Original Researcher Article

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decisions in Fashion: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement on TikTok

Shabrina Zata Amani[1]* ,Asad Ur Rehman Muhammad Sadiq[2] , Iis Mariam[3], Sultan Rehman Sherief [4]

[1]*Graduate School of Management, Management and Science University, Malaysia
[2]Graduate School of Management, Management and Science University, Malaysia
[3]Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia
[4]Faculty of Business Management & Professional Studies, Management and Science University, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on investigating how social media marketing influences the purchase decision of fashion customers with customer engagement as the mediating variable. Based on the study on TikTok Shop users in Jakarta, the emerging impact of short-video commerce as a factor in the development of consumer behavior in new digital markets is emphasized in the research. An online survey was conducted on 203 valid respondents to collect the data and then analyzed with SPSS to conduct the preliminary analysis and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS to assess measurement and structural models. The findings reveal that social media marketing has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, both directly and indirectly through customer engagement. Furthermore, higher levels of engagement strengthen the effectiveness of social media marketing by enhancing consumers' involvement, trust, and loyalty toward fashion brands. These results suggest that fashion marketers should adopt interactive and engagement-driven social media strategies to effectively influence consumer purchasing behavior on platforms such as TikTok Shop. This study contributes to the digital marketing literature by empirically demonstrating the mediating role of customer engagement in social commerce and provides practical implications for marketers operating in the fashion e-commerce industry.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Customer Engagement, Consumer Purchase Decision, TikTok Shop, Fashion Industry, and PLS - SEM**.**

1. INTRODUCTION:

Modern digital technology development has completed a fundamental shift in marketplace consumer conduct and business operational models. E-commerce along with social commerce platforms simplify product and services access so consumers can do without visiting physical retail stores (Wayan et al., 2023). These channels make it simpler for consumers, especially those from Millennials and Gen Z, to buy products and services online. Tik Tok Shop that combines entertainment and shopping features, by allowing users to buy fashion items through short videos and live streams, is a new platform that offers users to buy fashion items directly as they consume content. This integration will render TikTok a useful tool in digital marketing within the fashion industry.

Social media marketing has become one of the most influential strategies within TikTok Shop. Brands use interactive and algorithm-optimized content to engage users and influence purchasing decisions (Do et al., 2020). Features like the "For You Page" (FYP) amplify product visibility, allowing fashion brands to reach wide audiences without relying heavily on paid advertising. These characteristics are especially significant in the fashion industry, where the fashion changes quickly enough and audience involvement is essential.

Customer engagement is very important in this process. According to Arghashi and Yuksel (2022), user interaction with social media content strengthens emotional connections and builds trust in promoted products. On TikTok, interactions like liking, commenting, sharing videos and joining challenges may help make brand-consumer relationships stronger and boost conversions.

Although several studies have examined social media marketing's impact on purchase intention, few have specifically addressed how this relationship plays out within TikTok Shop, particularly in the fashion industry (Putri et al., 2022). Moreover, the mediating role of customer engagement has been regarding the unique features of TikTok's algorithm and real-time interaction system.

Considering Jakarta is a center for digital and fashion trends in Indonesia, this study examines the influence of TikTok Shop social media marketing on consumer purchase decision with customer engagement as mediating variable. The results are predicted to support academic study in digital marketing and assist fashion marketers who want to improve their performance on social platforms that follow algorithms..

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is an effort to create material (text, photos, and video) that are uploaded, shared, and inspire social media users to take part and spread the word

on those channels (Levina et al., 2023). Social media marketing can be an entertaining strategy to increase brand awareness and consumer interaction while also making it simple to perform marketing in real time (Nusantara & Pardede, 2023). Social media allows users to share content quickly and in real time via smartphones, tablets, laptops and computers. Therefore, posts on social media have the potential to reach consumers from all over the world (Cooley & Yancy, 2019). In the social media marketing model that has been previously researched, there are four dimensions put forward by As'ad in Utami and Saputri (2020) as follows: a. Online Communities; b. Interaction; c. Sharing of Content; d. Accessibility of Social Media

2.2 Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is the systematic involvement of consumers through interactive communication and experiences that efficiently help them, and eventually impact their purchase decisions (Setiawan et al., 2023). According to Do, et al, (2020), customer engagement is considered an interaction or connection that occurs between customers and brands or businesses. The reference for this research is taken from Ziginov (2021) who states that despite operating online, it is still possible to become a leader in the market by communicating with the audience through social media. There are seven subdimensions to measure customer engagement, namely enjoyment, enthusiasm, attention, absorption, sharing, learning, endorsing. (Khairani, A., & Fachira, I., 2022).

Consumer Purchase Decision

Purchase decisions are the steps that customers take before deciding whether to buy a goods or service, by selecting two or more alternative purchasing decision options, implying that a decision-maker needs to be able to choose from a variety of options (Munandar, 2022). Meanwhile, (Haryanti, 2024) defines an online purchase decision, which means that making an online purchase choice involves evaluating several options and choosing an action after carrying out problem-solving steps. Based on the understanding of the opinions expressed by experts, a purchase decision is a condition in which consumers have undergone several processes of consideration of what they need, then recognize several brands of products with their respective advantages offered as consideration, until they finally find one of them that attracts their confidence and is considered capable of satisfying the desire they expect from a product or service, or one product or services that they receive that are considered equivalent to cost consumers spend to buy. In the consumer purchase decision that has been previously researched, there are several dimensions put forward by Kotler & Setiawan (2019) as follows: a. Product choice; b. Brand choice; c. Choice of distributor; d. The amount of purchase; e. Purchase time,

Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decision

From the research study conducted by Amy Yeo Chu May et al. (2022), social media marketing has a direct influence on consumer buying behavior in a positive way. From the result of the research, the following statement of Pratama I Putu Agi & Yasa Ni Nyoman (2023) shows that SMM has a correlation to the likelihood of a person purchasing products from Umah Local Coffee & Roastery. Based on the study conducted by Levina et al, (2023), social media marketing enhanced positive and significant purchasing decisions. Kharabsheh & Zhen (2021) have presented the result of the research showing a positive and significant effect of social media marketing on the purchase decision. Based on the result of previous research, this study hypothesized that:

H1 : Social media marketing has a direct positive impact on Consumer TikTok Shop purchase decisions in Jakarta Areas.

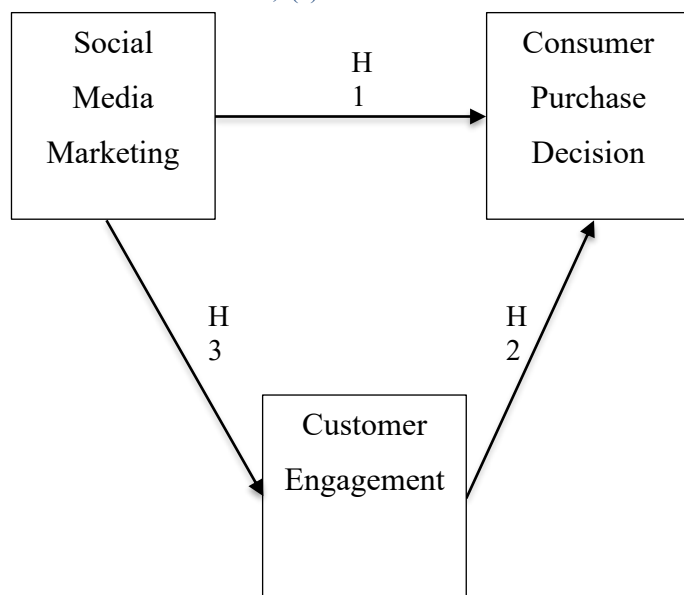## Customer Engagement and Consumer Purchase Decision

According to the result of the research from Rosadi et al. (2022), customer engagement has an effect on consumer purchase decisions. Similarly, Chaudhuri et al. showed that engagement figures are significant indicators of buying behavior on the digital platform. According to the result of the research from Ardiyansyah & Febrianti (2022) customer engagement has an impact on consumer purchase decision. Based on the result of previous research, this study hypothesized that:

H2 : Customer Engagement has a direct positive impact on Consumer TikTok Shop purchase decisions in Jakarta Areas.

The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

May et al. (2023) together with Jia et al. (2023) demonstrate that social media marketing decisively impacts customer purchasing behavior. Setiawan, et al., (2024) discovered that social media marketing effectiveness depends on the levels of customer engagement which strengthens this relationship. TikTok users develop trust and emotional connection with brands through its engagement elements such as comments and sharing features along with live interactions (Lim & Rasul, 2022). Recent research approaches TikTok engagement in two ways by studying duets and live shopping events independent of other typical features. The researchers explore TikTok engagement features to analyze their role in social media marketing to consumer buy decisions relationships. Based on the result of previous research, this study hypothesized that:

H3 : Customer Engagement mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase

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   Social                    Consumer
   Media        H1  ------>  Purchase
   Marketing                 Decision
        \                      /
       H3\                  /H2
            \            /
           Customer
           Engagement
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Research Framework

The framework demonstrates the effects of social media marketing on buying choices of people in the TikTok Shop fashion industry based in Jakarta. The three main components of the framework are Social Media Marketing (SMM) serving as the independent variable, Customer Engagement (CE) acting as the mediator and Consumer Purchase Decision (CPD) as the dependent variable. In this framework:

tests the direct effect of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchase Decision, indicating how marketing efforts on social platforms can lead directly to increased consumer purchasing behavior.

examines the direct relationship between Customer Engagement and Consumer Purchase Decision, emphasizing how consumer interaction and emotional involvement impact final purchasing outcomes.

H3 investigates the mediating role of Customer Engagement in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decision. This path highlights the importance of consumer interaction as a mechanism through which social media marketing exerts its influence on buyer behavior.

The arrows in the model represent the pathways and Customer Engagement helps to explain the relationship between the other elements. It shows that direct impact on purchases happens when social media marketing leads to more engagement first. It means that to increase sales in TikTok Shop, marketers should make sure both the promotion of goods and also consumer involvement are considered among their main strategies.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design to investigate the influence of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions, with customer engagement acting as a mediating variable. The study focuses on TikTok Shop users within the fashion sector in Jakarta, Indonesia.

To gather relevant data, the researchers employed purposive sampling, targeting respondents who had prior experience purchasing fashion products through TikTok Shop. A total of 203 valid responses were collected via an online structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Hair et al. (2022) emphasize that non-probability sampling, particularly purposive sampling, offers a practical and flexible approach in studies involving large and undefined populations, such as digital commerce users. Although this method may be subject to sampling bias, it remains a widely recognized technique in marketing and social science research, especially when researchers aim to target specific user segments with relevant experience or characteristics.

The data were first processed using SPSS to conduct descriptive statistical analysis and evaluate initial reliability. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then performed using SmartPLS 4 to analyze both the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model assessment included evaluation of indicator reliability through outer loadings, convergent validity via Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Structural model evaluation involved the calculation of R^2, f^2, and Q^2 values, along with the examination of path coefficients. Mediation analysis was conducted through bootstrapping procedures to determine both direct and indirect effects of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions via customer engagement.

4. Results and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis

The information about age and gender of the respondents is shown in Table 1 and Table 2. There were 203 valid responses gathered from fashion buyers on TikTok Shop in Jakarta.

Table 1. Age Distrbution of Respondents

Age					
		Freque ncy	**Perc ent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	17 - 22 years old	65	32.0	32.0	32.0
	23 - 28 years old	82	40.4	40.4	72.4
	29 - 34 years old	39	19.2	19.2	91.6
	34 - 40 years old	17	8.4	8.4	100.0

	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	94	46.3	46.3	46.3
	Female	109	53.7	53.7	100.0
	Total	203	100.0	100.0	

Data from demographics in table 1 and table 2 indicate that respondents aged 23 to 28 are most common, while the second most common age group is 17 to 22. A higher number of female respondents (53.7%) took part than male respondents (46.3%). The data reflects that most

young adults in Jakarta use TikTok Shop to shop for fashion.

Measurement Model Assessment

Testing was completed by checking outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's Alpha to assess the measurement model. All constructs had values that went above the recommended limits set by the AVE > 0.5, Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7 and outer loading > 0.6.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.855	.856	5

The instrument used to measure Social Media Marketing is reliable and delivers consistent measurements because of the high Cronbach's Alpha value. Therefore, the items do not need to be changed because of this variable.

Table 4. CFA via Individual Measurement Model

	CE	CPD	SMM
CE1	0.692		
CE2	0.711		
CE3	0.662		
CE4	0.614		
CE5	0.710		
CPD1		0.752	
CPD2		0.630	
CPD3		0.654	
CPD4		0.702	
CPD5		0.658	
SMM1			0.708
SMM2			0.833
SMM3			0.809
SMM4			0.821
SMM5			0.803

The table 4 provides the outer loadings for each indicator of the construct it belongs to. All loadings are higher than 0.60, demonstrating that all indicators are reliable and play an important role in their respective constructs. For Customer Engagement (CE), all indicator loadings fall between 0.614 and 0.711 which indicates a reliable way to measure how customers are engaged. The indicator loadings in CPD vary from 0.630 to 0.752 which means there is a strong relationship between each indicator and the main construct. Social Media Marketing (SMM) also reveals all its loading scores are above 0.70, the highest at 0.833, showing good consistency of the indicators for this construct. By these results, we see that the measurement model used in the study is correct.

Structural Model Assessment

In Figure 1, the structural model of the research is shown. It shows how Social Media Marketing (SMM), Customer Engagement (CE) and Consumer Purchase Decision (CPD) are interrelated
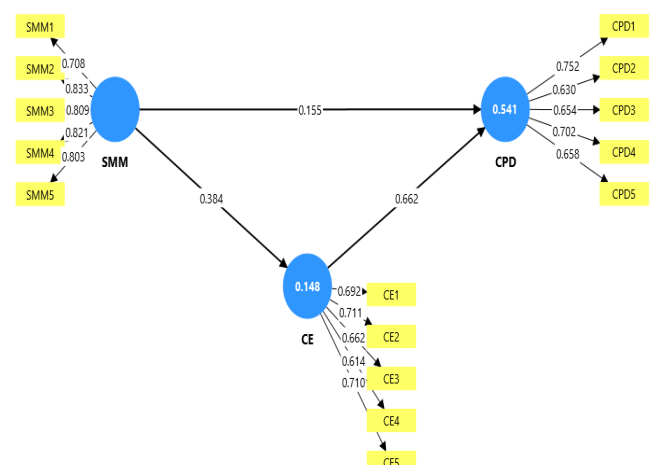

Figure 1. Structural Model Result (SmartPLS Output)

Figure 1 presents the results of the SmartPLS structural model, displaying the links between SMM, CE and CPD. There is a moderate positive relationship between SMM and CE, according to the path coefficient of 0.384. It is also found that social media marketing directly affects CPD, with a smaller effect measured by a coefficient of 0.155. However, CE is related to an increase in CPD because its coefficient is 0.662. Correlation shows that Social Media Marketing (SMM) explains only 14.8% of the Variable CE, whereas together SMM and CE explain 54.1% of what affects consumers' decision to purchase a product. All of the indicator loadings are higher than 0.60 which means the scale is reliable. Customer engagement is seen to be the reason behind the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' buying decisions.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Path	Original sample (O)	T-Statistics	p-values	Conclusion
SMM -> CPD	Direct	0.204	3.956	0.000	Accepted
CE -> CPD	Direct	0.478	7.516	0.000	Accepted

Table 5 shows the outcome of testing the hypotheses with SmartPLS. Social Media Marketing has a strong impact on Consumer Purchase Decision which is showed by a path coefficient of 0.204, a t-statistic of 3.956 and a p-value of 0.000 in line with H1. H2 is supported, as customer engagement (CE) records a strong positive impact on customer perceived difference (CPD) based on a coefficient of 0.478 and t-statistic of 7.516.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
SMM -> CE -> CPD	0.161	5.030	0.000	Accepted

Table 6 demonstrates that SMM has an indirect effect on CPD by going through CE. According to the mediation path, the coefficient is 0.161, the t-statistic is 5.030 and the p-value is 0.000. Findings support H3, proving that Customer Engagement plays a key role in connecting Social Media Marketing and Consumer Purchase Decision.

DISCUSSION

This study show that both social media marketing (SMM) and interacting with customers (CE) have a big impact on what consumers choose to purchase via TikTok Shop in Jakarta. Most people in the study are young adults aged 23–28 years which is in line with studies showing that Gen Z and Millennials are the top users of social commerce platforms (Levina et al., 2023; Kotler et al., 2019). The researcher found that the measurement model is reliable and valid since all indicators had scores over 0.60 and Cronbach's alpha surpassed 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). The structural model indicates a sizable but not very strong link between SMM and CPD. According to Alkharabsheh and Zhen (2021), social media marketing influences what people buy most when it comes with exciting and relevant content. CE has a larger impact on CPD which shows that previous studies were right about the importance of emotional and social involvement in deciding consumer behavior (Ardiyansyah & Febrianti, 2022; Rosadi et al., 2022). Besides, CE helps explain how SMM impacts CPD, showing that being engaged with a brand leads to better performance of SMM on purchases (Lim & Rasul, 2022). CPD has a strong correlation, as the model's R² is 0.541 (Hair et al., 2022). Basically, to encourage sales on TikTok Shop, advertisers need to focus on interactivity rather than just getting viewers' attention (Arghashi & Yuksel, 2022; Nusantara & Pardede, 2023).

5. Conclusion and Implications

Summary of Findings

This research examines which social media marketing impact consumer purchase decision in TikTok Shop by evaluating customer engagement as the mediating effect. This research shows social media advertising strengthens buying choices of consumers on the TikTok Shop platform. The analysis confirms that consumer engagement acts as a crucial factor which determines purchasing decisions. Social media marketing benefits from customer engagement which makes marketing activities directly relate to actual product purchases.

Academic and Practical Implications

This research produces essential implications for marketers who operate within the TikTok Shop platform and business stakeholders using it for their growth. Social media marketing proves powerful enough for fashion brands to use for raising consumer involvement and generating purchase decisions. Customer engagement emerges as a key intermediary effect, which proves why businesses should create interactive features that develop personalized interactions with their consumers.

The research advises fashion-oriented businesses to make informed choices about their influencer campaigns since such choices should align with customer profiles. Businesses should implement price promotions thoughtfully because these strategies need to match brand image standards without compromising product value.

Research Limitations

The research study delivered important findings but these results must be considered limited. The findings may not

generalize because the research only surveyed users of TikTok Shop located within Jakarta. The research could gain additional value through expansion of its participant base to different geographical areas and industry segments.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further studies should consider other factors such as brand trust or how valuable a product is which might influence buying behavior in social commerce. Moreover, researchers could use a larger sample or try qualitative approaches to better understand consumer engagement behavior. Comparing TikTok Shop to other platforms or studying a variety of industries could offer more helpful information.

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