



## The Influence of Influencer Endorsement and Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention with Brand Awareness as a Mediating Variable

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### ABSTRACT

The growth of social media has strengthened the role of influencer endorsement and social media marketing in influencing consumer behavior. This study analyzes the effect of these two strategies on purchase intention, with brand awareness as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 114 TikTok users and analyzed using SPSS. The results indicate that influencer endorsement and social media marketing have a significant direct effect on purchase intention. However, brand awareness is unable to mediate this relationship, as the indirect effect is not sufficiently strong. Nevertheless, brand awareness still contributes as a factor that may encourage purchase intention, although it is not strong enough to reinforce the influence of these digital strategies. These findings suggest that brand awareness alone is insufficient to generate purchase intention without the presence of other factors such as trust, perceived quality, or consumer experience.

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## Introduction

The increasing trend of purchases through digital platforms highlights the importance of understanding consumer purchase intention in the social media era, particularly on applications like TikTok, which rely heavily on social media marketing and influencer

endorsement to build brand awareness and stimulate purchase intention. Although these strategies are considered effective, prior studies have produced inconsistent findings – ranging from significant, weak, to even negative effects – particularly regarding the role of brand awareness as a mediating variable. These divergent results indicate a research gap in explaining the relationship among influencers, social media marketing, and purchase intention, especially within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) such as Nyemil Saji. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of social media influencers and social media marketing on brand awareness and purchase intention, as well as to examine the role of brand awareness as a mediating variable.

### *Hypotheses Development*

The literature highlights the positive impact of social media influencer endorsement on brand promotion (Nurhandayani et al., 2019). When companies utilize social media influencers as part of their product marketing activities, it influences consumers' perceptions of a brand. In some cases, consumers may not be fully aware of the brand, yet they still choose to use it due to the influence of these influencers (Hermanda et al., 2019). Thus, it can be concluded that social media influencers have a positive and significant effect on brand awareness.

H1: Social media influencers have a positive effect on brand awareness.

Most companies utilize electronic communication as a marketing tool to promote their brands and products (Andreani et al., 2021). These tools are employed to enhance firm value and help strengthen brand awareness. In a quantitative study, Cheung et al. (2022) concluded that effective social media marketing strategies generate trending topics and updates on social media pages, which motivate consumers to invest greater cognitive effort in understanding the focal brand more thoroughly. The authors further suggest that interactive social media content – such as live streaming, chat rooms, and rewards for active consumers who provide feedback – also encourages consumer engagement with the brand. Interactive posts that facilitate the sharing of brand experiences, along with the incorporation of various social media technologies such as polls, Q&A posts, and challenges, promote consumer participation, thereby increasing consumers' intention to engage. Thus, it can be concluded that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness.

H2: Social media marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness."

Social media influencer endorsement refers to the practice of engaging social media influencers to promote a company's products and services. Social media influencers, as public figures who present themselves on digital platforms, attract substantial public attention through the construction of their online personas. By leveraging this image, they are able to engage a large number of followers in various activities. Influencers typically have a significant following on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and other social media channels. Due to their extensive reach, they are capable of endorsing or promoting both positive and negative activities on social media, which can have a substantial impact on their followers (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). Purchase intention is specifically related to consumers' buying behavior, in which consumers demonstrate a positive attitude toward a brand due to specific product attributes and favorable reviews from endorsers. Over the years, social media platforms have received increasing attention from companies as a means of leveraging consumer purchase intention. Thus, it can be

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concluded that social media influencers have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H3: Social media influencers have a positive effect on purchase intention.

Social media marketing refers to the practice of utilizing social media platforms to promote a company's products and services. Social media marketing activities facilitate the rapid and viral dissemination of offerings that capture consumers' attention, thereby increasing purchase intention. Furthermore, Sze Yin Ho & Binwani (2019) state that purchase intention is influenced by social media recommendations, which have a positive effect on users' buying intentions. Given that social media facilitates consumer social interaction, it leads to increased trust and purchase intention. Purchase intention is considered one of the outcomes of social media marketing activities (Yadav & Rahman, 2017), as it reflects consumers' evaluations of a product or brand. Thus, it can be concluded that social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H4: Social media marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Brand awareness is an important factor influencing consumer purchase intention. When customers decide to make a purchase, the first thing that comes to mind is the brand name and image (Rungtornkiet & Sirinapatpokin, 2019). Purchase intention refers to consumers' willingness to buy a product or service. Therefore, a positive brand image strengthens brand awareness and increases the likelihood of purchase. When a brand's image holds significant meaning in consumers' memory, it fosters a positive intention toward that brand. Positive brand awareness tends to inspire customers to make purchases (Mao et al., 2020). Similarly, Liu et al. (2019) state that customers are more likely to purchase products they are familiar with. Brand recognition and awareness contribute to brand loyalty and create positive consumer purchase intentions toward the brand. Thus, it can be concluded that brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H5: Brand awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Brand awareness plays a crucial role in linking the influence of influencer endorsement to consumer purchase intention. According to Samudro et al. (2020), consumers with a high level of brand awareness are better able to accurately recognize their needs and understand how to select appropriate brands. This increases the likelihood of including the brand in their purchase consideration set. When consumers follow celebrities or influencers on social media, exposure to the promoted brand generates recognition and a positive understanding of that brand. As explained by Kanwar & Huang (2022), this awareness fosters a sense of satisfaction and encourages further engagement, including the intention to purchase. In other words, the higher the level of brand awareness, the stronger the consumer's motivation to transition from merely recognizing a brand to developing purchase intention. Thus, it can be concluded that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intention."

H6: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media influencers and purchase intention.

*Social media marketing plays a critical role in building brand awareness, which ultimately influences consumer purchase intention. As explained by Rungtornkiet & Sirinapatpokin (2019), when customers intend to purchase a product, the first elements that come to mind are the brand name and image; therefore, marketing activities on social media can strengthen this image through engaging and consistent content. Social media marketing also supports the development of a positive brand image. According to Mao et al. (2020) this can inspire*

consumers and foster purchase intention. Furthermore, consumers are more likely to purchase products they are familiar with (Liu et al., 2019), thus, repeated exposure to brands on social media increases the level of brand recognition. Interactive content and direct communication through social media strengthen brand loyalty and contribute to the formation of positive purchase intentions. Effective social media marketing strategies enhance brand awareness, build a favorable brand image, and encourage consumers to develop higher purchase intention. Thus, it can be concluded that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.”

H7: Brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention.

### ***Research Gap and Novelty***

The literature indicates that consumer exposure to influencers and promotional content can enhance brand recognition and awareness, which in turn fosters trust and brand preference, ultimately driving purchase intention. The novelty of this study lies in the application of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, in which influencer content and digital marketing activities function as stimuli. The internal processes of consumers, such as perceptions and evaluations of the brand, are conceptualized as the organism through brand awareness (Liu et al., 2019). The final outcome is the response, represented by purchase intention. This framework clarifies how social media stimuli operate through psychological mechanisms to influence purchase intention. By integrating social media influencers, social media marketing, and brand awareness into a single model, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions regarding how digital marketing strategies can enhance purchase intention. It also assists practitioners in identifying the most effective approaches and influencers for building brand awareness.

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey as the data collection method. Quantitative research is often referred to as a positivistic method, as it is grounded in the philosophy of positivism. It is used to examine a specific population or sample, where data are collected through research instruments and analyzed using statistical techniques, with the aim of testing predetermined hypotheses. This study examines both the direct effects of social media marketing and influencer endorsement on purchase intention, as well as their indirect effects on purchase intention through brand awareness as a mediating variable. The case study in this research focuses on the influence of TikTok and influencer endorsement on Nyemil Saji products.

### ***Sampling***

In this study, the population consists of consumers who have purchase intentions toward Nyemil Saji products on TikTok, influenced by influencer endorsement. This study employs a purposive sampling method, which is considered appropriate as it allows the researcher to select respondents who meet specific criteria closely related to the research objectives. The sampling criteria include individuals aged 18–25 who have seen or interacted with promotional content for Nyemil Saji products or influencer endorsements on TikTok within the past six months and who have purchase intentions toward Nyemil Saji products.

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Based on these criteria, a total of 114 respondents were obtained. The sample size was determined using the statistical formula proposed by Lemeshow and Levy (1999), which is widely used in research and is suitable for populations with an unknown size. Prior to the main data collection, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted with a small group of respondents to assess clarity, content validity, and reliability. Based on the pre-test results, several items were refined to improve measurement accuracy. The final questionnaire was then distributed via Google Forms through relevant social media platforms and online communities, and respondents participated voluntarily.

### ***Analysis Tools***

This study utilizes SPSS and applies Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis to evaluate the validity and reliability of each research construct. SPSS is a statistical software application widely recognized for its high-standard analytical capabilities. Following the development of the research instrument, the next step involves conducting validity testing to ensure that each questionnaire item accurately measures what it is intended to measure. The data analysis techniques in this study include descriptive statistical analysis, which aims to provide a general overview of the basic characteristics of the collected data, including measures of central tendency, dispersion, position, and data visualization.

Measurement model (assessment of validity and reliability). Indicator reliability: outer loadings are examined (preferably  $> 0.70$ ; items with very low loadings are considered for removal). Internal consistency: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are reported, with  $CR \geq 0.70$  indicating acceptable reliability. Validity: the significance level of Pearson correlation is reported; if  $p < 0.05$ , the questionnaire items are considered valid (Ghozali, 2016:53). Structural model (coefficient of determination, hypothesis testing, and predictive assessment). Coefficient of determination: values  $> 0.19$  but  $< 0.33$  are considered weak; values  $> 0.33$  but  $< 0.67$  are considered moderate; and values  $> 0.67$  are considered strong (Chin, 1998). All analyses and hypothesis testing were conducted using SPSS.

## **Results**

### ***Respondent Profile***

Descriptive analysis explains the data obtained from respondents through the applied data collection method. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on specific and relevant criteria aligned with the research objectives. Using this technique, a total of 114 respondents were included, selected based on criteria such as age, gender, university affiliation, and exposure within a six-month period. The descriptive section discusses respondent characteristics as presented in Table 1.

Among the respondents, 114 individuals (73.7%) were female. The largest age group was 20 years old, comprising 62 respondents (54.39%), indicating that Generation Z demonstrates purchase intention toward Nyemil Saji products. Most respondents were students from Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) (66 individuals, 57.9%). The majority of respondents had viewed Nyemil Saji content from influencers on TikTok within the past six months, totaling 99 individuals (86.8%). Participants were recruited using a purposive sampling method by distributing an online questionnaire via social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp, targeting individuals who have purchase intention toward Nyemil Saji products. The detailed characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Respondent Profile

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Usia	18 years old	1	0,88 %
	19 years old	20	17,54 %
	20 years old	62	54,39 %
	21 years old	23	20,18 %
	22 years old	3	2,63 %
	23 years old	3	2,63 %
	24 years old	2	1,75 %
	25 years old	0	0 %
Gender	Female	30	26,3 %
	Male	84	73,7 %
Origin	UNNES student	66	57,9 %
	Non UNNES student	48	42,1 %
Respondents in a 6-Month Time Frame	Respondents have seen snack content from an influencer on TikTok	99	86,8 %
	Respondents have not seen snack content from an influencer on TikTok	15	13,2 %

### *Descriptive Analysis*

Descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive overview of respondents' perceptions regarding social media influencers, social media marketing, brand awareness, and purchase intention. Social Media Influencers (SMI) achieved an average score of 74.86%, categorized as a high index value. This indicates that the indicators of the social media influencer variable, as reflected in several statements, effectively represent TikTok users' perceptions of influencers. One example includes the ability to recall a brand promoted by an influencer through videos uploaded on TikTok.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) follows with an average score of 86.13%, also classified within the high index category. This suggests that the indicators of the social media marketing variable adequately capture TikTok users' perceptions, particularly regarding the platform's role in providing opportunities for marketing and sharing brand-related information.

Brand Awareness (BA) recorded an average score of 86.76%, falling within the high index category. This result indicates that all indicators of the brand awareness variable effectively represent users' perceptions of how TikTok contributes to increasing awareness, acceptance, and ease of recognizing and differentiating brands among users.

Purchase Intention (PI) achieved an average score of 76.1%, also categorized as high. This demonstrates that all indicators of purchase intention are capable of representing users' perceptions regarding their intention to purchase, recommend, and consider brands discovered through TikTok in the future. The consistently high average scores across all variables reflect generally positive consumer attitudes toward social media influencers, social media marketing, and brand awareness in influencing purchase intention. Further details are presented in Table 2:

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**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<i>Social Media Influencer (SMI)</i>	74,86%	High
<i>Social Media Marketing (SMM)</i>	86,13%	High
<i>Brand Awareness (BA)</i>	86,76%	High
<i>Purchase Intention (PI)</i>	76,10%	High

The results of this study indicate that the average score for the social media influencer variable is 74.86%, categorized as high, suggesting that respondents generally hold positive perceptions of social media influencers and consider them relevant to their purchase intention toward Nyemil Saji products. Social Media Marketing (SMM) shows an average score of 86.13%, also classified as high, indicating that consumers become aware of a brand through social media marketing activities. Brand Awareness records an average score of 86.76%, while purchase intention shows an average score of 76.1%, both categorized as high. The consistently high average scores across all variables reflect generally positive consumer attitudes toward social media influencer strategies, social media marketing, and brand awareness in influencing purchase intention.

#### **Measurement Model Evaluation**

The measurement model is used to assess the reliability and validity of each construct for all latent variables. Validity aims to evaluate whether a questionnaire is appropriate and capable of accurately measuring the intended variables. An instrument is considered valid if each item is able to represent the variable being studied (Ghozali, 2018:53). In this study, the significance level of the Pearson correlation used is 0.05. If the significance value is less than 0.05, the questionnaire items are considered valid (Ghozali, 2016:53). Reliability is examined through factor loadings and Composite Reliability (CR) (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). A questionnaire is considered reliable if Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.70, although values above 0.60 are still acceptable. The results of the measurement model are presented in Tables 3 and 4:

**Table 3.** Validity

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Pearson Corelation</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
SMI1	0,000	0,888	Valid
SMI2	0,000	0,779	Valid
SMI3	0,000	0,888	Valid
SMI4	0,000	0,631	Valid
SMM1	0,000	0,708	Valid
SMM2	0,000	0,775	Valid
SMM3	0,000	0,863	Valid
SMM4	0,000	0,742	Valid
SMM5	0,000	0,807	Valid
SMM6	0,000	0,689	Valid
SMM7	0,000	0,784	Valid
BA1	0,000	0,805	Valid
BA2	0,000	0,9	Valid

BA3	0,000	0,922	Valid
BA4	0,000	0,917	Valid
BA5	0,000	0,888	Valid
PI1	0,000	0,891	Valid
PI2	0,000	0,82	Valid
PI3	0,000	0,89	Valid
PI4	0,000	0,853	Valid

**Tabel 4.** Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
<i>Social Media Influencer</i>	0,814	Reliable
<i>Social Media Marketing</i>	0,883	Reliable
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	0,932	Reliable
<i>Purchase Intention</i>	0,885	Reliable

**Structural Model Evaluation**

The structural model is evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). According to Chin (1998),  $R^2$  values greater than 0.19 but less than 0.33 are considered weak; values greater than 0.33 but less than 0.67 are considered moderate; and values greater than 0.67 are considered strong. These results indicate that the proposed model is consistent with the research hypotheses and adequately explains the research model. The results of the structural model are presented in Tables 5 and 6:

**Table 5.** Model Fit

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Model 1	0,778	0.559	0.551	0.472
Model 2	0,787	0,620	0,610	0,578

Based on Table 5, Model 1 shows an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.551, indicating that social media influencer and social media marketing explain 55.1% of the variance in brand awareness on TikTok. This value falls within the moderate category, as it is greater than 0.33 but less than 0.67. Meanwhile, Model 2 shows an adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.610, indicating that social media influencer and social media marketing, through brand awareness as a mediating variable, explain 61% of the variance in purchase intention on TikTok. This result is also categorized as moderate, as it exceeds 0.33 but remains below 0.67.

**Tabel 6.** Hypotheses test

Variables	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
SMI-BA	0.095	1.350	0.180
SMM-BA	0.701	9.995	0.000
SMI-PI	0.348	5.281	0.000
SMM-PI	0.416	4.608	0.000
BA-PI	0.184	2.074	0.040

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A hypothesis is accepted when the significance value of the t-test is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between variables is statistically significant. As shown in Table 6, H6 is rejected, while H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H7 are accepted. This indicates that social media influencer, social media marketing, and brand awareness each have a positive effect on purchase intention for Nyemil Saji products. However, brand awareness is unable to mediate the relationship between social media influencer and purchase intention, rendering the indirect relationship insignificant.

## Discussion

The results of Hypothesis 1 testing indicate that the social media influencer variable does not have a positive or significant effect on brand awareness. This finding contradicts prior studies, such as Munir & Watts (2025) which reported a positive and significant relationship between influencers and consumer brand awareness. Similarly Zapata Tito et al. (2025) found that influencers significantly enhance brand awareness through credibility, content authenticity, and interaction frequency. This discrepancy suggests that influencer effectiveness depends heavily on factors such as influencer quality, content relevance, engagement level, and alignment between the influencer's audience and the brand's target market. In this study, the lack of influence may reflect a mismatch in influencer strategy, resulting in suboptimal brand awareness outcomes.

Hypothesis 2 analysis shows that social media marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness. This finding is consistent with Hidayatullah et al. (2025) and Simamora & Suparna (2025) which confirm that social media marketing significantly contributes to increasing brand awareness. This result reinforces the notion that social media marketing is not merely an additional promotional channel, but a strategic tool that—through informative content, appealing visuals, active interaction, and consistent posting—enhances consumer awareness of a brand.

Hypothesis 3 confirms that social media influencers have a positive effect on purchase intention. This finding is in line with Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024) and Rahma et al. (2024) who reported a positive relationship. This suggests that influencer effectiveness in shaping purchase intention depends on credibility, relevance, and the appropriateness of endorsement strategies.

Hypothesis 4 indicates that social media marketing positively affects purchase intention. Mahesa (2023) also supports that social media marketing activities—such as visual content, interaction, and promotions—have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. Effective marketing on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, through engaging and relevant content, can strengthen consumer purchase intention toward Nyemil Saji products.

Pengujian hipotesis 5 menunjukkan bahwa *brand awareness* memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap *purchase intention*. Hypothesis 5 shows that brand awareness positively influences purchase intention. This finding aligns with Hasan & Haji (2025) and Chen (2024) who found that higher brand awareness increases the likelihood of purchase decisions. This highlights the importance of creative content, consistent interaction, and strong visual branding in shaping consumer buying intentions.

The results of Hypothesis 6 indicate that brand awareness does not mediate the relationship between social media influencer and purchase intention. This finding is consistent with Sesar et al. (2022), suggesting that the influence of social media influencers on purchase intention is often direct rather than mediated through brand awareness.

Hypothesis 7 demonstrates that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention, although the mediation effect is relatively weak. Temuan Zeqiri et al. (2024) support this result, indicating that social media marketing strengthens brand awareness, which in turn enhances purchase intention. However, if social media marketing is perceived negatively, it may weaken brand awareness and subsequently reduce purchase intention.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The findings of this study indicate that social media influencer endorsement does not have a positive effect on brand awareness, suggesting that influencer strategies used for promoting Nyemil Saji on TikTok have not effectively built brand awareness. In contrast, social media marketing shows a positive influence on brand awareness, confirming the importance of creative, interactive, and consistent marketing strategies. Both social media influencer endorsement and social media marketing have positive effects on purchase intention. Additionally, brand awareness positively influences purchase intention, confirming its role as a key factor in consumer decision-making.

However, brand awareness does not mediate the relationship between influencer endorsement and purchase intention and only weakly mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intention. These findings suggest that digital marketing strategies have a stronger direct effect on purchase intention rather than relying solely on increasing brand awareness.

Therefore, companies are recommended to optimize the alignment between influencer endorsement and brand identity, while strengthening social media marketing strategies that foster emotional connection and trust. Future research is encouraged to expand the sample size and respondent characteristics, as well as include additional variables such as brand trust, user experience, and content quality to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

## **Authors' Declaration**

This research was fully designed and conducted by the author, including idea formulation, methodological design, data analysis, and the writing of results and discussion. The author takes full responsibility for the content of this article and ensures that all parts have been prepared objectively and in accordance with the research data. The author has also reviewed and approved this manuscript for publication.

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