



The Role of Personal Branding in Shaping Consumer Purchasing Decisions: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Personal Branding;
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This study aims to examine the role of personal branding in influencing consumer purchasing decisions in the digital business environment. The research employs a systematic literature review (SLR) by analyzing relevant scholarly publications on personal branding and consumer purchasing behavior. The reviewed literature was selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and quality of the findings. The results indicate that personal branding has a significant positive influence on purchasing decisions by enhancing credibility, trust, perceived value, and consumer engagement. Strong personal branding also increases consumers' confidence in products and strengthens purchase intentions across digital platforms. Furthermore, the findings suggest that personal branding has evolved into an essential competency for professionals, entrepreneurs, and business practitioners seeking to improve market competitiveness and establish long-term relationships with consumers. The study implies that organizations and individuals should strategically develop authentic and consistent personal branding to enhance consumer trust and support sustainable business performance in the digital era.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of the global business environment from conventional offline transactions to digital platforms has fundamentally changed the way consumers interact with products and brands (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). This transformation is important because digital technology has expanded market accessibility, accelerated information exchange, and reshaped consumer expectations regarding purchasing experiences. According to global internet statistics, more than five billion people were connected to the internet in 2022, while social media users reached approximately 4.74 billion, representing nearly 60% of the world's population. Such growth has created an ecosystem where

consumers increasingly rely on digital channels to search for information, compare products, and make purchasing decisions. Consequently, businesses are no longer competing solely through product quality or pricing but also through their digital presence and communication strategies. As digital interaction becomes an integral part of everyday life, understanding the factors that influence online purchasing decisions has become increasingly important for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers (Córdova et al., 202).

The growing dependence on digital platforms has also altered how trust is established between businesses and consumers. Unlike conventional transactions, online purchasing decisions are often made without direct physical interaction (Clark et al., 2020), making intangible factors such as credibility, authenticity, and reputation increasingly influential. Previous studies have shown that consumers evaluate products not only based on price, quality, promotions, and accessibility but also on the degree of trust they place in sellers and brands (Bahri & Komaladewi, 2023). The expansion of social media has strengthened this phenomenon because consumers continuously receive information, recommendations, and opinions from individuals who actively communicate their expertise and experiences online. Consequently, personal branding has emerged as a strategic mechanism for establishing credibility and strengthening consumer confidence before purchasing decisions are made. Understanding this relationship is therefore essential because consumer trust has become one of the primary determinants of business sustainability and competitiveness in the digital economy.

Despite the enormous opportunities created by digital technology, businesses face increasingly intense competition in attracting and retaining consumers. The ease of entering online markets has enabled countless firms and entrepreneurs to offer similar products, making product differentiation substantially more difficult. Consequently, businesses can no longer rely exclusively on competitive pricing or product innovation to secure customer loyalty (Shukla et al., 2022; Staniewski & Awruk, 2022). Instead, consumers increasingly evaluate the individuals behind the brands, including founders, entrepreneurs, and content creators who communicate directly through digital platforms. Personal branding therefore becomes an important strategic asset because it enables business owners to project expertise, consistency, authenticity, and credibility while establishing stronger emotional relationships with consumers (Ningsih & Vania, 2022). Nevertheless, many business actors still struggle to develop effective personal branding strategies that consistently generate consumer trust and encourage purchasing decisions within highly competitive digital markets (Amelia et al., 2026).

This phenomenon can be observed across various digital business environments where entrepreneurs actively utilize social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and other online communities to communicate their expertise, values, and business identities. Rather than promoting products alone, successful entrepreneurs increasingly share professional experiences, educational content, and personal values to establish stronger relationships with potential consumers. Previous studies suggest that consistency, expertise, active social media engagement, and clearly communicated personal values contribute significantly to the development of effective personal branding (Omar, 2020). Furthermore, strong personal branding enhances consumer engagement, strengthens credibility, differentiates businesses from competitors, and ultimately increases purchasing intentions (Kosim & Pasaribu, 2021; Halim & Hermawan, 2022). These developments indicate that personal branding has evolved from a complementary marketing activity into a strategic business capability that deserves comprehensive academic investigation.

Previous studies have extensively examined personal branding from different theoretical perspectives, emphasizing its role in creating a distinctive professional identity and generating brand equity for individuals. Personal branding is defined as the process through which individuals strategically manage their identity, competencies, and reputation to create favorable perceptions among target audiences (Md Saad & Yaacob, 2021). The emergence of social media has significantly strengthened this process by providing cost-effective platforms that enable individuals to communicate their expertise, values, and professional achievements to broader audiences. Researchers have further argued that personal branding extends beyond impression management because it focuses on creating long-term value and differentiation. A strong personal brand contributes to uniqueness, credibility, and favorable reputation, enabling individuals to establish meaningful relationships with stakeholders while enhancing their professional visibility. These findings indicate that personal branding has become an increasingly important strategic resource in the digital business environment.

Although previous research consistently acknowledges the importance of personal branding, several limitations remain. Existing studies predominantly focus on the conceptual development of personal branding, career advancement, social media engagement, or corporate communication rather than examining its direct contribution to consumer purchasing decisions (Petcharat & Leelasantitham, 2021; Peters, 2021). Other studies have demonstrated that personal branding strengthens investor confidence, emotional attachment, customer loyalty, and organizational reputation, yet empirical findings concerning its influence on purchasing decisions remain fragmented across

different industrial contexts. Furthermore, many previous investigations analyze personal branding as an isolated construct without integrating consumer trust, perceived credibility, and purchase intention into a comprehensive understanding of digital consumer behavior. Consequently, a clear research gap exists regarding how personal branding functions as a strategic determinant of purchasing decisions within increasingly competitive digital marketplaces, thereby requiring further systematic investigation (Mei et al., 2022; Naheen & Elsharnouby, 2021).

This study offers a different perspective by positioning personal branding as a strategic mechanism that directly influences purchasing decisions rather than merely serving as a communication or self-promotion strategy. Instead of examining personal branding from the perspective of career development or social media popularity, this study synthesizes evidence on its contribution to building trust, credibility, perceived value, and consumer confidence throughout the purchasing process. By integrating diverse findings from previous studies into a comprehensive framework, this research provides a broader understanding of the strategic role of personal branding in digital marketing. The resulting synthesis contributes to developing a more holistic explanation of how personal branding supports sustainable competitive advantage and strengthens long-term relationships between businesses and consumers in the digital era.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following research question: how does personal branding influence consumer purchasing decisions in the digital business environment? This study argues that effective personal branding enhances consumer trust by consistently communicating expertise, authenticity, credibility, and shared values, thereby increasing consumers' confidence in products and encouraging stronger purchase intentions. As competition in digital markets continues to intensify, businesses and entrepreneurs are expected to recognize personal branding not merely as a complementary promotional activity but as a strategic capability that supports sustainable business performance. Therefore, understanding the relationship between personal branding and purchasing decisions is expected to provide valuable theoretical insights for marketing research while offering practical guidance for professionals, entrepreneurs, and organizations seeking to strengthen their competitiveness in the digital economy.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Chen et al., 2024; Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025). This design was selected because the objective of the

study was to systematically identify, evaluate, synthesize, and interpret existing scientific evidence regarding the role of personal branding in enhancing purchasing decisions rather than collecting primary empirical data. The PRISMA framework provides a rigorous and transparent procedure for conducting literature reviews by minimizing selection bias and ensuring the credibility of synthesized findings. The review process followed six sequential stages, including formulating research questions, conducting a systematic literature search, selecting relevant studies, analyzing and synthesizing qualitative findings, implementing quality control, and preparing the final report. Since this study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from published scientific literature, no specific research location or field site was involved. Instead, the unit of analysis consisted of scholarly articles retrieved from internationally recognized academic databases.

Data collection was conducted between February and April 2025 using four internationally recognized academic databases, namely ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. These databases were selected because they publish high-quality peer-reviewed journals in the fields of business, management, marketing, and related disciplines (Alsaffarini & Awwad, 2026; Vrtana & Križanová, 2023). The literature search was limited to articles published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure that the review reflected recent developments in personal branding and consumer purchasing behavior. Boolean operators were employed to construct the search strategy by combining keywords related to personal branding and purchasing decisions, including "Personal Branding" OR "Human Branding" OR "Self Branding" AND "Purchase Decision" OR "Buying Decision" OR "Purchasing Decision", supported by conceptual terms such as Explanation, Terminology, Concept, and Interpretation. Inclusion criteria comprised English-language journal articles published in reputable academic journals, directly addressing personal branding and purchasing decisions, containing reliable scientific evidence, and being accessible through institutional or open-access databases. Articles published outside the specified period, written in languages other than English, lacking relevance to the research objectives, or containing insufficient scientific evidence were excluded from the review.

The selected studies were analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, duplicate publications were removed, followed by title and abstract screening based on research objectives, topic relevance, contextual suitability, and business and management scope. Subsequently, full-text screening was performed to evaluate the methodological quality and conceptual relevance of each article. The data

display stage involved organizing the selected studies into thematic categories according to their research objectives, theoretical perspectives, research methods, and principal findings concerning personal branding and purchasing decisions (Guo & Luo, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). Finally, the verification stage involved comparing evidence across studies to identify recurring themes, similarities, inconsistencies, and emerging patterns before drawing comprehensive conclusions. This analytical procedure ensured that the synthesized findings were systematic, transparent, and aligned with the objectives of the systematic literature review.

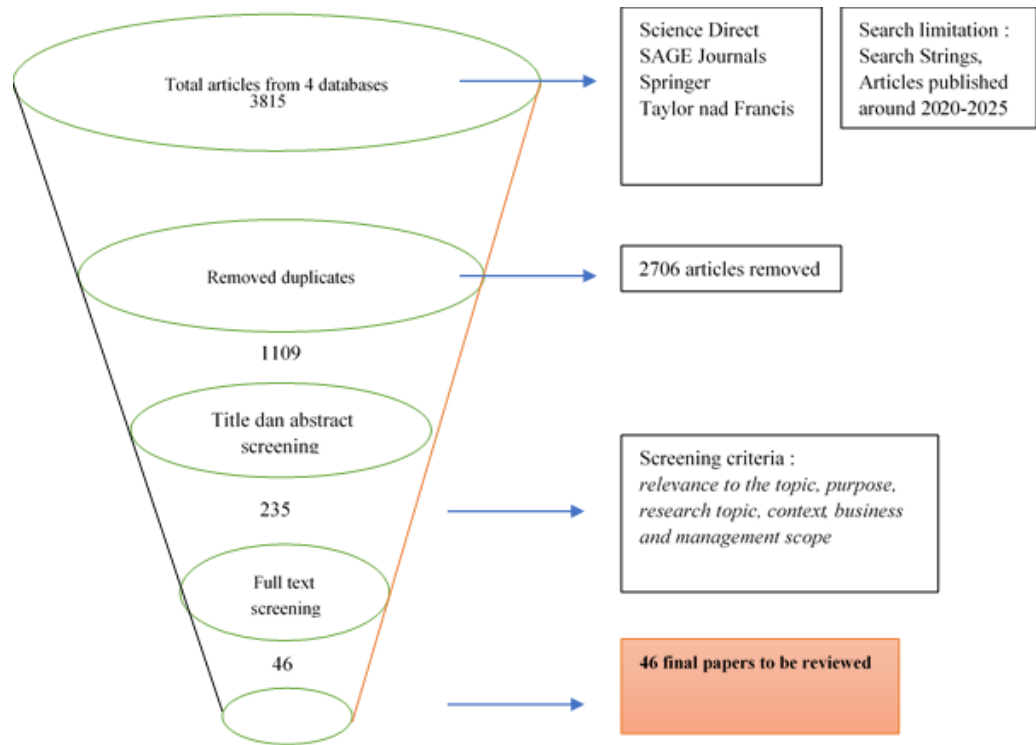


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Article Selection Proces

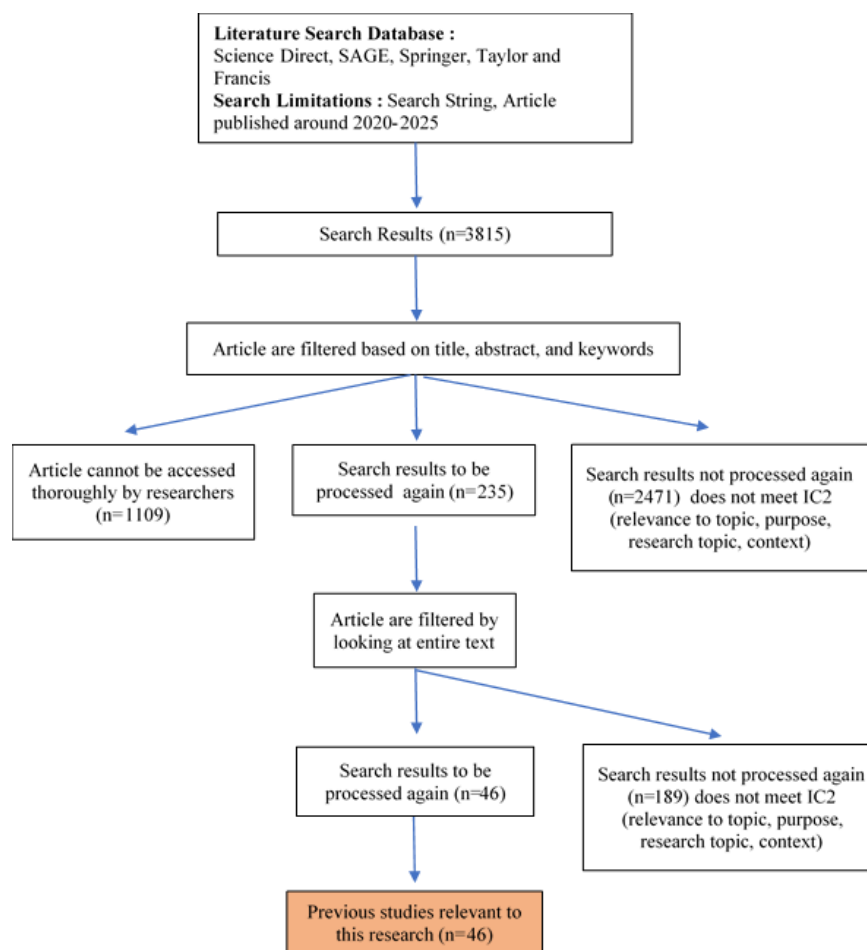
Figure 1 illustrates the article selection process based on the PRISMA framework. Initially, 3,815 articles were identified through searches in four academic databases: ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. After removing 2,706 duplicate records, the remaining articles underwent title and abstract screening according to predefined eligibility criteria, including relevance to the research topic, research objectives, business and management scope, and contextual suitability. Articles that met these criteria proceeded to full-text assessment to evaluate their methodological quality and conceptual relevance. Following this multi-stage screening process, 46 articles satisfied all inclusion criteria and were selected for qualitative synthesis in the

systematic literature review. The PRISMA flow diagram demonstrates the transparency and rigor of the study selection procedure, thereby enhancing the reliability, reproducibility, and credibility of the review findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A total of 3,815 articles were initially identified from four academic databases, namely ScienceDirect, SAGE Journals, Springer, and Taylor & Francis. After duplicate records were removed, the remaining studies underwent title and abstract screening based on predefined eligibility criteria. Articles that met the inclusion criteria proceeded to full-text assessment to evaluate their relevance and methodological suitability. Following the screening process, 46 articles fulfilled all eligibility criteria and were included in the qualitative synthesis. These studies constitute the final corpus analyzed in this systematic literature review.



Picture 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Systematic Literature Review

Picture 2 illustrates the study selection process used in this systematic literature review. The review began with the identification of 3,815 articles retrieved from four international academic databases. Duplicate records were subsequently removed, after which the remaining studies underwent title and abstract screening. Eligible articles were then evaluated through full-text assessment based on their relevance to the research objectives, business and management scope, and methodological suitability. Following the sequential screening stages, 46 articles satisfied all inclusion criteria and were selected for qualitative analysis. The diagram demonstrates a transparent and systematic article selection process, ensuring that only relevant and high-quality studies were included in the review.

Definition of Personal Branding

The analysis of the selected studies demonstrates that personal branding is interpreted from several complementary perspectives. Although each study adopts different research contexts and units of analysis, the findings consistently indicate that personal branding refers to the deliberate process of developing an individual's identity, credibility, expertise, and reputation to create a distinctive image that is recognized by a target audience.

The reviewed literature shows that personal branding is implemented across various professional contexts. In digital marketing, personal branding is reflected through content creators and influencers who establish trust and emotional relationships with audiences by consistently presenting authentic content and demonstrating expertise. In entrepreneurship, personal branding is developed by integrating personal stories, professional experiences, and business values to strengthen credibility and increase public engagement. Within professional environments, personal branding emphasizes competence, integrity, and continuous professional development to enhance reputation and career opportunities.

The results further reveal that effective personal branding is characterized by several common elements. These include authenticity, consistency, professional expertise, active communication, audience engagement, credibility, and alignment between personal values and professional identity. These elements appear consistently across different industries, including business, education, healthcare, politics, and public services. Although implementation strategies vary according to professional context, the underlying objective remains the same: creating a unique and trustworthy personal identity that differentiates an individual from competitors while strengthening relationships with relevant stakeholders.

Finally, the reviewed studies indicate that personal branding has evolved beyond individual self-promotion into a strategic asset that supports organizational performance and business competitiveness. A strong personal

brand enhances visibility, improves professional reputation, increases stakeholder confidence, and strengthens long-term relationships with customers, partners, investors, and broader communities. These findings suggest that personal branding has become an essential capability in contemporary digital environments where individual credibility increasingly influences organizational success.

The Role of Personal Branding in Enhancing Purchasing Decisions

The analysis of the selected studies demonstrates that personal branding plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions in digital environments. The reviewed articles consistently indicate that consumers are more likely to purchase products or services promoted by individuals who possess a strong, authentic, and credible personal brand. Personal branding functions as an important intangible asset that reduces uncertainty during the purchasing process by increasing consumers' confidence in the information provided by entrepreneurs, influencers, professionals, and content creators.

The findings reveal that trust is the primary mechanism through which personal branding affects purchasing decisions. Individuals who consistently demonstrate expertise, transparency, and authenticity are perceived as more reliable sources of information, leading consumers to develop greater confidence in recommended products or services. As consumer trust increases, purchase intention also becomes stronger, particularly in online purchasing environments where direct product evaluation is limited. The reviewed studies consistently show that consumers rely on the credibility of individuals behind a product before making purchasing decisions.

Another important finding is that personal branding positively influences consumers' perceptions of product quality and value. A well-established personal brand creates favorable impressions regarding product reliability, professionalism, and overall quality. Consumers frequently associate the positive reputation of entrepreneurs, influencers, or professionals with the products they promote, resulting in stronger perceived value and higher purchasing confidence. Consequently, products promoted through strong personal branding are more likely to receive favorable evaluations than similar products lacking credible personal representation.

The reviewed studies also indicate that emotional attachment represents an important outcome of effective personal branding. Consumers tend to establish emotional relationships with individuals who consistently communicate their experiences, professional expertise, personal values, and authentic stories through digital platforms. This emotional connection strengthens consumer engagement and encourages greater loyalty toward

products associated with the individual's personal identity. The development of emotional relationships further contributes to repeated purchasing behavior and long-term customer relationships.

The analysis further shows that social media serves as the primary platform for developing and communicating personal branding. Platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, Facebook, and other digital channels enable individuals to build visibility, interact directly with audiences, and continuously strengthen their professional image. Active engagement through educational content, personal experiences, product demonstrations, testimonials, and audience interaction contributes to stronger consumer perceptions and increases purchasing intentions. The reviewed studies consistently identify social media as an effective medium for establishing personal credibility and maintaining long-term relationships with consumers.

Another recurring finding concerns the importance of authenticity and consistency in personal branding. Successful personal branding is characterized by alignment between personal values, communication style, professional expertise, and actual behavior. Consumers demonstrate greater confidence in individuals who consistently present authentic identities rather than those who rely solely on promotional content. Authentic communication strengthens perceived honesty, enhances credibility, and reinforces consumers' willingness to purchase products associated with the individual.

The findings also indicate that personal branding contributes to product differentiation in highly competitive digital markets. When multiple businesses offer similar products with comparable prices and quality, consumers often differentiate products based on the reputation and credibility of the individuals representing the brand. Personal branding therefore functions as a strategic competitive advantage by increasing brand recognition, strengthening consumer recall, and improving product attractiveness compared with competing alternatives.

Across the reviewed studies, personal branding was found to influence purchasing decisions in various sectors, including retail, fashion, food and beverage, healthcare, higher education, entrepreneurship, professional services, politics, and social media marketing. Although implementation strategies differ across industries, the synthesized evidence consistently demonstrates that strong personal branding enhances consumer trust, improves perceived product quality, strengthens emotional engagement, increases purchase intention, and ultimately supports purchasing decisions. These findings confirm that personal branding has become an important strategic capability for individuals and organizations seeking to improve marketing effectiveness and business competitiveness in the digital era.

Discussion

The findings of this systematic literature review confirm that personal branding has evolved into a strategic factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions in digital business environments. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that personal branding extends beyond individual self-promotion and functions as a mechanism for establishing trust, credibility, and long-term relationships with consumers. This finding supports previous studies that conceptualize personal branding as a deliberate process of creating a unique professional identity capable of generating personal brand equity and influencing stakeholder perceptions. The present review further indicates that the role of personal branding has expanded significantly due to the rapid development of digital platforms and social media, enabling individuals to directly communicate their expertise and values to broader audiences. Consequently, the findings reinforce the argument that personal branding should be viewed as a strategic marketing resource rather than merely a communication tool or reputation management practice (Md Saad & Yaacob, 2021).

The findings also reveal that trust represents the principal mechanism through which personal branding affects purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to evaluate products not only based on functional attributes but also based on the credibility, authenticity, and expertise demonstrated by individuals representing the products. This result is consistent with previous studies showing that authenticity and transparency strengthen consumer confidence and increase willingness to purchase recommended products. Similarly, studies on influencer marketing and parasocial interaction suggest that emotional relationships between audiences and content creators reinforce trust and positively affect purchase intentions (Hanaysha, 2022). However, this review extends previous findings by demonstrating that these mechanisms are applicable not only to influencers but also to entrepreneurs, professionals, executives, educators, and organizational leaders who consistently communicate their competencies through digital platforms (Penttinen et al., 2022; Zwicker et al., 2023).

Another important finding concerns the multidimensional nature of personal branding across different professional contexts. The reviewed studies indicate that effective personal branding is characterized by authenticity, consistency, competence, professional expertise, active communication, audience engagement, and ethical behavior (Huang & Liu, 2021). These characteristics are consistently observed across diverse sectors, including entrepreneurship, healthcare, higher education, politics, librarianship, and corporate leadership. This evidence complements previous literature arguing that successful personal

branding depends not only on visibility but also on the alignment between personal values, professional competencies, and communication strategies. Unlike earlier studies that primarily investigated personal branding within a single professional context, the present review demonstrates that similar personal branding dimensions are consistently associated with stronger credibility and purchasing decisions across multiple industries, suggesting broader theoretical applicability (Marin & Nilă, 2021).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of personal branding literature by integrating fragmented evidence from multiple disciplines into a comprehensive conceptual understanding of how personal branding influences purchasing decisions. Previous studies have generally examined personal branding from isolated perspectives, such as career development, professional identity, social media communication, or influencer marketing. In contrast, this systematic review synthesizes these perspectives into an integrated framework that positions personal branding as a strategic capability influencing consumer trust, perceived product value, emotional attachment, and purchase intention simultaneously. Accordingly, the findings extend existing branding and consumer behavior theories by emphasizing that purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by individual credibility and authentic personal identity alongside conventional marketing variables such as price, product quality, and promotional activities.

The findings also generate several practical implications for business practitioners, entrepreneurs, organizations, and digital marketers. In increasingly competitive digital markets, organizations should recognize personal branding as a strategic organizational asset rather than an individual activity (Zhang et al., 2021). Business owners, executives, influencers, and professionals should consistently communicate their expertise, values, experiences, and professional achievements across digital platforms to strengthen credibility and consumer trust. Organizations may also integrate personal branding development into leadership development, digital marketing strategies, employer branding, and customer relationship management programs. Furthermore, maintaining authenticity, transparency, and consistency in online communication becomes increasingly important because these characteristics strengthen emotional engagement and encourage sustainable purchasing behavior among consumers operating within highly connected digital ecosystems (Halim & Hermawan, 2022).

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive synthesis of recent empirical evidence published between 2020 and 2025 across multiple disciplinary contexts. Rather than limiting the discussion to influencer marketing or social media communication, this review demonstrates that personal branding

consistently functions as a strategic determinant of purchasing decisions regardless of professional background or industrial sector. This broader perspective represents the main contribution of the study by proposing that personal branding should be understood as an interdisciplinary strategic capability that simultaneously creates trust, enhances perceived value, strengthens emotional relationships, and improves consumer purchasing decisions. Consequently, this review provides a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for future research while offering practical guidance for organizations and professionals seeking to strengthen competitiveness through authentic personal branding in the evolving digital economy.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review demonstrates that personal branding has evolved into a strategic capability that significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions by strengthening trust, perceived product value, credibility, and purchase intention across diverse digital contexts. The most important insight from this study is that purchasing decisions are no longer determined solely by product-related attributes but are increasingly shaped by the authenticity, consistency, and professional reputation of the individuals representing products or organizations. This finding highlights the growing importance of personal branding as a competitive advantage in contemporary digital markets. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating fragmented evidence from multiple disciplines into a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between personal branding and purchasing decisions, thereby extending existing knowledge beyond influencer marketing and social media communication. Nevertheless, this review is limited to English-language publications indexed in four academic databases and articles published between 2020 and 2025, which may exclude relevant evidence from other sources or earlier studies. Future research is therefore encouraged to incorporate additional databases, broader publication periods, empirical investigations across different cultural and industrial contexts, and quantitative approaches such as meta-analysis to validate and strengthen the relationships identified in this review.

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