



Influencer Attractiveness and Social Media Interactivity: The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust in Purchase Decisions

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ABSTRACT

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The rapid growth of TikTok has transformed digital marketing and increasingly shaped Generation Z's purchasing behavior. Influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity can influence consumer responses, but consumer trust may determine whether these marketing stimuli are translated into purchase decisions. This study examines the effects of influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity on consumer trust and purchase decisions, as well as the mediating role of consumer trust. A quantitative causal-associative approach was employed using data from 150 Generation Z respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results show that influencer attractiveness significantly affects consumer trust and purchase decisions, while social media interactivity also has significant positive effects on both variables. Consumer trust significantly influences purchase decisions and mediates the effects of both influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity on purchase decisions. The model explains 57.1% of the variance in consumer trust and 62.4% of the variance in purchase decisions. These findings highlight the importance of combining authentic influencer characteristics, meaningful interaction, and trust-building strategies in TikTok-based marketing.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally changed how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products, making social media an important environment for contemporary marketing. TikTok is particularly relevant because its short-video, live-streaming, and recommendation features enable brands and influencers to reach consumers through engaging content (Alkan & Ulas, 2023; Wu, 2026). This development matters because purchasing decisions

are increasingly shaped by digital information, social interaction, and perceived authenticity rather than traditional advertising alone. For Generation Z, frequent exposure to influencer content may affect how products are trusted and evaluated before purchase (Ao et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2023). The key issue is therefore not merely TikTok's growing reach, but whether digital marketing practices can generate sufficient consumer trust to translate exposure into purchasing decisions. Consequently, understanding the relationships among influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, trust, and purchase decisions is important for consumers, marketers, researchers, and society.

This study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, which explains how external marketing stimuli influence internal consumer states and behavioral responses. Influencer attractiveness represents a persuasive stimulus because physical appeal, familiarity, likability, and similarity can shape audience evaluations (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Ashraf et al., 2023). Social media interactivity represents another stimulus because reciprocal communication, immediate feedback, and participation can strengthen psychological involvement. Consumer trust functions as the organismic state because it reflects confidence in the influencer, brand, information, and transaction environment. Purchase decision represents the behavioral response resulting from these evaluations (Anapah et al., 2026; Ulum et al., 2025). Source Credibility Theory further explains why attractive and credible communicators can influence consumer perceptions, whereas Interactivity Theory explains how two-way communication affects engagement and relationship quality. Commitment-Trust Theory emphasizes trust as a foundation of relationship development, supporting its mediating role between marketing stimuli and purchase decisions.

The general problem is that high digital exposure does not necessarily result in effective purchasing decisions. Consumers may encounter attractive influencers and interactive TikTok content repeatedly, yet remain uncertain about product quality, information accuracy, promotional motives, or seller reliability (Wahyudin et al., 2025; Zahroh & Furqon, 2025). This uncertainty matters when commercial messages are embedded in entertainment-oriented content, where promotional and personal communication overlap. For Generation Z, repeated interaction may increase attention, but attention alone does not guarantee confidence or willingness to purchase (Migkos et al., 2025; Liu, 2025). Excessive promotion, inconsistent recommendations, limited responsiveness, or perceptions of inauthenticity may weaken trust despite strong engagement. This gap between exposure and purchase decision creates a

practical challenge for brands seeking sustainable digital relationships. Therefore, identifying whether attractiveness and interactivity operate through consumer trust is necessary to explain why some TikTok marketing efforts translate into decisions while others do not.

Previous research indicates that influencer characteristics can shape consumer responses, while social media interactivity can strengthen engagement and outcomes. Influencer marketing studies emphasize attractiveness, credibility, familiarity, similarity, and authenticity as determinants of consumer evaluations (Chen et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2024). Other research shows that interactive features, including live streaming, real-time comments, and user participation, can increase engagement and facilitate communication between consumers and sellers. However, much literature examines direct relationships, such as influencer characteristics affecting purchase intention or interactivity affecting engagement, without integrating both antecedents within one framework (Rachman et al., 2025; Ashraf et al., 2023). Research also focuses on intention rather than purchase decision and examines variables separately. These limitations obscure whether attractiveness and interactivity influence purchasing through a common mechanism. Consequently, consumer trust requires closer examination as a bridge connecting digital marketing stimuli with consumer decision-making. This integration matters for explaining purchasing behavior.

A further limitation concerns contextual and population differences. Findings from metropolitan markets or general social-media users may not fully explain purchasing behavior among Generation Z consumers in Pontianak, where digital consumption has developed rapidly (Melgarejo-Espinoza et al., 2025; Zhou & Baskaran, 2025). Studies also vary in how they conceptualize these variables, making an integrated explanation relevant. The present research positions consumer trust as a central mediating mechanism rather than treating it only as a direct predictor. This addresses a gap because attractiveness may create favorable impressions, while interactivity may create involvement, but both processes may require trust before becoming translated into purchasing decisions (Hasiana, 2024; Laksemi, 2024). By examining these relationships simultaneously, the study contributes a coherent explanation of TikTok consumer behavior. It also extends digital marketing research by connecting communicator characteristics, platform interaction, psychological trust, and purchase decision within a single empirical framework (Dahniar et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024).

This study integrates influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity as complementary digital marketing stimuli, with consumer trust positioned as the mechanism linking them to purchase decisions. The proposed model recognizes that TikTok consumption combines interpersonal persuasion

with technological interactivity. Its novelty also lies in focusing specifically on Generation Z consumers in Pontianak, a context less represented than larger Indonesian urban markets. This focus is important because local consumer environments may shape how digital communication, influencer relationships, and trust are interpreted. The study examines whether trust explains conversion of digital exposure and engagement into purchasing decisions, while also clarifying how these relationships operate among Generation Z consumers in Pontianak. Resolving this issue is important for marketers designing credible influencer campaigns and interactive experiences, while theoretically strengthening explanations of consumer decision-making in short-video social commerce. It therefore offers grounded evidence for future digital marketing research.

The research problem is whether influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity explain purchase decisions among Generation Z TikTok users in Pontianak through consumer trust. The proposed argument is that attractive influencers may create favorable perceptions and reduce psychological distance, while interactive communication may increase participation, responsiveness, and perceived relationship quality. These effects should strengthen trust when information, communicators, and interactions are perceived as credible and authentic. In turn, higher trust is expected to reduce uncertainty and facilitate purchase decisions. The study proposes that influencer attractiveness positively affects consumer trust and purchase decisions, social media interactivity positively affects consumer trust and purchase decisions, and consumer trust positively affects purchase decisions. It proposes that trust mediates the relationships between influencer attractiveness and purchase decisions and between social media interactivity and purchase decisions. These propositions guide empirical testing.

H1: Influencer attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust.

H2: Social media interactivity has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust.

H3: Consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

H4: Influencer attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

H5: Social media interactivity has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

H6: Consumer trust mediates the effect of influencer attractiveness on purchase decisions.

H7: Consumer trust mediates the effect of social media interactivity on purchase decisions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design with a causal-associative approach to examine the relationships among influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. The design was selected because the study aimed to empirically examine both direct and indirect effects among the variables through consumer trust as a mediating variable (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Ashraf et al., 2023). The study was conducted in Pontianak City, Indonesia, because the research focused on Generation Z consumers who actively use TikTok and engage with influencer-based marketing content. Pontianak provides a relevant urban context for examining digital consumer behavior because social media has become an important channel for product information and purchasing activities among younger consumers. The population consisted of Generation Z individuals residing in Pontianak who actively use TikTok and had purchased a product after viewing influencer content. Generation Z was defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012.

The sample was selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria relevant to the research objectives. Respondents were required to belong to Generation Z, reside in Pontianak, actively use TikTok, and have experience purchasing products after viewing influencer content on the platform. A minimum of 150 respondents was targeted to provide sufficient observations for structural model analysis. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Ao et al., 2023; Wijaya, 2023). The questionnaire items measured influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, consumer trust, and purchase decisions based on the operational definitions established for each construct. Before the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed and pre-tested to identify unclear statements and ensure that the instrument was understandable and appropriate for the target respondents.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The analysis consisted of two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. The measurement model was assessed to determine indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. The structural model was subsequently evaluated by examining path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), effect sizes, and statistical significance obtained through bootstrapping. Direct effects were tested to examine the relationships between influencer attractiveness, social media

interactivity, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. Indirect effects were also examined to determine whether consumer trust mediated the relationships between influencer attractiveness and purchase decisions and between social media interactivity and purchase decisions. The results were interpreted based on the statistical criteria and proposed hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 150 Generation Z respondents residing in Pontianak City who met the predetermined research criteria. The respondent characteristics were examined based on gender, age, employment status, and daily TikTok usage frequency. These characteristics provide a descriptive overview of the respondents included in the analysis.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Item	f	%
Gender	Male	66	44.0
	Female	84	56.0
	Total	150	100.0
Age	18–21	69	46.0
	22–24	52	34.7
	25–28	29	19.3
	Total	150	100.0
Status	Student	85	56.7
	Employed	65	43.3
	Total	150	100.0
Daily TikTok Usage	< 1 hour	40	26.7
	1–2 hours	48	32.0
	> 2 hours	62	41.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 1 shows that the respondents consisted of 66 males (44.0%) and 84 females (56.0%). In terms of age, respondents aged 18–21 years represented the largest group, with 69 respondents (46.0%), followed by those aged 22–24 years with 52 respondents (34.7%) and those aged 25–28 years with 29 respondents (19.3%). Regarding status, 85 respondents (56.7%) were students, while 65 respondents (43.3%) were employed. In terms of daily TikTok usage, 62 respondents (41.3%) reported using TikTok for more than two hours per day, followed by 48 respondents (32.0%) who used it for one to two hours and 40 respondents (26.7%) who used it for less than one hour. Thus, the largest proportion of respondents reported relatively frequent daily TikTok use.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated before testing the structural relationships among the constructs. The evaluation covered convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct reliability, and indicator-level collinearity. These assessments were conducted to determine whether the indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using the outer loading values of each indicator. The results of the measurement model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Indicator	Influencer Attractiveness	Social Media Interactivity	Consumer Trust	Purchase Decision
DT1	0.893			
DT2	0.840			
DT3	0.842			
DT4	0.861			
IM1		0.878		
IM2		0.882		
IM3		0.891		
Y1				0.923
Y2				0.882
Y3				0.889
Z1			0.907	
Z2			0.858	
Z3			0.894	

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 2 shows that all indicators have outer loading values ranging from 0.840 to 0.923. The influencer attractiveness indicators range from 0.840 to 0.893, social media interactivity indicators range from 0.878 to 0.891, consumer trust indicators range from 0.858 to 0.907, and purchase decision indicators range from 0.882 to 0.923. All loading values exceed 0.70, indicating that every indicator demonstrates a strong association with its respective construct. No indicator has a loading value below the specified threshold; therefore, all 13 indicators were retained in the measurement model.

The relationships among the latent constructs and the structural paths are visualized in the following model.

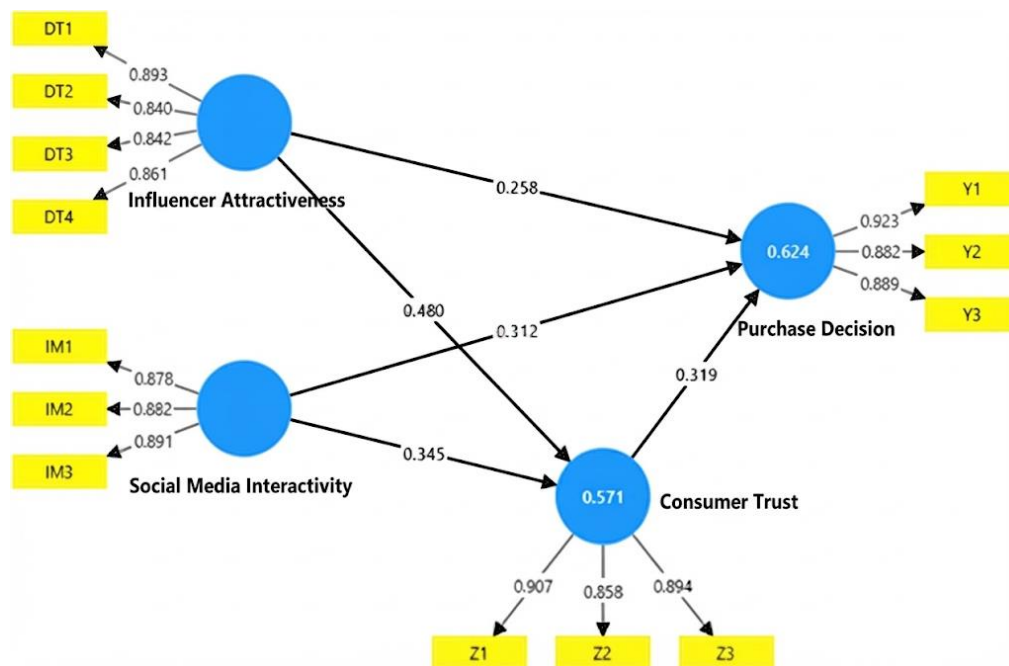


Figure 1. Structural Model
Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Figure 1 presents the structural model and the estimated path coefficients among the four constructs. Influencer attractiveness has a path coefficient of 0.480 toward consumer trust, while social media interactivity has a coefficient of 0.345 toward consumer trust. Consumer trust has a coefficient of 0.319 toward purchase decision. The direct path from influencer attractiveness to purchase decision is 0.258, while the direct path from social media interactivity to purchase decision is 0.312. The model also reports an R^2 value of 0.571 for consumer trust and 0.624 for purchase decision, indicating that the structural model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in both endogenous constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed to determine whether each construct was empirically distinct from the other constructs. The first assessment used the Fornell–Larcker criterion, followed by cross-loading and HTMT assessments.

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Variable	Influencer Attractiveness	Social Media Interactivity	Consumer Trust	Purchase Decision
Influencer Attractiveness	0.859			
Social Media Interactivity	0.669	0.883		
Consumer Trust	0.711	0.666	0.887	
Purchase Decision	0.694	0.697	0.711	0.898

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 3 shows that the square roots of AVE on the diagonal range from 0.859 to 0.898. Each diagonal value is higher than the corresponding correlations between that construct and the other constructs. The square root of AVE for influencer attractiveness is 0.859, compared with correlations of 0.669, 0.711, and 0.694 with the other constructs. Similarly, social media interactivity has a diagonal value of 0.883, consumer trust has 0.887, and purchase decision has 0.898. These values satisfy the Fornell–Larcker criterion and indicate adequate discriminant validity among the four constructs.

Table 4. Cross Loadings

Item	Influencer Attractiveness	Social Media Interactivity	Consumer Trust	Purchase Decision
DT1	0.893	0.607	0.660	0.658
DT2	0.840	0.592	0.610	0.576
DT3	0.842	0.535	0.571	0.578
DT4	0.861	0.562	0.597	0.567
IM1	0.538	0.878	0.553	0.592
IM2	0.608	0.882	0.573	0.635
IM3	0.622	0.891	0.636	0.620
Y1	0.623	0.603	0.619	0.923
Y2	0.651	0.622	0.677	0.882
Y3	0.594	0.652	0.616	0.889
Z1	0.613	0.540	0.907	0.550
Z2	0.617	0.613	0.858	0.603
Z3	0.655	0.612	0.894	0.721

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 4 shows that each indicator has its highest loading on the construct it is intended to measure. For example, the four influencer attractiveness indicators have their highest values under influencer attractiveness, while IM1–IM3 have their highest values under social media interactivity. Similarly, Y1–Y3 load highest on purchase decision, and Z1–Z3 load highest on consumer trust. Although several indicators show moderate correlations with other constructs, their primary loadings remain higher than their cross-loadings. This pattern confirms that the indicators demonstrate construct-specific measurement.

Table 5. Construct Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_A)	AVE
Influencer Attractiveness	0.882	0.885	0.738
Social Media Interactivity	0.859	0.861	0.780
Consumer Trust	0.864	0.869	0.786
Purchase Decision	0.880	0.880	0.807

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 5 indicates that all four constructs demonstrate adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.859 to 0.882, while Composite Reliability values range from 0.861 to 0.885. The AVE values range from 0.738 to 0.807. The highest AVE is observed for purchase decision (0.807), followed by consumer trust (0.786), social media interactivity (0.780), and influencer attractiveness (0.738). All constructs therefore exceed the required values for internal consistency and average variance extracted, confirming that the indicators consistently represent their respective latent constructs.

Collinearity Assessment

The next assessment examined the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the indicators to determine whether excessive collinearity was present within the measurement model.

Table 6. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Item	VIF
DT1	2.808
DT2	2.282
DT3	2.400
DT4	2.402
IM1	2.170
IM2	2.132
IM3	2.201
Y1	3.152
Y2	2.207
Y3	2.486
Z1	2.798
Z2	1.964
Z3	2.340

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 6 shows that the VIF values range from 1.964 to 3.152. The lowest value is observed for Z2 (1.964), while the highest value is observed for Y1 (3.152). All values remain below 5.00, indicating that none of the measurement indicators exhibits excessive collinearity. Thus, the indicators can be retained for subsequent structural model evaluation.

Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Influencer Attractiveness	Social Media Interactivity	Consumer Trust	Purchase Decision
Influencer Attractiveness				
Social Media Interactivity	0.766			
Consumer Trust	0.811	0.769		
Purchase Decision	0.785	0.801	0.807	

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 7 shows that all HTMT values range from 0.766 to 0.811. The highest HTMT value is 0.811, representing the relationship between influencer attractiveness and consumer trust. The lowest value is 0.766 between influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity. All values are below 0.90, indicating that the constructs remain empirically distinguishable from one another. These results provide additional evidence that influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, consumer trust, and purchase decision represent distinct constructs within the measurement model.

Structural Model Evaluation

After the measurement model satisfied the validity, reliability, and collinearity requirements, the structural model was evaluated to determine the explanatory and predictive performance of the proposed model. The evaluation included R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 , and hypothesis testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination was examined to assess the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by the predictors included in the model.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Consumer Trust	0.571	0.565
Purchase Decision	0.624	0.616

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 8 shows that consumer trust has an R^2 value of 0.571 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.565. This indicates that 57.1% of the variance in consumer trust is explained by influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity, while the remaining 42.9% is associated with factors outside the model. Purchase decision

has an R^2 value of 0.624 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.616, indicating that 62.4% of its variance is explained by influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, and consumer trust. The difference between the R^2 and adjusted R^2 values is relatively small for both endogenous constructs.

Effect Size (f^2)

The effect size analysis was conducted to determine the contribution of each predictor to the endogenous constructs when included in the structural model.

Table 9. Effect Size (f^2)

Variable	Consumer Trust	Purchase Decision
Influencer Attractiveness	0.297	0.076
Social Media Interactivity	0.154	0.124
Consumer Trust		0.116

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 9 shows that influencer attractiveness has an f^2 value of 0.297 for consumer trust, whereas social media interactivity has an f^2 value of 0.154. For purchase decision, influencer attractiveness has an f^2 value of 0.076, social media interactivity has 0.124, and consumer trust has 0.116. The largest effect size in the model is therefore associated with the relationship between influencer attractiveness and consumer trust. For purchase decision, the effect sizes of social media interactivity and consumer trust are higher than that of influencer attractiveness.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Predictive relevance was assessed using the blindfolding procedure. The resulting Q^2 values for the endogenous constructs are presented in Figure 3.

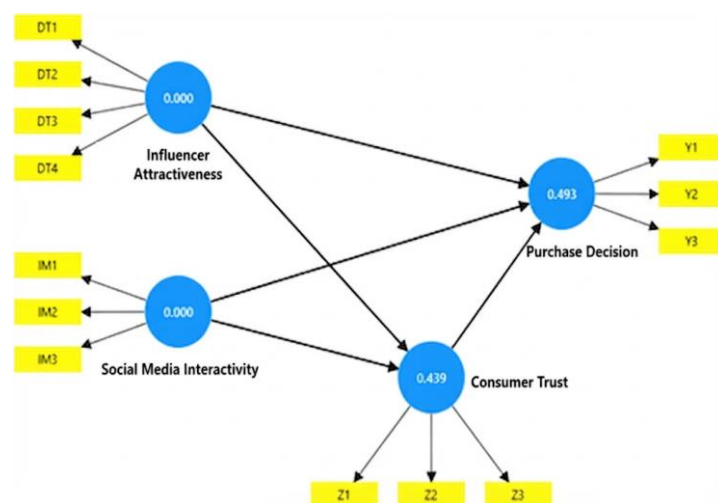


Figure 2. Predictive Relevance

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Figure 2 shows Q^2 values of 0.439 for consumer trust and 0.493 for purchase decision. Both values are greater than zero, indicating that the structural model has predictive relevance for the two endogenous constructs. The Q^2 value for purchase decision (0.493) is higher than that for consumer trust (0.439), indicating a higher predictive relevance value for purchase decision within the estimated model.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The direct and indirect effects were assessed using the original sample coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value.

Table 10. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis / Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
Influencer Attractiveness → Consumer Trust	0.480	4.924	0.000	Supported
Social Media Interactivity → Consumer Trust	0.345	3.551	0.000	Supported
Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	0.319	3.598	0.000	Supported
Influencer Attractiveness → Purchase Decision	0.258	3.327	0.001	Supported
Social Media Interactivity → Purchase Decision	0.312	3.611	0.000	Supported
Influencer Attractiveness → Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	0.153	2.847	0.004	Supported
Social Media Interactivity → Consumer Trust → Purchase Decision	0.110	2.342	0.019	Supported

Source: SmartPLS v.3 Output

Table 10 shows that all seven hypothesized relationships are statistically supported. Influencer attractiveness has a positive path coefficient of 0.480 toward consumer trust, with a t-statistic of 4.924 and a p-value of 0.000. Social media interactivity also has a positive relationship with consumer trust, with a coefficient of 0.345, a t-statistic of 3.551, and a p-value of 0.000. Consumer trust has a positive coefficient of 0.319 toward purchase decision, with a t-statistic of 3.598 and a p-value of 0.000.

The direct relationship between influencer attractiveness and purchase decision is positive, with a coefficient of 0.258, a t-statistic of 3.327, and a p-value of 0.001. Social media interactivity also demonstrates a positive direct relationship with purchase decision, with a coefficient of 0.312, a t-statistic of 3.611, and a p-value of 0.000.

The indirect effects through consumer trust are also statistically significant. The indirect effect of influencer attractiveness on purchase decision through consumer trust is 0.153, with a t-statistic of 2.847 and a p-value of 0.004. Meanwhile, the indirect effect of social media interactivity on purchase decision through consumer trust is 0.110, with a t-statistic of 2.342 and a p-value of 0.019. Thus, all seven proposed relationships meet the statistical significance criterion, including the two mediation relationships involving consumer trust.

Discussion

The findings show that influencer attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on both consumer trust and purchase decisions. This result is consistent with previous literature emphasizing that attractive, relatable, and credible influencers can strengthen favorable consumer responses (Triady et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2024). However, the present findings add a specific perspective because attractiveness produced a stronger effect on trust than social media interactivity, indicating that interpersonal perceptions remain important within highly interactive digital environments. The direct effect on purchase decisions also confirms that consumers may respond to positive impressions of influencers without relying exclusively on extended evaluation of product information. Theoretically, this finding supports the relevance of source characteristics in contemporary digital marketing. Practically, brands should prioritize influencer authenticity, relatability, communication style, and perceived similarity rather than selecting influencers solely according to audience size (Rajput & Gandhi, 2024; Poh et al., 2024).

Social media interactivity demonstrated positive and significant effects on consumer trust and purchase decisions, supporting earlier research that interactive communication can increase engagement and facilitate consumer responses. The finding is particularly relevant to TikTok because real-time comments, live streaming, and other interactive features allow consumers to communicate with sellers, influencers, and users during purchasing. Nevertheless, the effect of interactivity on trust was lower than the effect of influencer attractiveness, while its direct effect on purchase decisions remained substantial. This pattern suggests that technological interaction and interpersonal appeal operate through partly different mechanisms. Theoretically, the result extends digital consumer behavior research by showing that interactivity should not substitute for interpersonal credibility. Practically, brands should design interactive activities that provide responsive, informative, and authentic communication rather than relying on promotional intensity alone (Coutinho et al., 2023; Liu & Zhang, 2024).

Consumer trust was found to have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, confirming its central position in social commerce. The result indicates that trust can reduce uncertainty surrounding products, sellers, and promotional messages and facilitate the transition from interest to purchasing action. This finding is consistent with previous studies identifying trust as an important mechanism connecting digital marketing stimuli with consumer responses. At the same time, the present model provides a broader explanation because trust is positioned between two antecedents: influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity (Melgarejo-Espinoza et al., 2025; Poh et al., 2024). Theoretically, this supports trust-based explanations of digital purchasing behavior by demonstrating that consumer responses are shaped not only by exposure or interaction, but also by confidence formed through those experiences. Practically, brands should provide transparent information, consistent communication, credible demonstrations, and responsive interactions to strengthen trust before encouraging purchase decisions.

The mediation results provide an important contribution to understanding how influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity translate into purchase decisions. Both indirect effects through consumer trust were positive and significant, demonstrating that trust is a meaningful pathway linking marketing stimuli with consumer responses (Triady et al., 2025; Rajput & Gandhi, 2024). The indirect effect of influencer attractiveness was stronger than that of interactivity, indicating an asymmetric mediation pattern. This result differs from perspectives that place technological interaction at the center of digital relationship formation and demonstrates that interpersonal characteristics can remain more influential in establishing trust. Theoretically, the study contributes an integrated explanation by combining source attractiveness, platform interactivity, trust, and purchasing behavior within one structural model. Practically, TikTok marketing should pursue two objectives: developing credible and relatable influencer relationships while creating interactive experiences that facilitate engagement and purchasing opportunities.

The state of the art of this study lies in integrating influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity as simultaneous antecedents of consumer trust and purchase decisions among Generation Z in Pontianak. Previous research has frequently examined influencer characteristics, social media engagement, or trust separately, while fewer studies have examined their direct and mediated relationships within one model and within a secondary Indonesian city context. The present findings contribute evidence that both marketing stimuli matter, but they do not operate with identical strength across outcomes (Chen et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2025). Influencer attractiveness shows a stronger role in trust formation, whereas interactivity provides a meaningful direct route toward

purchase decisions. This distinction represents the study's main conceptual contribution (Coutinho et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024). It suggests that digital marketing effectiveness should be understood as a combination of interpersonal and technological mechanisms rather than as a purely platform-driven process. The findings broaden understanding of Generation Z consumer behavior in Indonesia and strengthen the contextual diversity of digital marketing research.

Overall, the findings contribute theoretical and practical insights into digital consumer behavior. The model demonstrates that influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity independently contribute to trust and purchase decisions, while trust provides an additional mechanism through which both variables influence purchasing outcomes. This contribution clarifies that digital marketing effectiveness depends not only on generating exposure or interaction but also on creating confidence in information and relationships surrounding a product (Alkan & Ulas, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). For businesses and marketers, the findings support coordinated strategies that select influencers based on relevance and authenticity, maintain meaningful two-way communication, and provide trustworthy purchasing information. For future research, the model can be extended by examining perceived risk, price sensitivity, product quality, brand awareness, or electronic word-of-mouth. Such extensions could clarify additional mechanisms influencing Generation Z purchasing behavior across different platforms and regions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that influencer attractiveness and social media interactivity significantly contribute to consumer trust and purchase decisions among Generation Z in Pontianak, while consumer trust also provides a significant mediating pathway between both marketing stimuli and purchasing decisions. The key lesson is that effective TikTok marketing depends not only on attracting attention or generating interaction but also on developing consumer confidence through credible, relatable, and meaningful digital communication. The study's main scholarly contribution lies in integrating influencer attractiveness, social media interactivity, consumer trust, and purchase decisions into a single empirical model, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of digital purchasing behavior among Generation Z. However, the cross-sectional design, geographically limited sample, and focus on four main variables restrict broader generalization; future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs, broader populations, and additional factors such as perceived risk, price sensitivity, product quality, and electronic word-of-mouth. Practically, the findings indicate that brands should combine authentic and relatable influencer selection with responsive, transparent, and interactive TikTok communication to strengthen trust and facilitate purchase decisions.

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