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The Role of Social Media Marketing Strategy, Consumer Engagement, and Company Responsiveness Mediated by Consumer Trust in Influencing Generation Z's Purchase Decisions for Local Fashion Brands in Ciracas District, East Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a key channel through which Generation Z consumers discover and evaluate local fashion brands. However, the relationships between brand communication, consumer interactions, and purchase decisions, particularly through the mediating role of consumer trust, remain unclear. This study examined the direct associations of social media marketing strategy, consumer engagement, and company responsiveness with purchase decisions and investigated the mediating role of consumer trust in these relationships in Ciracas District, East Jakarta. A cross-sectional online survey conducted from March to May 2026 yielded 308 valid responses from consumers aged 17–26 years who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software and 5,000 bootstrap resamples. All three predictors demonstrated positive and statistically significant direct associations with purchase decisions, with consumer engagement exhibiting the largest direct path coefficient (β = 0.291). Consumer trust partially mediated all three relationships, accounting for 33.0% of the total association for social media marketing strategy, 21.6% for consumer engagement, and 22.1% for company responsiveness. The model explained 77.6% of the variance in purchase decisions. These findings suggest that consumer trust complements the direct associations between brand practices and purchase decisions. Local fashion brands targeting Generation Z can leverage these findings to strengthen their social media marketing strategies, foster consumer engagement, improve responsiveness to consumer inquiries, and build consumer trust.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has driven structural transformations across various industrial sectors, including the fashion industry, accelerating innovation and expanding market reach beyond geographical boundaries (Glogar et al., 2025). The digital revolution has transformed how producers manufacture and distribute products and fundamentally reshaped global consumption patterns (S. Liu & Liu, 2025), ushering the fashion industry into a digitally driven era characterized by the integration of information technology, social media, and e-commerce as primary channels of brand–consumer interaction (Sun & Ha-Brookshire, 2025). Consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for product information, evaluate brands, and make purchasing decisions (Figueiredo et al., 2025), while

social commerce has positioned social media as a strategic environment in which consumer preferences are shaped through product visualization, brand narratives, influencer recommendations, and social validation (Panesar et al., 2026; George et al., 2025). Consequently, social media has emerged as an accessible, visually oriented, and interactive source of information for assessing product quality, comparing prices, and identifying fashion trends (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025). Table 1 illustrates this shift, indicating that 82% of respondents in a 2025 survey reported using social media for product discovery and research, with YouTube identified as the most widely used platform (Rosnerova et al., 2025).

Table 1. Use of Social Media Platforms for Product Research in 2025

Platform	Respondents (%)	Platform	Respondents (%)
YouTube	52	Reddit	16
Facebook	45	Snapchat	15
Instagram	38	LinkedIn	8
TikTok	34	WhatsApp	7
Pinterest	26	Other	3
X (Twitter)	17	None of the above	18

Source: Salminen (2025), as cited in the manuscript; converted from the original bar chart.

Social media plays a dominant role in the fashion industry because fashion products are highly visual, symbolic, and closely associated with personal identity (Toebast-Wensink et al., 2025). Consequently, fashion marketing relies on compelling visual narratives, emotional engagement, and rapid responses to emerging trends (Del Olmo Arriaga et al., 2025). Digital fast fashion, microtrends, and algorithm-driven virality have shortened product life cycles (Damayanti et al., 2025), making brand success dependent not only on product quality but also on the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions (Haque & Lang, 2025). Generation Z (Gen Z), the first generation to grow up in a predominantly digital environment, exhibits consumption behaviors that differ substantially from those of previous generations (Escourido-Calvo et al., 2025) and demonstrates high responsiveness to digital content, online trends, and platform-based interactions (Prashar & Kaushal, 2025). Gen Z consumers are particularly responsive to emerging trends, visual content, and social influences (Huwaida et al., 2024), frequently using TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube as sources of information for fashion inspiration and brand evaluation (K. Hu et al., 2025). Their purchasing behavior is also strongly influenced by social media influencers and user-generated content (El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025). Furthermore, they tend to favor authentic brands that align with their lifestyles and values (Moulidhanty & Aruan, 2024) and prefer personalized, interactive brand communication (Radithya & Rosidah, 2025).

Survey findings further reinforce these patterns. Among Gen Z consumers, 58% reported making purchases based on recommendations from influencers or content creators, compared with 46% of Generation X consumers and 38% of baby boomers. Additionally, 49% reported purchasing more fashion products because of social media exposure (SurveyMonkey, 2025). In Indonesia, the most widely used social media and messaging platforms among Gen Z in 2025 were WhatsApp (84.7%), Instagram (83.3%), TikTok (79.4%), and YouTube (67.4%) (GoodStats, 2025). Fashion ranked second only to basic necessities in Gen Z's net spending intentions, accounting for 48% compared with 51% for basic necessities (Databoks Katadata, 2024). The emergence of local streetwear, modest fashion, urban fashion, and sustainable fashion brands reflects the increasing competitiveness of domestic fashion products (Christiarini et al., 2025), further supported by national initiatives encouraging consumers to purchase locally produced goods (Rimadias & Sufina, 2025). Local fashion brands increasingly rely on digital marketing strategies to expand their market reach and improve conversion rates (Huwaida et al., 2024), reflecting a broader transition from conventional marketing channels

to interactive digital platforms (Suzianti et al., 2023) that facilitate engagement with Gen Z consumers (Lacap et al., 2025). However, many local brands experience temporary increases in sales followed by difficulties in retaining consumers, highlighting the importance of sustained consumer engagement and prompt, personalized responses (Kusuma et al., 2024). Jakarta, with its substantial urban Gen Z population, represents an important market for evaluating the digital marketing strategies of local fashion brands (Rachmawati & Nugrahaeni, 2026). Its high levels of social media engagement and online shopping activity (Heriyati et al., 2024) also make it a strategic setting for examining the relationships between social media marketing practices and Gen Z's purchase decisions (Radithya & Rosidah, 2025).

This study is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), originally developed by Fishbein and Ajzen, which proposes that individual behavior is preceded by behavioral intention, which is shaped by attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms (Gundala et al., 2022; Panjaitan & Cahya, 2025). TRA and its extension, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), have been widely applied to explain purchase intentions and sustainable or environmentally responsible consumption behaviors (Rahma et al., 2024, 2025; Rai & Narwal, 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). Purchase decisions constitute a central component of consumer behavior and represent the purchasing stage within a broader decision-making process encompassing need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and postpurchase behavior. This process is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Kotler & Keller, 2016, 2023; Kotler et al., 2021; Rachmad, 2024; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2015; Solomon, 2018). In this study, the purchase decision construct is operationalized through purchase interest, purchase consideration, and willingness to buy (Yeo et al., 2022), while Gen Z's fashion purchasing behavior is associated with digital familiarity, identity expression, brand reputation, and online consumer reviews (Azmi et al., 2025; Guo & Luo, 2023; Katyal & Sehgal, 2025).

Social media marketing strategy refers to the strategic use of social technologies, digital platforms, and online media to create, communicate, and deliver value while establishing sustainable relationships with consumers (Evans, 2010; Kadam, 2025; Susanti, 2025). Its defining characteristics include authentic communication, two-way interaction, social validation, and audience reach (Zarrella, 2009). In this study, social media marketing strategy is measured through informativeness, interaction, and personalization (Ngo et al., 2025, 2026). Marketing and strategic management literature emphasizes its importance in brand development, marketing analytics, and data-driven decision-making (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, 2021; Kotler et al., 2020; Tjiptono, 2015, 2020; Zeithaml et al., 2020). Recent empirical studies have also established relationships between social media marketing activities, firm-generated content, marketing analytics, and various consumer outcomes, including brand equity, consumer engagement, brand loyalty, purchase intention, and revisit intention (Al-Abdallah et al., 2025; Almashaleh et al., 2025; Chakranarayan & Victor, 2025; Huo & Filieri, 2025; Ismael et al., 2025; Ngo et al., 2024; Selvakumar et al., 2025; Wilopo & Nuralam, 2025; Zahran, 2025). Consumer engagement refers to a psychological state emerging from interactions between consumers and brands, reflected in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses (Benegas & Zanfardini, 2023; Brodie et al., 2015; Sallaku et al., 2025). In this study, consumer engagement is operationalized through augmenting, co-developing, and influencing behaviors (Tedjakusuma et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Previous research examining engagement with branded content, short-form videos, live streaming, augmented reality, virtual fitting rooms, and artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools has demonstrated significant associations with purchase intention and consumer loyalty (Duffett & Maraule, 2024; Huang & Zhou, 2025; Konale et al., 2025; Krowinska & Dineva, 2025; Lang et al., 2025; Pu et al., 2025; Rehman et al., 2025; Sarkis et al., 2025; Xiao & Chen, 2025).

Company responsiveness refers to a company's willingness and ability to address consumer needs, inquiries, and complaints promptly, accurately, and appropriately. It constitutes a fundamental dimension of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988) and is associated with consumer satisfaction, loyalty, cross-buying behavior, and referrals (Sharma et al., 2021; Srinivasan et al., 2021; Yum & Kim, 2024). Company responsiveness is particularly visible in social media environments, where consumers can directly observe how brands address inquiries, feedback, and complaints (Cheng & Lee, 2023; Ennser-Jedenastik et al., 2022; Lee & Chung, 2023). Furthermore, advances in AI-based customer relationship management (CRM) systems have increasingly supported companies in improving the efficiency and consistency of their responses (Ozay et al., 2024). In this study, company responsiveness is measured through delivery speed, after-sales service, and response time (Rita et al., 2019; Saad et al., 2022; Thuy et al., 2025). Consumer trust refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's competence, integrity, and benevolence, particularly its ability and willingness to fulfill its promises and deliver expected value (Khalfallah & Keller, 2025; Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Accordingly, consumer trust is measured through benevolence, competence, and integrity (Monfort et al., 2025). Previous studies have identified trust as an important predictor of social commerce engagement, consumer loyalty, impulse purchasing, and online purchasing behavior (Ahmad et al., 2025; Arizal et al., 2024; Fathia & Halim, 2025; Mallik et al., 2025). Additionally, Gen Z's purchase intentions are shaped by social commerce adoption, influencer recommendations, perceived value, product attributes, price perceptions, and brand awareness (Azhar et al., 2023; Chiu & Ho, 2023; Gong & Seo, 2025; C. Liu et al., 2023; Rahmatia et al., 2026; Singh et al., 2025; Tadjudin et al., 2025; Tran et al., 2022).

Previous empirical studies provide support for the hypothesized relationships among social media marketing strategy, consumer engagement, company responsiveness, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. Social media marketing has been found to positively influence Gen Z's intention to purchase local products (Waworuntu et al., 2022), while customization, advertising, and interactive communication contribute to purchase intention (Deepika & Massand, 2025). Additional research has demonstrated that social media marketing activities are positively associated with Gen Z's purchase intentions and brand-related outcomes (An, 2025; Rinaldy Achmad & S AB, 2025; Wahyu et al., 2024). Consumer engagement, reflected in activities such as liking, commenting, sharing content, and participating in promotional campaigns, strengthens emotional connections with brands and is associated with consumer loyalty and purchase decisions (Bunyamin & Tjahyadi, 2024; Rehman et al., 2025). Similarly, prompt responses to consumer inquiries through social media improve perceptions of brand professionalism and strengthen purchase intentions (Roy et al., 2025), while responsive customer service contributes to positive consumer experiences (Thuy et al., 2025). Consumer trust has also been identified as a key mediating variable in the relationships between social media marketing, consumer engagement, company responsiveness, and purchase decisions (Sanjaya et al., 2025). Trust can be strengthened through consistent brand communication and transparency (Firdiansyah et al., 2025) and has been shown to mediate relationships involving purchase decisions in social commerce environments (Hermawanto et al., 2025; N. Rahmawati & Mangifera, 2023; Syah & Salim, 2024). Furthermore, consumer trust serves as an important mechanism linking digital marketing exposure to purchasing behavior among Gen Z consumers (Humairoh et al., 2023; Noor et al., 2025; R. Rahmawati & Hidayati, 2023; Wiratha & Kemalasari, 2025).

Nevertheless, several research gaps remain. Relatively few studies have developed integrative models explaining the combined roles of social media marketing strategy, consumer engagement, and company responsiveness in shaping purchase decisions for local fashion brands in Indonesia. Moreover, limited research has specifically examined Gen Z consumers as the primary target population in social media-driven fashion purchasing contexts,

particularly at the district level. Practical frameworks that integrate digital marketing practices with consumer trust as a mediating mechanism also remain insufficiently developed. To address these gaps, this study proposes FASTER (Fashion Advancement through Social Media Targeted Engagement & Response), a conceptual framework integrating social media marketing strategy, targeted consumer engagement, and company responsiveness, with consumer trust serving as a mediating mechanism in Gen Z's purchase decisions. Specifically, the study aims to examine the direct associations of social media marketing strategy (H1), consumer engagement (H3), and company responsiveness (H5) with purchase decisions concerning local fashion brands among Gen Z consumers in Ciracas District, East Jakarta. Furthermore, it investigates the indirect associations of these three independent variables with purchase decisions through the mediating role of consumer trust (H2, H4, and H6). By integrating these relationships into a unified conceptual framework, this study seeks to contribute to the literature on digital consumer behavior and provide practical insights for local fashion brands seeking to strengthen consumer engagement, enhance responsiveness, build trust, and improve purchasing outcomes.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative survey approach with a descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional design. Data were collected in Ciracas District, East Jakarta, from March to May 2026. The target population comprised Generation Z consumers who resided or were active in Ciracas District, had been exposed to social media marketing content from local fashion brands, and had purchased or expressed an interest in purchasing local fashion products. Respondents were recruited through purposive sampling based on three inclusion criteria: being 17–26 years old, residing or being active in Ciracas District, and having been exposed to local fashion brand content on social media. The Lemeshow formula, assuming a population proportion of 0.50 and a 5% margin of error, yielded an initial sample size of 384 respondents. Due to time and resource constraints, the recruitment target was reduced to 300 respondents, resulting in 308 valid responses. Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms.

The research instrument comprised 45 items measuring five constructs, with nine items per construct, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), as presented in Table 2. A pilot test involving 30 respondents indicated acceptable item validity, with Pearson correlation coefficients ranging from 0.477 to 0.879, exceeding the critical value of 0.361 ($p < 0.05$). Internal consistency reliability was also satisfactory, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.751 to 0.781.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software (Hair et al., 2022). Descriptive analysis summarized respondents' perceptions using mean scores, while the measurement model was assessed for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability through indicator loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability. The structural model was evaluated using variance inflation factors (VIF), coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), predictive performance (Q^2predict, RMSE, and MAE), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Hypotheses were tested using 5,000 bootstrap resamples, with statistical significance established at $p < 0.05$. The mediating role of consumer trust was examined through specific indirect effects, the significance of direct and indirect paths, and the variance accounted for (VAF) (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Operational Variables and Indicators

Variable	Indicators (items)	Source
Social media marketing strategy (X1)	Informativeness (X1.1–1.3); interaction (X1.4–1.6); personalization (X1.7–1.9)	Ngo et al. (2025, 2026)
Consumer engagement (X2)	Augmenting (X2.1–2.3); co-developing (X2.4–2.6); influencing (X2.7–2.9)	Tedjakusuma et al. (2025); Zhang et al. (2025)
Company responsiveness (X3)	Delivery speed (X3.1–3.3); after-sale service (X3.4–3.6); response time (X3.7–3.9)	Rita et al. (2019); Saad et al. (2022); Thuy et al. (2025)
Consumer trust (Z)	Benevolence (Z1–3); competence (Z4–6); integrity (Z7–9)	Monfort et al. (2025)
Purchase decision (Y)	Purchase interest (Y1–3); purchase consideration (Y4–6); willingness to buy (Y7–9)	Yeo et al. (2022)

Source: Processed by the researcher (2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile and Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 summarizes the 308 respondents. Most were women (62.99%), aged 18–21 years (38.96%), university students (44.16%), holders of a bachelor's degree (47.73%), had purchased local fashion products two to three times (47.08%), and mainly used Instagram (36.36%) followed by TikTok (31.17%) to find product information. The profile indicates digitally active young consumers with repeated purchase experience and a preference for visual platforms.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics (n = 308)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male / Female	114 / 194	37.01 / 62.99
Age	< 18 / 18–21 / 22–25 / > 25 years	23 / 120 / 114 / 51	7.47 / 38.96 / 37.01 / 16.56
Status	Pupil / University student / Worker / Other	40 / 136 / 111 / 21	12.99 / 44.16 / 36.04 / 6.82
Last education	High school / Diploma / Bachelor's / Master's–Doctoral	93 / 46 / 147 / 22	30.19 / 14.94 / 47.73 / 7.14
Purchase frequency	1 time / 2–3 times / > 3 times	84 / 145 / 79	27.27 / 47.08 / 25.65
Main platform	Instagram / TikTok / YouTube / WhatsApp / Facebook / Other	112 / 96 / 45 / 36 / 10 / 9	36.36 / 31.17 / 14.61 / 11.69 / 3.25 / 2.92

Source: Primary data processed (2026).

As shown in Table 4, all variables fall in the high category (means of 3.693–3.786) with standard deviations below 1.00, indicating positive and relatively homogeneous perceptions. Purchase decision has the highest mean (3.786) and company responsiveness the largest dispersion (0.881). At the item level, the highest and lowest means were X1.2 (information needed before buying, 3.760) and X1.4 (fast admin response, 3.653) for social media marketing strategy; X2.7 (recommending the brand, 3.808) and X2.4 (willingness to give suggestions, 3.734) for engagement; X3.1 (fast order processing, 3.737) and X3.9 (responsiveness outside peak hours, 3.662) for responsiveness; Z6 (professional sales process, 3.779) and Z7 (honesty in product information, 3.685) for trust; and Y5 (comparing with other products, 3.821) and Y8–Y9 (3.750) for purchase decision.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Min	Max	SD	Category
Social media marketing strategy (X1)	3.701	1.000	5.000	0.873	High
Consumer engagement (X2)	3.772	1.000	5.000	0.857	High
Company responsiveness (X3)	3.693	1.000	5.000	0.881	High
Consumer trust (Z)	3.735	1.000	5.000	0.851	High
Purchase decision (Y)	3.786	1.000	5.000	0.863	High

Source: Primary data processed (2026).

Measurement Model Evaluation

The outer model is presented in Figure 1, and the outer loadings are summarized in Table 5. All 45 indicators have loadings above 0.70, ranging from 0.764 (X2.1) to 0.845 (Y9), so all are convergently valid and retained.

Table 5. Outer Loadings of Measurement Items

Item	X1	X2	X3	Z	Y
1	0.805	0.764	0.794	0.773	0.812
2	0.812	0.824	0.789	0.793	0.782
3	0.806	0.803	0.783	0.823	0.792
4	0.795	0.799	0.816	0.817	0.776
5	0.786	0.796	0.798	0.789	0.810
6	0.802	0.789	0.809	0.802	0.792
7	0.807	0.817	0.822	0.808	0.830
8	0.803	0.821	0.839	0.814	0.820
9	0.821	0.821	0.807	0.791	0.845

Note: X1 = social media marketing strategy; X2 = consumer engagement; X3 = company responsiveness; Z = consumer trust; Y = purchase decision. Item numbers refer to the order within each variable. Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

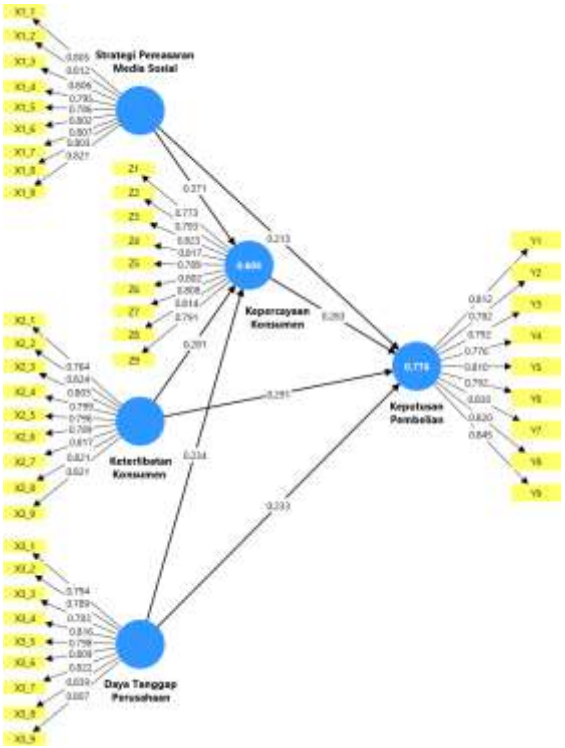


Figure 1. Outer Model Results

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

Discriminant validity was assessed with HTMT (Table 6). All values are below the strict threshold of 0.85; the highest, between consumer trust and purchase decision (0.836), approaches the threshold, reflecting the conceptual closeness of the two constructs as antecedent and consequence, but the constructs remain empirically distinct.

Table 6. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Variable	X1	X2	X3	Z
Consumer engagement (X2)	0.718			
Company responsiveness (X3)	0.692	0.657		
Consumer trust (Z)	0.761	0.722	0.691	
Purchase decision (Y)	0.812	0.822	0.781	0.836

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

Table 7 shows that Cronbach's alpha (0.930–0.933) and composite reliability (0.942–0.944) exceed 0.70 and AVE values (0.642–0.651) exceed 0.50, confirming that the measurement model is reliable and suitable for structural testing.

Table 7. Construct Reliability and AVE

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Remark
Social media marketing strategy (X1)	0.932	0.943	0.647	Reliable
Consumer engagement (X2)	0.931	0.943	0.646	Reliable
Company responsiveness (X3)	0.933	0.944	0.651	Reliable
Consumer trust (Z)	0.930	0.942	0.642	Reliable
Purchase decision (Y)	0.933	0.944	0.651	Reliable

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

Structural Model Evaluation

Inner VIF values range from 1.916 (company responsiveness → consumer trust) to 2.530 (consumer trust → purchase decision), below 5, so there is no multicollinearity. Table 8 shows that consumer trust has an R^2 of 0.605 (moderate) and purchase decision 0.776 (substantial): 60.5% of the variation in trust is explained by the three independent variables, and 77.6% of the variation in purchase decision is explained by the four predictors. Positive Q^2predict values (0.591 and 0.732) with relatively low RMSE and MAE indicate strong predictive relevance. The SRMR of 0.039 (d_ULS = 1.576; d_G = 0.830; NFI = 0.878) is below 0.08, indicating good fit.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
Consumer trust (Z)	0.605	0.601	0.591	0.645	0.443
Purchase decision (Y)	0.776	0.773	0.732	0.522	0.367

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

The effect sizes in Table 9 show that consumer engagement has the largest effect on purchase decision ($f^2 = 0.170$, medium), whereas social media marketing strategy has a medium effect on consumer trust (0.161) but a small effect on purchase decision (0.080). The remaining effects are small.

Table 9. Inner VIF and Effect Size (f^2)

Path	VIF	f^2	Category
Social media marketing strategy → Consumer trust	2.169	0.161	Medium
Consumer engagement → Consumer trust	2.015	0.099	Small
Company responsiveness → Consumer trust	1.916	0.072	Small
Social media marketing strategy → Purchase decision	2.518	0.080	Small
Consumer engagement → Purchase decision	2.214	0.170	Medium
Company responsiveness → Purchase decision	2.055	0.117	Small
Consumer trust → Purchase decision	2.530	0.141	Small

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

Table 10 presents the path coefficients and hypothesis tests based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples. All direct and indirect effects are positive and significant, so H1–H6 are accepted. Because each direct effect remains significant in the same direction as its indirect effect, consumer trust acts as a complementary partial mediator, with VAF values of 33.0% for social media marketing strategy [0.105/(0.213 + 0.105)], 21.6% for consumer engagement [0.080/(0.291 + 0.080)], and 22.1% for company responsiveness [0.066/(0.233 + 0.066)].

Table 10. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis / Path	O	M	SD	t	p	Result
H1: X1 → Y	0.213	0.212	0.070	3.041	0.002	Accepted
H3: X2 → Y	0.291	0.294	0.069	4.227	0.000	Accepted
H5: X3 → Y	0.233	0.229	0.060	3.860	0.000	Accepted
X1 → Z	0.371	0.373	0.071	5.194	0.000	Significant
X2 → Z	0.281	0.281	0.066	4.254	0.000	Significant
X3 → Z	0.234	0.233	0.065	3.587	0.000	Significant
Z → Y	0.283	0.283	0.072	3.908	0.000	Significant
H2: X1 → Z → Y	0.105	0.106	0.037	2.842	0.005	Accepted
H4: X2 → Z → Y	0.080	0.079	0.027	2.994	0.003	Accepted
H6: X3 → Z → Y	0.066	0.066	0.027	2.466	0.014	Accepted

Note: O = original sample; M = sample mean; SD = standard deviation; X1 = social media marketing strategy; X2 = consumer engagement; X3 = company responsiveness; Z = consumer trust; Y = purchase decision. Source: Data processed with SmartPLS (2026).

The Effect of Social Media Marketing Strategy on Purchase Decision

Social media marketing strategy has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision (H1). The better local brands present relevant information, communicate responsively, and treat consumers as individuals, the stronger Gen Z's tendency to buy. From the TRA perspective, informative and personal content forms positive attitudes, while active interaction signals social support for the purchase, strengthening intention. Informativeness matters because online fashion buyers cannot touch fabrics or try sizes, so complete product information reduces uncertainty. Interaction, measured by the speed of admin replies, received the lowest mean (X1.4 = 3.653) and therefore offers the greatest room for improvement, while personalization (X1.9, loading 0.821) most strongly reflects the construct. These results support Waworuntu et al. (2022) and Deepika and Massand (2025), who identified customization and interaction as the strongest drivers of Gen Z purchase intention, as well as El-Shihy and Awaad (2025), Rinaldy Achmad and S AB (2025), and Kim et al. (2023); Huang et al. (2024) further show that content design determines the effectiveness of social media marketing.

The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust for Social Media Marketing Strategy

Consumer trust mediates the effect of social media marketing strategy on purchase decision (H2), with the largest indirect effect (0.105) among the three mediation paths. Clear, consistent, and accurate content allows consumers to judge the credibility, competence, and benevolence of a brand; once information is perceived as matching the actual product, consumers are more confident that the brand will keep its promises. Although trust is not a core construct of classical TRA, it can be positioned as a behavioral belief that forms a positive evaluation of purchasing. This finding agrees with Humairoh et al. (2023), Noor et al. (2025), and Wiratha and Kemalasari (2025), who describe trust as a bridge between digital marketing and actual purchase, and with Hermawanto et al. (2025), N. Rahmawati and Mangifera (2023), and Sanjaya et al. (2025). Brands therefore should not judge social media success by views, followers, or likes alone, but by whether content builds trust through transparent product information, unedited visuals, authentic reviews, and consistency between promotional messages and the consumer experience.

The Effect of Consumer Engagement on Purchase Decision

Consumer engagement has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision (H3), and its coefficient (0.291) is the largest among the three independent variables. Engaged consumers have processed brand information deeply, which forms positive attitudes, while sharing experiences and recommending the brand reflects and reinforces subjective norms. Influencing was the most prominent form of engagement (X2.7 = 3.808; X2.8 and X2.9 loadings = 0.821), indicating that Gen Z engagement is social and visible, whereas co-developing had the lowest mean (X2.4 = 3.734), showing that participation in product development demands the most effort. Continuous monitoring of brand updates (X2.2, loading 0.824) reflects engagement more strongly than one-off information search (X2.1, 0.764). The result is consistent with Bunyamin and Tjahyadi (2024), Krowinska and Dineva (2025), Sallaku et al. (2025), and Cao and Matsuoka (2025), while Huang et al. (2024) emphasize that the quality of engagement matters more than its quantity. Local brands should therefore shift from broadcasting content to participatory approaches.

The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust for Consumer Engagement

Consumer trust mediates the effect of consumer engagement on purchase decision (H4) with an indirect effect of 0.080. Repeated interaction allows consumers to observe how a brand answers questions, handles complaints, and communicates with its community, and positive assessments of openness, consistency, and care develop into trust. High engagement alone does not guarantee purchase, because consumers may interact only for information or entertainment; purchase becomes more likely when engagement produces trust. Consumers whose suggestions are acknowledged gain direct evidence of the brand's benevolence, while sharing and recommending provide social validation that makes their beliefs more resistant to doubt. The relatively low mean for willingness to give suggestions indicates that participation spaces offered by local brands are not yet fully used. This mediating role of trust is in line with Zhang et al. (2025), Hermawanto et al. (2025), and N. Rahmawati and Mangifera (2023). Ignored comments, unanswered questions, or deleted complaints can erode trust even when engagement appears high.

The Effect of Company Responsiveness on Purchase Decision

Company responsiveness has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision (H5). Fast and solutive responses to questions in direct messages or comments form positive attitudes and reduce perceived risks about product fit and complaint handling, while responses to other consumers in public spaces confirm that buying from the brand is approved by the digital community. Responsiveness is one of the core dimensions of service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988), and its importance increases given Gen Z's high expectations of speed. Order processing was rated well (X3.1 = 3.737), but product conformity (X3.3, loading 0.783) remains the most vulnerable point; accuracy of answers (X3.8, loading 0.839) matters more than reply speed alone; and service outside peak hours had the lowest mean (X3.9 = 3.662). These findings support Roy et al. (2025), Thuy et al. (2025), Garcia-Collart (2023), Wen and Li (2025), Riswandi et al. (2025), Dzreke and Dzreke (2025), Novita et al. (2023), and Lee and Chung (2023), who note that every brand response on social media is visible to a wide audience.

The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust for Company Responsiveness

Consumer trust mediates the effect of company responsiveness on purchase decision (H6), although its indirect effect (0.066) is the smallest of the three paths. Fast, accurate, and empathetic responses reduce uncertainty about stock, size, payment, delivery, and returns, and consistent responses lead consumers to judge that the brand has the competence and commitment to fulfil its responsibilities. Accurate delivery builds trust in competence, assured complaint handling builds trust in benevolence, and timely answers show that the brand is available when needed. Limited service outside peak hours restrains the full formation of trust,

which helps explain why this indirect effect is the smallest, while it remains statistically significant. The result supports the view that responsiveness strengthens trust in digital services and that trust drives purchase decisions (Sanjaya et al., 2025; Wen & Li, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Local brands should set clear digital service standards and keep information consistent across platforms.

Overall, the results support the FASTER framework, in which complementary social media marketing, engagement, and responsiveness drive purchase decisions, with trust converting positive perceptions into purchases. Several limitations apply. The sample was limited to Gen Z in Ciracas District, so the results cannot be generalized to other regions; self-reported data may contain subjective bias; the cross-sectional design cannot capture changes over time on dynamic social media platforms; and other factors such as price, product quality, brand image, influencers, reviews, trends, and lifestyle were outside the model.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that social media marketing strategy, consumer engagement, and company responsiveness each had a positive and statistically significant direct effect on Generation Z's purchase decisions regarding local fashion brands in Ciracas District, East Jakarta. Consumer trust also exhibited a complementary partial mediating role in all three relationships, indicating that trust strengthened rather than replaced the direct effects of these factors on purchase decisions. Informative content, two-way communication, and personalized interactions encouraged purchasing decisions, while active consumer participation through information seeking, feedback, and brand recommendations reinforced purchasing tendencies. Furthermore, prompt and effective responses to consumer inquiries and complaints helped reduce perceived risks. These factors also contributed to building consumer trust, which served as an additional pathway linking digital marketing practices to purchase decisions.

Based on these findings, local fashion brands should establish measurable response standards, implement automated replies for frequently asked questions, and ensure adequate customer service coverage during peak engagement periods. Integrating social media platforms, messaging services, and comment sections into a centralized customer relationship management (CRM) system could improve communication efficiency and prevent consumer inquiries from being overlooked. Brands should also encourage meaningful consumer participation through interactive polls, feedback channels, question-and-answer sessions, product trials, and user-generated content initiatives, while demonstrating responsiveness to consumer feedback. Extending customer support beyond conventional business hours through rotating staff schedules and AI-powered chatbots could further improve accessibility and responsiveness. Additionally, brands should maintain transparency and consistency between their marketing claims and actual product offerings by providing accurate information about product sizes, materials, and return policies. Future research should examine potential moderating variables, including social media platform type, digital literacy, and frequency of social media use, while expanding the geographical scope to other cities. Longitudinal research designs could provide further insights into how consumer trust and purchase decisions evolve over time. Additional variables, such as brand authenticity, user-generated content quality, and influencer credibility, should also be considered. Qualitative or mixed-methods approaches could further enrich the understanding of how Generation Z consumers develop and maintain trust in local fashion brands.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in this research and has no commercial or financial relationship with any party that could potentially influence the conduct of the research, the analysis of results, or the presentation of findings.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author is fully responsible for all stages of this research, from conceptualization, data collection, and analysis to writing and refining the manuscript.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE STATEMENT

In preparing this manuscript, the author used artificial intelligence (AI) technology to a limited extent, only to help improve grammar and check language accuracy. All ideas, analyses, and substantive content are entirely the author's own work and responsibility.

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