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The Influence of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intentions among Generation Z in Medan

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ABSTRACT

The increasing use of social media has changed the way businesses communicate with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. As one of the most active digital consumer groups, Generation Z often relies on social media platforms and influencer recommendations when evaluating products before making a purchase decision. This study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan, Indonesia. A quantitative research approach with an associative design was used. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 97 respondents selected using purposive sampling. The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, t-tests, F-tests, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The results showed that social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. Influencer credibility also has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. Simultaneously, both independent variables have a significant effect on purchase intention, with the regression model explaining 83.4% of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.834$). These findings suggest that integrating effective social media marketing strategies with credible influencer endorsements can substantially increase consumer purchase intentions. This study contributes to the digital marketing literature by providing empirical evidence from Generation Z consumers in Medan and offering practical insights for businesses in designing effective digital marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility, Purchase Intention, Generation Z, Digital Marketing.

JEL Code: M31, M37, D91

I. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally changed the marketing landscape, enabling businesses to communicate with consumers more efficiently through digital platforms. Among the various digital marketing channels, social media has become one of the most influential tools for building customer relationships, increasing brand awareness, and driving consumer purchasing decisions. (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Among the various realms of digital marketing, social media—such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook—have evolved from mere entertainment and interpersonal social networking platforms into a crucial commercial ecosystem for companies to drive customer engagement ,

strengthen brand equity , and stimulate purchasing decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021a; Kim & Ko, 2012). The widespread adoption of social media has encouraged businesses to shift from traditional promotional approaches to interactive and consumer-oriented digital marketing strategies. Indonesia is among the countries with the highest social media adoption, making social media a crucial platform for marketing communications. (Indonesia, 2024; Kemp, 2025). Generation Z is one of the most dominant social media user groups. As a generation that grew up in the digital age, they spend a significant amount of time interacting with digital content and often rely on social media for product information. Their purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by online interactions, user-generated content, and influencer recommendations, rather than traditional advertising. (Balqis & Yasri, 2025; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Unlike previous generations who were relatively passive towards conventional mass media advertising, Generation Z has digital native characteristics that make them more proactive in relying on user -generated content -based information , direct interactions, and influencer recommendations before making commercial decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021a; Suryati et al., 2024).

Within Indonesia's digital landscape, Generation Z (Statistik, 2020) has emerged as the most dominant and critical demographic and economic segment. Empirical data shows that the prevalence of social media use among Generation Z is very intensive, with more than 80% of Gen Z individuals accessing social media for at least 3 to 5 hours daily to consume visual content, search for product reviews, and compare brand alternatives (Balqis & Yasri, 2025; Irwanto, 2025) Unlike previous generations who were relatively passive in their exposure to conventional mass media advertising, Generation Z possesses digital native characteristics that make them more proactive in relying on user -generated content , direct interactions, and influencer recommendations before making commercial decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021a; Suryati et al., 2024). Social media marketing (SMM) and influencer credibility are the two main pillars most widely implemented by business actors to reach Generation Z (Kim & Ko, 2012; Ohanian, 1990). (Kim & Ko, 2012) conceptualize social media marketing through five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trends, personalization, and word-of-mouth marketing. Previous studies consistently show that effective social media marketing positively influences consumer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intentions (Erwin et al., 2023; Ismael et al., 2025; Kim & Ko, 2012). In addition to social media marketing, influencer credibility has become an increasingly important factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to trust product recommendations delivered by influencers they perceive as knowledgeable, honest, and engaging. According to (Ohanian, 1990) , influencer credibility consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Recent studies further confirm that influencer credibility remains one of the strongest determinants of Generation Z purchase intentions in the digital environment (Babu et al., 2024; Marklen et al., 2025).

However, other studies such as those reported by (Balqis & Yasri, 2025) and (Maharani & Aruan, 2025) revealed that the impact of Social Media Marketing or influencer recommendations does not always have a direct or significant effect on Purchase Intention. The main causes of the inconsistency of previous research results can be explained through several contextual, cultural, and methodological factors. Contextual Factors of Product and Level of Involvement (Product Involvement): In high -involvement product categories such as electronics, consumers tend to require more in-depth objective analysis so that exposure to social media promotions that are merely entertaining often fails to trigger purchase intentions without the support of theoretical evidence or reliable technical reviews (Lambert et al., 2025; Maharani & Aruan, 2025). Cultural Collectivism and the Carcinoma of Commercialization (Persuasion Knowledge): Consumers in urban areas experiencing ad fatigue begin to develop awareness of persuasion schemes (persuasion knowledge). When influencers display excessive commercial promotions (over-endorsement) without authenticity, the emotional connection fades and produces a response of resistance (skepticism) from the audience (Babu et al., 2024; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Sample Characteristics and Geographic Homogeneity: Most previous studies have focused on megapolitan metropolitan areas such as Jakarta or Western countries that have different preference structures and digital infrastructure readiness than regional developing cities (Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023; Vidyanata, 2022).

Based on these inconsistencies, Medan City was chosen as a research site , possessing unique urgency and specific academic novelty. Medan is the largest metropolitan city on Sumatra Island and a leading center of economic growth, trade, and education in Western Indonesia (Statistik, 2024). Medan has a highly heterogeneous, multi-ethnic Generation Z demographic, adapting to global digital trends, while maintaining local socio-cultural norms that are critical and pragmatic in financial (Akbar et al., 2025; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023). The behavior of Gen Z in Medan demonstrates a very high level of reliance on short video-based social media such as TikTok and Instagram for information exploration (explorative intention), but they are highly selective in trusting commercial recommendations if they do not align with the values of expertise and honesty of the source (Akbar et al., 2025; Jasin Mohammad, 2022) Therefore, empirical testing in Medan City

provides a new contextual contribution that validates the generalization of digital marketing theory beyond major metropolitan areas.

Furthermore, empirical studies that simultaneously examine the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on Generation Z consumers in Medan are still limited. Given the rapid growth of digital marketing activities and Generation Z's increasing reliance on social media platforms, understanding how these factors shape purchase intentions is crucial for developing more effective digital marketing strategies. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intentions among Generation Z in Medan. This study contributes to the digital marketing literature in two ways. First, partially and simultaneously test the influence of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention of Generation Z in Medan City using a representative sample framework. Second, this study explains the integrated theoretical mechanisms that bridge the relationship between variables, by combining the Social Media Marketing Framework (Kim & Ko, 2012) and Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) to describe how social media stimulation mitigates consumer doubts and builds explicit commercial purchase intentions.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is defined as a set of marketing activities, processes, and practices that utilize interactive social media channels to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange value offerings that strengthen customer relationships and brand equity (Dwivedi et al., 2021b; Kim & Ko, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2021). Unlike traditional linear media that is one-way, SMM facilitates multi-directional communication that allows consumers to share experiences, provide direct evaluations, and influence the perceptions of other audiences in real-time (Jasin Mohammad, 2022; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). (Kim & Ko, 2012) conceptualize social media marketing through five main dimensions, namely Entertainment (Entertainment) is the capacity of content to present pleasure, visual aesthetics, and positive emotional stimulation. Interaction (Interaction) is the level of ease for consumers to dialogue, provide responses, and get feedback from brands. Trendiness (Currentness) is the delivery of the latest information that aligns content with pop trends, viral topics, and current issues. Customization (Adjustment) is the personalization of messages and offers according to the preferences and needs of individual segments. And Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) which is the expansion of recommendations between consumers through uploads, reviews, and sharing of digital content. These dimensions collectively create a positive customer experience that increases consumer trust, satisfaction, and intention to purchase a product or service. Among these dimensions, interaction and e-WOM have received considerable attention because they allow consumers to exchange opinions and experiences that can significantly influence purchasing decisions.

The theoretical mechanism linking SMM to Purchase Intention can be explained through the cognitive-affective processing framework (Cognitive-Affective-Conative Model) (Kim & Ko, 2021). When companies present entertaining and trendy content, initial cognitive stimulation is formed in consumers' minds, drawing their attention away from the disruption of digital information. Furthermore, the interaction and personalization dimensions (customization) build affective engagement, where consumers feel valued and receive solutions relevant to their personal needs. This positive affective experience reduces perceived risk and triggers trust, which ultimately directly drives conative impulses in the form of intentions to conduct commercial transactions (Purchase Intention) (Erwin et al., 2023; Mandung et al., 2024; Yadav & Rahman, 2018). Despite these consistent findings, previous studies have also revealed that the effectiveness of social media marketing can vary across consumer segments, product categories, and geographic contexts. Most existing studies focus on e-commerce platforms, beauty products, or metropolitan areas, while available evidence regarding Generation Z consumers in Medan is still limited. Given Generation Z's unique digital behavior and purchasing characteristics, further investigation is needed to understand how social media marketing influences their purchase intentions in this specific context.

2.2. Influencer Credibility

Social media influencers have become important opinion leaders, shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions through digital content. Compared to conventional advertising, influencer recommendations are generally perceived as more authentic because they are delivered in a more

personalized and interactive manner (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Influencer credibility refers to the audience's perception of the extent to which recommendations or information conveyed by influencers are trustworthy, objective, and have scientific/practical value (Y. X. Lim & Zhang, 2022; Ohanian, 1990). The concept of influencer credibility stems from the Source Credibility Theory, proposed by (Ohanian, 1990), which identifies expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as three key dimensions that determine an endorser's credibility. Expertise reflects the influencer's knowledge and competence regarding the promoted product, trustworthiness represents consumers' perceptions of honesty and integrity, while attractiveness refers to the influencer's physical appearance and overall appeal. Influencers who possess these characteristics are better able to persuade their audience and increase consumer trust in the endorsed product.

The credibility of influencers driving purchase intention is explained through the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Psychological Risk Reduction Theory (Ananda & Darma, 2026; Ohanian, 1990)). Under the central route of the ELM, when an influencer demonstrates high expertise and honest reviews (trustworthiness), critical Generation Z consumers will process product arguments rationally and deeply. This reduces psychological barriers (skepticism) and perceived purchase risk (Marklen et al., 2025; Saridewi & Annisa, 2025). Meanwhile, the attractiveness dimension works through the peripheral route that builds self-identification and parasocial interactions, where consumers adopt influencer recommendations to achieve social conformity or an ideal self-image. This combination of central and peripheral processing strengthens the conversion of cognitive beliefs into strong purchase intentions (Babu et al., 2024; S. Lim & Keni, 2025). Recent studies have confirmed the importance of influencer credibility in digital marketing. (Marklen et al., 2025) showed that influencer credibility significantly increases purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers by increasing trust in product recommendations. Similarly, (Ananda & Darma, 2026) reported that trustworthy and knowledgeable influencers generate stronger consumer trust, ultimately leading to higher purchase intentions. These findings suggest that influencer credibility serves not only as a persuasive communication factor but also as a mechanism to reduce consumers' perceived risk when making purchasing decisions. However, empirical findings regarding influencer credibility remain inconclusive. Several studies suggest that the magnitude of its influence depends on consumer engagement with the product, cultural background, and familiarity with the influencer. This inconsistency suggests that the effectiveness of influencer credibility may vary across demographic groups and geographic regions. Therefore, examining influencer credibility among Generation Z consumers in Medan is expected to provide additional empirical evidence in Indonesia's rapidly evolving digital market.

2.3. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness or readiness to purchase a product after evaluating available information and considering the expected benefits of ownership. According to (Dodds et al., 1991), purchase intention represents a consumer's behavioral tendency to purchase a product they perceive as valuable and desirable. It is widely recognized as one of the strongest predictors of actual purchasing behavior because consumers generally form purchase intentions before making a final purchase decision. In the digital marketing environment, purchase intention is influenced by various psychological and marketing-related factors. Exposure to persuasive promotional content, positive online interactions, electronic word-of-mouth reviews, and recommendations from credible influencers can strengthen consumer trust and increase their intention to purchase a product. Generation Z consumers, who actively seek product information through social media, are highly responsive to these digital marketing stimuli because they often rely on online content when evaluating products. Recent empirical evidence supports the role of digital marketing activities in stimulating purchase intent. Studies show that consumers who perceive marketing content as informative, entertaining, and credible tend to demonstrate stronger purchase intent than those exposed to less engaging promotional messages (Balqis & Yasri, 2025; S. Lim & Keni, 2025). Therefore, understanding the determinants of purchase intent remains crucial for businesses seeking to develop effective marketing strategies targeting Generation Z consumers.

2.4. Hypothesis Development

The theoretical interaction between Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility, and Purchase Intention forms a complementary conceptual framework. Social Media Marketing acts as a platform providing information stimulation and a means of customer engagement, while Influencer Credibility acts as a trusted messenger agent that validates the quality of the (Kim & Ko, 2012; Ohanian, 1990; Putra & Rivera, 2024). When

social media content is presented interactively and supported by honest and competent influencers, a synergistic effect is created to maximize information certainty and purchase intention of Generation Z in Medan City. Based on the theoretical foundation, previous empirical studies, and the conceptual framework discussed above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan.

H2: Influencer credibility has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan.

H3 : Social media marketing and influencer credibility simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan.

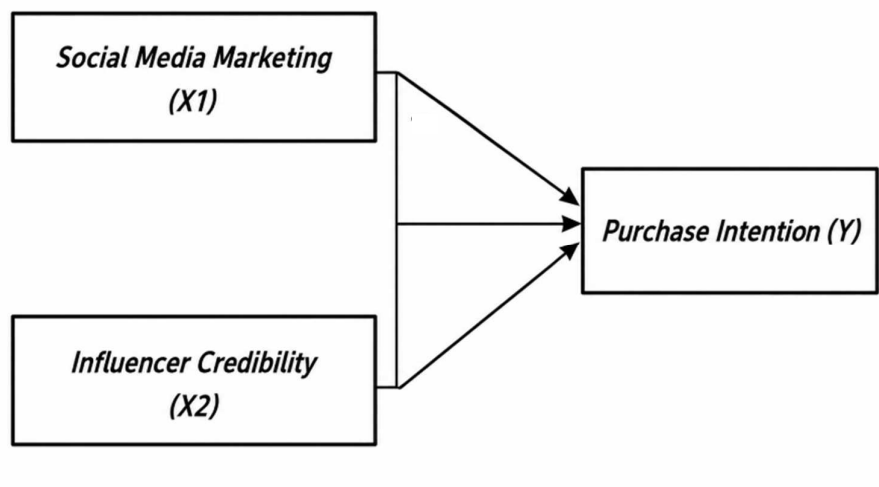


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Methods

This study used a quantitative design with a causal associative approach aimed at examining the causal relationship and intercorrelation between the independent variables (Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility) on the dependent variable (Purchase Intention) (Sugiyono, 2022). The study was conducted in Medan, North Sumatra, targeting Generation Z residents. Primary data collection took place over a four-month period, from March 2026 to June 2026, using a structured questionnaire distributed online via the Google Forms platform. The population of this study consisted of Generation Z individuals residing in Medan and actively using social media. Since the exact population size could not be determined, a non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling, was used. Purposive sampling was chosen because this study specifically targets respondents who meet predetermined criteria and are considered capable of providing relevant information regarding the research variables. The sampling criteria included respondents who (1) belong to Generation Z, (2) are domiciled in Medan, and (3) actively use social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter/X. Based on these criteria, 97 valid respondents participated in this study.

Primary data were collected using a structured online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of statements measuring Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility, and Purchase Intention. All measurement items were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The five-point Likert scale was adopted because it is widely recognized as an effective instrument for measuring respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions in marketing and social science research. Social Media Marketing (X1): Measured through a 10-item questionnaire covering 5 dimensions of (Kim & Ko, 2021) (Entertainment [SMM1-SMM2], Interaction [SMM3-SMM4], Trendiness [SMM5-SMM6], Customization [SMM7-SMM8], and e-WOM [SMM9-SMM10]). Influencer Credibility (X2): Measured through a 6-item questionnaire covering 3 dimensions of (Ohanian, 1990) (Expertise [IC1-IC2], Trustworthiness [IC3-IC4], and Attractiveness [IC5-IC6]). Purchase Intention (Y): Measured through an 8-item questionnaire covering 4

indicators of Ferdinand (2006) (Transactional Intention [PI1-PI2], Referential Intention [PI3-PI4], Preferential Intention [PI5-PI6], and Explorative Intention [PI7-PI8]). Social Media Marketing variables are measured using the dimensions proposed by (Kim & Ko, 2012), namely entertainment, interaction, trends, customization, and electronic word-of-mouth. Influencer credibility is measured based on dimensions developed by (Ohanian, 1990), including expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Meanwhile, Purchase Intention is measured using original indicators developed by (Dodds et al., 1991).

3.1. Respondent Characteristics

Before testing the proposed hypotheses, the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement items. Furthermore, classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the required statistical assumptions. Multiple linear regression analysis was used because this study examined the influence of two independent variables on one dependent variable. Partial effects were examined using the t-test, while simultaneous effects were assessed using the F-test. The explanatory power of the regression model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2). All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25.

Table 1. Sample Criteria (N = 97)

Measurement	N	%
Gender		
Man	47	48.5
Woman	50	51.5
Age (years)		
17 – 19	10	10.3
20 – 22	36	37.1
23 – 27	51	52.6
Most Used Social Media Platforms		
TikTok	52	53.6
Instagram	37	38.1
Facebook	4	4.1
YouTube	3	3.1
Twitter/X	1	1
Frequency of Social Media Use per Day		
< 1 jam	5	5.2
1 – 3 jams	31	32
3 – 5 hours	47	48.5
> 5 jams	14	14.4

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in this study. A total of 97 valid respondents who met the predetermined sampling criteria were included in the analysis. Based on gender, the respondents were relatively balanced, with 50 females (51.5%) and 47 males (48.5%). Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents were aged 23–27 (52.6%), followed by those aged 20–22 (37.1%), while respondents aged 17–19 accounted for 10.3% of the sample. This distribution indicates that the sample is dominated by respondents in the upper age range of Generation Z. Regarding social media usage, TikTok was identified as the most frequently used platform (53.6%), followed by Instagram (38.1%), while Facebook (4.1%), YouTube (3.1%), and Twitter/X (1.0%) were only used by a small proportion of respondents. In terms of daily social media usage, nearly half of respondents (48.5%) reported spending 3–5 hours per day on social media, followed by 32.0% who spent 1–3 hours, 14.4% who spent more than 5 hours, and 5.2% who spent less than an hour. Overall, these demographic characteristics indicate that respondents represent active social media users within the Generation Z segment in Medan. Therefore, this sample is considered appropriate for examining the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intentions.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The results and discussion section presents the findings of an empirical analysis conducted to examine the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan. The analysis begins with an evaluation of the research instrument through validity and reliability testing to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement items. Next, multiple linear regression analysis is used to test the proposed hypotheses, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to previous studies and relevant theories.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variables	The amount of goods	Range of r values	r table	Results
Social Media Marketing (X1)	10	0.784–0.888	1996	Legitimate
Influencer Credibility (X2)	6	0.845–0.899	1996	Legitimate
Purchase Intention (Y)	8	0.756–0.895	1996	Legitimate

Validity testing was conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation method to determine whether each questionnaire item was able to measure the intended construct. Based on the test results presented in Table 2, all questionnaire items showed correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value of 0.1996 ($n = 97$). The correlation coefficient for the Social Media Marketing variable ranged from 0.784 to 0.888, while for Influencer Credibility it ranged from 0.845 to 0.899. The Purchase Intention variable showed a correlation coefficient ranging from 0.756 to 0.895. Since all calculated correlation coefficients are greater than the critical value, all measurement items are declared valid and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variables	The amount of goods	Cronbach's alpha	Threshold	Results
Social Media Marketing (X1)	10	0.965	0.70	Reliable
Influencer Credibility (X2)	6	0.962	0.70	Reliable
Purchase Intention (Y)	8	0.956	0.70	Reliable

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement instruments. As presented in Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha values for Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility, and Purchase Intention were 0.965, 0.962, and 0.956, respectively. These values are significantly higher than the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency. Therefore, all measurement instruments used in this study are considered reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

a. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of social media marketing and influencer credibility on purchase intention among Generation Z in Medan. This analysis aimed to determine the direction and magnitude of the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The regression results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficient ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T	Signature
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2,502	1,225		2,042	0.044

Social Media Marketing	.307	0.050	.415	6,184	0,000
Influencer Credibility	0.699	0.085	0.552	8,218	0,000

Based on Table 4, the multiple linear regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$PI = 2.502 + 0.307(SMM) + 0.699(IC)$$

The regression equation shows that Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility have positive coefficients, indicating that increases in these variables are associated with higher Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan. The constant value of 2.502 indicates the baseline level of Purchase Intention when the independent variables are assumed constant. The regression coefficient of Social Media Marketing (0.307) indicates that every one-unit increase in Social Media Marketing is associated with a 0.307-unit increase in Purchase Intention, assuming other variables remain constant. The regression coefficient of Influencer Credibility (0.699) indicates that every one-unit increase in Influencer Credibility increases Purchase Intention by 0.699 units, assuming other variables remain constant. Compared to Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility has a larger regression coefficient, indicating a stronger contribution to Purchase Intention in this study.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

Hypothesis	Connection	B	t value	Signature.	Decision
H1	Social Media Marketing → Purchase Intent	0.307	6,184	0.000	Supported
H2	Influencer Credibility → Purchase Intention	0.699	8,218	0.000	Supported

b. The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention (H1)

Table 5 shows that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention. The calculated t-value is 6.184, which is statistically significant with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05). Therefore, H1 is accepted, which indicates that better social media marketing activities significantly increase the purchase intention of Generation Z in Medan. This finding indicates that engaging, interactive, and informative social media content encourages consumers to develop a stronger intention to purchase products promoted through social media platforms.

c. The Influence of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention (H2)

Table 5 also shows that Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention. The calculated t-value of 8.218 with a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05) confirms that H2 is accepted. This result implies that consumers are more likely to intend to purchase products recommended by influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and attractive.

Table 6. ANOVA Results

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Signature.
Regression	3301.189	2	1650,594	235,996	0.000 ^b
Remainder	657,450	94	6,994	-	-
Total	3958.639	96	-	-	-

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA), which was conducted to test the simultaneous influence of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention. The regression model produced an F-value of 235.996 with a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, H3 is supported, which indicates that Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan. These findings suggest that a combination of effective social media marketing strategies and credible influencers plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchase intentions. Together, these two variables contribute significantly to explaining purchasing behavior among Generation Z in Medan.

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Squared	Standard Error of Estimate
1	0.913	0.834	0.830	2.64465

Table 7 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2), which indicates the explanatory power of the regression model. The analysis shows an R^2 value of 0.913, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the independent variables (Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility) and the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). Furthermore, the R^2 value of 0.834 indicates that 83.4% of the variation in Purchase Intention can be explained by Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility. The remaining 16.6% is explained by other variables not included in this research model. Furthermore, the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.830 confirms that the regression model has strong explanatory power even after adjusting for the number of predictors used in the analysis. Therefore, the proposed regression model is considered appropriate to explain Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan.

4.2. Discussion

a. The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

The findings of this study indicate that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan, thus supporting H1. The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that Social Media Marketing has a regression coefficient of 0.30, a t-value of 6.184, and a significance value of 0.000, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. These findings indicate that an effective social media marketing strategy contributes to increasing consumer intention to purchase a product. Therefore, the first hypothesis is supported. These results align with the theoretical foundation of (Kim & Ko, 2021) who stated that the effectiveness of social media marketing is determined by the integration of five dimensions: entertainment, interaction, contemporary, personalization, and e-WOM. For Generation Z in Medan City, who spend an average of 3–5 hours a day on TikTok and Instagram, aesthetically pleasing, fast-paced, and entertaining social media content serves as a primary cognitive validator. These dimensions enable companies to build closer relationships with consumers by delivering engaging content, facilitating two-way communication, and providing information tailored to consumer interests. For Generation Z, who are highly active on digital platforms, these characteristics make social media an effective medium for influencing purchasing decisions.

Interactive features such as quick comment replies, story polls, and live streaming have been shown to build emotional engagement and closeness (interaction) between brands and consumers. This study reinforces previous empirical findings by (Erwin et al., 2023), (Ismael et al., 2025), and (Yadav & Rahman, 2018), as well as the recent publication in (Rusdian et al., 2024), which emphasizes that marketers who are able to personalize content (customization) and consistently follow viral trends (trendiness) can significantly trigger exploratory and transactional interests of young consumers in emerging markets. This finding also aligns with previous research that reported that social media marketing has a positive effect on purchase intentions. Research by (Yadav & Rahman, 2018) It was found that effective social media marketing activities significantly increased consumer purchase intentions by increasing engagement and perceived value. Similarly, (Maharani & Aruan, 2025) Reports show that interactive and informative social media content drives stronger purchase intentions by improving consumer perceptions of products and brands. These studies support the argument that social media marketing has become a crucial marketing tool for influencing consumer behavior in the digital age. From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that businesses targeting Generation Z should prioritize developing creative, interactive, and consumer-oriented social media content. Marketing strategies that encourage consumer participation, provide relevant information, and stimulate electronic word-of-mouth can strengthen consumer engagement and increase purchase intentions. Therefore, companies must continuously optimize their social media presence to remain competitive in today's digital marketplace.

b. The Influence of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention

The findings of this study revealed that Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan, thus supporting H2. The results of the regression analysis show that Influencer Credibility has a regression coefficient of 0.699, a t-value of 8.218, and a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. These findings indicate that consumers are more likely to develop purchase intention when product recommendations are delivered by influencers who are considered credible. Compared to Social Media Marketing, Influencer Credibility shows a

larger regression coefficient, indicating that it has a stronger influence on Purchase Intention in this study. dominant influence of the Influencer Credibility regression coefficient (0.699) compared to Social Media Marketing (0.307) explains that personal-based recommendations are far more effective in mitigating perceived risk than official company accounts. This finding is consistent with studies by (S. Lim & Keni, 2025; Marklen et al., 2025), and the (Ratnawati et al., 2025) research, which found that parasocial interactions and source credibility are the most effective triggers for purchase intention conversion in the Gen Z segment. These results support the Source Credibility Theory proposed by (Ohanian, 1990), which states that the effectiveness of a recommender depends on three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Consumers are generally more willing to trust recommendations from influencers who possess relevant knowledge, demonstrate honesty, and maintain an attractive public image. In the context of social media, influencer credibility reduces consumer uncertainty about products and increases their confidence in making purchasing decisions.

These results are also consistent with previous empirical studies that found a positive relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intention. (S. Lim & Keni, 2025) reported that influencers with high credibility significantly increased consumer trust and purchase intention by providing authentic and reliable product recommendations. Similarly, (Ananda & Darma, 2026) found that influencer credibility positively influenced consumer purchase intention because credible influencers were perceived as reliable sources of information and were able to shape favorable consumer attitudes towards the promoted products. These findings strengthen the argument that influencer credibility plays a crucial role in digital marketing strategies, particularly among Generation Z consumers who often rely on social media influencers when evaluating products. Generation Z in Medan City acts as savvy consumers who are able to detect promotional manipulation; they place high trust in influencers who provide honest reviews, transparently explain product advantages and disadvantages, and have proven competence in their field (e.g., skincare enthusiasts or tech reviewers) (Ananda & Darma, 2026; Suryati et al., 2024). From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that companies should carefully select influencers who not only have a large following but also a high level of credibility in terms of expertise, trustworthiness, and authenticity. Collaborating with credible influencers can strengthen consumer trust in the promoted product, improve brand perception, and ultimately increase purchase intention. Therefore, influencer selection should prioritize credibility and audience relevance over mere popularity to maximize marketing effectiveness.

c. The Simultaneous Effect of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention

The results of this study indicate that Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan. Thus supporting H3. Based on the ANOVA test, the regression model produces an F value of 235.996 with a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This finding confirms that the proposed regression model is statistically significant, indicating that the two independent variables jointly influence consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination analysis shows an R Square value of 0.834, which indicates that 83.4% of the variation in Purchase Intention can be explained by Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility. The remaining 16.6% is explained by other variables not included in this study, such as brand image, product quality, perceived value, electronic word-of-mouth, price perception, or consumer lifestyle. The high coefficient of determination indicates that the proposed model has strong explanatory power in predicting Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan.

These findings suggest that social media marketing and influencer credibility complement each other in influencing consumer behavior. Effective social media marketing enables companies to deliver engaging, interactive, and relevant content that captures consumers' attention, while credible influencers strengthen consumer trust in the products they promote. When brands leverage interactive social media marketing strategies and simultaneously partner with trusted influencers, the barrier of consumer doubt breaks down, triggering a significant surge in purchase intent among Generation Z in Medan. Consequently, integrating engaging social media content with credible influencer endorsements creates a more persuasive marketing communication strategy, ultimately driving higher purchase intent. This finding is consistent with the digital marketing framework proposed by (Kim & Ko, 2012), which emphasizes the strategic role of social media marketing in increasing consumer engagement and purchasing behavior. Similarly, this finding supports (Ohanian, 1990) The Credibility Theory explains that the effectiveness of influencer endorsements depends on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. When these two concepts are applied together, they reinforce each other in shaping consumer purchase intentions, particularly among Generation Z, who actively consume information and interact with brands through social media platforms.

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that companies should not rely solely on engaging social media content or influencer endorsements. Instead, businesses should integrate both strategies by producing engaging digital content and collaborating with influencers who possess high credibility and are relevant to their target audience. This integrated marketing approach is expected to strengthen consumer trust, increase brand engagement, and ultimately increase purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers.

V. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the influence of Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention among Generation Z in Medan. The results show that both independent variables have a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. Partial regression analysis shows that Social Media Marketing significantly influences Purchase Intention, indicating that engaging, interactive, and informative social media activities can increase consumer intention to purchase a product. Similarly, Influencer Credibility has a positive and significant partial influence on Purchase Intention of Generation Z in Medan City, with a more dominant influence than social media marketing variables. Honesty, expertise, and influencer attractiveness are the main determining factors in building consumer trust. Furthermore, simultaneous analysis confirmed that Social Media Marketing and Influencer Credibility together have a significant influence on Purchase Intention. The coefficient of determination shows that 83.4% of the variation in Purchase Intention can be explained by these two variables, indicating that the proposed research model has strong explanatory power. This finding emphasizes that integrating effective social media marketing strategies with collaborations involving credible influencers can substantially strengthen consumer purchase intention, especially among Generation Z who actively interact with digital platforms.

From a practical perspective, this study provides useful insights for companies and digital marketers in designing effective marketing strategies. For business practitioners and digital marketers targeting the Generation Z market in Medan and its surrounding areas, it is recommended to: first, shift the focus of influencer selection from merely quantitative measures (number of followers) to qualitative ones, namely credibility, field expertise, and authenticity of reviews. Businesses are encouraged to create interactive and relevant social media content, while carefully selecting influencers with high credibility and aligned with their target market. This integrated strategy is expected to increase consumer trust, strengthen brand engagement, and increase purchase intent. Second, optimize marketing budget allocation on TikTok and Instagram Reels channels by focusing on entertainment content and responsive two-way communication (interaction). Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted only among Generation Z consumers in Medan, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions or demographic groups. Second, this study only examined two independent variables, while other factors such as brand image, perceived value, electronic word-of-mouth, product quality, price perception, and consumer lifestyle can also influence purchase intentions. Therefore, future research is recommended to implement experimental research designs or in-depth qualitative tests (mixed-methods) to isolate real causal relationships and explore consumer psychological dynamics beyond self-reported questionnaire data.

Addition of Mediating and Moderating Variables: Integrating mediating variables such as Brand Equity, Customer Trust, or Parasocial Interaction, as well as moderating variables such as Perceived Price or Product Involvement to explain the remaining 16.6% of the variance in purchase intention that is not explained in this model. **Addition of Mediating and Moderating Variables:** Integrating mediating variables such as Brand Equity, Customer Trust, or Parasocial Interaction, as well as moderating variables such as Perceived Price or Product Involvement to explain the remaining 16.6% of the variance in purchase intention that is not explained in this model.

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