

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Description of Research Object

Dimas Ramadhan is a prominent travel influencer in Indonesia, recognised for his motivational content across platforms including Instagram and YouTube. The primary emphasis of his work is his personal travel adventures, encompassing adventure, cultural exploration, and the natural beauty of Indonesia. Dimas prioritizes authentic experiences in each of his uploads, which feature tourist destinations and provide practical information such as travel tips and recommendations for places to eat.

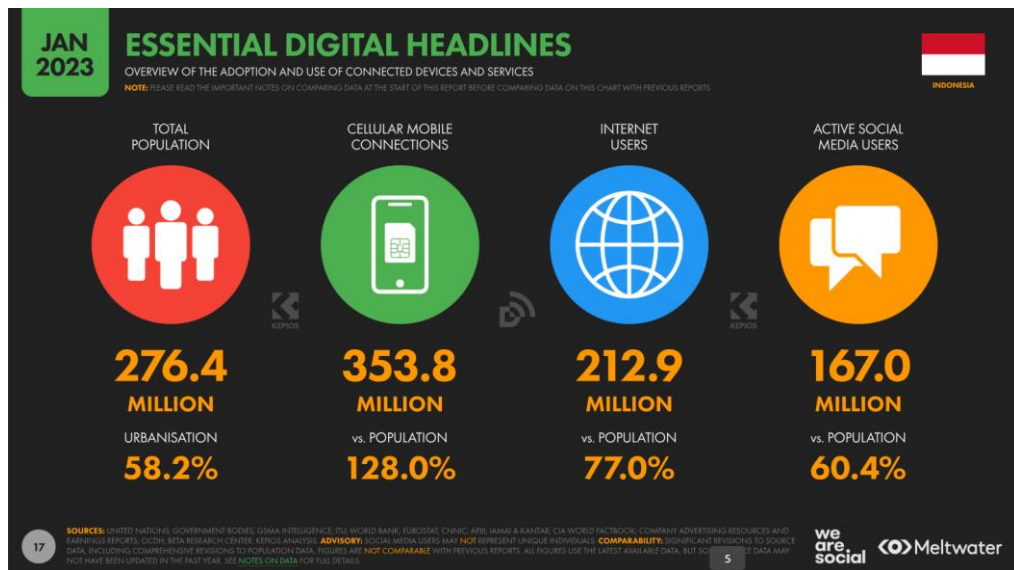
As an influencer, Dimas has a very large following, especially among the younger generation. This is due to Dimas' ability to build strong engagement with his audience, making him a trusted source of information for his followers looking for recommendations for tourist destinations. In addition, he is also known for his ability to introduce new and interesting tourist destinations in Indonesia, which are often not widely known by the general public. Dimas content not only promotes tourist destinations but also educates the audience about the importance of preserving nature and culture.

Dimas Ramadhan is also active in collaborating with various brands and companies in the tourism sector, as well as products related to lifestyle and travel. This further consolidates her status as a preeminent travel influencer in Indonesia, capable of shaping traveller behaviour and travel trends among her audience.

1.2 Research Background

Progress in digital technology has transformed the manner in which individuals get information. The primary influence is the rise of social media as the predominant venue for sharing experiences and obtaining recommendations, particularly within the tourism sector. According to data from We Are Social (2023), active social media users in Indonesia now make up over 60% of the total population, which amounts to 167.0 million people.

Figure 1.1 Total Active Social Media Users

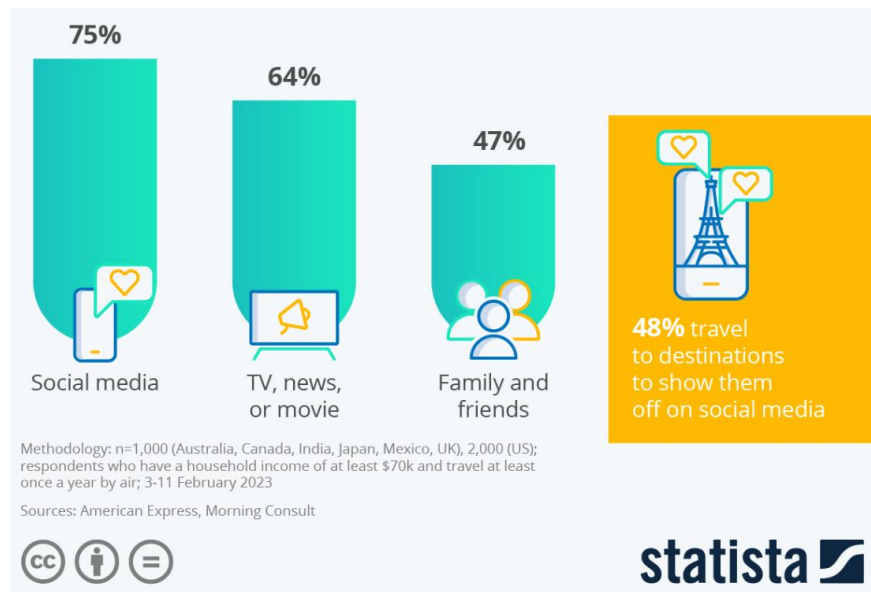


Source: We are Social (2023)

The data above indicates that social media platforms have a significant impact on people's lives in Indonesia. Social media serves a crucial role in delivering reliable information that users can access directly, fostering a digital ecosystem where experiences and reviews are shared in real-time (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), Social media is defined as a set of internet-based platforms that enable the sharing of ideas and comments in a virtual setting. Consequently, it significantly influences public opinion in society. In contrast, Buhalis & Law (2008) categorize social media as the most important tool in modern tourism as it supports the sharing of information in real-time hence enhancing travel decisions through recommendations.

Figure 1.2 Source of Information on Travel Decisions



Source: Statista (2023)

According to data Statista (2023), social media has the biggest influence in determining the choice of travel destinations. Approximately 75% of participants utilise social media platforms as a source of inspiration for selecting their trip destinations. These results reveal that pictures, reviews and ratings accessible through Social media are popular with today's traveler. Besides that, 64% of respondents also said that they are effective through printed and non-printed media like television, news, or movies as sources that have an impact on travel decisions. Simultaneously, 47% of participants depended on endorsements from relatives and acquaintances, underscoring the importance of personal experiences in influencing travel decisions. The survey also found that 48% of travellers choose destinations specifically to share their experiences on social media, indicating that travel is no longer just about exploration but also about curating one's online identity.

Examining the influence of social media on consumer decision-making, particularly in the travel industry, indicates a significant shift in the behaviour of the modern age. Currently, customers are increasingly relying on social networks as their principal source of information when selecting their next travel

destination. (Dabija et al., 2018). Social media has become an essential platform for connectivity, and the increasing user base has resulted in the proliferation of social media influencers (Cox et al., 2009). According to Freberg et al. (2011), an influencer is an individual who enjoys proximity to his or her fans and can be trusted. Social networks' opinion leaders, and influencers, possess the potential to increase the effect of the information they share with the target audience (Jalilvand, 2017). According to Pavlou & Gefen (2004), trust does affect consumer perceptions and behaviour. Ultimately, the degree of trust consumers place in social media influencers influences how likely they are to disregard or follow the recommendations provided. As a result, influencer marketing has become a crucial tool in the global online business landscape, enabling firms to forge more direct and authentic connections with their customers (Backaler, 2018) This can be perceived as a partnership between businesses and content creators, wherein they amalgamate their personalities with a product or service, enhancing its allure and pertinence to a certain audience. (De Veirman et al., 2017). This underscores the importance of trust in influencers, as it serves as a key factor in connecting their recommendations with the audience's purchasing or travel decisions. This trust is established not only through the influencer's credibility but also through the emotional bond that forms between them and their followers (Casaló et al., 2020).

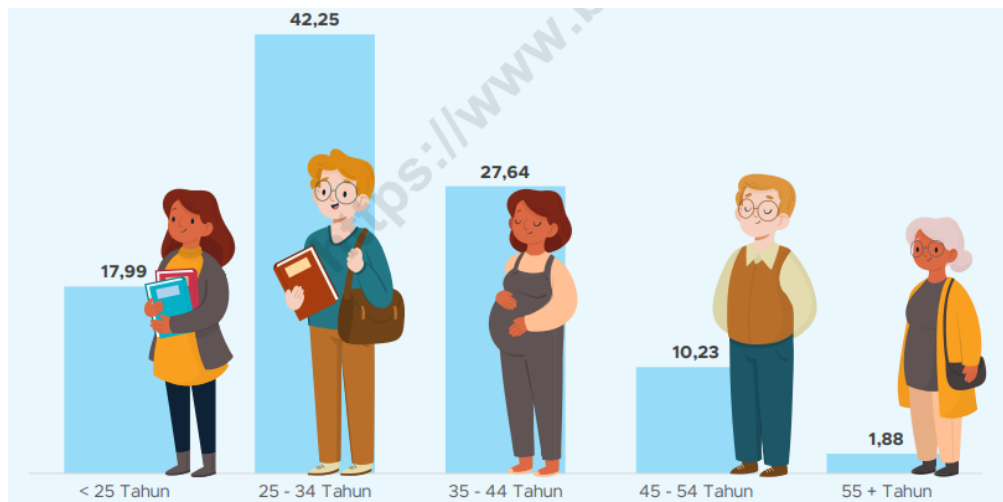
Trust in influencers is a key element in the decision-making process, especially in the digital landscape. According to Mayer et al. (1995), Trust is a disposition to depend on the competence, integrity, and good intentions of another individual, group, or organization, rather than one's perceptions. In the context of social media, Pavlou et al. (2004) concluded that trust helps to minimize the contagion that frequently happens in online-based transactions. However, trust does not always affect influencers directly. According to research conducted by Chu & Kim (2011), The audience's willingness to visit a promoted destination can be shaped by the trust an influencer has built. This suggests that trust is a mediator of perceived influence and an enabler of the relationship between influencers and the audience.

A global questionnaire-based survey conducted by Rakuten (2019) involving 3,600 consumers from five countries revealed that 88% of respondents felt influenced by the presence of influencers in determining their favourite destinations. As a result, influencers are progressively employing social media as an effective medium to disseminate their travel experiences, significantly influencing the choices of prospective travellers. In addition, Martínez-López et al. (2020) revealed that trust has a predictive ability of the credibility of uploaded content, which in turn increases audience interest in influencer posts.

Social media has a huge influence on Generation Z and Millennials, especially in motivating them to seek recommendations. Generation Z tends to use social media to follow trends, read news and consume inspirational content, while Millennials focus more on engaging with communities and discovering new products or brands through these platforms (GWI, 2020). According to McCrindle (2014), research indicates that Generation Z is more swayed by the opinions of social media influencers than by conventional branded commercials. This is in line with the findings of Tapscoot (2008), who states that the Millennial generation is highly dependent on technology to make decisions, including when choosing a tourist destination.

Millennials and Gen Z are the main segments of domestic travellers in Indonesia. Based on data from Domestic Tourism Statistics (2023), millennials and Generation Z dominate the domestic tourism sector in Indonesia, contributing almost 70%, while Generation Z is around 18% of total trips.

Figure 1.3 Traveler Segments in Indonesia



Source: Domestic Tourism Digital Survey 2023

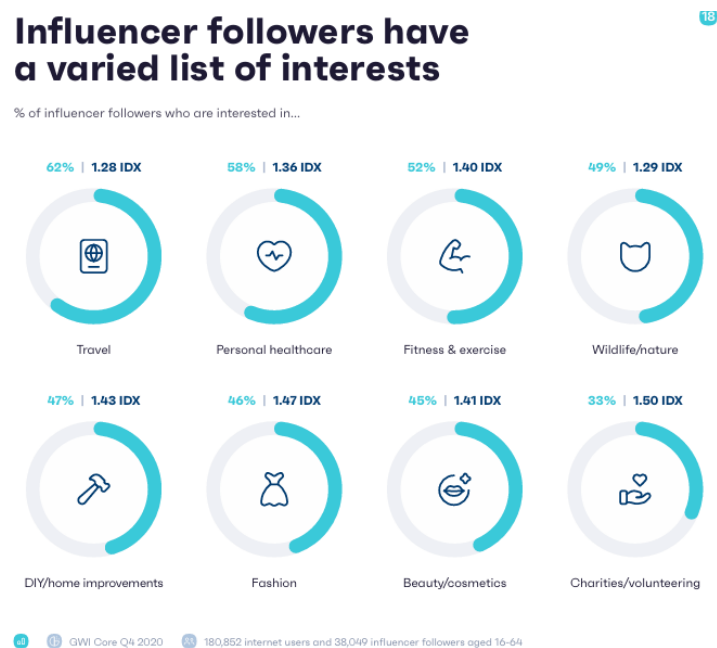
In figure 1.3 above, the main segment of domestic travelers in Indonesia is dominated by the 25-34 age group (42.25%), which is the Millennial generation, and followed by the 35-44 age group (27.64%). Meanwhile, the <25 age group (17.99%), which is mostly Gen Z, also contributes significantly to domestic travel. The report also states that Millennials generally have more travel experience and financial independence, so they tend to prioritize service quality as a key factor when travelling. On the other hand, Generation Z tends to be more price-sensitive, especially when it comes to accommodation costs, as they are still financially dependent on their parents. They are also more flexible and realistic in accepting lower-quality services.

The differences in the characteristics of these two generations are not only reflected in travel preferences but also in the way they obtain information related to tourist destinations. According to Kotler & Keller (2018), consumers increasingly rely on more credible and trustworthy sources of information, one of which is influencers on social media. Millennials and Gen Z, as frequent social media users, often follow influencers for recommendations on lifestyle, beauty products, health, and travel destinations.

Therefore, Social media influencers significantly impact tourists' impressions of travel locations. According to Rybalko & Seltzer (2010) mentioned that influencers, through social media, can substantially increase the

visibility of brands and tourist destinations. Influencers build their self-image through engaging visual content, as well as direct interaction with their followers, such as likes and comments, which deepens the emotional connection with the audience. Khamis et al. (2017) also stated that by utilizing influencers who have great influence, the tourism industry can expand audience reach and increase interest in visiting the promoted places.

Figure 1.4 Interest from the influencer's followers on social media



Source : GWI Core Q4 (2020)

Based on data from GWI (2020), Followers of influencers on social media have diverse interests that reflect their lifestyle. Their primary interest is in the travel category (62%), followed by personal healthcare (58%) and fitness or sports (52%). The interest in these categories suggests that followers of influencers tend to prioritize activities that support life experiences and well-being. In addition, interest in DIY (Do-It-Yourself) or home improvement (47%), fashion (46%), and beauty or cosmetics (45%) is also significant, indicating their focus on aesthetics and creativity. Meanwhile, though, the percentage of followers interested in charity or volunteering is relatively low (33%). This data

shows that influencer followers have a higher level of engagement than the population average in all categories. These findings open up strategic opportunities for companies or brands to design marketing campaigns that align with the interests of their target audience, especially on digital platforms.

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2018), Instagram is a powerful marketing tool for corporations and enterprises, particularly when they establish partnerships with influencers. Based on data from The Global Statistic (2024), Instagram is the most popular social media network in Indonesia, with 84.80% usage and a total of 173.59 million active users.

Table 1.1 Most Used Social Media Platforms in Indonesia 2024

Top Social Network Platforms in Indonesia	Percentage	Active User (In Million)
Instagram	84.80%	173.59
Facebook	81.30%	166.42
TikTok	63.30%	129.17
X	58.30%	119.34
Pinterest	36.70%	75.12
Kuaishou	35.70%	73.08
LinkedIn	29.40%	60.18
Discord	17.60%	36.03
Likee	14.20%	29.07

Source: The Global Statistics

Table 1.1 shows that Facebook holds the second position, with a usage rate of 81.30% and a total of 166.42 million active users. TikTok is in third place with 63.30% of users and a total of 129.17 million active users, followed by X with a percentage of 58.30% and 119.34 million active users. Other platforms such as Pinterest, Kuaishou, LinkedIn, Discord and Likee have a much smaller percentage of users. This data shows that Instagram and Facebook remain the most widely used main platforms in Indonesia, reflecting the popularity of both

platforms as a medium for sharing visual and text content. TikTok, as a rapidly growing short video-based platform, shows significant market penetration with an increasing number of users.

Based on this, the report from databoks (2024) also revealed that Instagram is the most active social media used by Gen Z and Millennials in Indonesia. Instagram's popularity among this younger generation strengthens its position as the main platform for sharing visual content, following the latest trends, and establishing social interactions.

Figure 1.5 Social media of gen z and millennials in Indonesia



Source: APJII 2024

The figure highlights notable differences in social media usage between Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials in Indonesia. Gen Z uses Instagram (51.9%), Facebook (51.64%), TikTok (46.84%), and YouTube (38.63%) more, while Millennials dominate on Facebook (74.09%) and YouTube (53.42%), with lower usage of TikTok (31.72%) and Instagram (22.14%). This data shows that each generation has a favourite platform according to their needs and behaviour patterns in interacting on social media.

Furthermore, the rise of influencers on social media has significantly influenced the behaviour of the second generation. According to Anestia (2024), Indonesia ranks fourth globally in terms of influencer content submissions, with

4.37%. Meanwhile, Indonesia ranks 6th in the number of influencers on Instagram, accounting for 3.31%. By leveraging platforms like Instagram and TikTok, influencers effectively promote tourist destinations through engaging, authentic content while reaching a broader audience. This shows that influencers can expand the market through innovative digital promotion strategies (Hariyanti, 2018).

It is indisputable that influencers are one of the main factors shaping people's perceptions and preferences towards tourist destinations. Through creative and authentic content, they transform previously unknown destinations into viral and interesting places to visit. This is a list of macro-influencers in Indonesia's tourism sector, ranked by follower count and engagement level among numerous social media travel influencers.

Table 1.2 Macro Influencer Traveller

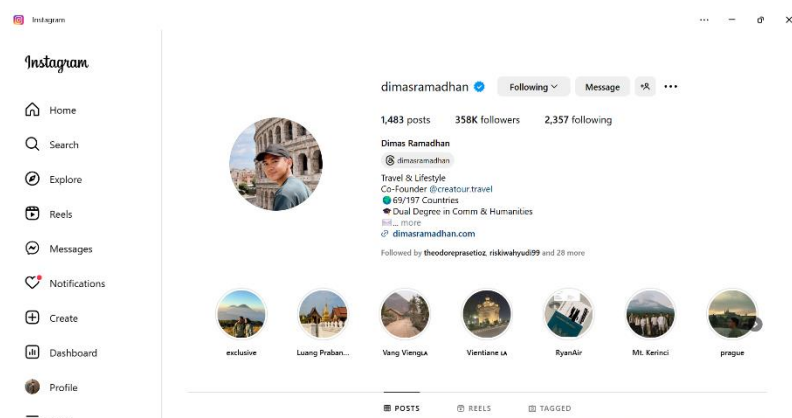
No	Social Media Influencer	Account	Followers	Highest Engaging Post
1	Dimas Ramadhan	@dimasramadhan	354k	91,9K
2	Indah Lorian	@lorianbackpacker	330k	72,4k likes
3	Milla Hisyam	@Milla_khs	314k	25,2k likes
4	Pandu Waskitha	@backpackertampan	288k	38,0k likes
5	Trinity	@trinitytraveler	123k	5,4k likes
6	Marianne Rumantir	@mariannerumantir	115k	12,7k likes
7	Ferry Hu	@ferryhu_	48,8k	3,5k likes
8	Susan & Adam	@pergidulu	54,2k	283 likes
9	Harival Zakuya	@harivalzakuya	96,9k	46,0k likes
10	I Wayan Sudiandika	@sudiandhika	68,1k	1,6k likes
11	Irene Komala	@pinktravelogue	57,7k	463 likes

Source: Data is processed using Phlanx.com tools

The data in the table above is taken from an article published by Slice.id in 2024, which discusses travel influencers in Indonesia. Then, it was processed using phlanx.com tools to find out the engagement for each account. The influencers listed have followers ranging from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, with varying levels of interaction on their posts. This data highlights the popularity and influence of each influencer in shaping their audience's perceptions on social media platforms. Subsequently, to authenticate the reliability of the data regarding the highest follower counts and engagement rates, the information is examined utilizing social media tools offered by Phlanx.com. The tool was crucial in assessing the engagement levels of each identified influencer's posts to better comprehend their impact on social media followers.

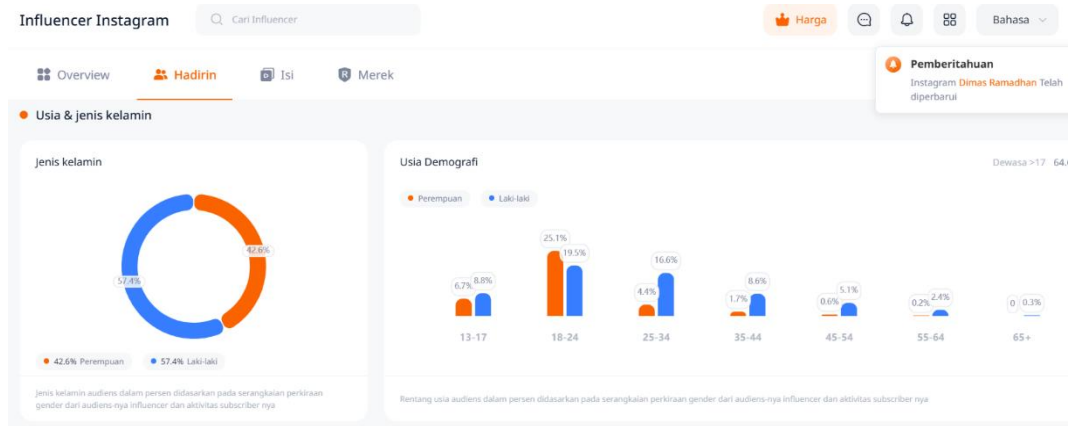
Based on the data described, Dimas Ramadhan with the Instagram account @dimasramadhan is one of the influential influencers in the world of travel in Indonesia. With 358,000 followers, Dimas has the highest number of followers compared to other influencers. Dimas has great appeal, especially among social media users who are interested in travel and lifestyle content. This number of followers shows that he not only has a large audience base but also relevance in the digital tourism industry.

Figure 1.6 Social Media Instagram Dimas Ramadhan



Source: Instagram

Figure 1.7 Social Media Instagram Dimas Ramadhan Age



Source: <https://id.noxinfluencer.com/>

Based on the demographic analysis of Dimas Ramadhan's Instagram followers checked by noxinfluencer tools, the majority of his audience is male at 57.4%, while women reach 42.6%. Additionally, the majority of the audience falls within the 18-24 age range (25.1% male and 19.5% female) and the 25-34 age range (16.6% male and 4.4% female). This age range indicates that Dimas' followers are primarily young adults and early adults who are active on social media and are generally drawn to content related to lifestyle, entertainment, and travel.

In an article written by Slice.id, Dimas Ramadhan is known as a world traveller who has a mission to visit all countries in the world. To date, he has managed to visit 68 out of 197 countries. The article says that Dimas is loved by his followers for the informative content he often shares. He often shares itinerary files in PDF format to guide audiences who want to visit the countries he has explored. The article also discusses the content performance of @dimasramadhan's Instagram account which shows amazing results with an average engagement rate of 12.64%. A fantastic and favourable number for brands who want to gain exposure. Dimas also has experience collaborating with various brands, ranging from gadget products, and travelling accessories, to transportation services.

While the impact of social media on information dissemination and decision-making has been widely investigated, certain studies have specifically examined its impact on the tourism industry. Prior research indicated that social media influencers, by establishing trust, impact all phases of the decision-making process regarding the selection of a specific destination, with the exception of the experience-sharing phase. (Pop et al., 2021).

From the above discussion, it is evident that social media influencers play a crucial role in shaping travel decisions. However, the influence of trust in the content produced by certain influencers on consumer decisions still requires further study. Based on the above phenomenon, I chose the travel influencer Dimas Ramadhan as the object of research, and I was interested in conducting research with the title **“THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER TRUST “DIMAS RAMADHAN” ON THE TOURISM DESTINATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.**

1.3 Formulation of Problem

While the impact of social media on information sharing and decision-making has been extensively investigated, more narrowly focused research in the tourism industry indicates that social media is essential in influencing the decision-making processes of travellers. Leung et al. (2013) shown that tourists utilize social media at various stages of trip planning: in the pre-trip phase to gather information, during the trip to explore alternatives, and post-trip to share their experiences.

In line with this, Magno & Cassia (2018) have revealed that social media influencers play a significant role in shaping consumers' travel intentions, with trust being a crucial factor in their decision-making process. However, According to Pop et al. (2021) the research found that the influence of social media influencers is more dominant at earlier stages, such as information search and alternative selection, but less significant at the experience-sharing stage. Christou (2010), also noted that social media activities have fundamentally changed the pre-purchase stage, mainly through consumers' evolving expectations, influenced by their level of trust in influencers.

Based on the research background on The Influence Of Social Media Trust Dimas Ramadhan on Millennials and Generation Z Decision Making In Choosing Tourist Destinations, several main problems can be formulated as follows:

1. Does Customer Trust in content generated by social media influencers (SMI) have a significant impact on travel Desire?
2. Does customer trust in content created by social media influencers (SMI) significant impact on information searching for tourism destinations?
3. Does customer trust in content produced by social media influencers (SMI) have a significant impact on evaluating tourism destinations?
4. Does trust in the content created by influencers has a significant positive impact on the purchase of tourism products?
5. Does Customer Trust in content generated by influencers have a positive impact on destination travel product satisfaction.?
6. Does influencer generated content have on travelers' experience-sharing behavior?
7. Does the desire to travel mediate the relationship between SMI beliefs and information search?
8. Does information search mediate the relationship between SMI beliefs and alternative evaluations?
9. Does alternative evaluation in mediating the relationship between SMI trust and purchasing decisions?
10. Does purchasing decisions in mediating the relationship between SMI trust and travel satisfaction?
11. Does travel Satisfaction mediate the relationship between SMI trust and sharing travel experiences?

1.4 Research Purpose

Thus, this study aims to prove whether trust in social media influencers, such as Dimas Ramadhan, significantly influences tourists' decisions in choosing to travel. Based on this statement, this research is designed with the following focus:

1. To identify Customer Trust in content generated by social media influencers (SMI) has a significant impact on Travel Desire
2. To identify customer trust in content created by social media influencers (SMI) a significant impact on information searching for tourism destinations.
3. To identify customer trust in content produced by social media influencers (SMI) have a significant impact on evaluating tourism destinations.
4. To Identify Customer Trust in content produced by influencers has a positive impact on satisfaction with destination travel products.
5. To identify Customer Trust in content generated by influencers have a positive impact on destination travel product satisfaction.
6. To identify influencer generated content has on tourists' experience sharing behavior.
7. To identify the influence of travel desire that mediates the relationship between SMI beliefs and information search.
8. To identify the influence of information search mediate the relationship between SMI beliefs and alternative evaluations.
9. To identify the influence of alternative evaluation in mediating the relationship between SMI trust and purchasing decisions.
10. To identify the influence of purchasing decisions in mediating the relationship between SMI trust and travel satisfaction.
11. To identify influence of Travel Satisfaction in mediating the relationship between SMI trust and sharing travel experiences.

1.5 Research Benefit

This research is expected to provide several benefits, both practical and non-practical, as follows:

1.5.1 Theoretical Aspects

This research is expected to provide a valuable scientific foundation for future studies in digital marketing, especially regarding the use of social media and influencer marketing in the tourism industry.

1.5.2 Practical Aspects

a. For Tourism Industry Actors

This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of optimising marketing strategies through the use of social media influencers to promote tourist destinations, thereby enhancing their attractiveness and engaging a wider audience.

b. For Social Media Influencer

This research aims to examine the attributes of content and the determinants affecting audience travel decisions, consequently providing insights to enhance the creation of more useful and entertaining content in the future.

c. For the Government or Tourism Office

The findings of this research are expected to provide data and insights that facilitate the creation of creative and targeted tourism marketing strategies through collaboration with social media influencers, with the aim of maximizing Indonesia's tourism potential.

1.6 Systematics Of Research Writing

Contains the systematics and a brief explanation of the research report consisting of Chapters I to V in the research report.

a. CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the research topic, research background, problem formulation, research objectives, research intent, research benefits, and research framework.

b. CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a comprehensive discussion of relevant theories and their relation to the research topic, along with supporting approaches to solving the problem.

c. CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the type of research used, the operational variables, the control variables, the measurement Scale, the methods of data collection, the sampling techniques, and the data analysis methods.

d. CHAPTER IV: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the author presents and analyzes the collected data and discusses the research results in depth.

e. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The final chapter presents the research conclusions and suggestions for the research object or other related parties.