



# RMU 4U

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**Research Management Unit**  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah

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## RECTOR'S NOTE



**Prof. Dr Roshima Said**  
Acting Rector

***"Together we advance knowledge with integrity, creativity, and purpose—many voices united to shape a brighter, sustainable future."***

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

Alhamdulillah, with gratitude to Allah SWT, I am pleased to welcome you to the fourth volume of RMU4U e-Bulletin. This publication continues to serve as a reflection of our vibrant intellectual community at UiTM Kedah, bringing together voices from diverse disciplines and perspectives. In this issue, with 42 insightful contributions, we witness not only the richness of research topics but also the strength of our shared purpose. While the papers range from sustainability in fashion and design, digital literacy, and artificial intelligence to law, economics, and cultural heritage, they are united by a common aspiration: to advance knowledge that is meaningful, ethical, and impactful for society.

Our academic journey is significant because of this harmony amid diversity. Whether addressing contemporary challenges in technology and governance or celebrating the timeless values of culture and tradition, our scholars demonstrate that knowledge is most powerful when it is connected, when different fields meet at the crossroads of innovation, integrity, and service to the community.

As Rector, I am profoundly inspired by the dedication, innovation, and scholarly excellence demonstrated by our academics and researchers. You are not only advancing knowledge within our university but are also fulfilling UiTM's noble mission, creating impactful ideas that serve the nation and uplift the ummah.

Your work reflects a deep commitment to relevance, integrity, and service. Let us continue to nurture a culture of collaboration, creativity, and excellence, ensuring that our contributions remain forward-looking, transformative, and rooted in the needs of society. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more sustainable future through education, research, and innovation.

Congratulations to all the dedicated contributors whose passion and perseverance have brought this volume to life. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the Research Management Unit for their steadfast leadership and solid commitment in making this achievement possible. May RMU4U continue to shine as a beacon of knowledge, uniting diverse voices in a shared mission of discovery and excellence. Together, may we be inspired to reach even greater heights in the pursuit of impactful research and innovation.

One purpose. One vision. Many voices, one future.

Sincerely,  
Prof. Dr Roshima Said  
Acting Rector,  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Keda

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EDITOR



**Dr Azyyati Anuar**  
Chief Editor,  
RMU4U E-Bulletin

***"RMU4U Volume 4 celebrates diverse scholarship, uniting research, innovation, and culture to inspire collaboration, sustainability, and inclusive growth."***

We are pleased to present Volume 4 of RMU4U, a platform dedicated to showcasing research, innovation, and thought leadership across diverse academic disciplines. This issue reflects the dynamic intellectual ecosystem we strive to cultivate, highlighting contributions that bridge theory and practice while addressing pressing contemporary challenges. In the Business, Accounting, and Finance section, we feature 15 insightful papers that explore the evolving landscape of global markets, financial resilience, sustainable accounting practices, and digital transformation in business operations.

These works not only provide empirical findings but also propose actionable frameworks for industry adoption, underscoring the vital role of research in shaping competitive and ethical enterprises. The Designer Thoughts segment presents 6 stimulating papers that merge creativity with problem-solving. From design thinking methodologies to innovation in product aesthetics and usability, these contributions remind us that design is not merely about form but about crafting meaningful user experiences.

This section will be of particular interest to those who value the intersection of artistry, functionality, and human-centered solutions. Our IR 5.0 category brings together 6 pioneering papers examining the fusion of automation, artificial intelligence, and human capital development in the context of the Fifth Industrial Revolution. The authors challenge readers to consider how technology can be harmonized with ethical and inclusive practices, ensuring that digital progress translates into equitable societal benefits. In the Law and Policy section, 7 comprehensive papers analyze legal reforms, governance frameworks, and policy innovations that respond to shifting socio-economic realities.

The breadth of topics from regulatory compliance in emerging industries to community rights in a globalized economy reflects the critical role of law as both a safeguard and an enabler of change. The Literature and Culture segment enriches this volume with 8 thought-provoking papers that delve into narratives, identities, and cultural dialogues shaping societies today.

Whether revisiting classic literature through modern lenses or exploring contemporary cultural phenomena, these works invite readers to appreciate the role of the humanities in fostering empathy, critical thinking, and cultural continuity. Collectively, these 42 scholarly contributions affirm the breadth and depth of academic engagement within our community. They underscore our commitment to advancing knowledge that is relevant, impactful, and forward-looking. This volume is not only a testament to our contributors' dedication but also a resource for policymakers, practitioners, educators, and learners who seek informed perspectives and innovative solutions. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all authors, reviewers, and editorial team members whose collective efforts have made this publication possible. We hope that RMU4U Vol. 4 will spark dialogue, inspire collaboration, and contribute to the enrichment of both academic scholarship and practical application.

Let us continue to explore, innovate, and contribute, together shaping a future where knowledge serves as the foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Warm regards,  
Dr Azyyati Anuar  
Chief Editor,  
RMU4U E-Bulletin



# INFLUENCER MARKETING AND PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS: UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF ONE-SIDED CONNECTIONS IN DIGITAL BRANDING

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## INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerhouse in the online world wherein brands partner with social media influencers to endorse products and services. Such influencers tend to develop devoted fan bases through consistent, relatable, and emotionally connected content. At the core of this phenomenon is the idea of parasocial relationships (PSRs), one-sided emotional connections developed by audiences for media personalities who are unaware of them personally. Relative to traditional celebrity endorsements, influencers are found to offer authenticity and accessibility that enhances PSRs (Sokolova & Perez, 2021).

Horton and Wohl (1956) have used the term parasocial interaction to describe the impression of a face-to-face relationship developed by audiences with media figures. With social media, this has shifted. Influencers are constantly posting stories, responding to comments, and creating interactive content that adds to the felt proximity between them and their audience (Labrecque, 2014). However, these PSRs are akin to real friendships, and as a result, leading consumers to trust influencers in the same way they would trust their friends. Source credibility theory accounts for this process, outlining how trust and expertise increase persuasiveness (Ohanian, 1990).



"Connection creates influence and credibility"



## **INFLUENCER MARKETING THROUGH THE LENS OF PSRS**

Influencers depend on narrative, behind-the-scenes content, personal struggles, and direct address to establish a sense of closeness with their followers. The parasocial closeness generates emotional trust and encourages consumer involvement, like liking, sharing, and ultimately purchasing (Lou & Kim, 2019). Emma Chamberlain, for example, is a YouTuber who posts unedited vlogs of her daily life that are close and relatable, forging powerful PSRs that lead to brand influence. Research shows that high PSR consumers are more likely to be receptive to product suggestions, believe them, and are less resistant to persuasion (Lee & Watkins, 2016).



Influencers are strategically employed by brands not only for reach but also for credibility.

PSRs eliminate skepticism, and therefore branded content is more acceptable. For instance, beauty influencers like Huda Kattan or NikkieTutorials mix personal experience with product use, making them more credible.

### **RISKS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While promoting its impact, the influencer-follower relationship is ethically problematic. Influencers dissolve the line between organic content and sponsored messages that may disorient consumers, especially younger consumers (Boerman et al., 2017). Regulatory frameworks like the U.S.'s FTC guidelines require influencers to label paid partnerships with hashtags like #ad or #sponsored, but enforcement is inconsistent.

Besides, the emotional work of upholding PSRs can lead to burnout among influencers and emotional dependence among followers. If followers treat influencers like mentors or friends, what they suggest possesses undue psychological power, with emotional manipulation in question.

### **CONCLUSION**

Parasocial relationships lie at the center of the efficacy of influencer marketing. Using emotional bonding, authenticity, and faith, influencers convert their perceived closeness into persuasive power. Yet, marketers must be aware of ethical implications, like open advertising and proper content creation.



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