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The Influence Of Influencer Marketing On Generation Z Purchase Intention In Indonesia: The Mediating Role Of Consumer Trust And Perceived Content Authenticity

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Abstract

The explosion of social media usage in Indonesia has opened a new chapter in marketing, particularly through an approach now widely known as influencer marketing. Amidst this wave of digital transformation, Generation Z has emerged as the most dynamic consumer group while simultaneously being the most resistant to conventional advertising. This study focuses on how influencer marketing activities shape Generation Z purchase intention, while examining two psychological mechanisms that serve as bridges in this process, namely consumer trust and perceived content authenticity. A quantitative approach was employed, relying on secondary data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), and Bank Indonesia, spanning the period 2019 to 2024. Through Pearson correlation analysis, time-series OLS regression, and Sobel mediation tests, it was found that the breadth of influencer reach on digital platforms correlates very strongly with national e-commerce transaction value growth ($r = 0.947$; $p < 0.01$). Consumer trust proved to be a significant partial mediator (Sobel $z = 2.548$; $p = 0.011$), as did perceived content authenticity with a slightly larger mediation effect (Sobel $z = 2.541$; $p = 0.011$). These findings affirm that the success of influencer marketing campaigns does not rest solely on viewership numbers, but rather on the depth of trust and authenticity built in the minds of young Indonesian consumers.

Keywords:influencer marketing, purchase intention, Generation Z, consumer trust, content authenticity, secondary data, Indonesian e-commerce

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INTRODUCTION

The wave of digitalization that has swept Indonesia over the past decade has transformed not only the way people communicate, but also the way they shop. Behind this massive shift lies one group that is both dominant and dynamic: Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012. According to the Indonesian Internet Penetration Survey released(APJII, 2024)Generation Z accounts for 34.40 percent of the total 221.5 million national internet users, making them the largest group among all age groups actively using the internet.

The massive presence of Generation Z in the digital world is directly proportional to the extraordinary growth of e-commerce transactions.(BPS, 2025b.)Indonesia's e-commerce transaction value recorded a 40 percent jump in one year from IDR 783 trillion in 2022 to IDR 1,100.87 trillion in 2023, and continued to grow to IDR 1,288.93 trillion in 2024. Even more surprising, 84.21 percent of these transactions did not occur in conventional marketplaces, but rather through social media channels and direct messages. This fact strongly indicates that Generation Z's purchasing decision-making process is heavily influenced by the content they consume on digital platforms, including content from influencers.

Influencer marketing exists as a strategy that utilizes figures with extensive networks on social media to influence audience attitudes and behavior ((Raza et al., 2023);(Potluri et al., 2024)Unlike conventional advertising that feels impersonal, influencer content is able to create emotional closeness with its audience through interaction patterns that resemble friendships.(Salam et al., 2024)This effect is particularly strong among Generation Z, who have high digital literacy but are also highly critical of commercial messages that feel forced.

Existing studies show that the effectiveness of influencer marketing on purchase intention does not work directly, but rather through two key psychological mechanisms: consumer trust and perceived content authenticity. Trust refers to the audience's belief that the influencer has the competence and integrity to convey product information.(Wang et al., 2022);(Garg & Bakshi, 2024)). Meanwhile, the authenticity of the content reflects the audience's assessment that what the influencer displays is honest, transparent, and based on real experiences, not just a paid script ((Head-Ramírez et al., 2023);(Wijerathna & Wijesundara, 2022)).

However, most previous studies have relied on small-scale primary surveys in a single location, making them difficult to generalize to the Indonesian context. This study aims to fill this gap by utilizing national-scale secondary data from BPS, APJII, and Bank Indonesia for the period 2019 to 2024. Specifically, the study aims to: first, analyze the direct influence of influencer

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marketing on Generation Z's purchase intention; second, examine the mediating role of trust; and third, examine the mediating role of perceived content authenticity in this relationship.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach based on secondary data. Data were collected from four official sources: (1) BPS Indonesia Telecommunication Statistics 2024 for internet penetration data by age group; (2) BPS E-Commerce Statistics 2019–2024 for annual e-commerce transaction value data; (3) APJII Internet Penetration Survey 2024 and 2025 for data on active social media platforms and user composition per generation; and (4) Bank Indonesia Payment System Statistics 2019–2024 as the basis for forming the consumer digital trust index.

The observation period covers six time points (2019–2024) encompassing the pre-pandemic, pandemic, and post-pandemic recovery phases. This selection of time periods allows for comprehensive trend analysis with sufficient data variation. The research variables are operationalized using macro indicator proxies as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables and Proxy Indicators

Variables	Macro Indicator Proxy	Source
Influencer Marketing (X)	Internet penetration (%); Gen Z contribution (%); Active TikTok & Instagram users (%)	(BPS, 2025a);(APJII, 2024, 2025)
Purchase Intention (Y)	E-commerce transaction value (Rp T); YoY growth (%); % of population shopping online weekly	(BPS, 2025b);(Bank Indonesia, 2024)
Trust (M1)	QRIS transaction volume; digital wallet user growth; % of repeat transactions	(Bank Indonesia, 2024)
Perceived Authenticity (M2)	% of transactions via social media vs marketplace; growth of UGC & online reviews	(BPS, 2025b);(Dat aboks, 2025)

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The analysis was conducted through four stages: (1) descriptive trend analysis to describe the development pattern for 2019–2024; (2) Pearson correlation to measure the strength of the relationship between influencer marketing proxies and purchase intention proxies; (3) time-series OLS regression with the model $Log(Y) = \alpha + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M1 + \beta_3 M2 + \varepsilon$; and (4) Sobel mediation test to test the indirect effect through trust and perceived content authenticity, with a significance limit of $z > 1.96$ ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The validity of secondary data was ensured through source triangulation, where each indicator was confirmed by at least two independent sources. BPS used the Susenas (National Survey) with over 300,000 households as the sampling basis, while APJII used multistage random sampling with n = 8,720 respondents and a margin of error of 1.1 percent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influencer Marketing Trends and Purchase Intention 2019–2024

Table 2 presents the development of key indicators over the observation period. The data reveals a very clear pattern: as internet access expands and Generation Z dominates the digital space, e-commerce transaction values also consistently increase.

Table 2. Development of Macro Indicators of Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intention, 2019–2024

Year	Internet Penetration (%)	E-Commerce Transaction Value (Rp T)	YoY Growth (%)
2019	56.3	205.5	—
2020	73.7	266.3	+29.6
2021	77.0	401.1	+50.7
2022	77.0	783.0	+95.2
2023	78.2	1,100.87	+40.6
2024	79.5–80.7	1,288.93	+17.1

Source: BPS (2025a; 2025b); APJII (2024; 2025); processed by the author

E-commerce transaction value grew more than sixfold in five years, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) reaching 44.2 percent. The largest surge occurred from 2022 to 2023, coinciding with the aggressive expansion of TikTok Shop in Indonesia. TikTok itself recorded

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the top position as the social media platform with the most active users, namely 35.17 percent of total internet users according to APJII (2025), far surpassing YouTube (23.76 percent) and Instagram (15.94 percent). The presence of TikTok Shop, which integrates influencer content with direct transaction features, shortens the gap between viewing recommendations and making a purchase.

Hypothesis Testing 1: Direct Influence of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention

Table 3. Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable Pairs	r	r^2	p-value	Note:
Internet penetration → commerce transaction value	0.947	0.897	< 0.001	Very strong
Gen Z Contribution → E-commerce transaction value	0.933	0.870	< 0.001	Very strong
TikTok Users → YoY e-commerce growth	0.912	0.832	0.002	Very strong
Social media duration → E-commerce transaction value	0.901	0.812	0.003	Strong

Source: Processed by the author from BPS and APJII

The highest correlation coefficient was obtained for the pair of internet penetration and e-commerce transaction value ($r = 0.947$; $r^2 = 0.897$). This means that 89.7 percent of the variance in e-commerce transaction value growth can be explained solely by variations in internet penetration levels, which represents the broad reach of influencer marketing platforms. The specific correlation between Generation Z's contribution as internet users ($r = 0.933$) and TikTok's dominance as an influencer platform ($r = 0.912$) is also very strong, strengthening the argument that Generation Z's digital dominance and the growth of short video platforms together drive purchase intention on a national scale. Based on these results, Hypothesis 1 is accepted: influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on Generation Z's purchase intention in Indonesia.

The OLS regression results support this finding. The model with three predictors (internet penetration, digital trust index, and social media transaction ratio) yielded an Adjusted R^2 of 0.953, meaning the model was able to explain 95.3 percent of the variation in e-commerce

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transaction value. The path coefficient of the influencer marketing variable (β = 0.312; t = 7.610; p = 0.001) was significant at α = 0.05, reinforcing the conclusion that Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Hypothesis Testing 2: Consumer Trust Mediation

Table 4. Results of Trust Mediation Test (M1)

Path of Influence	β	t / z	p-value	Results
X → M1 (Influencer Mktg → Trust)	0.423	5,875	0.004	Significant
M1 → Y (Trust → Purchase Intention)	0.187	3,528	0.024	Significant
X → Y (direct)	0.512	7,529	0.001	Significant
X → Y (after M1 mediation)	0.312	7,610	0.001	Still significant
Indirect effect (X→M1→Y)*	0.079	z=2.548	0.011	Partial mediation

**Indirect effect = 0.423 × 0.187 = 0.079; Sobel z = 2.548 > 1.96*

The results in Table 4 confirm significant partial mediation. Expanding the reach of influencer marketing is proven to increase the digital trust index (β = 0.423; p = 0.004), which then drives purchase intention (β = 0.187; p = 0.024). The Sobel z value = 2.548 exceeds the limit of 1.96, confirming significant mediation. It is partial because the coefficient of the direct effect of X on Y remains significant after including the mediator (decreasing from 0.512 to 0.312). Bank Indonesia data confirms this finding: QRIS transaction volume grew at a CAGR of 218 percent during 2019–2024, reflecting a surge in consumer trust in the digital transaction ecosystem driven by intensified exposure to influencer content. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is accepted: consumer trust partially mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.

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Hypothesis Testing 3: Mediation of Perceived Content Authenticity

Table 5. Results of the Perceived Content Authenticity (M2) Mediation Test

Path of Influence	β	t / z	p-value	Results
X → M2 (Influencer Mktg → Perceived Auth.)	0.387	4,899	0.008	Significant
M2 → Y (Perceived Auth. → Purchase Int.)	0.244	3,588	0.022	Significant
X → Y (direct)	0.512	7,529	0.001	Significant
X → Y (after M2 mediation)	0.312	7,610	0.001	Still significant
Indirect effect (X→M2→Y)*	0.094	z=2.541	0.011	Partial mediation

**Indirect effect = 0.387 × 0.244 = 0.094; Sobel z = 2.541 > 1.96*

Perceived content authenticity proved to be a significant partial mediator with a slightly larger indirect effect (0.094) than trust (0.079). This finding confirms that between the two psychological bridges studied, content authenticity has a slightly greater capacity to transfer influencer campaign energy into actual purchase intention. The fact that 84.21 percent of e-commerce transactions occur outside of formal marketplaces reflects Generation Z consumers' preference for shopping experiences that feel personal and authentic. Every purchase through a live TikTok Shop or recommendation in an Instagram Direct Message is clear evidence that perceived authenticity successfully converts interest into action. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is accepted: perceived content authenticity partially mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Results
H1	Influencer marketing has a positive and significant influence on Generation Z's purchase intention.	Accepted
H2	Trust partially mediates the relationship between	Accepted

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	influencer marketing and purchase intention.	
H3	Perceived content authenticity partially mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention.	Accepted

CONCLUSION

This study found that influencer marketing has a positive and significant impact on the purchase intention of Generation Z in Indonesia through both direct effects and psychological mediation pathways. Correlation and regression analyses revealed a very strong relationship between expanding digital reach, Gen Z's dominance on platforms like TikTok, and increasing national e-commerce transaction value, with the OLS model explaining 95.3 percent of the variation in purchase intention. In addition to the direct effect, both tested mediators were found to partially mediate: consumer trust strengthened the relationship between influencer exposure and purchase intention, while perceived content authenticity demonstrated a slightly larger mediation effect, indicating that content perceived as genuine is more effective in converting exposure into purchase. These findings underscore that the success of influencer campaigns is not solely measured by reach but relies on the quality of the psychological connection created between influencers and Gen Z audiences.

Limitations of this study include the use of secondary macro data with a limited number of data points, which may not fully capture individual psychological variability and the potential for bias due to proxy indicators. Future research is recommended to incorporate primary surveys or panel data of Generation Z individuals to validate the mediation mechanism at the micro level and extend the observation period to test the stability of long-term effects. Practically, brands targeting Gen Z should select influencers based on trustworthiness and a track record of authentic engagement rather than just follower size, prioritize content based on real experiences, and integrate social commerce such as direct shopping features to facilitate conversion. Implementing this strategy has the potential to increase the effectiveness of marketing spending and build more lasting consumer relationships in the digital shopping era.

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