



Brand awareness as a mediator between influencer marketing and purchase decisions on tiktok

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the increasingly widespread utilization of influencer marketing, including product reviews, styling videos, and personal endorsements, in marketing fashion products belonging to East Jakarta MSMEs on TikTok. This study examines the effect of influencer marketing on brand awareness and purchase decisions toward East Jakarta fashion MSME products on TikTok, with brand awareness examined as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative explanatory approach, data were collected from 300 TikTok users in Indonesia who had previously encountered influencer promotions of East Jakarta fashion MSME products, selected through purposive sampling, and analyzed using SEM-PLS via SmartPLS. Results show that influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness (R-Square = 0.413) and, together with brand awareness, on purchase decisions (R-Square = 0.596). Brand awareness also significantly mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions, with an indirect effect of 0.250 (Sobel $z = 7.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.181, 0.319]), indicating partial mediation. The study is limited by its cross-sectional design and purposive sampling technique.

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INTRODUCTION

The swift growth of short-video platforms continues to reshape how Indonesian consumers discover and evaluate local products, with TikTok emerging as one of the most influential channels in this shift. Indonesia was recorded as the country with the largest TikTok user base in the world as of October 2025, reaching 180.11 million active users (Raka, 2025), with users spending an average of 44 hours and 54 minutes per month on the platform (Izzul, 2025). Such intensive usage has positioned TikTok as a strategic channel for businesses, driving the rise of short-video-based influencer marketing as a primary strategy for capturing audience attention and engagement.

This growth has also touched the local fashion industry, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which now face increasingly complex market dynamics. Ministry of Industry data shows the apparel sector experienced positive growth in the first quarter of 2024,

with 50,880 active MSME units recorded out of 243,972 registered within the Jakarta Entrepreneur system by the end of 2023, marking an 8.23% increase from the previous year (Siti, 2023). Even so, this growth in business numbers has not necessarily been matched by a corresponding rise in brand awareness among consumers, particularly the younger generation who dominate TikTok's user base. Influencer marketing itself is no longer understood merely as simple promotion through public figures, but now operates within a Digital Marketing 5.0 framework that blends digital technology with a more personal and humanized approach (As-syahri, 2024). TikTok has proven effective in strengthening brand awareness among millennial and Gen Z audiences owing to an algorithm capable of delivering content in a highly personalized manner (Akbar, et al., 2024), a pattern consistent with findings linking influencer activity to consumer perception and purchase decisions for culturally rooted fashion products (Ulfa, 2025).

Nonetheless, adopting this strategy is not without obstacles for local fashion MSMEs in East Jakarta, ranging from limited digital literacy (Nurul et al., 2024) to budget constraints that restrict collaboration with larger-scale influencers, alongside difficulty in selecting influencers whose credibility, content style, and audience closeness truly align with their products rather than follower count alone (Tan et al., 2023). Content strategy is equally decisive, since influencers who tailor their TikTok content specifically to local MSME audiences tend to generate stronger market appeal (Feriska et al., 2025). However, most prior studies examining influencer marketing among local fashion MSMEs have focused primarily on its direct effect on purchase decisions, whereas the theoretical mechanism through which this influence occurs, specifically through consumer brand awareness, remains comparatively underexplored within the East Jakarta fashion MSME context. Several prior studies further indicate that the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions does not always occur directly, but rather through brand awareness as a bridging mechanism (Fernanda & Dwita, 2024). This mediating pattern is reinforced by Rohmawati and Ahmadi (2024) and Wahid et al. (2025), both of whom found brand awareness to serve as a significant mediator linking influencer marketing to purchase decisions among TikTok users in Indonesia.

Theoretically, this mechanism can be explained by linking Source Credibility Theory, in which a credible, expert, and attractive information source strengthens message acceptance (Saskara & Achmad, 2024), with Brand Equity Theory, in which brand awareness constitutes a foundational element in the formation of brand equity, reflecting the perception and value of a brand in the minds of consumers (Milcha Handayani, 2022). This awareness is built through repeated, credible exposure to brand-related elements such as name, logo, and slogan across various promotional channels (Marsudin & Marbun, 2023). Within this framework, influencer marketing is expected to first strengthen brand awareness through credible and attractive content, which in turn shapes purchase decisions, positioning brand awareness as the mechanism that bridges influencer marketing and consumer purchase decisions. This theoretical gap, namely clarifying the mediating position of brand awareness between influencer marketing and purchase decisions within a specific regional fashion MSME context, is what this study seeks to address.

A pre-research survey of 10 TikTok users who had previously encountered influencer promotions of fashion MSME products found consistently favorable perceptions: all respondents regarded the influencers as trustworthy and engaging, 90% acknowledged their expertise, and 80% reported that influencer promotion strengthened both their confidence in purchasing and their ability to recall and recognize the promoted brand. As an initial observation involving a small, non-random group of respondents, these findings should not be regarded as generalizable evidence, but merely as a preliminary indication supporting the relevance of examining this relationship further in the main study.

Building on this gap, particularly the limited research clarifying the mediating mechanism of brand awareness within the local fashion MSME context, this study offers a contribution by examining: (1) whether influencer marketing influences brand awareness of fashion MSME

products in East Jakarta; (2) whether influencer marketing influences purchase decisions for such products; and (3) whether brand awareness influences purchase decisions and mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions. Based on this framework, the study proposes the following hypotheses. H1, influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness. H2, influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. H3, brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. H4, brand awareness significantly mediates the effect of influencer marketing on purchase decisions. This research is anticipated to enrich the theoretical discourse on digital marketing communication from a regional perspective, while also offering practical contributions in the form of recommendations for MSME actors in optimizing TikTok-based influencer marketing strategies to strengthen brand awareness and purchase decisions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied a quantitative explanatory design with a cross-sectional approach, in which data were collected at a single point in time, to examine the influence exerted by influencer marketing toward purchase decisions for fashion MSME products in East Jakarta, with brand awareness positioned as a mediating variable. The population consisted of TikTok users holding an active account, aged at least 17 years, domiciled in or having accessed content from the DKI Jakarta area, and who had previously encountered promotional content for East Jakarta fashion MSME products delivered by an influencer. Since the exact size of this population could not be identified (an unknown population), the sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula rather than Slovin's.

Applying a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated population proportion of 0.5, and a 10% margin of error, the Lemeshow formula yielded a minimum sample of 96.04 respondents, rounded up to 100. This minimum was further supported by an a priori power analysis, which indicated that, using a medium effect size $f^2 = 0.15$ (Hair et al., 2022), an alpha level of .05, a statistical power of .95, and two predictor variables in the most complex structural path, a minimum of 107 respondents was required. The selection method used was non-probability purposive sampling, in which respondents were chosen based on criteria relevant to the study's objectives, given the researcher's limited access to the complete population of TikTok users exposed to such promotional content. As purposive sampling is a non-probability technique, the resulting sample does not claim to statistically represent the broader population. Respondents were required to meet five eligibility criteria, namely (1) possessing an active TikTok account, (2) being at least 17 years old, (3) residing in the DKI Jakarta area or having accessed content related to East Jakarta fashion MSMEs on TikTok, (4) having previously seen influencer-driven promotional content for East Jakarta fashion MSME products, and (5) being willing to participate as a respondent. Data were collected online through a self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Form from June to July 2026. Eligibility was verified through a set of screening questions corresponding to these criteria at the beginning of the questionnaire. A target sample exceeding the minimum thresholds above was set to strengthen the statistical power of the PLS-SEM analysis, resulting in 300 completed responses that met all eligibility criteria, all of which were retained for the final analysis.

Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed that their identity and responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic purposes, and that their participation was entirely voluntary. By proceeding to complete the questionnaire, respondents provided informed consent to participate under these conditions.

This study seeks to determine the links connecting the predictor variable, Influencer Marketing (X), the dependent variable, Purchase Decision (Y), and the mediating variable, Brand Awareness (M). The researcher illustrates that relationship through a conceptual research framework, presented in Figure 1.

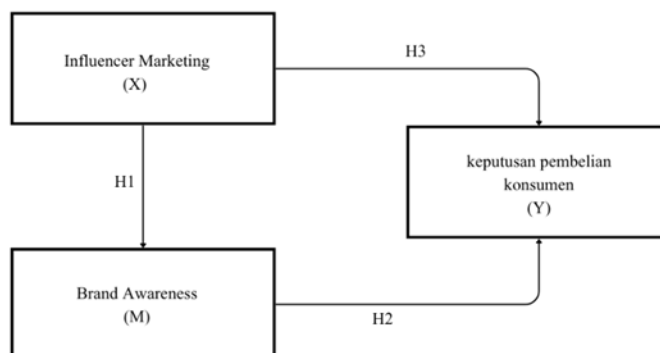


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The data collection tool took the shape of a structured questionnaire comprising three main constructs. Influencer Marketing (X) was measured through three dimensions (Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness) adapted from Source Credibility Theory (Saskara & Achmad, 2024), Purchase Decision (Y) was measured through six dimensions (Product Choice, Brand Choice, Dealer Choice, Purchase Timing, Purchase Amount, and Payment Method) adapted from Kotler and Keller's purchase decision framework (Tua et al., 2022), and Brand Awareness (M) was measured through three dimensions (Brand Recall, Brand Recognition, and Top of Mind Awareness) adapted from Brand Equity Theory (Marsudin & Marbun, 2023). All items were self-developed by the researcher based on these theoretical sources and were originally written in Indonesian, requiring no additional translation. In total, the instrument consisted of 19 statement items measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 denoting strongly disagree through 5 denoting strongly agree). All constructs were specified as first-order reflective constructs, consistent with the loading-based approach used in the validity testing.

Data collection was carried out electronically via Google Forms distributed to TikTok users who met the sampling criteria. Beyond the questionnaire as the primary technique, documentation study was used as a supporting technique, drawing on scientific articles, journals, and official statistical reports to strengthen the theoretical foundation and provide contextual background on influencer marketing practices among fashion MSMEs in Indonesia.

The analysis of the data was carried out employing the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling approach (PLS-SEM) via the SmartPLS 4.0 program. The evaluation encompassed the outer model, assessed by means of convergent validity (as reflected in outer loading ≥ 0.7 and AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity (assessed via cross loading), and reliability (measured through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, both ≥ 0.70), together with the structural model, comprising the coefficient of determination (RSquare), effect magnitude (F-Square), predictive relevance ($Q^2_{predict}$ via $PLSpredict$, with RMSE and MAE values compared against a linear regression benchmark), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping, applying a t-statistic threshold of > 1.96 together with a p-value of < 0.05 as the significance criteria. The significance of the mediating effect of Brand Awareness was further examined using the Sobel test, calculated from the path coefficients and standard errors of the Influencer Marketing $\rightarrow$ Brand Awareness and Brand Awareness $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision paths obtained from the bootstrapping procedure.

TikTok was chosen as the setting for this research given that it stands as the platform with the largest active user base in Indonesia and a proven track record in strengthening brand awareness through algorithm-driven content distribution. This positions TikTok as a fitting context for examining how influencer marketing, through the credibility, expertise, and attractiveness conveyed by content creators, influences fashion MSME consumers' purchase decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents Characteristic

Participants involved in this research consisted of TikTok users domiciled in East Jakarta who had previously encountered influencer-driven promotional content for East Jakarta fashion MSME products. Data were collected using Google Forms distributed online, with a total of 300 respondents collected, exceeding the minimum sample requirement of 100 respondents obtained from the Lemeshow formula. The data collection yielded the following results:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Domicile	East Jakarta	300	100.00%
	Outside East Jakarta	0	0.00%
	Total	300	100.00%
Experience Viewing Influencer Promotion	Yes	300	100.00%
	No	0	0.00%
	Total	300	100.00%
Age	17–20 years	25	8.30%
	21–25 years	211	70.30%
	26–30 years	53	17.70%
	31–35 years	11	3.70%
	Total	300	100.00%
Daily TikTok Usage	< 1 hour	18	6.00%
	1–2 hours	74	24.70%
	3–4 hours	126	42.00%
	> 4 hours	82	27.30%
	Total	300	100.00%

According to the respondent-characteristics table, all 300 respondents (100.00%) were domiciled in East Jakarta and reported having previously seen influencer promotions of East Jakarta fashion MSME products on TikTok, confirming that the entire sample met the criteria established for this study. The largest group of respondents were aged 21–25 years, comprising 211 people (70.30%), reflecting the fact that Generation Z dominates exposure to influencer-driven fashion promotion on TikTok, followed by those aged 26–30 years, numbering 53 individuals (17.70%). Regarding daily TikTok usage, most respondents used the platform for 3–4 hours per day, totaling 126 people (42.00%), followed by those using it for more than 4 hours daily, numbering 82 individuals (27.30%), and those using it for 1–2 hours, numbering 74 individuals (24.70%), while the smallest group used the platform for less than 1 hour daily (18 individuals, 6.00%), indicating that respondents were fairly active TikTok users with substantial opportunity to be exposed to influencer promotional content.

Statistical Test Results

This study's data underwent analysis through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), applying SmartPLS 4.0 in order to examine how Influencer Marketing influences Purchase Decisions through Brand Awareness as a mediating variable. The accuracy and consistency of the measurement items were examined through an outer assessment framework, whereas the relationship at the structural level linking the three constructs was assessed by means of the inner model (Candra et al., 2026).

Outer Model Testing

Convergent validity was assessed via the loading values obtained from the outer model, where each of the 19 indicators belonging to the three constructs yielded loadings exceeding the .70

cutoff point (Candra et al., 2026), thereby confirming that each indicator adequately reflected its corresponding construct; these findings can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity Test Results (Convergent Validity)

Indicator	Influencer Marketing (X)	Brand Awareness (M)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Validity
IM1	0.855			Valid
IM2	0.804			Valid
IM3	0.858			Valid
IM4	0.798			Valid
IM5	0.739			Valid
IM6	0.724			Valid
BA1		0.741		Valid
BA2		0.700		Valid
BA3		0.823		Valid
BA4		0.771		Valid
BA5		0.798		Valid
KP1			0.741	Valid
KP2			0.785	Valid
KP3			0.788	Valid
KP4			0.751	Valid
KP5			0.731	Valid
KP6			0.720	Valid
KP7			0.833	Valid
KP8			0.799	Valid

In addition, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values recorded across all three variables surpassed the 0.50 benchmark (Candra et al., 2026), pointing to strong convergent validity, a result shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Construct	Criterion	AVE
Influencer Marketing (X)	> 0.50	0.637
Brand Awareness (M)	> 0.50	0.590
Purchase Decision (Y)	> 0.50	0.592

Discriminant validity received further confirmation via cross-loading values, in which every indicator recorded its highest loading on the construct it was intended to measure rather than on either of the other two constructs, satisfying the required threshold (Susanto et al., 2025). Discriminant validity in this study was assessed solely through cross-loading values; the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) were not computed and are recommended for future research to further strengthen discriminant validity assessment. Additionally, reliability indices consisting of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability computed for all three variables exceeded the minimum value of 0.70 (Susanto et al., 2025) (see Table 4), demonstrating that the instrument was accurate and dependable in measuring the research variables consistently.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Construct	Criterion	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Influencer Marketing (X)	≥ 0.70	0.885	0.913
Brand Awareness (M)	≥ 0.70	0.829	0.877
Purchase Decision (Y)	≥ 0.70	0.901	0.920

Inner Model Testing

An analysis pertaining to the coefficient of determination (R^2) has been conducted to assess the extent to which Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision are represented by the exogenous constructs in this model. A resulting R-Square value of 0.413 was obtained for Brand Awareness, indicating that Influencer Marketing explains 41.3% of its variance, whereas an R-Square value of 0.596 was obtained for Purchase Decision, indicating that Influencer Marketing together with Brand Awareness explains 59.6% of its variance, with both figures falling into the moderate category (Utmiati et al., 2026). These results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. R-Square (R^2) Test Results

Dependent Variable	R-Square (R^2)	R-Square Adjusted
Brand Awareness (M)	0.413	0.411
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.596	0.593

F-Square, understood as the effect size, was subsequently computed in order to gauge to what extent each exogenous construct influences its corresponding endogenous construct (Utmiati et al., 2026). These findings are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6. Effect Size (f^2) Test Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Effect Size (f^2)	Interpretation
Influencer Marketing (X)	Brand Awareness (M)	0.704	Large Effect
Influencer Marketing (X)	Purchase Decision (Y)	0.310	Moderate Effect
Brand Awareness (M)	Purchase Decision (Y)	0.219	Moderate Effect

The Influencer Marketing–Brand Awareness relationship registered the largest effect size at 0.704, whereas its direct relationship with Purchase Decision, together with the Brand Awareness–Purchase Decision relationship, fell within the moderate category. Corroborating this, the predictive relevance evaluation yielded Q^2 predict values of 0.502 for Brand Awareness and 0.407 for Purchase Decision, both comfortably exceeding the 0.35 threshold (Hair et al., 2022), thereby affirming the model's strong predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing of the hypotheses was performed using path coefficient assessment along with a bootstrapping procedure, aimed at evaluating how significant the relationship between the constructs was (Riduan & Firdaus, 2024), the corresponding results appear within Table 7.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Results (Path Coefficient Analysis)

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Conclusion
Influencer Marketing (X) → Brand Awareness (M)	0.643	24.438	< .001	Significant
Influencer Marketing (X) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0.712	22.622	< .001	Significant
Brand Awareness (M) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0.389	7.409	< .001	Significant

The bootstrapping results reveal that Influencer Marketing demonstrates a favorable and statistically meaningful influence toward Brand Awareness, evidenced by a computed path coefficient reaching 0.643, alongside a t-value of 24.438, together with a **p-value below .001**. Because this computed t-value exceeds the threshold of 1.96, together with the p-value remaining below 0.05, H1 is accepted, meaning that influencers regarded as credible, attractive, and capable of delivering product information in an engaging manner help consumers recognize, recall, and distinguish the promoted brand from others. This finding reinforces the study by (Sirait et al., 2025), who likewise found Influencer Marketing to exert a partial, favorable, and significant effect upon Brand Awareness.

Influencer Marketing likewise exerts a favorable and meaningful effect upon Purchase Decision, reflected in a path coefficient of 0.712, a t-value of 22.622, and a p-value below .001, leading H2 to be accepted; the credibility, expertise, and attractiveness conveyed by influencers in communicating product information exert a direct positive pull toward consumers' purchase decisions. This result is consistent with (Satiawan et al., 2023), who found that engaging credible influencers heightens consumer trust, which in turn drives purchase decisions.

Meanwhile, Brand Awareness demonstrates a favorable and meaningful effect upon Purchase Decision, shown by a path coefficient of 0.389, a t-value of 7.409, and a p-value below .001, leading H3 to be accepted; brands that are more easily recognized and recalled become more likely to be prioritized by consumers over competing brands, thereby strengthening purchase decisions. This finding corroborates (Adriyanto & Subakti, 2023), who reported that a stronger level of brand awareness correspondingly drives a higher likelihood of purchase decisions being made. The mediating role of Brand Awareness was further tested using the Sobel test, which yielded an indirect effect of 0.250 (SE = 0.035, Sobel $z = 7.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.181, 0.319]), confirming that Brand Awareness significantly mediates the effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision, thereby leading H4 to be accepted. Because the direct effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision also remained significant, this indicates partial mediation.

The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Brand Awareness

The findings affirm that Influencer Marketing exerts a favorable and meaningful effect toward Brand Awareness, aligning with Source Credibility Theory (Saskara & Achmad, 2024), which holds that a source's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness shape how its message is adopted. At the dimension level, Trustworthiness and Expertise achieved the highest mean score alike (3.677), whereas Attractiveness registered the lowest (3.552), indicating that respondents' confidence in the influencer's honesty and knowledge outweighs visual appeal in shaping brand awareness. This finding reinforces (Sirait et al., 2025), who likewise found Influencer Marketing to exert a favorable and significant effect upon Brand Awareness. The R-Square figure of 41.3% shows other factors also play a role, yet the large F-Square value (0.704) confirms this effect remains substantial.

The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision

Influencer Marketing likewise exerts a favorable and meaningful effect directly upon Purchase Decision, consistent with (Satiawan et al., 2023), who found that credible influencers heighten consumer trust and thereby drive purchase decisions. At the dimension level, Purchase Amount achieved the highest mean score (3.740), while Dealer Choice registered the lowest (3.410), suggesting influencer content shapes how much consumers buy more strongly than where they buy it. An F-Square value of 0.310, within the moderate-effect category, confirms this direct contribution remains meaningful.

The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness on Purchase Decision

The Sobel test confirms that Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between Influencer Marketing and Purchase Decision, reinforcing Brand Equity Theory (Milcha Handayani, 2022) and consistent with (Adriyanto & Subakti, 2023), who reported that stronger brand awareness drives higher purchase decisions. At the dimension level, Brand Recall achieved the highest mean score (3.537), whereas Brand Recognition registered the lowest (3.160), indicating recall matters more than logo-level recognition. With a moderate F-Square value (0.219), Brand Awareness meaningfully strengthens the Influencer Marketing–Purchase Decision link alongside Influencer Marketing's direct effect, underscoring the value of pursuing both strategies together.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on these findings, Influencer Marketing exerts a favorable and meaningful effect upon Brand Awareness (path coefficient 0.643, t-statistic 24.438, $p < .001$, H1 accepted) and directly upon Purchase Decision (path coefficient 0.712, t-statistic 22.622, $p < .001$, H2 accepted), while Brand Awareness itself exerts a favorable and meaningful effect upon Purchase Decision (path coefficient 0.389, t-statistic 7.409, $p < .001$, H3 accepted), consistent with Source Credibility Theory (Saskara & Achmad, 2024). The Sobel test further confirms that Brand Awareness significantly mediates the relationship between Influencer Marketing and Purchase Decision (indirect effect = 0.250, SE = 0.035, Sobel $z = 7.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.181, 0.319], H4 accepted), indicating partial mediation given that the direct effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision also remained significant. This mediating role is consistent with Brand Equity Theory (Milcha Handayani, 2022). In other words, more effective Influencer Marketing raises Brand Awareness, which in turn drives Purchase Decision. Influencer Marketing accounts for 41.3% of the variance in Brand Awareness, while it does so together with Brand Awareness for 59.6% of the variance in Purchase Decision, both moderate, leaving room for factors beyond this model such as consumer trust or platform features. Even so, the large F-Square value (0.704) for the Influencer Marketing–Brand Awareness path, alongside moderate effects for the remaining two paths, confirms these relationships remain substantively strong, aligning with (Sirait et al., 2025), Satiawan et al. (2023) and Adriyanto & Subakti (2023). These results indicate that fashion MSME actors should prioritize influencer credibility and content quality over follower count, while consistently reinforcing brand identity, in order to strengthen brand awareness and sustain purchase decisions through TikTok.

This study is limited by its cross-sectional design, its use of non-probability purposive sampling, and the assessment of discriminant validity solely through cross-loading values, without the Fornell-Larcker criterion or the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Future research is encouraged to employ a longitudinal design, incorporate probability sampling where feasible, and apply a more comprehensive discriminant validity assessment, as well as to examine additional variables such as consumer trust or platform-specific features that may further explain purchase decisions on TikTok.

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