predominance of research from Asian countries, particularly China, suggests that authenticity in marketing is a significant concern in emerging markets with dynamic consumer cultures. Studies from Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand have also begun to appear, indicating a growing interest in this topic across the region.

Figure 4 demonstrates how publication trends over time contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the field's development, while also supporting the previously discussed geographic distribution

3.3 Time Dynamics

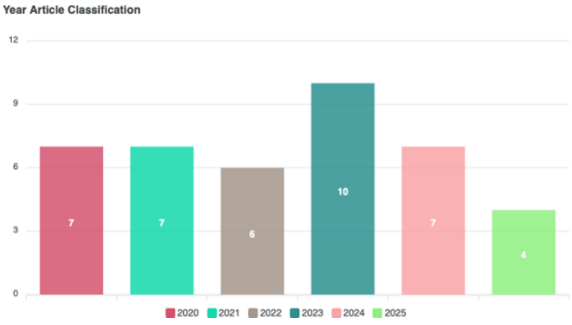

Fig. 4. Year Article Time Dynamics in Five Years

The distribution of articles from 2020 to 2025 shows a relatively stable trend, with a significant increase in 2023, which recorded the highest number of publications at 10 articles. The years 2020, 2021, and 2024 each contributed 7 articles, while 2022 had 6 articles, and 2025 (as of the data collection period) recorded 4 articles. These findings indicate that academic interest in the topic of perceived authenticity in consumer behavior has been steadily growing, with peak attention occurring in 2023. This trend suggests that the issue is becoming increasingly relevant in contemporary marketing discussions, particularly in the areas of digital marketing and branding.

Perceived authenticity influences consumer behavior by enhancing brand trust, purchase intention, loyalty, and emotional engagement. The literature indicates that consumers tend to respond more positively to brands, products, or influencers they perceive as honest, consistent, and aligned with their personal values. Perceived authenticity also strengthens long-term relationships between consumers and brands, while encouraging advocacy behaviors such as word of mouth. In digital contexts, authenticity plays a crucial role in building credibility and fostering meaningful connections with audiences.

3.4 Genuineness in Themes in Perceived Authenticity Research

The analysis results indicate that the most dominant theme in perceived authenticity research is influencer authenticity, accounting for 73.2% of all reviewed articles. This highlights the significance of authenticity in influencer communication and behavior in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions.

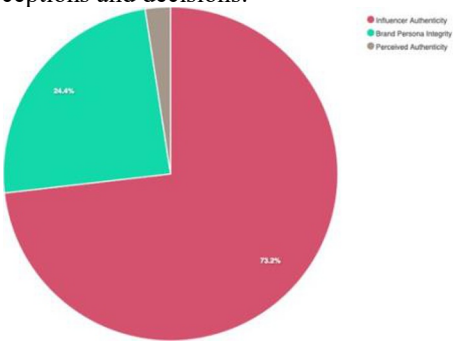

Fig. 5. Category Genuineness in Themes in Perceived Authenticity

The theme of brand persona integrity ranks second at 24.4%, reflecting the importance of consistency and alignment in brand identity when building perceptions of authenticity. Meanwhile, the general topic of perceived authenticity appears in only 2.4% of the articles, suggesting that most studies focus on specific contexts such as influencer communication and brand image, rather than on broad conceptual exploration. Foundational themes like authentic communication and emotional sincerity are often embedded within these specific discussions.

3.5 Transparency Themes in Perceived Authenticity Research

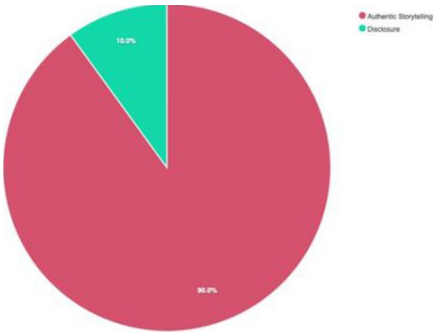

Fig. 6. Category Transparency in Themes in Perceived Authenticity

The analysis shows that transparency in perceived authenticity research is predominantly operationalized through authentic storytelling, accounting for approximately 90% of the reviewed studies. This pattern reflects the view that brand authenticity is closely linked to perceived sincerity and value congruence, with narrative communication serving as a key mechanism for conveying these attributes and strengthening consumers' evaluative judgments [1,2]. In contrast, transparency in the form of disclosure, including explicit communication of sponsorship or commercial intent, is addressed in only 10% of the literature; however, it remains a crucial factor in shaping consumer interpretations, as transparent communication influences how authenticity is perceived [15]. Overall, the findings highlight a dominant focus on narrative-based authenticity, while structural aspects of transparency receive limited attention, leading to the under exploration of informational openness and process visibility and indicating the need for a more integrative approach in marketing research.

4 Conclusion

Based on a systematic review of 42 scholarly articles published between 2020 and 2025, this study concludes that perceived authenticity is a central concept in modern marketing, exerting a significant influence on consumer behavior. Consumers' perceptions of the authenticity of a brand or marketing message have been shown to affect several key factors, including trust, purchase intention, loyalty, and emotional attachment. The study also highlights the predominant use of Self-Determination Theory, Signaling Theory, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, reflecting a multidisciplinary approach that integrates consumer psychology, marketing communication, and perception theory to explain how authenticity is constructed. Furthermore, a majority of the reviewed studies concentrate on digital contexts, particularly influencer marketing, where the perceived authenticity of individuals on social media plays a critical role in determining the success of brand campaigns. Overall, prior research indicates that authenticity is not an inherent or objective attribute

of a brand, but rather a construct shaped through the complex interplay of narrative, values, signaling, and consumer interpretation.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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