

MARKETING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Influence of Digital Halal Influencers on the Purchase Decision of Halal Products among Generation Z

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## ABSTRACT

The expansion of digital halal marketing has increased the role of digital halal influencers, who not only promote products but also communicate religious messages and halal-related values to Muslim consumers. This study examines the effects of audience engagement, halal value, and influencer credibility on halal product purchase decisions among Muslim Generation Z in Indonesia. It also investigates whether influencer credibility mediates the effects of audience engagement and halal value on purchase decisions. Data were collected through a cross-sectional online survey administered using Google Forms. The final sample consisted of 210 Muslim Generation Z students from the Faculty of Da'wah at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, selected through convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling with SmartPLS 3.0. The results show that audience engagement positively and significantly affects influencer credibility and purchase decisions. Halal value also positively and significantly affects influencer credibility and purchase decisions. However, influencer credibility does not have a significant effect on purchase decisions and does not mediate the relationship between audience engagement and purchase decisions or between halal value and purchase decisions. The model explains 53.5% of the variance in influencer credibility and 45.0% of the variance in purchase decisions. These findings identify a contextual boundary of Source Credibility Theory by demonstrating that influencer credibility alone may be insufficient to generate purchasing responses among Muslim Generation Z. Meaningful digital engagement and clear halal value appear to be more influential than the personal credibility of influencers. The findings imply that halal businesses should prioritize interactive communication, transparent halal information, and value-consistent content rather than relying solely on influencer popularity or reputation.

**Keywords:** Audience Engagement, Halal Value, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Decision, Muslim Generation Z.

**JEL Code:** M31, D12, Z12, M37

## I. Introduction

The rapid development of digital communication has transformed how Muslim consumers obtain and evaluate information about halal products. Halal consumption is no longer limited to food and beverages but has expanded into cosmetics, fashion, tourism, financial services, and digital lifestyles. Among Muslim Generation Z consumers in Indonesia, halal considerations are increasingly connected to product safety, ethical consumption, personal identity, and religious commitment. As an intensive user of social media, this generation is influenced not only by formal halal certification and product attributes but also by digital narratives, recommendations, and interactions (Jannah & Al-Banna, 2021; SGIER, 2023). This development has



encouraged the emergence of digital halal influencers, who combine commercial promotion with communication about halal certification, ingredient safety, production processes, Islamic ethics, and sharia compliance. Their role is therefore broader than that of conventional endorsers because they function simultaneously as marketers, information providers, and communicators of halal values (Aziz et al., 2023; Supriani et al., 2025). However, this role also raises concerns regarding the commercial use of religious symbols and narratives, which may improve halal literacy but may also contribute to the commodification of religion when Islamic values are primarily used to strengthen brand positioning (Handayani & Haris, 2021).

The effectiveness of digital halal influencers cannot be explained solely by popularity or follower numbers. Muslim Generation Z actively interacts with influencer content through likes, comments, content sharing, saved posts, live broadcasts, and question-and-answer sessions. These activities represent audience engagement and may create familiarity, perceived closeness, and involvement with the influencer. Fitriyani et al. (2025) found that influencer popularity did not directly determine Generation Z's purchase decisions, while social media engagement and customer trust played more substantial roles. This finding indicates that relational interaction may be more influential than visibility alone. Audience engagement must also be considered together with halal value. Halal value refers to consumers' perceptions that a product and its promotional communication are consistent with sharia principles, ethical integrity, cleanliness, safety, and responsible consumption. Previous studies show that halal awareness, religiosity, halal knowledge, and certification influence Muslim consumers' purchase intentions and decisions (Alimusa et al., 2023; Juliana et al., 2022; Vikaliana et al., 2024). However, these studies generally treat halalness as a product attribute or individual orientation and provide limited explanations of how halal values communicated by influencers affect both influencer credibility and purchase decisions.

Influencer credibility is also an important but inconclusive factor. Source Credibility Theory explains that the effectiveness of a communicator depends on perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Several studies indicate that credible influencers can strengthen consumer attitudes, trust, purchase intention, and purchase decisions (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Ilieva et al., 2024). Virgianti and Ronny (2025) also found that credibility significantly influenced purchase-related outcomes, although its indirect effects were not supported in all relationships. Other studies, however, suggest that credibility or popularity alone may be insufficient without audience interaction, authenticity, trust, and value congruence (Fitriyani et al., 2025; Timur et al., 2022). These inconsistent findings indicate that the influence of credibility may depend on the consumer and purchasing context.

A synthesis of the literature reveals three research gaps. First, halal consumer studies mainly focus on halal awareness, religiosity, certification, product quality, and purchase intention, while giving limited attention to digital actors who communicate halal information. In contrast, influencer-marketing studies generally examine commercial endorsements without sufficiently incorporating religious values. Second, previous studies have not adequately integrated audience engagement as a digital-relational mechanism and halal value as a religious-ethical mechanism within one explanatory model. Although trust, brand engagement, purchase intention, and parasocial relationships have frequently been examined as mediators, limited evidence is available regarding influencer credibility as a mediator between audience engagement, halal value, and purchase decisions (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024; Warsito et al., 2022). Third, empirical evidence concerning these relationships among Muslim Generation Z consumers in Indonesia remains limited, particularly studies that examine purchase decisions rather than purchase intention.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating audience engagement, halal value, influencer credibility, and purchase decisions within the context of digital halal marketing among Muslim Generation Z in Indonesia. Unlike previous halal studies that primarily emphasize product-level halal attributes, this study examines halal value as a religious and ethical message communicated through digital influencers. Unlike conventional influencer-marketing research that focuses mainly on popularity or general credibility, this study simultaneously positions audience engagement and halal value as antecedents of influencer credibility and purchase decisions. It also examines influencer credibility as a mediating mechanism and evaluates a potential

contextual boundary of Source Credibility Theory. SEM-PLS is used to test the proposed direct and indirect relationships but is not presented as the principal novelty of the study.

Accordingly, this study examines the effects of audience engagement and halal value on influencer credibility and purchase decisions, the effect of influencer credibility on purchase decisions, and the mediating role of influencer credibility in the relationships between audience engagement, halal value, and purchase decisions. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to influencer-marketing and halal-consumer literature and practically assist halal businesses, digital influencers, and regulators in developing interactive, transparent, and value-consistent digital marketing strategies for Generation Z.

## **II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### 2.1. Theoretical Foundation and Muslim Generation Z Context

This study integrates Source Credibility Theory, customer engagement, parasocial interaction, social influence, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and value congruence to explain halal product purchase decisions among Muslim Generation Z. These perspectives are complementary because purchase decisions are shaped by consumers' evaluations of the message source, their interaction with digital content, and the compatibility of promoted products with their religious and ethical values. Source Credibility Theory serves as the main theoretical foundation. It explains that persuasive communication depends on the audience's perceptions of the communicator's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. In influencer marketing, these dimensions determine whether followers accept and act upon product information (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Ilieva et al., 2024). However, credibility is also developed through interaction. Audience engagement, reflected in activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, saving content, and participating in live discussions, allows followers to assess an influencer's responsiveness, consistency, knowledge, and sincerity (Ao et al., 2023; Joshi et al., 2025).

Parasocial interaction explains how repeated exposure can create familiarity and emotional closeness between followers and influencers. This relationship may strengthen perceived authenticity and trust even without direct interpersonal contact (Sarkis et al., 2024). Social influence also operates through informational influence, when followers use influencer content to evaluate products, and normative influence, when consumers perceive that purchasing a product is supported by their digital or religious community. Fitriyani et al. (2025) found that engagement and customer trust were more influential in purchase decisions than influencer popularity alone. Halal consumption must also be understood within the religious context of Muslim consumers. The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that behavior is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In Muslim consumption, these factors are influenced by religiosity, halal awareness, product knowledge, and social expectations regarding sharia-compliant consumption. Rokhmah et al. (2025) showed that credibility, trust, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence Muslim Generation Z's attitudes toward influencers promoting halal cosmetics.

Religiosity, halal awareness, and halal value are related but distinct. Religiosity refers to the extent to which religious beliefs guide behavior, while halal awareness concerns consumers' knowledge of halal requirements, certification, ingredients, and production procedures. Halal value refers to the religious, ethical, and functional benefits associated with a halal product and its communication, including sharia compliance, safety, cleanliness, honesty, and compatibility with Muslim identity. Value congruence occurs when the values communicated by an influencer are consistent with those of the audience. Influencers who consistently provide accurate information about certification, ingredients, production, and Islamic ethical principles may be perceived as more trustworthy and competent. Muslim consumers therefore evaluate not only the halal attributes of a product but also the credibility of the person communicating those attributes (Irfany et al., 2024; Liew & Karia, 2024; Supriani et al., 2025).

Purchase decision is the principal outcome in this study. It refers to consumers' determination to select and purchase a product after searching for information, evaluating alternatives, and assessing risks and benefits. It differs from purchase intention, which reflects willingness to purchase rather than a more

advanced purchasing response. Customer satisfaction is not included because it represents a post-purchase evaluation beyond the scope of the proposed model.

## 2.2. Hypothesis Development

### a. Audience Engagement and Influencer Credibility

Audience engagement enables followers to evaluate how influencers respond to questions, explain products, and maintain consistency. Repeated interaction reduces psychological distance and may strengthen familiarity, authenticity, trustworthiness, and perceived expertise. Therefore, engagement provides relational and informational cues through which influencer credibility is formed.

*H1: Audience engagement has a positive effect on influencer credibility.*

### b. Halal Value and Influencer Credibility

Halal value reflects consumers' perceptions of sharia compliance, ethical integrity, product safety, and functional benefits. Influencers who accurately communicate halal certification, ingredients, production procedures, and Islamic principles may be viewed as more knowledgeable and trustworthy. Consistency between the influencer's values, behavior, and promotional messages also strengthens value congruence and perceived credibility (Silalahi et al., 2021; Supriani et al., 2025).

*H2: Halal value has a positive effect on influencer credibility.*

### c. Audience Engagement and Purchase Decisions

Audience engagement provides consumers with product information, opportunities for clarification, and social confirmation. Through comments, live sessions, demonstrations, and content sharing, followers gain greater confidence in evaluating products. Engagement also creates informational and normative influence within digital communities. Fitriyani et al. (2025) found that social media engagement significantly influenced Generation Z's purchase decisions, whereas influencer popularity did not have a significant direct effect.

*H3: Audience engagement has a positive effect on purchase decisions.*

### d. Halal Value and Purchase Decisions

Halal value reduces moral and functional uncertainty by providing assurance regarding certification, ingredients, production methods, safety, and sharia compliance. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, positive attitudes and supportive subjective norms toward halal products can strengthen purchase decisions. Previous studies show that halal awareness, religiosity, product knowledge, and perceived halal integrity influence Muslim consumers' purchasing responses (Alimusa et al., 2023; Irfany et al., 2024; Sudarsono et al., 2024).

*H4: Halal value has a positive effect on purchase decisions.*

### e. Influencer Credibility and Purchase Decisions

Influencer credibility reflects perceptions of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. According to Source Credibility Theory, messages from credible sources are more likely to be accepted because they reduce perceived manipulation and uncertainty. In halal marketing, credibility is important because influencers communicate both commercial information and religiously sensitive claims. Previous studies generally show that credibility influences consumer attitudes and purchase-related outcomes, although the

strength of the relationship varies across contexts (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Ilieva et al., 2024; Virgianti & Ronny, 2025).

*H5: Influencer credibility has a positive effect on purchase decisions.*

f. Mediating Role of Influencer Credibility between Audience Engagement and Purchase Decisions

Audience engagement may influence purchase decisions indirectly by strengthening influencer credibility. Repeated interaction allows followers to evaluate the influencer's honesty, responsiveness, knowledge, and consistency. When these evaluations are favorable, credibility may reduce uncertainty and increase willingness to follow product recommendations. Previous studies indicate that credibility can mediate influencer-related effects, although mediation must be tested separately for each relationship (Saima & Khan, 2021; Fitriasaki et al., 2025; Nurkhotimah et al., 2025).

*H6: Influencer credibility mediates the effect of audience engagement on purchase decisions.*

g. Mediating Role of Influencer Credibility between Halal Value and Purchase Decisions

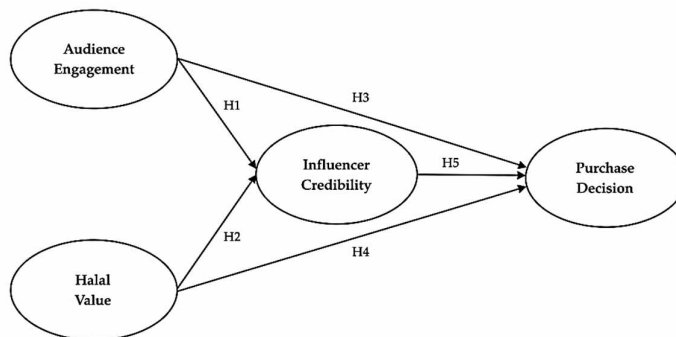
Halal value may also influence purchase decisions indirectly through influencer credibility. Accurate and transparent explanations of certification, ingredients, production processes, safety, and sharia compliance can strengthen perceptions of expertise and trustworthiness. The direct pathway occurs when consumers use halal value as a product criterion, while the indirect pathway occurs when halal value first strengthens influencer credibility and subsequently affects purchase decisions.

*H7: Influencer credibility mediates the effect of halal value on purchase decisions.*

h. Research Model and Practical Relevance

Based on the theoretical arguments and hypothesis development, the proposed research model consists of two exogenous variables, namely Audience Engagement and Halal Value; one mediating variable, namely Influencer Credibility; and one endogenous variable, namely Purchase Decision. Audience Engagement and Halal Value are proposed to influence Influencer Credibility through H1 and H2. The direct effects of Audience Engagement, Halal Value, and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Decision are represented by H3, H4, and H5. The indirect effects through Influencer Credibility are represented by H6 and H7.

The proposed relationships are summarized as follows:



**Figure 1. Proposed Research Model**

### III. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey to examine the predictive relationships among audience engagement, halal value, influencer credibility, and halal product purchase decisions. The

design was appropriate because the model contains multiple latent constructs and examines both direct and indirect relationships using data collected from Muslim Generation Z respondents at a single point in time. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used because the study is prediction-oriented and tests influencer credibility as a mediating variable. PLS-SEM enables simultaneous assessment of the measurement and structural models, including direct, indirect, and total effects. The study does not introduce a new statistical method but applies established survey and PLS-SEM procedures to an integrated digital halal marketing model. Because the design is cross-sectional and nonexperimental, the results are interpreted as predictive relationships rather than definitive causal evidence.

### 3.1. Population and Sampling

The population consisted of 1,700 students from the Faculty of Da'wah at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The unit of analysis was the individual student. Respondents were eligible when they were active students, Muslim, between 18 and 26 years old, active social media users, and had been exposed to digital influencer content concerning halal products. The study used non-probability convenience sampling because it required accessible respondents with specific demographic and digital-media characteristics. A total of 210 valid responses were included in the analysis. The sample was considered adequate for the proposed PLS-SEM model based on model complexity, the number of structural relationships, and its predictive orientation. However, convenience sampling from one faculty and one university may create self-selection bias and limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader Muslim Generation Z population in Indonesia.

### 3.2. Instrument and Variable Measurement

Primary data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire created using Google Forms. The measurement indicators were adapted from established theories and previous studies on audience engagement, parasocial interaction, halal consumption, source credibility, and consumer purchase behavior. The wording was adjusted to the context of digital halal influencers and Muslim Generation Z. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: research information and voluntary consent, respondent screening, demographic characteristics, and measurement statements for the four constructs. The available research documentation does not indicate that a separate formal pilot test or independent expert validation was conducted. Therefore, the study does not claim that these procedures were performed. Nevertheless, the indicators were adapted from established sources and subsequently evaluated through the PLS-SEM measurement model.

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree." Each item was modeled as a reflective indicator of its corresponding construct. Audience Engagement was defined as followers' behavioral and relational involvement with digital halal influencer content. It was measured through liking, commenting, sharing, saving content, and participating in direct interaction, based on Ao et al. (2023), Sarkis et al. (2024), and Fitriyani et al. (2025). Halal Value referred to the perceived religious, ethical, and functional benefits associated with halal characteristics. It was measured through understanding of halal information, confidence in halal certification, conformity with sharia principles, and perceptions of safety, cleanliness, and ethical integrity, based on Alimusa et al. (2023), Vikaliana et al. (2024), and Supriani et al. (2025). Influencer Credibility represented perceptions of an influencer's trustworthiness, knowledge, persuasiveness, and relevance. It was measured through trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness or relatability, and consistency in communicating product information, based on Garg and Bakshi (2024), Ilieva et al. (2024), and Rokhmah et al. (2025). Purchase Decision referred to consumers' determination to select and purchase halal products after evaluating information, alternatives, risks, and expected benefits. It was measured through confidence in choosing a product, willingness to decide on the product, purchasing action, and the tendency to recommend the selected product. The construct was

interpreted as a purchase-related decision response and not as independently verified transactional behavior. All items were positively worded, and no reverse-scored items were used.

### 3.3. Online Data-Collection Procedure

The questionnaire link was distributed through online communication networks accessible to students of the Faculty of Da'wah. The invitation explained the purpose of the study, eligibility requirements, voluntary participation, and confidentiality. The first page presented research information and consent, followed by screening questions to identify eligible respondents. No sensitive identifying information was included in the analytical dataset. Participation was voluntary, uncompensated, and unrelated to academic assessment. A total of 210 eligible and valid responses were retained. A conventional response rate was not calculated because the available documentation did not record the exact number of individuals who received or viewed the open questionnaire link.

### 3.4. Data Screening

Before analysis, the responses exported from Google Forms were screened for respondent eligibility, completeness, duplicate entries, coding consistency, and implausible response patterns. The measurement questions were configured as required-response items, resulting in no item-level missing values in the final dataset. Responses were coded from 1 to 5 according to the Likert scale. Duplicate or inconsistent submissions were examined through response timestamps, demographic similarities, and response patterns. Descriptive statistics and response distributions were also reviewed to identify coding errors or values outside the permitted range. Because all constructs were measured using one self-reported questionnaire, common-method bias could not be fully eliminated. Procedural controls included anonymous participation, neutral wording, separation of demographic and measurement sections, and clear instructions that there were no right or wrong answers.

### 3.5. PLS-SEM Analysis

The data were analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 through two stages: measurement-model assessment and structural-model assessment. Indicator reliability was evaluated using outer loadings, with values of approximately 0.708 or higher considered adequate. Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability values of at least 0.70 indicated acceptable internal consistency. Convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted, with values of at least 0.50 considered acceptable. Discriminant validity was evaluated primarily through the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio, using a threshold below 0.90. The Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings were used as supplementary evidence. After the measurement model met the required criteria, the structural model was evaluated. Collinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor, with values below 5.00 indicating no critical collinearity problem. The explanatory power of the model was examined using  $R^2$ , while  $f^2$  was used to assess effect sizes. Values of approximately 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represented small, medium, and large effects. Predictive relevance was assessed using Stone–Geisser's  $Q^2$ , with values above zero indicating predictive relevance.

The significance of direct and indirect effects was tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. A two-tailed significance level of 5% was applied. Relationships were considered significant when the p-value was below 0.05 and the 95% confidence interval did not include zero. Mediation was assessed through the specific indirect effects of Audience Engagement → Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision and Halal Value → Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision. Direct, indirect, and total effects were reported separately. Model-fit statistics, including SRMR, were used as supplementary information rather than as the sole criterion for model acceptance.

### 3.6. Ethical Considerations and Methodological Limitations

Respondents were informed about the study before completing the questionnaire, and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality was protected, and the data were used solely for academic purposes. The available documentation does not report a separate institutional ethics approval number; therefore, the manuscript does not claim formal ethical clearance. Nevertheless, the study followed the principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and academic data use. Several limitations should be acknowledged. Convenience sampling may overrepresent respondents who are active on social media or interested in halal products. The sample was restricted to one faculty and one university, which limits representativeness. Self-reported data may also be affected by recall bias, social-desirability bias, and common-method variance. In addition, the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal precedence, while the absence of a separately documented pilot test and expert review limits preliminary evidence concerning questionnaire clarity and content validity.

## IV. Result and Discussion

### 4.1. Descriptive Analysis of the Study

This section presents the research findings, data processing results, and analysis related to the discussion of the study. The data obtained from respondents' responses serve as the main source of information to answer the research problems that have been formulated previously. The discussion in this section includes several important aspects, namely respondent characteristics, descriptive statistical analysis, outer model testing, and inner model testing. The inner model testing in this study was conducted using SmartPLS version 3.0. Furthermore, the results of data processing are used as the basis for decision-making in accepting or rejecting the proposed research hypotheses, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Based on the data obtained from 210 respondents, the characteristics of respondents and the descriptive statistical results of each research variable are presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics and Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

Analysis Aspect	Variable	Category / Construct	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Median	SD	Mode	Interpretation
Respondent Characteristics	Gender	Female	121	57.60%	-	-	-	-	-
Respondent Characteristics	Gender	Male	89	42.40%	-	-	-	-	-
Respondent Characteristics	Age	20–25 years	154	73.30%	-	-	-	-	-
Respondent Characteristics	Age	15–20 years	55	26.20%	-	-	-	-	-
Respondent Characteristics	Occupation	Student	207	98.60%	-	-	-	-	-
Descriptive Statistics	M	Influencer Credibility	-	-	3.97	4.25	0.954	5	High
Descriptive Statistics	X1	Audience Engagement	-	-	3.46	3.40	0.899	4	High
Descriptive Statistics	X2	Halal Value	-	-	4.20	4.50	0.903	5	High
Descriptive Statistics	Y	Purchase Decision	-	-	3.42	3.38	0.952	3	High

The analysis of the research sample shows that the respondents were dominated by female respondents, accounting for 57.6%, while male respondents accounted for 42.4%. In terms of age, the majority

of respondents were in the 20–25 years age group, accounting for 73.3%. This indicates that the sample is highly relevant to the characteristics of Generation Z. Furthermore, almost all respondents were students, representing 98.6% of the total respondents. This finding confirms that the sample is highly appropriate for the target population determined by the researcher, namely Generation Z students at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten.

The descriptive statistical analysis also presents measures of central tendency, namely mean, median, and mode, as well as the measure of dispersion, namely standard deviation, for each latent variable. Overall, all research variables fall into the high category, indicating that respondents have strong positive perceptions of the constructs being measured. The Halal Value variable (X2) shows the highest mean score of 4.20, approaching the very high category. This indicates that Generation Z respondents have high awareness and expectations regarding the halal aspects promoted by influencers. Meanwhile, Audience Engagement (X1) and Purchase Decision (Y) show the lowest mean scores, with values of 3.46 and 3.42 respectively, although both remain within the high category. This suggests that although Generation Z has positive perceptions and a relatively high level of interaction with influencers, their certainty in making purchase decisions remains moderate. Therefore, these findings indicate that halal value is the strongest perceived factor among respondents, while audience engagement and purchase decisions still require stronger persuasive mechanisms to encourage actual purchasing behavior.

#### 4.2. Outer Model Testing

The outer model is used to evaluate the strength of the relationship between each indicator and the variable it represents. This model explains how well each indicator reflects its main construct (Jogiyanto & Abdillah, 2019). To ensure the quality of the measurement model, several tests were conducted, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability testing. These tests were carried out using the PLS Algorithm. The validity and reliability tests aim to determine whether the measurement instrument used in this study is accurate and consistent.

#### 4.3. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the loading factor values. The loading factor indicates the strength of the relationship between each questionnaire item and its corresponding variable. An indicator is considered valid if its loading factor is positive and greater than 0.70. The loading factor values for each variable are presented in the following figure.

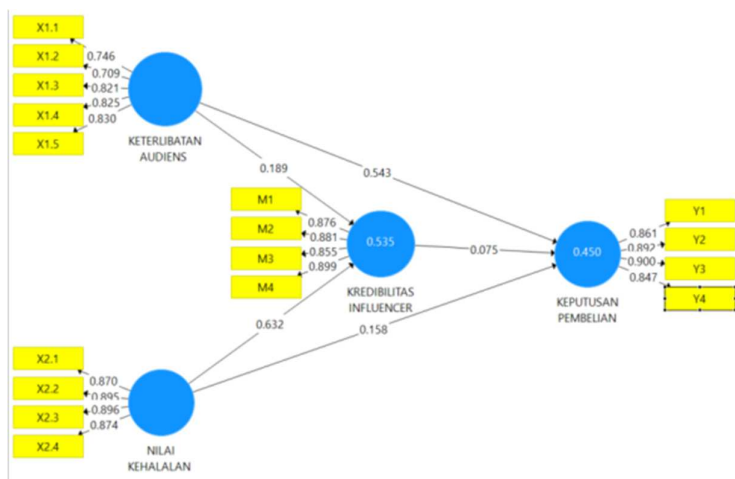


Figure 2. Path Model of Convergent Validity Test

The results of the convergent validity test, presented in the form of loading factor values, are shown in the table below.

**Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity Test**

Variable Description	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description
Audience Engagement	X1.1	0.746	Valid
Audience Engagement	X1.2	0.709	Valid
Audience Engagement	X1.3	0.821	Valid
Audience Engagement	X1.4	0.825	Valid
Audience Engagement	X1.5	0.830	Valid
Influencer Credibility	M1	0.876	Valid
Influencer Credibility	M2	0.881	Valid
Influencer Credibility	M3	0.855	Valid
Influencer Credibility	M4	0.899	Valid
Halal Value	X2.1	0.870	Valid
Halal Value	X2.2	0.895	Valid
Halal Value	X2.3	0.896	Valid
Halal Value	X2.4	0.874	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y1	0.861	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y2	0.892	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y3	0.900	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y4	0.847	Valid

Based on the convergent validity test results, all indicators in this study are declared valid because their loading factor values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). In the Audience Engagement variable, the loading factor values range from 0.709 to 0.830, with X1.5 having the highest value. This indicates that all indicators are able to represent the audience engagement construct properly. The Influencer Credibility variable shows strong loading factor values, ranging from 0.855 to 0.899, with M4 having the highest value. This means that all four indicators strongly contribute to explaining the influencer credibility construct. The Halal Value variable also shows valid results, with loading factor values ranging from 0.870 to 0.896, where X2.3 has the highest value. Meanwhile, the Purchase Decision variable has loading factor values ranging from 0.847 to 0.900, with Y3 as the strongest indicator.

Therefore, all indicators in this study are considered valid and meet the requirements for representing the research constructs. Each item has an outer loading value above 0.70, indicating that the measurement instrument has good validity. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test was conducted as part of the convergent validity evaluation. AVE is used to determine how much variance of the indicators can be explained by the construct. According to Jogiyanto and Abdillah (2019), a construct is considered to have good validity if the AVE value is greater than or equal to 0.50. This means that more than 50% of the indicator variance is explained by the construct.

**Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values**

Variable	AVE Value	Description
Purchase Decision	0.766	Valid
Audience Engagement	0.620	Valid
Influencer Credibility	0.771	Valid
Halal Value	0.781	Valid

Based on the AVE test results, all constructs in this study meet the criteria for convergent validity because their AVE values are above 0.50. The Purchase Decision variable has an AVE value of 0.766, indicating that its indicators explain more than 76% of the construct variance. Audience Engagement has an AVE value of 0.620, showing that its indicators are adequate in representing the construct. In addition, Influencer Credibility has an AVE value of 0.771, while Halal Value has the highest AVE value of 0.781. These results

indicate that the indicators used in both constructs are strong and consistent in representing their variables. Thus, all constructs in this study are concluded to have good convergent validity.

#### 4.4. Discriminant Validity

In this study, discriminant validity was tested using three approaches, namely the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and cross loading values. These tests were conducted to ensure that each construct in the model is conceptually distinct and does not overlap with other constructs. The Fornell-Larcker criterion compares the square root of AVE with the correlations among constructs. A construct is considered to have good discriminant validity when the square root of AVE is higher than its correlations with other constructs. The results of the Fornell-Larcker test are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

Construct	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Purchase Decision	0.875			
Audience Engagement	0.642	0.788		
Influencer Credibility	0.432	—	0.878	
Halal Value	0.436	—	0.711	0.884

Based on the Fornell-Larcker test results, all constructs in this study meet the criteria for discriminant validity. The square root of AVE for Purchase Decision is 0.875, which is higher than its correlations with Audience Engagement, Influencer Credibility, and Halal Value. Similarly, Audience Engagement has a square root of AVE of 0.788, while Influencer Credibility and Halal Value have values of 0.878 and 0.884, respectively. These results indicate that each construct is able to distinguish itself from the other constructs in the model. In addition to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, discriminant validity was also tested using the HTMT ratio. HTMT is used to measure the degree of similarity between constructs. If the HTMT value is below the recommended threshold of 0.90, the constructs are considered to have adequate discriminant validity. The HTMT results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Results of HTMT Test**

Construct	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Purchase Decision				
Audience Engagement	0.734			
Influencer Credibility	0.479	0.492		
Halal Value	0.477	0.441	0.781	

The HTMT test results show that all values are below 0.90. The HTMT value between Audience Engagement and Purchase Decision is 0.734, indicating a relatively strong but acceptable relationship. The values between Influencer Credibility and Purchase Decision, Halal Value and Purchase Decision, and Influencer Credibility and Halal Value are also below the maximum threshold. Therefore, the HTMT results confirm that all constructs in this study have good discriminant validity. The next step in testing discriminant validity was examining the cross loading values. Cross loading analysis was conducted to ensure that each indicator has a higher loading value on its own construct than on other constructs. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6. Cross Loading Values**

Indicator	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Y1	0.861	0.540	0.453	0.465
Y2	0.892	0.516	0.329	0.379

Y3	0.900	0.575	0.354	0.337
Y4	0.847	0.609	0.371	0.344
M1	0.316	0.347	0.876	0.691
M2	0.394	0.326	0.881	0.628
M3	0.418	0.471	0.855	0.556
M4	0.391	0.443	0.899	0.619
X1.1	0.476	0.746	0.607	0.539
X1.2	0.503	0.709	0.169	0.092
X1.3	0.543	0.821	0.313	0.303
X1.4	0.457	0.825	0.313	0.334
X1.5	0.546	0.830	0.288	0.282
X2.1	—	—	—	0.870
X2.2	—	—	—	0.895
X2.3	—	—	—	0.896
X2.4	—	—	—	0.874

The cross loading results indicate that all indicators have the highest loading values on their respective constructs compared to other constructs. For example, the indicators of Purchase Decision, namely Y1, Y2, Y3, and Y4, have loading values ranging from 0.847 to 0.900, which are higher than their correlations with other constructs. The same pattern is found in Influencer Credibility, where M1, M2, M3, and M4 show strong loading values ranging from 0.855 to 0.899. Furthermore, the indicators of Audience Engagement, namely X1.1 to X1.5, also show the highest loading values on their own construct, ranging from 0.709 to 0.830. The Halal Value indicators, namely X2.1, X2.2, X2.3, and X2.4, also show strong loading values of 0.870, 0.895, 0.896, and 0.874, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators meet the cross loading criteria and the research instrument has good discriminant validity. Overall, the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT ratio, and cross loading tests confirm that the constructs in this study are distinct from one another. Thus, the measurement model is considered valid and suitable for further analysis.

#### 4.5. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

The reliability test was conducted to ensure that each construct in the research model has good internal consistency in measuring its latent variable. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Hartono in Jogiyanto and Abdillah (2019), a construct is considered reliable if it has a Cronbach's Alpha value of  $\geq 0.6$  and a Composite Reliability value of  $\geq 0.7$ . Composite Reliability is used to measure the actual reliability of a construct, while Cronbach's Alpha represents the lower bound of construct reliability. Therefore, Composite Reliability values are generally higher than Cronbach's Alpha values. Based on the data processing results using SmartPLS, all constructs in this study have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above the recommended threshold. This indicates that the indicators used to measure each variable are consistent and reliable. The complete reliability test results are presented in the following table.

**Table 7. Reliability Test**

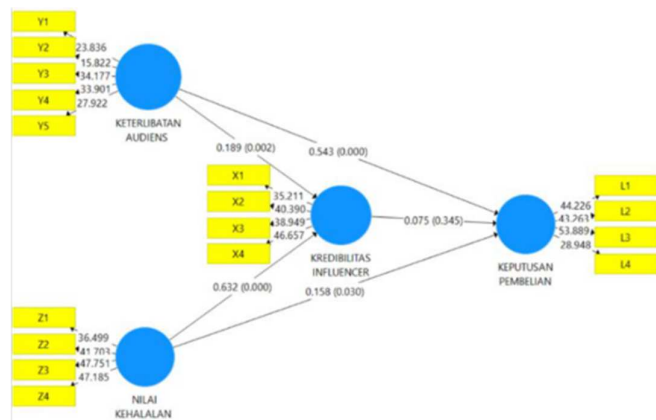
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Description
Audience Engagement	0.847	0.891	Reliable
Purchase Decision	0.898	0.929	Reliable
Influencer Credibility	0.901	0.931	Reliable
Halal Value	0.907	0.934	Reliable

Based on Table 7, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed the minimum recommended threshold of 0.7. The Audience Engagement variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.847 and a Composite Reliability value of 0.891, indicating high reliability. The Purchase Decision

variable obtains a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.898 and a Composite Reliability value of 0.929, showing that its indicators are consistent in measuring the construct. Furthermore, the Influencer Credibility variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.901 and a Composite Reliability value of 0.931, while the Halal Value variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.907 and a Composite Reliability value of 0.934. These results indicate very good reliability because all values are far above the minimum criteria. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study meet the construct reliability criteria and can be used for further analysis.

#### 4.6. Inner Model Testing

The next stage in SEM-PLS analysis is testing the inner model or structural model. This test is used to examine the causal relationships among the research variables and to determine whether the proposed hypotheses are supported. The inner model evaluation is conducted by observing several important values, including the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), path coefficient, and parameter coefficient. Through these values, the researcher can identify the strength and significance of the relationships among variables. If the test results show a significant relationship between variables, the proposed hypothesis can be accepted. In addition, the inner model evaluation also measures the ability of the research model to predict endogenous variables. This is assessed using the  $R^2$  value as an indicator of model strength and the  $Q^2$  predictive relevance value to determine the model's ability to explain the overall variation in the data. The bootstrapping result of the inner model test is presented in the following figure.



**Figure 3. Bootstrapping of Inner Model Test**

#### 4.7. Collinearity Test

The collinearity test was conducted to ensure that the independent variables in the model do not excessively influence one another. This test used the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to measure the extent to which a variable is correlated with other independent variables. In the SEM-PLS approach, a VIF value is considered acceptable if it is below 5.0 or if the tolerance value is above 0.20. If the VIF value is below this threshold, it can be concluded that there is no collinearity problem, and the model is suitable for further analysis. Conversely, a VIF value above 5.0 indicates a high correlation among constructs that needs to be considered. The results of the VIF test are presented in the following table.

**Table 8. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

Construct	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Purchase Decision				
Audience Engagement	1.285		1.208	

Influencer Credibility	2.148			
Halal Value				

Based on the results obtained using SmartPLS, the VIF values for the constructs range from 1.208 to 2.148. According to Hair et al. (2017), VIF values below 5.0 indicate that there is no serious collinearity problem among the constructs. Therefore, the relationships among Audience Engagement, Influencer Credibility, Halal Value, and Purchase Decision do not statistically interfere with one another. These results confirm that each construct has an independent contribution in explaining the dependent variable. Thus, the model is free from multicollinearity symptoms and is appropriate to proceed to the path analysis stage.

#### 4.8. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is used to measure the extent to which the model can explain the variation in the dependent variable. In other words,  $R^2$  shows how much the independent variables contribute to explaining the dependent variable. The  $R^2$  value ranges from 0 to 1. A value closer to 0 indicates limited explanatory power, while a value closer to 1 indicates stronger explanatory power. In general, an  $R^2$  value above 67% indicates a strong model, a value between 33% and 67% indicates a moderate model, and a value between 19% and 33% indicates a weak model. Therefore, the higher the  $R^2$  value, the better the model is in explaining the relationships among the research variables. The coefficient of determination results are presented in the following table.

**Table 9. Coefficient of Determination**

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchase Decision	0.450	0.442
Influencer Credibility	0.535	0.530

Based on Table 9, the Purchase Decision variable has an  $R^2$  value of 0.450 and an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.442. This means that 45% of the variation in purchase decisions can be explained by the variables included in the model, while the remaining 55% is influenced by other factors outside this study. This value falls into the moderate category, indicating that the model has adequate explanatory power. Meanwhile, the Influencer Credibility variable has an  $R^2$  value of 0.535 and an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.530. This indicates that 53.5% of the variation in influencer credibility can be explained by the independent variables in the model. This value also falls into the moderate category and shows that the variables examined in this study have a considerable influence on the formation of influencer credibility. Overall, these results indicate that the research model is able to explain the relationships among variables with an adequate level of accuracy, although there are still other external factors that may contribute to explaining the phenomenon being studied.

#### 4.9. F-Square Test (Effect Size)

The F-square ( $f^2$ ) test is used to measure the contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variables in the research model. The  $f^2$  value indicates how much the  $R^2$  value changes when an exogenous variable is included in or removed from the model. In other words,  $f^2$  helps determine the importance of each variable in explaining the variation of other variables. A higher  $f^2$  value indicates a stronger effect, while a lower  $f^2$  value indicates a weaker contribution. The results of the  $f^2$  test in this study are presented in the following table.

**Table 10. F-Square Values**

Construct	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Purchase Decision				
Audience Engagement	0.417		—	
Influencer Credibility	0.005			
Halal Value	—		0.710	

The  $f^2$  analysis shows the effect size of each variable on the other variables in the model. Audience Engagement has a strong effect on Purchase Decision, with an  $f^2$  value of 0.417. This indicates that higher audience engagement has a substantial impact on consumers' purchase decisions. Furthermore, Halal Value has a very strong effect on Influencer Credibility, with an  $f^2$  value of 0.710. This result shows that halal perception plays an important role in shaping the credibility of halal influencers. Meanwhile, the effect of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Decision is very small, with an  $f^2$  value of 0.005, indicating a weak contribution. Overall, the  $f^2$  results help identify which variables play a dominant role in the model. Audience Engagement and Halal Value appear to be the main driving factors, while Influencer Credibility has a relatively minor direct contribution to Purchase Decision.

4.10.  $Q^2$  Test (Predictive Relevance)

The  $Q^2$  test, or predictive relevance test, is used to assess the ability of the research model to predict endogenous constructs. In SEM-PLS, a model is considered to have predictive relevance when the  $Q^2$  value is greater than zero ( $Q^2 > 0$ ). Conversely, a  $Q^2$  value equal to or less than zero indicates that the model does not have sufficient predictive capability for the construct being measured. The  $Q^2$  value is obtained by comparing the Sum of Squares Observation (SSO) and the Sum of Squares Error (SSE). The higher the  $Q^2$  value, the better the predictive relevance of the model. The results of the  $Q^2$  test in this study are presented in the following table.

**Table 11.  $Q^2$  Values**

Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Purchase Decision	840	560.711	0.332
Audience Engagement	1050	1050	0.000
Influencer Credibility	840	499.668	0.405
Halal Value	840	840	0.000

Based on Table 11, the Purchase Decision variable has a  $Q^2$  value of 0.332, while the Influencer Credibility variable has a  $Q^2$  value of 0.405. Since both values are greater than zero, it can be concluded that the model has good predictive relevance for these two endogenous variables. This means that the model is able to predict variations in Purchase Decision and Influencer Credibility adequately. Meanwhile, Audience Engagement and Halal Value have  $Q^2$  values of 0.000. This result occurs because both variables function as exogenous variables in the model, meaning that they are not predicted by other variables but instead act as predictors for the endogenous variables. Overall, the  $Q^2$  test results show that the research model has adequate predictive relevance. Influencer Credibility has the highest predictive relevance with a  $Q^2$  value of 0.405, followed by Purchase Decision with a  $Q^2$  value of 0.332. Therefore, the model can be considered suitable for explaining and predicting the relationships among the variables examined in this study.

4.11. Path Coefficient

The path coefficient test is used to determine the direction and strength of the relationships among variables in the research model. A positive coefficient value indicates a positive relationship between

variables, meaning that an increase in one variable will be followed by an increase in the related variable. The results of the path coefficient test are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12. Path Coefficient Values**

Construct	Purchase Decision	Audience Engagement	Influencer Credibility	Halal Value
Purchase Decision				
Audience Engagement	0.543		0.189	
Influencer Credibility	0.075			
Halal Value	0.158		0.632	

Based on Table 12, the relationship between Audience Engagement and Purchase Decision has a coefficient value of 0.543. This indicates a strong and positive influence, meaning that the higher the audience engagement with influencer content, the greater the possibility of purchase decisions being formed. Meanwhile, Influencer Credibility has a coefficient value of 0.075 toward Purchase Decision, indicating a weak positive influence. This suggests that influencer credibility alone is not strong enough to directly encourage consumers to make purchases without active audience engagement. Halal Value has a positive moderate effect on Purchase Decision, with a coefficient value of 0.158. This indicates that halal aspects remain an important consideration in purchasing decisions, although their direct influence is not as strong as audience engagement. Furthermore, Halal Value has a strong positive effect on Influencer Credibility, with a coefficient value of 0.632. This shows that the stronger the halal value perceived by consumers, the higher the credibility attributed to the influencer. In addition, Audience Engagement also has a positive effect on Influencer Credibility, with a coefficient value of 0.189, although the effect is relatively weaker. Overall, the results show that Audience Engagement is the strongest predictor of Purchase Decision, while Halal Value plays an important role in shaping Influencer Credibility.

4.12. Effect Size (Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects)

Effect size analysis is used to examine the magnitude of the influence among variables in the model, including direct effects, indirect effects, and total effects. Direct effects show the influence of one variable on another without passing through a mediating variable, while indirect effects show the influence that occurs through a mediator. Total effects represent the overall influence by combining both direct and indirect effects. This analysis is important because it helps identify not only the direct influence among variables but also how indirect pathways contribute to the final outcome. Therefore, the researcher can determine which variables have the strongest contribution and which paths play the most important role in shaping the purchase decision. The results of the effect size analysis are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13. Effect Size / Total Effects**

Relationship	Original Sample (O)
Audience Engagement → Purchase Decision	0.557
Audience Engagement → Influencer Credibility	0.189
Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision	0.075
Halal Value → Purchase Decision	0.205
Halal Value → Influencer Credibility	0.632

Based on Table 13, Audience Engagement has the strongest effect on Purchase Decision, with a value of 0.557. This indicates that audience engagement is the main factor influencing consumers' purchase decisions in this model. Halal Value also contributes to Purchase Decision with a value of 0.205, showing that halal aspects remain an important consideration in consumer behavior. Furthermore, Halal Value has the strongest effect on Influencer Credibility, with a value of 0.632. This means that the stronger the perceived

halal value, the higher the credibility attributed to the influencer. Audience Engagement also affects Influencer Credibility with a value of 0.189, indicating a moderate influence. Meanwhile, Influencer Credibility has a relatively small direct effect on Purchase Decision, with a value of 0.075. Overall, the effect size results show that the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables varies from strong to weak. Audience Engagement is the most dominant factor in shaping Purchase Decision, while Halal Value plays an important role in strengthening Influencer Credibility.

4.13. Goodness of Fit (GoF)

In the SEM-PLS approach, model fit can be assessed through the Goodness of Fit (GoF) test. This test is used to evaluate how well the proposed model fits the empirical data as a whole. The GoF index reflects the overall suitability of the research model in explaining the relationships among variables. Several indicators are commonly used to assess model fit, including SRMR, d\_ULS, d\_G, Chi-Square, and NFI. The results of the Goodness of Fit test in this study are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14. Goodness of Fit (GoF)**

Fit Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.094	0.094
d_ULS	1.346	1.346
d_G	0.436	0.436
Chi-Square	522.819	522.819
NFI	0.806	0.806

Based on Table 14, the SRMR value is 0.094 for both the Saturated Model and the Estimated Model. Since this value is below the threshold of 0.10, it indicates that the model has an acceptable level of fit between the empirical data and the theoretical model. Furthermore, the d\_ULS value of 1.346 and d\_G value of 0.436 indicate that the difference between the model covariance and the actual data is relatively small. This suggests that the model structure is adequate in representing the relationships among variables. The Chi-Square value is 522.819, which serves as an overall measure of model fit. Meanwhile, the NFI value of 0.806 indicates that the model has an acceptable fit because the value is reasonably close to the ideal value of 1.0. Overall, the Goodness of Fit results show that the research model has an acceptable level of fit and is suitable for testing the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

4.14. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using SEM-PLS through the bootstrapping procedure. This test aims to determine the significance of the relationships among the variables in the research model. The assessment was based on the Original Sample (O), t-statistics, and p-values. The Original Sample (O) indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between variables, while the t-statistics and p-values determine whether the relationship is statistically significant. In this study, the hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistics value was greater than 1.64 and the p-value was less than 0.05 at the 5% significance level. Conversely, if the t-statistics value was lower than 1.64 or the p-value was greater than 0.05, the hypothesis was rejected. The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15. Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
H1	Audience Engagement → Influencer Credibility	0.189	3.129	0.002	Positive and Significant Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
H2	Halal Value → Influencer Credibility	0.632	10.995	0.000	Positive and Significant Effect
H3	Audience Engagement → Purchase Decision	0.557	9.281	0.000	Positive and Significant Effect
H4	Halal Value → Purchase Decision	0.205	3.834	0.000	Positive and Significant Effect
H5	Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision	0.075	0.879	0.380	Not Significant
H6	Audience Engagement → Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision	0.014	0.760	0.448	Not Significant
H7	Halal Value → Influencer Credibility → Purchase Decision	0.047	0.837	0.403	Not Significant

Based on Table 15, four hypotheses are accepted, namely H1, H2, H3, and H4. H1 shows that Audience Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Influencer Credibility, with an original sample value of 0.189, a t-statistic of 3.129, and a p-value of 0.002. This indicates that higher audience engagement through likes, comments, content sharing, and other forms of interaction can increase the perceived credibility of influencers. H2 shows that Halal Value has a positive and significant effect on Influencer Credibility, with an original sample value of 0.632, a t-statistic of 10.995, and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that halal values displayed by influencers, such as honesty, sharia compliance, and consistency in promoting halal principles, strongly contribute to the formation of influencer credibility. H3 shows that Audience Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, with an original sample value of 0.557, a t-statistic of 9.281, and a p-value of 0.000. This means that the higher the level of audience engagement with influencer content, the stronger the possibility of consumers making purchase decisions. This finding confirms that interaction and digital closeness play an important role in shaping the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers.

H4 shows that Halal Value has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, with an original sample value of 0.205, a t-statistic of 3.834, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that halal value is an important factor in influencing consumers' purchase decisions. For Muslim Generation Z, halal is not only perceived as a religious requirement, but also as a symbol of product quality, safety, integrity, and ethical consumption. Meanwhile, H5 is rejected because Influencer Credibility does not have a significant effect on Purchase Decision. This is shown by the original sample value of 0.075, the t-statistic of 0.879, and the p-value of 0.380. These results indicate that influencer credibility alone is not strong enough to directly encourage purchase decisions. Generation Z consumers tend to be more critical and selective, so they do not rely solely on the credibility of influencers when making purchasing decisions. H6 is also rejected because Influencer Credibility does not mediate the relationship between Audience Engagement and Purchase Decision. The original sample value is 0.014, with a t-statistic of 0.760 and a p-value of 0.448. This result indicates that the effect of Audience Engagement on Purchase Decision occurs directly, without passing through Influencer Credibility as a mediating variable.

Similarly, H7 is rejected because Influencer Credibility does not mediate the relationship between Halal Value and Purchase Decision. This is shown by the original sample value of 0.047, the t-statistic of 0.837, and the p-value of 0.403. This finding indicates that Halal Value directly influences Purchase Decision without requiring Influencer Credibility as an intermediary variable. Overall, the hypothesis testing results show that Audience Engagement and Halal Value are the main factors influencing Purchase Decision. Both variables also significantly affect Influencer Credibility. However, Influencer Credibility does not significantly influence Purchase Decision and does not mediate the relationship between Audience Engagement, Halal Value, and Purchase Decision. Therefore, the purchase decisions of Muslim Generation Z consumers toward halal

products are more strongly influenced by digital engagement and halal values than by the personal credibility of influencers.

#### 4.15. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that audience engagement and halal value are the principal factors explaining halal product purchase decisions among Muslim Generation Z respondents. These findings indicate that young Muslim consumers do not make purchasing decisions solely on the basis of religious considerations or the personal characteristics of an influencer. Instead, their decisions are shaped by the interaction between digital participation, access to relevant product information, and the perceived compatibility of the product with Islamic, ethical, and functional values. Within the context of digital halal marketing, relational engagement and value congruence therefore appear to provide stronger explanations of purchase decisions than influencer credibility alone.

##### a. Audience Engagement and Influencer Credibility

The first hypothesis is supported, as audience engagement has a positive and significant effect on influencer credibility. The path coefficient of 0.189, with a t-statistic of 3.129 and a p-value of 0.002, indicates that greater interaction with influencer-generated content is associated with higher perceived influencer credibility. Activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, saving content, and participating in interactive discussions allow followers to observe the influencer's responsiveness, consistency, communication ability, and knowledge. These repeated interactions provide audiences with additional cues for evaluating whether an influencer is trustworthy and competent.

This finding is consistent with the customer-engagement and parasocial-interaction perspectives. Continuous digital interaction can reduce the perceived psychological distance between followers and influencers and create familiarity, social closeness, and perceived authenticity. In this context, credibility is not developed solely through reputation, attractiveness, or follower numbers. It may also emerge from the quality and continuity of the relationship established between the influencer and the audience. The result supports Ao et al. (2023), Cao et al. (2025), and Jayasingh and Sivakumar (2025), who indicate that consumer engagement can strengthen the evaluation of influencers and increase the effectiveness of influencer-generated communication. It also reinforces the argument that Generation Z evaluates digital figures through observable interaction rather than relying exclusively on their public image. Therefore, digital halal influencers who communicate consistently, respond to audience questions, and provide relevant information are more likely to be perceived as credible.

##### b. Halal Value and Influencer Credibility

The second hypothesis is also supported. Halal value has a positive and significant effect on influencer credibility, with a path coefficient of 0.632, a t-statistic of 10.995, and a p-value below 0.001. This relationship is the strongest path directed toward influencer credibility, indicating that the religious, ethical, and functional values communicated by influencers play a central role in shaping audience evaluations of those influencers. Muslim Generation Z respondents appear to evaluate influencer credibility not merely through popularity, attractiveness, or communication style, but also through the influencer's consistency in presenting halal information. Explanations concerning halal certification, ingredients, production procedures, product safety, and conformity with sharia principles may function as evidence of expertise. At the same time, honesty, transparency, and consistency in communicating halal claims may strengthen perceived trustworthiness and moral integrity.

This finding is consistent with the value-congruence perspective, which suggests that consumers are more likely to positively evaluate a communicator whose messages and behavior align with their personal and religious values. The result also supports Silalahi et al. (2021), Supriani et al. (2025), and Ahmad et al. (2025), who emphasize that religiosity, halal authenticity, and value alignment are relevant to consumer trust in halal

marketing communication. The finding extends these previous studies by showing that halal value affects not only the evaluation of the promoted product but also the evaluation of the message source. Thus, halal value operates at two levels: as a product-related consideration and as an informational cue through which followers assess the competence and integrity of digital halal influencers.

c. Audience Engagement and Purchase Decisions

The third hypothesis is supported, as audience engagement has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. The total effect of audience engagement on purchase decisions is 0.557, with a t-statistic of 9.281 and a p-value below 0.001. This result indicates that audience engagement is the strongest predictor of purchase decisions in the proposed model. This finding can be explained by the informational and relational functions of engagement. Interactive influencer content gives consumers access to product demonstrations, user experiences, responses to questions, comments from other followers, and additional information concerning product benefits and risks. Such interaction may reduce uncertainty and improve consumers' confidence when evaluating purchasing alternatives.

Engagement may also create social confirmation. When consumers observe active discussions, positive responses, and the participation of other followers, they may perceive the recommended product as more relevant and socially acceptable. Consequently, audience engagement does not merely reflect exposure to content; it also represents participation in a digital decision-making environment. The finding is consistent with Ao et al. (2023) and Fitriasari et al. (2025), who show that social media engagement is an important determinant of purchase-related behavior. Fitriasari et al. (2025) found that engagement and customer trust were more relevant to Generation Z's purchase decisions than influencer popularity. The present result further supports this argument by demonstrating that Muslim Generation Z respondents are more responsive to active digital interaction than to the personal credibility of an influencer considered separately. This finding does not mean that every form of interaction will automatically produce a purchase. The quality, relevance, and informational content of engagement remain important. Superficial interaction may increase content visibility but may not reduce consumer uncertainty. Therefore, meaningful engagement that provides information, clarification, and opportunities for participation is more likely to influence purchase decisions.

d. Halal Value and Purchase Decisions

The fourth hypothesis is supported. Halal value has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, with a total effect of 0.205, a t-statistic of 3.834, and a p-value below 0.001. This finding confirms that halal value remains an important consideration in the consumption decisions of Muslim Generation Z. Halal is not interpreted only as a formal religious label. It also represents product safety, cleanliness, ethical production, transparency, quality, and consistency with Muslim identity. Clear halal information may reduce both moral and functional risks. From a moral perspective, consumers gain assurance that the product is compatible with Islamic principles. From a functional perspective, halal information may provide confidence concerning ingredients, production procedures, product safety, and ethical integrity.

The finding is consistent with Alimusa et al. (2023), Sudarsono et al. (2024), Supriani et al. (2025), and Ahmad et al. (2025), who demonstrate that halal awareness, religious concern, and perceived halal characteristics influence Muslim consumers' purchase-related responses. The current study extends this evidence by showing that halal value remains significant when audience engagement and influencer credibility are simultaneously included in the structural model. The result also indicates that halal value can operate directly. Consumers do not necessarily require the endorsement of a highly credible influencer when the product's halal characteristics are clear, relevant, and supported by sufficient information. For respondents with strong halal awareness, conformity with Islamic and ethical standards may serve as an independent purchasing criterion.

e. Influencer Credibility and Purchase Decisions

The fifth hypothesis is not supported. Influencer credibility has a positive but nonsignificant effect on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.075, a t-statistic of 0.879, and a p-value of 0.380. This result indicates that perceived credibility alone is insufficient to explain the purchase decisions of Muslim Generation Z respondents after audience engagement and halal value are considered simultaneously. This finding differs from studies by Garg and Bakshi (2024), Ilieva et al. (2024), and Virgianti and Ronny (2025), which identify credibility as an important determinant of purchase intention or purchase decisions. Source Credibility Theory generally proposes that information from a trustworthy and knowledgeable source is more likely to be accepted and translated into attitudinal or behavioral responses. However, the current finding suggests that this effect may be contingent on the consumer, product, and communication context.

Several explanations may account for the nonsignificant relationship. First, Generation Z consumers have access to multiple sources of product information, including reviews, comments, comparison content, certification databases, brand accounts, and other influencers. Consequently, they may not depend on a single influencer when evaluating a product. Even when an influencer is perceived as credible, consumers may verify the recommendation through other digital sources before making a purchase. Second, credibility may represent a general evaluation of the influencer rather than a direct evaluation of the promoted product. A follower may consider an influencer honest, knowledgeable, and attractive but still decide not to purchase because the product is irrelevant, unaffordable, unavailable, or inconsistent with personal preferences. Thus, source credibility does not necessarily eliminate product-level considerations.

Third, the simultaneous inclusion of audience engagement and halal value may reduce the unique explanatory contribution of influencer credibility. Engagement provides direct relational and informational benefits, while halal value provides religious and functional assurance. These mechanisms may be closer to the final purchase decision than the general credibility of the influencer. This finding is consistent with Timur et al. (2022), Cao et al. (2025), Jayasingh and Sivakumar (2025), and Barari et al. (2025), who suggest that the effect of influencer characteristics may vary according to authenticity, product relevance, audience involvement, and generational characteristics. Therefore, influencer credibility should not be considered universally sufficient for producing purchase decisions. The result does not invalidate Source Credibility Theory. Instead, it identifies a possible contextual boundary of the theory. Credibility may remain relevant in forming positive evaluations of the communicator, but its transformation into purchasing behavior may depend on additional mechanisms such as product relevance, consumer trust, authenticity, engagement quality, perceived value, and halal assurance.

f. The Mediating Role of Influencer Credibility in the Relationship between Audience Engagement and Purchase Decisions

The sixth hypothesis is not supported. Influencer credibility does not significantly mediate the relationship between audience engagement and purchase decisions. The indirect effect is 0.014, with a t-statistic of 0.760 and a p-value of 0.448. This means that the statistical effect of audience engagement on purchase decisions is not transmitted through influencer credibility. The nonsignificant mediation result is consistent with the nonsignificant direct relationship between influencer credibility and purchase decisions. Although engagement significantly strengthens perceived credibility, the resulting credibility does not significantly lead to a purchase decision. Therefore, the second stage of the proposed mediation mechanism is not supported. The result suggests that audience engagement influences purchase decisions primarily through a direct relational and informational pathway. Interactive communication may provide sufficient product knowledge, social confirmation, and involvement to strengthen purchase confidence without requiring consumers to first form a stronger credibility evaluation of the influencer.

However, this finding should not be interpreted as evidence that engagement automatically produces purchasing behavior. Rather, it indicates that credibility is not the significant intermediary in the tested model. Other psychological mechanisms may explain how engagement affects purchase decisions. Potential mediators include consumer trust in the product or brand, parasocial relationships, perceived

authenticity, perceived usefulness of the content, emotional attachment, and customer-brand engagement. This finding contributes to influencer-marketing research by demonstrating that source credibility is not always the primary mechanism connecting digital engagement with purchasing behavior. For Muslim Generation Z, direct participation and access to relevant information may be more influential than a general judgment about the influencer's credibility.

g. The Mediating Role of Influencer Credibility in the Relationship between Halal Value and Purchase Decisions

The seventh hypothesis is also not supported. Influencer credibility does not significantly mediate the relationship between halal value and purchase decisions. The indirect effect is 0.047, with a t-statistic of 0.837 and a p-value of 0.403. Although halal value has a strong positive effect on influencer credibility, the enhanced credibility does not significantly transmit the effect to purchase decisions. This result indicates that halal value functions primarily as a direct purchasing consideration. Muslim Generation Z respondents may evaluate halal certification, sharia compliance, safety, cleanliness, and ethical integrity independently of the influencer who communicates those attributes. When the halal characteristics of a product are clear and personally relevant, consumers may form purchasing confidence without depending on the credibility of the message source.

The finding also suggests that halal value has intrinsic importance. Unlike general commercial claims, halal-related information is connected to religious obligations, moral identity, and ethical consumption. Therefore, consumers may prioritize verifiable product-level evidence, such as recognized certification, ingredient information, and production transparency, over the personal credibility of an influencer. Other mediators may be more appropriate for explaining the relationship between halal value and purchase decisions. Consumer trust in halal certification, perceived product authenticity, perceived risk, halal awareness, religious commitment, and attitude toward the product may provide stronger explanatory mechanisms than influencer credibility. Future studies should test these alternatives.

h. Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the integration of influencer marketing and halal consumer behavior literature. First, the study demonstrates that influencer credibility is shaped by both digital-relational and religious-value factors. Audience engagement provides relational and informational cues, while halal value provides cues concerning expertise, integrity, and value congruence. Second, the results identify a contextual limitation of Source Credibility Theory. The theory remains useful for explaining how audiences evaluate an influencer, but credibility alone does not necessarily translate into purchase decisions. In the digital halal context, source evaluation may be less influential than direct audience involvement and the perceived value of the product. Third, the study shows that religious-value congruence and digital interaction operate as distinct but complementary mechanisms. Halal value reflects alignment with religious, ethical, and functional expectations, whereas audience engagement reflects relational involvement and access to information. Both mechanisms directly influence purchase decisions and explain more variance than influencer credibility. Fourth, the nonsignificant mediation findings suggest that influencer credibility should not automatically be positioned as the principal intermediary in influencer-marketing models. The psychological process connecting influencer communication and purchase behavior may differ according to the characteristics of the audience, the type of product, and the values attached to consumption.

i. Practical Implications

The findings provide several practical implications for halal businesses, marketers, influencers, and regulators. Halal businesses should not select influencers solely on the basis of popularity, attractiveness, or general credibility. The quality of audience engagement, relevance of the influencer's content, compatibility with the product, and ability to communicate halal information should also be evaluated. Marketing campaigns should create opportunities for meaningful audience participation. Live discussions, question-and-answer sessions, product demonstrations, interactive reviews, polls, comment responses, and user-

generated content may provide consumers with information and social confirmation. These formats are more consistent with Generation Z's interactive media-consumption patterns than one-way promotional endorsements.

Halal claims should be communicated clearly and supported by verifiable evidence. Brands and influencers should explain certification, ingredients, production processes, product safety, and ethical practices rather than relying only on halal symbols or religious language. Unsupported or exaggerated religious claims may weaken consumer confidence and create perceptions of religious commodification. Digital halal influencers should function as responsible information facilitators rather than merely as commercial endorsers. They should disclose promotional relationships, distinguish personal opinions from verified information, and avoid making claims beyond their competence. Responsiveness and consistency remain important for credibility, but credibility must be combined with useful content and authentic engagement to support purchasing behavior. For halal regulators and public institutions, the results indicate the importance of participatory digital education. Halal literacy campaigns can collaborate with appropriate digital influencers, but the information should remain accurate, transparent, and consistent with official certification standards. Interactive educational formats may help Generation Z identify reliable halal information and critically evaluate promotional claims.

#### j. Social Implications

The study indicates that Muslim Generation Z is developing a more selective and value-conscious pattern of consumption. Halal is increasingly interpreted not only as compliance with religious rules but also as an expression of ethical responsibility, personal integrity, product safety, and social identity. Digital interaction contributes to the formation of communities in which consumers exchange information, evaluate claims, and collectively interpret product values. The role of digital halal influencers may therefore develop beyond product promotion toward halal education and value communication. Nevertheless, this role requires transparency and responsibility to prevent commercial messages from oversimplifying or exploiting religious values. Overall, the findings show that the purchase decisions of Muslim Generation Z are more strongly associated with meaningful digital engagement and perceived halal value than with influencer credibility alone. Digital halal marketing strategies should therefore shift from source-centered persuasion toward interactive, transparent, evidence-based, and value-consistent communication.

## V. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among audience engagement, halal value, influencer credibility, and halal product purchase decisions among Muslim Generation Z, including the mediating role of influencer credibility. The PLS-SEM results show that audience engagement and halal value have positive and significant relationships with both influencer credibility and purchase decisions, with audience engagement demonstrating the strongest relationship with purchase decisions. In contrast, influencer credibility does not significantly influence purchase decisions and does not mediate the effects of audience engagement or halal value. These findings indicate that Muslim Generation Z consumers rely more strongly on meaningful digital interaction, product relevance, message authenticity, and clear halal information than on influencer credibility alone. Theoretically, the study identifies a contextual boundary of Source Credibility Theory by showing that credibility may explain how audiences evaluate influencers but may not be sufficient to generate purchasing responses.

Practically, halal businesses should prioritize influencers who provide interactive, transparent, and value-consistent content rather than selecting them solely on the basis of popularity or reputation. Marketing strategies should include educational reviews, live discussions, product demonstrations, and verifiable information regarding halal certification, ingredients, safety, and production processes. The findings should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously because the study used a cross-sectional design, convenience sampling, respondents from one faculty and university, and self-reported data. Future studies should use

longitudinal, experimental, or mixed-method designs; involve more diverse respondents; and examine alternative mediating or moderating variables such as perceived authenticity, parasocial relationships, consumer trust, religiosity, perceived risk, and product involvement. Overall, effective digital halal marketing should emphasize meaningful engagement and authentic halal value rather than source-centered endorsement alone.

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