



## Affiliate marketing, live streaming, and impulsive buying: evidence from generation Z TikTok consumers

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### ABSTRACT

In the rapidly expanding digital economy, businesses increasingly rely on online promotional tools to attract and retain customers. This study investigated the effect of affiliate marketing on consumer purchase decisions. Grounded in consumer behavior and digital marketing theories, the research aimed to understand how affiliate marketing strategies influence purchasing behavior in online environments. A quantitative approach was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to online shoppers who had interacted with affiliate marketing content. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis to examine the relationship between affiliate marketing and purchase decision variables. The findings revealed that affiliate marketing had a significant and positive influence on consumer purchase decisions. The results indicated that effective affiliate strategies, such as personalized recommendations and transparent product reviews, increased consumer trust and purchase intention. Theoretically, the study contributed to the development of digital marketing literature by confirming the role of affiliate strategies in shaping online consumer decision-making. Practically, the results provided insights for marketers to design more credible and targeted affiliate campaigns that enhance consumer engagement and conversion rates. It was concluded that affiliate marketing served as an important promotional tool that shaped consumer decision-making patterns in the digital marketplace. Future studies were suggested to explore the role of influencer credibility and technological innovation in strengthening the impact of affiliate marketing.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed various aspects of daily life, including communication, education, entertainment, and especially consumer behavior. The

evolution from traditional offline shopping to online platforms has reshaped how individuals search for, evaluate, and purchase products. In Indonesia, internet penetration continues to grow rapidly, with 185 million users in January 2024, representing 66.5 percent of the total population (We Are Social, 2024). This growth has made the internet not merely a communication tool but a fundamental necessity that supports information access, interaction, and digital transactions.

Among the diverse digital platforms, social media plays a particularly dominant role in influencing modern consumption patterns. According to We Are Social (2024), 97.8 percent of Indonesian internet users actively engage with social media, where the boundaries between entertainment and commerce are increasingly blurred. Platforms such as TikTok have emerged not only as entertainment media but also as powerful e-commerce ecosystems. TikTok's features, such as TikTok Shop, Live Streaming, and the Affiliate Program, enable users to purchase products directly from videos or live sessions, integrating shopping seamlessly into their social interactions. Indonesia now ranks as the second-largest TikTok user base globally (DataIndonesia.id, 2024), highlighting the platform's cultural and economic influence.

The TikTok Affiliate Program, launched in 2021, allows creators to earn commissions by promoting products through content embedded with affiliate links. Likewise, live streaming has become a dynamic marketing tool where sellers and influencers interact directly with audiences, showcase products, and offer time-limited discounts that stimulate a sense of urgency and excitement leading to impulsive buying. Studies have shown that this environment, combining visual appeal, real-time interaction, and social proof, can trigger spontaneous purchasing decisions, particularly in fashion products where visual presentation is crucial (Obukhovich et al., 2024).

However, it remains unclear how affiliate marketing and live streaming simultaneously influence impulse buying among Generation Z users on TikTok. While affiliate marketing provides persuasive recommendations and credibility through commission-based endorsements, live streaming offers real-time social interaction and emotional engagement that may intensify impulsive tendencies. Understanding the synergy between these two mechanisms is essential for explaining how TikTok's algorithmic and interactive design drives unplanned purchases.

Generation Z is particularly relevant in this context, as this cohort demonstrates stronger digital engagement, emotional responsiveness, and susceptibility to social influence compared to previous generations. Growing up as digital natives, they exhibit a higher tendency toward impulsive buying when exposed to interactive and entertaining content. TikTok's immersive format, fast-paced trends, and peer-driven validation align closely with the consumption style of Generation Z, making them more prone to spontaneous purchases.

However, empirical findings on the influence of TikTok-based marketing strategies remain inconsistent. For instance, Tukidi et al. (2024) reported that TikTok affiliate content had no significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products, while Biila & Dhofir (2024) found that affiliate marketing content significantly influenced online impulse buying. Similarly, Kaniati et al. (2024) highlighted how fashion brands such as Jiniso and Swepo increased sales dramatically through TikTok Live Streaming, emphasizing its persuasive potential. These mixed results indicate a research gap, suggesting that the combined effects of affiliate marketing and live streaming on impulsive buying, particularly among Generation Z TikTok consumers, require deeper investigation.

Furthermore, the real-time interaction characteristic of live streaming is believed to strengthen the persuasive effect of affiliate recommendations. When streamers respond instantly to audience questions, demonstrate products live, or offer exclusive discounts during broadcasts, the sense of authenticity and urgency becomes amplified. This immediacy can reinforce trust in affiliate endorsements and intensify the emotional triggers that lead to impulsive buying decisions.

This study aims to examine the influence of affiliate marketing and live streaming on impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z users on TikTok, focusing on the fashion category,

which dominates content and engagement on the platform. By integrating these two marketing mechanisms, the research seeks to explain how digital content strategies shape spontaneous purchase intentions.

The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of the dual effect of affiliate marketing and live streaming as complementary triggers of impulsive buying within a social media commerce context. Unlike previous studies that analyzed these factors separately or focused on different product categories, this research provides empirical evidence on how interactive and commission-based digital marketing formats simultaneously influence consumer spontaneity in a single integrated platform. The findings are expected to offer theoretical contributions to digital marketing and consumer behavior literature, as well as practical insights for marketers in optimizing real-time engagement strategies on TikTok.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research employed a quantitative descriptive method (Prasetyo & Wiharso, 2025), to examine the influence of affiliate marketing and live streaming on impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z consumers on TikTok. This approach was chosen because it allows for systematic, numerical measurement of behavioral tendencies and relationships among variables, enabling the researcher to quantify the strength of influence between marketing factors and consumer impulsivity. The descriptive design was also appropriate for portraying current patterns of consumer behavior within real social media contexts without manipulating variables.

This method was chosen to systematically measure the relationships between the independent variables (Ghozali, 2018), namely affiliate marketing and live streaming, and the dependent variable, impulsive buying behavior. The study focused on users who had previously purchased women's fashion products through TikTok, a category identified as highly interactive and purchase-driven on the platform. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms to efficiently reach the target respondents. To ensure the authenticity of responses, the questionnaire included screening questions confirming that participants had made at least one fashion purchase via TikTok within the past three months and had directly interacted with affiliate content or live streaming sessions before purchasing.

The research population consisted of TikTok users in Indonesia who had experience purchasing women's fashion items through the platform. Since the total population was unknown, the sample size was determined using the indicator-based approach proposed by Hair et al. (2018) which suggests a range of 5 to 10 respondents per indicator. This study involved 21 indicators; therefore, the sample size was set at 105 respondents ( $20 \times 5$ ). The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, which allows the selection of respondents who meet specific criteria, in this case, active TikTok users who had made fashion purchases. Respondents were required to provide a screenshot or transaction confirmation (optional) to verify the authenticity of their purchasing experiences, thereby enhancing the credibility of the collected data.

Primary data were obtained from questionnaire responses designed with a five-point Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions and attitudes toward affiliate marketing, live streaming, and impulsive buying tendencies. Secondary data were gathered from journals, books, and prior studies related to social media marketing, live commerce, and online consumer behavior, which served as theoretical support and contextual grounding for the analysis. To reduce potential self-report bias, the survey used neutral wording, randomized question order, and anonymity to encourage honest responses.

Data analysis followed two main stages: descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and describe the distribution of variable scores. Inferential analysis involved the testing of validity and reliability using SPSS to ensure data accuracy and consistency. Validity was assessed through the Pearson product-moment

correlation test, ensuring that each indicator correlated significantly with its construct ( $r > 0.3$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a threshold of  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  to confirm internal consistency across indicators (Ghozali, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019).

Hypothesis testing was conducted through multiple linear regression to identify the effect of affiliate marketing and live streaming on impulsive buying behavior. Both independent variables were analyzed simultaneously in a single regression model to determine their combined and individual contributions to impulsive buying among Generation Z users. No mediating or moderating variables were included in the current model; however, the discussion section acknowledges the potential mediating role of trust in influencers or brand credibility for future research. In addition to significance testing, standardized beta coefficients ( $\beta$ ) and effect size (Cohen's  $f^2$ ) were calculated to evaluate the magnitude and relative strength of the relationships between variables.

The operationalization of variables is presented in the following table. Each construct was broken down into measurable dimensions and indicators derived from established theories to ensure content validity.

**Table 1.** Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
Affiliate Marketing ( $X_1$ ) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011)	Messenger	Credibility of affiliate promoters Trustworthiness of affiliate communication
	Message	Informative content about product benefits Persuasive appeal encouraging purchase
	Environment	Platform convenience during affiliate promotions Visual and aesthetic presentation quality
	Streamer Credibility	The streamer's expertise and trustworthiness in presenting products The perceived authenticity and attractiveness of the streamer The consistency of the streamer's product-related communication
Live Streaming ( $X_2$ ) (Song & Liu, 2021)	Media Richness	Clarity of product visuals and demonstrations Audio-visual interactivity quality
	Interaction	Real-time engagement with viewers Responsiveness to consumer comments and questions
	Spontaneity	Making unplanned purchases during TikTok sessions Quick decision-making without deep consideration
Impulsive Buying ( $Y$ ) (Obukhovich et al., 2024)	Urgency	Feeling pressure to buy before the offer ends Fear of missing out (FOMO) on exclusive deals
	Excitement	Enjoyment and emotional satisfaction from purchases Pleasure derived from impulsive buying experience
	Lack of Planning	Purchasing without prior intention Buying driven by momentary attraction rather than necessity

This systematic procedure, supported by previous research (Cronje, 2020; Fryer & Dinsmore, 2020), ensures methodological rigor and replicability. The design provides a robust and empirically grounded understanding of how affiliate marketing and live streaming simultaneously influence impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z consumers on TikTok.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

The validity test using the Pearson Product Moment correlation indicated that all 21 indicators of the variables Affiliate Marketing, Live Streaming, and Impulsive Buying were valid,

as the correlation coefficients ( $r$  count) exceeded the critical value of 0.1918 at  $\alpha = 0.05$  with  $df = 103$ . This finding confirms that each indicator accurately measured its intended construct (Ghozali, 2018). The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha further demonstrated that all variables were reliable (Ghozali, 2018), with coefficients exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.6. Specifically, the reliability coefficients were 0.888 for Affiliate Marketing, 0.940 for Live Streaming, and 0.918 for Impulsive Buying, indicating internal consistency and stability of the measurement items.

**Table 2.** Instrument Test Results

Variable	Indicator Code	r-value	Cronbach's Alpha
Affiliate Marketing ( $X_1$ )	A.M.1 - A.M.6	0.779 - 0.831	0.888
Live Streaming ( $X_2$ )	L.S.1 - L.S.7	0.797 - 0.897	0.940
Impulsive Buying ( $Y$ )	I.B.1 - I.B.8	0.611 - 0.868	0.918

The normality test, conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, produced a significance value of 0.200, which was greater than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This result suggests that the residuals were normally distributed, satisfying the assumption of normality (Ghozali, 2018).

**Table 3.** Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		Unstandardized Residual
N		105
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	0.00
	Std. Deviation	4.21
Most Extreme	Absolute	0.059
Differences	Positive	0.038
	Negative	-0.059
Test Statistic		0.059
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>

The multicollinearity test showed tolerance values of 0.308 and VIF values of 3.249 for both independent variables, which are below the critical threshold of 10. Thus, there was no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables (Ghozali, 2018).

**Table 4.** Multicollinearity Test Results

Variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Affiliate Marketing ( $X_1$ )	0.308	3.249
Live Streaming ( $X_2$ )	0.308	3.249

The heteroscedasticity test, assessed through both the scatterplot observation and the Glejser test, indicated that the model was free from heteroscedasticity. The significance values for Affiliate Marketing (0.082) and Live Streaming (0.916) were greater than 0.05, confirming homoscedasticity within the regression model (Ghozali, 2018).

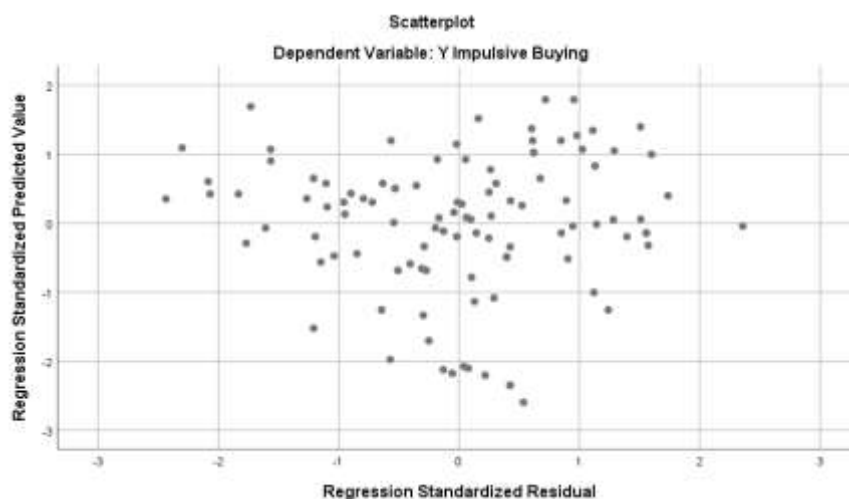


Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Visual inspection of the P-P plot and scatterplot further supported the absence of bias, as the residuals were randomly distributed around zero without forming any distinct pattern. This visual evidence confirms that all classical assumptions: normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were adequately met, validating the regression model’s robustness.

The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that both Affiliate Marketing (X1) and Live Streaming (X2) had significant positive effects on Impulsive Buying (Y). The regression equation obtained was  $Y = 1.870 + 0.440X_1 + 0.597X_2 + e$ . The coefficient for Affiliate Marketing was 0.440 with a t-value of 3.239 and a significance level of 0.002, indicating that more engaging and persuasive affiliate marketing strategies significantly increase impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z TikTok users. Similarly, the coefficient for Live Streaming was 0.597 with a t-value of 5.057 and a significance level of 0.000, suggesting that interactive and entertaining live-streaming sessions contribute more strongly to impulsive purchasing behavior on TikTok (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 5. The t-Test Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t-statistic	Sig.
(Constant)	1.870	1.681		1.112	0.269
Affiliate Marketing (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.440	0.136	0.333	3.239	0.002
Live Streaming (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.597	0.118	0.520	5.057	0.000

The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) was 0.662, indicating that 66.2% of the variation in Impulsive Buying could be explained by Affiliate Marketing and Live Streaming, while the remaining 33.8% was influenced by other factors not included in this study (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 6. The R<sup>2</sup> Test Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Information
818 <sup>a</sup>	0.669	0.662	4.248	Moderate

Table 7. The F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	3712.614	2	1856.307	102.88	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1840.434	102	18.043		
Total	5553.048	104			

The F-test result showed an F-value of 102.88 with a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This confirms that the regression model was significant, meaning that Affiliate Marketing and Live Streaming jointly have a significant effect on Impulsive Buying (Ghozali, 2018). Among the two predictors, Live Streaming had the higher standardized coefficient ( $\beta = 0.520$ ), identifying it as the more dominant variable influencing impulsive buying among Generation Z TikTok consumers.

## Discussion

The significant influence of affiliate marketing on impulsive buying among Generation Z TikTok consumers underscores the changing dynamics of digital consumption behavior. In affiliate marketing, trust and relatability between the messenger and the audience play crucial roles in stimulating unplanned purchases (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Affiliates who embody authenticity, share genuine product experiences, and maintain consistent communication foster a sense of credibility that encourages followers to act impulsively. Gen Z consumers, who are highly responsive to peer-like recommendations, often perceive affiliates as reliable sources of product information rather than traditional advertisers. This finding aligns with prior studies indicating that parasocial relationships between affiliates and followers enhance persuasion and reduce purchase hesitation (Lim et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the message element in affiliate marketing, particularly its persuasiveness, clarity, and storytelling appeal, serves as a psychological trigger that drives impulsive behavior. Short-form videos and personalized recommendations amplify the emotional appeal of the message, creating an immediate sense of desire and urgency to purchase (De Veirman et al., 2019). The digital environment of TikTok, characterized by algorithm-driven exposure and viral content, strengthens these effects by continuously presenting users with engaging affiliate promotions. The interactive nature of the platform enables real-time feedback and comment-based validation, which enhances consumers' confidence and accelerates impulsive buying (Agnihotri et al., 2023). Consequently, affiliate marketing not only shapes consumer perceptions of brand trust but also acts as a catalyst that transforms passive viewing into spontaneous purchasing.

The results also reveal that live streaming exerts a significant positive effect on impulsive buying, highlighting the power of real-time interaction and emotional engagement in digital commerce. The credibility of the streamer serves as the foundation for trust formation, where perceived authenticity, expertise, and attractiveness directly influence consumer purchasing intentions (Song & Liu, 2021; Yang et al., 2024). This study further found that trust in both the streamer and the endorsed brand significantly strengthened the influence of live streaming on impulsive buying. When viewers perceived the streamer as honest and the brand as reputable, they were more likely to interpret promotional messages as genuine recommendations rather than commercial persuasion, amplifying the likelihood of impulsive purchases.

The media richness dimension of live streaming further enhances these psychological effects. High-quality visuals, dynamic presentation styles, and the use of interactive features such as likes, gifts, and live chats contribute to sensory stimulation and emotional arousal. These immersive experiences heighten the perceived value of the product and create an illusion of scarcity, motivating viewers to make instant purchases (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Additionally, interactivity during live streaming, such as responding to audience questions or demonstrating products in real-time, strengthens consumer engagement and fosters a sense of participation, which has been shown to positively correlate with impulsive buying tendencies (Chen & Yang, 2023).

An additional finding of this study suggests that the duration of exposure to TikTok content may moderate the relationship between affiliate marketing, live streaming, and impulsive buying. Respondents who reported spending more than three hours per day on TikTok showed

stronger impulsive responses to live-streaming content, indicating that prolonged exposure increases emotional susceptibility and purchase likelihood.

While the results are largely consistent with prior studies, this research diverges from Tukidi et al. (2024) who found no significant influence of affiliate marketing on purchasing decisions. This discrepancy may be attributed to product category differences, as fashion items in this study tend to evoke higher emotional involvement and visual attraction compared to skincare products.

The combination of affiliate marketing and live streaming offers a synergistic effect that amplifies impulsive buying behavior among Gen Z TikTok users. Affiliate marketing establishes trust and emotional connection through credible recommendations, while live streaming transforms that trust into immediate purchasing action through dynamic and interactive experiences. The dominance of live streaming's effect suggests that real-time interactivity acts as a psychological accelerator, transforming latent interest from affiliate promotions into immediate purchasing impulses. This integration resonates strongly with Generation Z's preference for authenticity, instant gratification, and experiential consumption (Taj & Singh, 2024). As these consumers value both peer influence and entertainment-driven shopping, the convergence of affiliate marketing and live streaming creates a seamless pathway from product discovery to impulse-driven purchase.

These findings align with the broader literature on digital consumer psychology, emphasizing how social presence, emotional engagement, and real-time interaction are central to driving impulsive purchases (Huo et al., 2023). They also demonstrate that TikTok's algorithmic personalization and content virality intensify the impact of these marketing strategies by repeatedly exposing users to persuasive stimuli. Overall, this study confirms that while both affiliate marketing and live streaming effectively stimulate impulsive buying, live streaming particularly when combined with trust in influencers and prolonged platform engagement plays the more dominant and enduring role.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of affiliate marketing and live streaming on impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z TikTok consumers. The findings confirm that both affiliate marketing and live streaming have a significant positive effect on impulsive buying, aligning with the expectations stated in the introduction. Affiliate marketing, through credible messengers, persuasive messages, and an engaging digital environment, effectively stimulates unplanned purchasing by fostering trust and emotional connection with audiences. Likewise, live streaming enhances impulsive buying through the credibility of streamers, media richness, and interactivity, which collectively create immersive and emotionally charged shopping experiences.

The results of this study contribute to the understanding of how social commerce dynamics, particularly on platforms such as TikTok, shape impulsive buying among younger consumers. These findings reinforce the theoretical assumption that credibility, emotional engagement, and immediacy are central drivers of impulse-driven purchases in digital marketing contexts. In practice, brands can utilize these insights to develop more effective affiliate partnerships and live-streaming strategies that align with Gen Z's preferences for authenticity, entertainment, and real-time interaction.

However, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size of 105 respondents and the focus solely on TikTok users in Indonesia may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other demographic or geographic contexts. Additionally, relying exclusively on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias, and the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality over time. Future studies could address these limitations by expanding the sample across different regions and platforms such as

Instagram, YouTube, or Shopee Live, as well as employing longitudinal or experimental methods to strengthen causal interpretations.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the model by including mediating variables such as trust, emotional arousal, or perceived enjoyment to provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying impulsive buying in social commerce environments. Comparative studies across different social media platforms or generational cohorts could also offer broader insights into digital consumer behavior. Furthermore, exploring the long-term effects of affiliate marketing and live streaming on customer loyalty and satisfaction could enrich both academic and managerial perspectives, supporting the sustainable application of these strategies in digital marketing practices.

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