



## The Role of Influencers, Brand Image, Ease of Use, and Consumer Trust in Electric Vehicle Purchase Decisions

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### ABSTRACT

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The adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) is a critical issue in the global effort to reduce carbon emissions and transition to sustainable transportation systems. In Indonesia, despite government incentives and environmental awareness, the uptake of EVs remains slow. This study aims to examine the influence of influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use on electric vehicle purchasing decisions, with consumer trust as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was used, with a survey conducted among 113 potential EV consumers in Indonesia. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling –Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that brand image and ease of use significantly enhance consumer trust, while influencer marketing directly influences purchasing decisions without mediation through trust. Consumer trust plays a key role in purchasing decisions but does not fully mediate all relationships. The findings highlight that while influencer marketing raises awareness, building trust for high-tech products like EVs requires deeper validation. This study contributes to consumer behavior and digital marketing literature, offering practical insights for enhancing EV adoption strategies in Indonesia.

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of electric vehicles (EVs) is a critical global issue in the effort to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions (Aderibigbe et al., 2023; Bakhtyar et al., 2023). As the world grapples with the need for sustainable transportation systems, EV adoption has gained significant attention, especially in countries like Indonesia (Anugrah et al., 2025). The shift towards EVs not only helps reduce dependency on fossil fuels but also contributes to environmental preservation (Hossain et al., 2024). Despite the growing awareness and policies that support EV adoption, the uptake of these vehicles remains slow in many regions. This research is crucial for understanding how various factors, such as influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use, affect consumer purchasing

decisions for electric vehicles in Indonesia. The insights generated can guide the development of more effective marketing strategies to increase EV adoption, benefiting both consumers and the automotive industry (Yadav et al., 2024). Thus, exploring these factors is not only timely but essential for accelerating the transition to sustainable transportation in Indonesia (Sitinjak et al., 2025).

The adoption rate of electric vehicles in Indonesia is still relatively low compared to other Asian countries, despite the increasing attention to environmental sustainability and government incentives (Hidayat et al., 2023). One of the primary reasons for this slow adoption is the lack of consumer trust and awareness regarding the performance, safety, and benefits of EVs (Chidambaram et al., 2023). While price and efficiency are often emphasized in product marketing, consumer decision-making is also influenced by psychological and social factors such as brand image, ease of use, and trust. These non-functional elements play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions (Widjaja, 2025; Rahayu et al., 2023). This study aims to address the gap in understanding how these factors influence the adoption of electric vehicles in a developing market like Indonesia, where the acceptance of new technologies is still in its early stages.

In Indonesia, electric vehicle adoption is being hindered by several factors. While there has been some progress in terms of government incentives and policy support for EV adoption, consumer perceptions of electric vehicles remain ambivalent (Sapkota et al., 2025). Many potential buyers still view EVs as expensive, technologically complex, and lacking in infrastructure such as charging stations. In addition, there is a significant gap in understanding the psychological factors that influence consumers purchase decisions (Han et al., 2024). For example, while influencers have become a powerful force in shaping consumer opinions, their role in promoting EV remains under researched. Brand image, ease of use, and trust are all critical elements in influencing purchase behavior, but they are often not given enough attention in marketing strategies aimed at promoting electric vehicles. Understanding these factors is essential to increasing EV adoption in Indonesia.

Previous research has explored various aspects of consumer behavior and technology adoption, but few studies have focused on the combined influence of influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use in shaping consumer perceptions of electric vehicles. Influencer marketing has been shown to positively impact consumer trust and purchasing behavior for other products (Syaiful et al., 2021), but its role in promoting high-tech products like electric vehicles remains underexplored. Research on brand image in the automotive sector highlights its importance in building consumer trust, particularly for brands associated with innovation and sustainability (Hidayat et al., 2021).

However, studies on the relationship between brand image and EV adoption in developing markets like Indonesia are scarce. Furthermore, while ease of use has been identified as a key factor in technology acceptance (Fitriani et al., 2020), its specific impact on EV in Indonesia has not been adequately studied. This research aims to fill these gaps by examining how these three factors simultaneously influence consumer trust and purchase decisions for electric vehicles.

Despite the growing body of research on consumer behavior and digital marketing, there is a notable gap in understanding the interaction between influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use in the context of electric vehicles (Damanik et al., 2025). While previous studies have examined each of these factors in isolation, few have explored how they work together to shape trust and influence purchasing decisions. Moreover, most studies have focused on developed markets, with limited research on developing countries like Indonesia, where digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior may differ. The need for a comprehensive study that integrates these factors is evident, as it will provide valuable insights for marketers and policymakers working to accelerate EV adoption in Indonesia. This research will contribute to the existing literature by providing a holistic view of the factors that influence EV purchase decisions and offering practical recommendations for the automotive industry.

This research introduces a novel approach by integrating influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use as key determinants of consumer trust and purchase decisions for electric vehicles in Indonesia. The study not only adds to the growing body of knowledge on technology adoption but also provides a fresh perspective on how digital marketing strategies can influence consumer behavior in developing markets. The findings will be instrumental in identifying effective strategies to overcome barriers to EV adoption and in shaping the future of sustainable transportation in Indonesia. By examining these factors in a real-world context, this study addresses an important gap in the literature and offers actionable insights for both academics and industry professionals.

The central research problem of this study is to determine how influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use simultaneously influence consumer trust and, in turn, affect purchasing decisions for electric vehicles in Indonesia. The hypothesis is that these factors not only impact consumer perceptions but also serve as mediators that enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies for EV adoption. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these relationships and to offer practical recommendations for the automotive industry in Indonesia. By understanding the role of these factors, companies can develop more targeted and effective marketing campaigns that foster trust, increase awareness, and accelerate EV adoption in the Indonesian market.

From a management perspective, this study offers valuable insights into the role of digital marketing in influencing consumer decision-making, particularly in the context of emerging technologies like electric vehicles. The research underscores the importance of aligning marketing strategies with consumer perceptions and psychological factors, such as trust and brand image. For the automotive industry, the findings will provide guidance on how to craft marketing campaigns that leverage influencer partnerships and emphasize product benefits in a way that resonates with Indonesian consumers. Additionally, this study will contribute to the broader field of consumer behavior research, particularly in developing markets, by offering new perspectives on the factors that drive technology adoption. Ultimately, the study's practical implications will help companies better navigate the complexities of marketing innovative products in a competitive and evolving marketplace.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative research design using a survey approach to examine the influence of influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use on electric vehicle purchasing decisions, with consumer trust as a mediating variable. The survey design was chosen because it allows for the efficient collection of data from a large number of respondents and enables structured measurement of respondents' perceptions. Through the survey method, relationships between variables can be statistically tested, providing a clear picture of how psychological and marketing factors influence electric vehicle purchase decisions in Indonesia. This design was selected due to its ability to gather representative and valid data, making it well-suited to the research goals of testing the relationships between variables using statistical analysis.

The study was conducted in Indonesia, focusing on potential consumers and users of electric vehicles. The choice of location is based on the fact that Indonesia is an emerging market for electric vehicle adoption, with the adoption rate still relatively low compared to other Asian countries. However, there is growing attention towards environmental sustainability and government policies that encourage the transition to eco-friendly vehicles. Indonesia presents an ideal setting to study the factors influencing the adoption of new technologies, particularly electric vehicles, in a developing market. By selecting Indonesia, this research aims to contribute insights into the barriers and opportunities for accelerating electric vehicle adoption in the country.

Data collection was conducted using a survey method with a closed questionnaire that utilized a Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed based on indicators from consumer behavior theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and digital marketing literature. The survey was distributed online to reach a wider range of relevant respondents within the digital context. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents based on specific criteria, such as their understanding of electric vehicles or experience with accessing promotional content through influencers. A total of 113 respondents, consisting of potential consumers and electric vehicle users in Indonesia, participated in the study.

The data analysis process involved several stages, including data condensation (the initial processing of data to ensure completeness and relevance), data reduction (screening the data to retain only the most pertinent information for analysis), and data display (organizing and presenting the data in a systematic way for further analysis). To examine the relationships between variables and their effects, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). SEM-PLS was chosen for its ability to test both direct and indirect relationships between variables, as well as to examine the mediating role of consumer trust. The outer model was tested for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and indicator reliability, while the inner model was tested for the influence between variables using path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values. Mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping techniques to test indirect effects.

The validity of the data was assessed through several stages, including validity and reliability tests to ensure that each questionnaire item consistently and accurately measured the intended variables. Validity tests were conducted to assess whether the indicators in the questionnaire truly measured the constructs they were intended to measure, while reliability tests were used to ensure the consistency and trustworthiness of the measurements. These steps were crucial to ensure the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the conclusions drawn from the study.

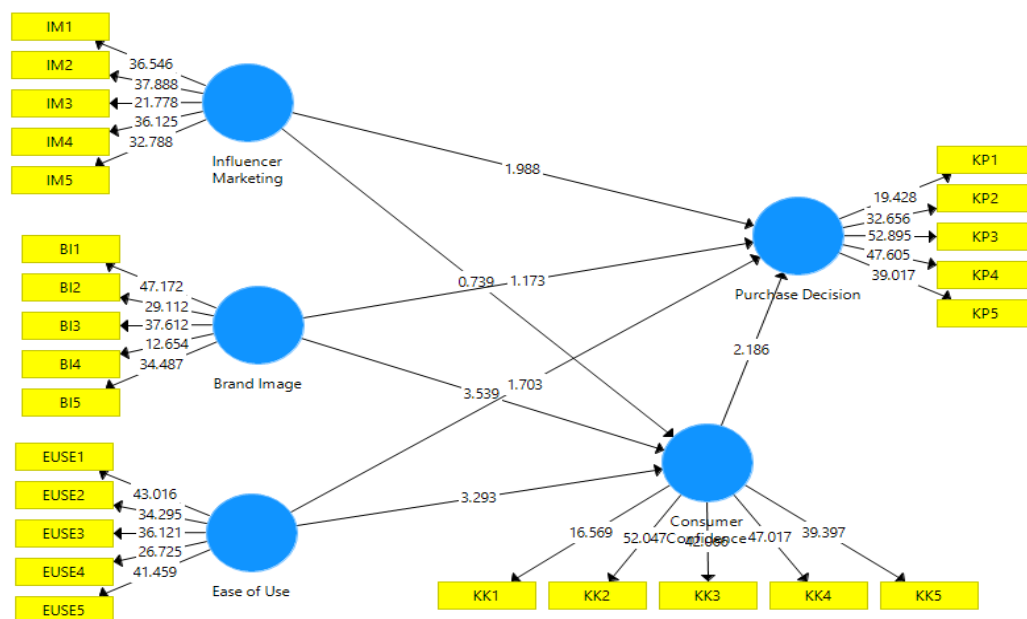
## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The research results are presented based on the sequence of the research questions, emphasizing the objective presentation of statistical facts. The testing of the relationship between variables was conducted using path analysis in a structural model. The results table shows the path coefficient values, T values, and P values as the basis for significance. Visually, the main findings can be displayed in Table 1, which summarises the direct and indirect effects between the research variables. Based on this table, the brand image variable was proven

to have a significant effect on consumer trust with a coefficient of 0.439 ( $p = 0.000$ ), while the direct effect of brand image on purchasing decisions was not significant ( $p = 0.241$ ). Meanwhile, ease of use also shows a significant effect on consumer trust (coefficient 0.414;  $p = 0.001$ ), but is not significant on purchasing decisions ( $p = 0.089$ ). The influencer marketing variable did not have a significant effect on consumer trust ( $p = 0.460$ ), but it had a significant direct effect on purchasing decisions (coefficient 0.212;  $p = 0.047$ ).

Furthermore, consumer trust was found to have a significant effect on purchasing decisions with a coefficient of 0.273 ( $p = 0.029$ ). For indirect effects, the path from brand image  $\rightarrow$  consumer trust  $\rightarrow$  purchasing decisions yielded a  $p$ -value of 0.079, while the path from ease of use  $\rightarrow$  consumer trust  $\rightarrow$  purchasing decisions yielded a  $p$ -value of 0.065. Both indicate a tendency towards mediation but are not yet statistically significant. The path influencer marketing  $\rightarrow$  consumer confidence  $\rightarrow$  purchasing decisions was found to be insignificant ( $p = 0.507$ ). Overall, these results provide an empirical picture of the pattern of relationships between variables in accordance with the established structural analysis sequence.



**Figure 1. Hypothesis Testing**

The significant influence of brand image on consumer trust confirms that a strong brand image creates consumer confidence in the quality and reliability of electric vehicles. This finding is in line with Wijaya and Hasanah (2023), who emphasise that automotive brand image plays a major role in building trust in new technological innovations. However, brand image does not directly

influence purchasing decisions, indicating that brand image alone is not enough to drive purchasing behaviour without the support of other psychological factors. This condition indicates that Indonesian consumers still need concrete evidence or additional validation before deciding to purchase an electric vehicle.

**Table 1. Path Coefficient and Specific Indirect Effects**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Brand Image -> Consumer Confidence	0.439	0.436	0.124	3.539	0.000
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.173	0.185	0.147	1.173	0.241
Consumer Confidence -> Purchase Decision	0.273	0.269	0.125	2.186	0.029
Ease of Use -> Consumer Confidence	0.414	0.409	0.126	3.293	0.001
Ease of Use -> Purchase Decision	0.261	0.263	0.153	1.703	0.089
Influencer Marketing -> Consumer Confidence	0.062	0.071	0.084	0.739	0.460
Influencer Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.212	0.201	0.107	1.988	0.047
Brand Image -> Consumer Confidence -> Purchase Decision	0.120	0.120	0.068	1.761	0.079
Ease of Use -> Consumer Confidence -> Purchase Decision	0.113	0.108	0.061	1.852	0.065
Influencer Marketing -> Consumer Confidence -> Purchase Decision	0.017	0.019	0.026	0.664	0.507

## Discussion

The significant influence of ease of use on consumer trust reinforces the TAM view that the perception of ease of use is the initial trigger for belief in the benefits of technology. Consumers feel more confident when products are considered simple and do not present operational barriers. However, the insignificant direct influence of ease of use on purchasing decisions indicates that ease alone is not enough to drive the final decision. This suggests that ease of use functions more as a psychological factor that reduces risk, rather than a major factor that determines purchasing decisions.

The finding that influencer marketing does not significantly affect consumer trust but directly influences purchasing decisions provides an interesting insight. This direct influence shows that the role of influencers is more about creating emotional impulses or instant persuasion, rather than building deep trust. Consumers may be motivated to buy because of the appeal or

popularity of influencers, but they do not consider influencers to be a source of credibility that enhances long-term trust. This finding intersects with the research by Rahman et al. (2023), which states that the influence of influencers can be tactical and does not always strengthen trust if it is not supported by high credibility.

The significant influence of consumer trust on purchasing decisions confirms that trust is a key element that transforms attitudes into actions. The decision to purchase high-tech electric vehicles is greatly influenced by consumer confidence in the safety, benefits, and reliability of the product. These findings reinforce the research by Putri & Handoko (2024), which places trust as the most decisive variable in the adoption of electric vehicles.

The mediation test results indicate that brand image and ease of use tend to have an indirect effect through consumer trust, but this is not yet statistically significant. This condition may be due to the high need for market education, so that consumer trust has not yet been strongly established even though perceptions of brand image and ease of use are already positive. Conversely, the mediation pathway in influencer marketing is not significant, indicating that trust is not the main mechanism that bridges the influence of influencers on purchasing decisions. Findings regarding the insignificant mediation tendency in the relationship between brand image and ease of use through consumer trust illustrate that the process of building trust in electric vehicles in Indonesia is still in its early stages. Previous research, such as Kurniawan & Ramadhani (2023), shows that automotive brand image usually has a strong indirect influence on purchasing decisions through trust because brand reputation is considered a signal of quality. However, unlike that study, this research found that although brand image was rated positively, its impact on trust was not strong enough to produce significant mediation. This discrepancy can be explained by the Indonesian market context, which still requires intensive education about electric vehicle technology, so that trust has not yet been firmly established even though consumers have a good perception of the brand.

In terms of ease of use, previous studies such as Wulandari & Prasetyo (2023) confirm that perceived ease of use tends to increase trust and lead to purchasing decisions when consumers are familiar with the technology. However, the findings of this study do not show significant mediation, indicating that perceived ease is not enough to form solid trust in electric vehicle technology. This may occur because consumers do not yet have direct experience in trying, operating, or evaluating electric vehicles, so the ease they perceive is only assumptive, not based on experience. As a result, even though ease of use is viewed positively, consumers remain hesitant to convert this perception into confidence that reduces the risk of purchase.

Meanwhile, the insignificant mediation on the path of influencer marketing consumer trust purchase decision shows a dynamic that contrasts with studies such as Putri & Santoso (2022), which found that influencer credibility plays an important role in strengthening trust. This study shows that influencers do not function as trust builders, but rather as emotional stimuli or direct persuasion that drives purchase decisions without a trust-building process. This difference may occur because consumers view influencers as parties providing commercial recommendations, not as reliable sources of information on complex technologies such as electric vehicles. Thus, influencers tend to create awareness and momentary interest, but do not produce a profound effect that builds trust. These findings emphasise that in new technology markets, trust is formed more from real experiences, quality testing, or brand reputation, rather than solely from popularity-based promotions.

Theoretically, this study enriches our understanding of how psychological factors and perceptions of technology work in the context of electric vehicle adoption. Practically, these findings imply the need for marketing strategies that strengthen trust, not just persuasive communication. Manufacturers need to provide real user experiences, product education, and high-quality testimonials to strengthen consumer confidence. Meanwhile, influencers need to be chosen who are truly relevant and have in-depth knowledge in order to increase trust, not just awareness or liking. This study also recognises the limitations of the number of variables, sample coverage, and potential consumer perception bias, so further research is recommended to expand variables such as perceived risk, perceived value, or social environmental factors. In addition, it is recommended to use mixed-methods to capture consumer behaviour insights more holistically.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that influencer marketing, brand image, and ease of use play distinct roles in influencing consumer trust and purchasing decisions for electric vehicles. Brand image and ease of use significantly enhance consumer trust, while influencer marketing directly impacts purchasing decisions without going through the trust mechanism. Although consumer trust is a key driver of purchasing decisions, it does not fully mediate all relationships between variables. These findings suggest that while influencer marketing is effective in raising awareness, building trust for high-tech products like electric vehicles requires a deeper approach, especially in Indonesia, where technology adoption is still in its early stages.

Academically, this study contributes to the literature on consumer behavior and digital marketing by demonstrating that influencer marketing strategies do not always generate trust, particularly for high-tech products

requiring deeper validation. The research highlights the importance of a strong brand image and ease of use in building consumer trust and driving purchasing decisions. However, the study has limitations, including the narrow scope of variables and the sample focusing on respondents with specific knowledge of electric vehicles. Future research should explore additional factors like risk perception and product value to offer a more comprehensive understanding of electric vehicle adoption and inform strategies for accelerating the transition to sustainable transportation technologies in Indonesia.

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