



The Influence of Content Marketing and Influencer Endorsement on Purchase Decision Through Brand Image Mediation

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Abstract

This study aims to test the effect of content marketing and influencer endorsement on purchasing decisions with brand image as a mediating variable. This study was conducted on active TikTok Shop users who had purchased from the TikTok Shop. This type of study is a causal qualitative study with data analysis applying the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The number of samples used is the Hair formula so that the number of indicators is 20, so 200 respondents are needed. For data collection, the research was carried out by distributing questionnaires online and using purposive random sampling. The findings of the hypothesis test describe Content Marketing and Influencer Endorsement as having a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. Then, Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. These findings indicate that marketing strategies through content and influencer support can improve brand image and encourage consumer purchasing decisions.

Keywords: content marketing, influencer endorsement, brand image, purchase decision

INTRODUCTION

Research (Agustian et al., 2023) mentions that the rapid advancement of information technology has driven significant changes in all aspects of life, especially in digital marketing methods. As a result, social media serves as a communication tool and a powerful marketing platform to reach a wider audience. (Puspita et al., 2024) state that social media offers retail companies significant potential to foster closer customer relationships through effective promotional techniques (Deng et al., 2024; Kim & Park, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024). One of the most significant innovations in digital marketing is social commerce, which integrates the shopping experience with social interaction within social media platforms. According to (Sillia & Ishak, 2023), social commerce uses social media that allows consumers to share their knowledge and online shopping experiences (Jasrotia et al., 2025; Le & Ngoc, 2024). This interaction helps consumers share

their online shopping experiences, increases trust, and ultimately influences purchasing decisions. In other words, social commerce makes online shopping more interactive and social.

As a social media network, TikTok is experiencing rapid expansion with substantial annual user growth. Data from Business of Apps (2024) shows that TikTok had 1.67 billion monthly active users at the beginning of 2024, an increase of 1.9% from the previous year, indicating that the platform is becoming increasingly popular.

TikTok launched TikTok Shop as a social commerce platform that optimizes social interaction through short videos or live shopping. It also features an algorithm-based recommendation system that supports direct product promotion. This offers an increasingly interactive shopping experience and becomes a strategic place to market products or services.

The two dominant digital marketing strategies in the TikTok Shop ecosystem are content marketing and influencer endorsement. Content marketing focuses on creating engaging and informative content to increase user engagement and create stronger brand awareness (Prayuda, 2024). Relevant marketing information can enhance product appeal and assist consumers in making more convincing purchasing decisions. On the other hand, influencer endorsements contribute to building trust and fostering emotional bonds between the brand and customers. Relevant marketing information can enhance product appeal and help consumers make more convincing purchasing decisions. On the other hand, influencer endorsements contribute to building trust and fostering emotional bonds between the brand and customers. A study by (Maulida et al., 2022), shows that recommendations from influencers significantly impact consumer purchase intentions, especially when combined with interactive marketing strategies such as live shopping.

Both marketing tactics are implemented to enhance brand image, a significant factor influencing purchasing decisions. According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), brand image shapes consumer perceptions of a brand, formed by associations in consumer cognition.

Although many studies have examined the impact of content marketing and influencer endorsement on purchasing decisions, there is still a gap in understanding the role of brand image as a mediator within the framework of TikTok Shop as a social commerce platform. The research by (Mawarda & Firmansyah, 2024) examines the role of brand image as a mediating variable in the relationship between content marketing and influencer endorsement on purchasing decisions, but not specifically within TikTok Shop. Another study by (Jayanti, 2024) examined the impact of influencer support on brand image and purchasing decisions, although it overlooked the analysis of how the interaction between content marketing and influencer support can enhance brand image. Meanwhile, the research by (Puspita et al., 2024), shows that social media influences purchasing decisions, although it does not account for brand image as a mediating factor.

Unlike the previous research, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by specifically examining "the influence of content marketing and influencer endorsement on purchasing decisions in TikTok Shop, with brand image as a mediating variable."

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Based on the literature review, this study proposes several hypotheses, namely:

- H1: "Content marketing positively influences purchasing decisions."
- H2: "Influencer endorsement positively influences purchasing decisions."
- H3: "Content marketing positively impacts brand image."
- H4: "Influencer endorsement positively impacts brand image."
- H5: "Brand image positively influences purchasing decisions."
- H6: "Brand image mediates the influence of content marketing on purchasing decisions."
- H7: "Brand image mediates the influence of influencer endorsement on purchase decisions."

The study model is described in Figure 1.

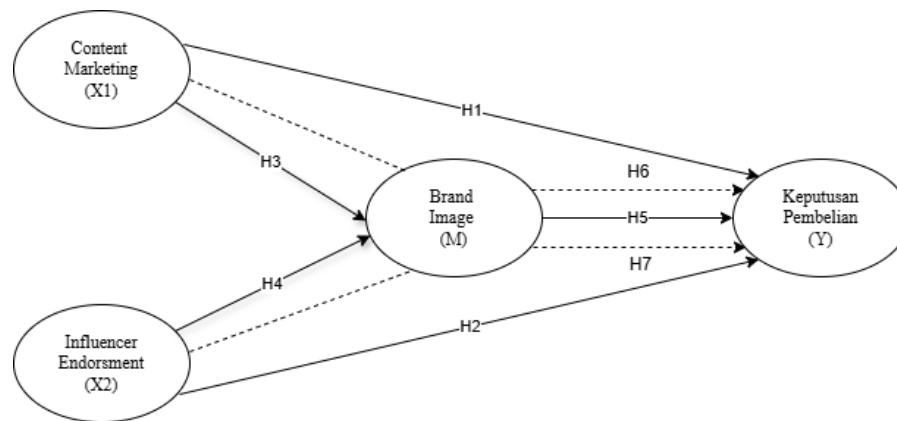


Figure 1. Research Model

METHODS

This study applies a causal quantitative method to identify the cause-and-effect relationship between content marketing, influencer endorsement, and purchasing decisions, with brand image as a mediating variable. This approach was chosen because it regulates the relationships between variables and evaluates direct and indirect effects using statistical analysis techniques.

The population in this study consists of active TikTok Shop users in Indonesia who have completed purchase transactions. The sample was determined through purposive sampling, which included 201 respondents. The total sample was determined according to the formula (Hair et al., 2021), which states 10 times the number of indicators in the research model. With 20 indicator questions, the required sample size is 200 respondents, and this study involves 201 respondents, thus meeting the criteria for PLS-SEM analysis. Respondents were selected based on age criteria and shopping experience on TikTok Shop in the last 6 months so that the research results could more represent consumer behavior on that platform..

The data used in this research were obtained by distributing an online questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims "to analyze the influence of content marketing and influencer endorsement on purchasing decisions with brand image as a mediating variable on TikTok Shop." The testing was conducted using the PLS-SEM method, using the SmartPLS 3.0 program to measure the correlation between variables.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	105	52.2%
	Woman	96	47.8%
Work	Private Employee	60	29.9%
	Student/University Student	97	48.3%
	Civil Servant	9	4.5%
	Housewife	7	3.5%
	Wiraswasta	16	8%
	others	12	6%
	Age	13-15 years	2
	19-24 years	134	66.7%
	25-30 years	26	12.9%
	31-35 years	11	5.5%
	<36 years	28	13.9%

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

The characteristics of the respondents indicate that most active TikTok Shop users in Indonesia are in the 19–24 age range (66.7%) and are predominantly students (48.3%). This indicates that the main market segment of TikTok Shop is the younger generation, who tend to be active in social commerce and are more responsive to content-based digital marketing strategies and influencer endorsements.

Table 2. Validity Test

Indicator	Content Marketing (X1)	Influencer Endorsement (X2)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Brand Image (M)
CM1	0,879			
CM2	0,880			
CM3	0,851			
CM4	0,857			
CM5	0,796			
IE1		0,906		
IE2		0,868		

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Indicator	Content Marketing (X1)	Influencer Endorsement (X2)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Brand Image (M)
IE3		0,900		
IE4		0,909		
IE5		0,817		
KP1			0,838	
KP2			0,802	
KP3			0,820	
KP4			0,820	
KP5			0,851	
BI1				0,878
BI2				0,839
BI3				0,868
BI4				0,871
BI5				0,896

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

The measurement model test (outer model) results indicate that all indicators have a loading factor score > 0.7, which indicates good validity in measuring the researched variable. (Hair et al., 2018) state that the recommended loading factor value for valid indicators is 0.7, to indicate that the indicators have a significant constructive contribution.

Table 3. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image	0,920	0,923	0,940	0,758
Influencer Marketing	0,927	0,929	0,945	0,776
Purchase Decision	0,884	0,885	0,915	0,683
Content Marketing	0,906	0,907	0,930	0,728

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

Next, the reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability shows a value > 0.7, which confirms that the research instrument has good internal consistency and can be relied upon to evaluate the relationships between the studied variables.

Table 4. Goodness-of-fit model test

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Brand Image	0,769	0,767
Purchase Decision	0,860	0,858

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

According to (Hair et al., 2018) In social research, an R^2 value of 0.75 is classified as substantial, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak. Structural model testing shows that content marketing and influencer endorsement significantly impact purchase decisions and brand image.

Table 5. Summary of Path Analysis Result

Path	T Statistic	P Values
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	2,710	0,007
Influencer Marketing -> Brand Image	5,061	0,000
Influencer Marketing -> Purchase Decision	5,939	0,000
Content Marketing -> Brand Image	3,311	0,001
Content Marketing -> Purchase Decision	3,225	0,001

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

The results of the path analysis explain that content marketing positively influences purchasing decisions (T-statistic = 3.225; p-value = 0.001), which means that the more attractive and relevant the marketing content, the greater the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. These findings are relevant to the studies conducted by (Nurohmah et al., 2024) and (Pramerta & Suparna, 2024), which describes how high-quality marketing content that aligns with audience preferences contributes to increasing purchase decisions.

Other findings indicate that influencer endorsement has a significant impact on purchasing decisions, with a T-statistic of 5.939 and a p-value of 0.000, supporting previous research by (Sari & Hidayat, 2021). These results confirm that influencers with high credibility can increase consumer trust, leading to greater purchasing decisions.

This study also proves that content marketing positively influences brand image (T-statistic = 3.311; p-value = 0.001). These findings are in line with (Agi & Kerti, 2023), who found that creative and engaging content marketing strategies significantly shape a strong brand image. Likewise, influencer endorsement has been proven to affect brand image (T-statistic = 5.061; p-value = 0.000), which supports the research by (Chan et al., 2021), stating that the credibility and attractiveness of an influencer can strengthen positive associations with the brands they promote.

Table 6. Summary of Indirect Influence Results (Indirect Effect)

Path	T Statistic	P Values
Influencer Marketing -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	2,310	0,021
Content Marketing -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	1,980	0,048

Source: Data processed by the author using SmartPLS, 2024.

The role of brand image mediation in this study is also significant. The results of the indirect effect test show that brand image mediates the correlation between content marketing and purchase decisions (T-statistic = 1.980; p-value = 0.048), as well as the relationship between

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influencer endorsement and purchase decisions (T-statistic = 2.310; p-value = 0.021). This supports the study by (Tauran et al., 2022), which states that brand image is an important factor strengthening digital marketing's influence on purchasing decisions.

From the perspective of digital marketing theory, this research shows that content-based marketing strategies and influencer endorsements on TikTok Shop can have a direct impact on purchasing decisions and an indirect impact through the enhancement of brand image. In other words, consumers are more likely to purchase products with a positive brand image developed by implementing optimal digital marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that content marketing and influencer endorsements significantly influence purchasing decisions directly and indirectly through brand image as a mediating variable. Attractive, relevant, and consistent marketing content, combined with the endorsement of credible influencers, enhances consumers' intention to purchase and shapes positive brand perceptions. The empirical evidence demonstrates that brand image strengthens the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior. When a brand image is strong, consumers tend to exhibit greater confidence in their purchasing decisions. These findings reinforce the theoretical framework proposed by Kotler & Keller (2016), which emphasizes the centrality of brand perception in marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, this study supports prior research by Tauran et al. (2022) and Jayanti (2024), affirming the mediating role of brand image in the link between content strategies and consumer responses, particularly within the context of social commerce platforms like TikTok Shop.

Although the findings provide valuable insights, this study is not without limitations. The relatively small and demographically narrow sample size (201 respondents) may not fully capture the diversity of TikTok Shop users in Indonesia. Therefore, future research should include larger, more varied samples to improve generalizability. Additionally, a mixed-methods approach—incorporating qualitative techniques such as interviews or focus group discussions—could uncover deeper insights into consumer motivations. Expanding the research to cover other platforms like Shopee Live, Instagram Shopping, and Facebook Marketplace would enhance cross-platform applicability. Lastly, future models could integrate additional variables such as customer engagement, brand loyalty, or psychological factors to build a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms behind purchase behavior in the evolving landscape of social commerce.

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