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Green Social Media Influencers: Shaping Gen Z's Green Purchase Intention through Trust and Attitude

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on green purchase intention among Generation Z, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of green trust and green attitude. Adopting a quantitative approach, data was collected from 295 Generation Z respondents in Greater Jakarta who follow eco-conscious influencers. Structural equation modeling and bootstrapping techniques were employed for data analysis. The results show that social media influencers do not have a direct effect on green purchase intention; however, they exert a positive influence on both green trust and green attitude. Furthermore, green trust and green attitude fully mediate the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention, with both variables significantly affecting green purchase intention. These findings highlight the importance of fostering trust and positive attitudes through influencer-generated content to enhance eco-friendly product purchase intentions among Generation Z consumers. This study contributes to the growing literature on green consumer behavior in the digital era and offers practical insights for marketers targeting environmentally conscious young consumers. Additionally, it provides avenues for future research on the role of digital marketing dynamics in promoting sustainable products among youth.

KEYWORDS

Social Media Influencers
Green Purchase Intention
Green Trust
Green Attitude

INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have become increasingly complex and urgent on a global scale, particularly in the modern era, where digital technology and fast-paced consumption dominate everyday life. Issues such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, deforestation, and rising carbon emissions have prompted societies worldwide to re-evaluate their lifestyles and consumption patterns. In response to these challenges, the concept of green consumption has emerged, referring to consumer behavior that considers the ecological impact of products purchased and consumed (Teixeira et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024).

Although awareness of environmental sustainability has increased significantly, a notable gap persists between environmental awareness and actual consumer behavior, a phenomenon known as

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the attitude-behavior gap (Zhuo et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2019). Consumers may express concern for environmental issues, yet these attitudes do not always translate into environmentally responsible purchasing decisions. This discrepancy poses a substantial challenge to the achievement of sustainable consumption objectives.

One consumer segment that has gained increasing scholarly attention in green consumer behavior research is Generation Z, defined as individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. As digital natives, this generation is deeply embedded in digital technologies and heavily engaged with social media as a platform for communication, information seeking, lifestyle inspiration, and consumption reference (Sugiarti et al., 2023; Valendia & Purwanegara, 2022). Interestingly, despite demonstrating relatively high levels of social and environmental awareness, Generation Z's actual purchasing behavior does not always consistently reflect green consumption principles.

Within the digital ecosystem, social media influencers (SMIs) play a pivotal role as persuasive and credible communicators. Influencers are seen as figures capable of building emotional closeness and trust, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions through personal, authentic, and persuasive content (Ki et al., 2020; Martínez-Navalón et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2017). Consequently, SMIs have become an increasingly popular marketing tool for brands, including those promoting eco-friendly products.

Prior research has indicated that SMIs exert a positive influence on green purchase intention (GPI) (Sugiarti et al., 2023; De Veirman et al., 2017). However, empirical findings in the literature remain inconclusive. For example, Teixeira et al. (2023) found that the direct effect of influencers on GPI is not statistically significant. These mixed results suggest that the influence of SMIs may operate indirectly, necessitating the need to incorporate mediating variables to better explain the underlying psychological mechanisms of consumer behavioral change.

To address this inconsistency, recent studies have increasingly incorporated psychological mediators, such as green trust and green attitude. Green trust refers to the consumer's belief regarding the credibility of a product's environmental claims, which are often shaped by the trustworthiness of the influencer (Shahahbuddin, 2024). Trust plays a crucial role in combating concerns related to greenwashing, a practice in which brands misleadingly portray their products as environmentally friendly (Sun & Shi, 2022). Meanwhile, green attitudes reflect an individual's values, beliefs, and commitment toward environmental preservation and have been consistently identified as a strong predictor of green behavior (Putri et al., 2021; Sun & Xing, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the present study proposes a dual-mediation model that examines the influence of social media influencers on green purchase intention through the simultaneous mediation of green trust and green attitude. This approach seeks to reconcile contradictory findings in prior research while deepening the understanding of the psychological processes underpinning green consumer behavior within digital marketing contexts.

Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the influence of social media influencers on Generation Z's green purchase intention, with green trust and green attitude serving as mediating variables. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) examine the effect of social media influencers on green purchase intention; (2) examine the effect of social media influencers on green trust; (3) examine the effect of social media influencers on green attitude; (4) examine the effect of green trust on green purchase intention; (5) examine the effect of green attitude on green purchase intention; (6) examine the mediating role of green trust in the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention; and (7) examine the mediating role of green attitude in the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention. Based on the literature review, the hypotheses are formulated and presented in the proposed conceptual framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Influence Theory

Social influence theory, originally introduced by Kelman (1958), explains that behavior change occurs through three key processes: compliance, identification, and internalization. In the digital age, these processes have become even more pronounced, especially through the growing role of social media influencers.

Recent empirical research highlights the relevance of this theory in shaping green consumer behavior. For example, Liao (2024) found that social media users tend to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors when such actions are perceived as socially normative and endorsed by influential online figures. Similarly, Purnama et al. (2025) noted that social value orientation moderates the effect of social influence on pro-environmental actions, indicating that personal values and perceived social expectations jointly shape sustainable behaviors. Accordingly, social influence remains a critical theoretical lens for understanding how social media influencers impact eco-conscious decision-making within the digital environment.

Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

Social media influencers (SMIs) are individuals who have built credibility and amassed sizable followings on social media platforms, thereby possessing the persuasive power to affect followers' attitudes, preferences, and behaviors (Casaló et al., 2020; Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). They play a significant role in shaping consumer decision-making through the creation and dissemination of authentic content, particularly within lifestyle and fashion domains, and increasingly in sustainability-related contexts.

In the context of green marketing, SMIs have emerged as powerful agents in promoting sustainable consumption behaviors. When influencers consistently communicate eco-conscious values, they contribute to the legitimization and normalization of green practices among their audiences (Jin et al., 2019). Additionally, the development of parasocial relationships, defined as emotional, one-sided bonds between followers and influencers, enhances message effectiveness and can directly impact green purchase intention (Schouten et al., 2021; Jalali & Khalid, 2021). Research by Lou & Yuan (2019) and Ki et al. (2020) also supported the idea that message value, source credibility, and perceived expertise of SMIs significantly boost followers' trust in promoted green products. These factors serve as key psychological triggers in motivating eco-friendly consumer behavior, positioning SMIs as strategic partners in the advancement of green branding initiatives.

Green Trust (GT)

Green trust is a crucial psychological mechanism that influences environmentally responsible consumer behavior. It refers to consumers' willingness to rely on a brand or company based on perceptions of its environmental performance and the sincerity of its sustainability efforts. Chuah et al. (2020) emphasized that green trust is shaped not only by corporate environmental claims but also by the perceived alignment between those claims and the firm's actual environmental practices. In the era of green skepticism, trust acts as a protective factor against accusations of greenwashing and plays a central role in cultivating long-term relationships with environmentally conscious

consumers.

From a strategic standpoint, green trust functions as a mediating factor that connects various green marketing attributes to customer loyalty and purchase intention. This role is further reinforced by Nguyen-Viet & Thanh Tran (2024), who showed that corporate social responsibility (CSR) and green brand image enhance consumers' behavioral intention through the development of green trust, particularly in developing economies where environmental credibility is increasingly scrutinized.

Furthermore, the influence of green trust has been documented across a wide range of sectors, including organic food, healthcare services, and retail. Rashid & Lone (2024) reported that green trust strongly affects purchase intention in the organic food market, highlighting its importance in contexts where health and environmental concerns intersect. Meanwhile, Jannah et al. (2024) revealed that in outpatient healthcare services, green trust significantly boosts green brand equity, emphasizing that the perception of sustainability is equally vital in service-based industries. These studies collectively affirm that green trust is not merely an abstract or symbolic factor but a pivotal construct that translates green marketing strategies into tangible consumer outcomes.

Green Attitude (GA)

Green attitude refers to an individual's favorable evaluation or predisposition toward environmentally friendly products and behaviors. It plays a critical role in shaping green behavioral intention, particularly in the context of eco-conscious consumption. Shehawy & Khan (2024) found that green attitude significantly predicts green purchase intention, with this relationship further strengthened by green awareness, underscoring the role of environmental consciousness in activating attitudinal influences on behavior.

Amoako et al. (2020), employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), demonstrated that green attitude significantly influences young consumers' perceptions of green value and their willingness to engage in green purchasing. This underscores the importance of integrating environmental education and value-based campaigns among younger demographics. Van Tonder et al. (2023) further emphasized that green attitudes are shaped by internal values and social norms, which together foster green customer citizenship behaviors (e.g., advocacy, recycling, and participation in eco-initiatives). Similarly, Mehak and Batcha (2024) linked individual green attitudes to organizational sustainability, arguing that the alignment between green human resource practices and employee green attitudes enhances environmental performance in the workplace. Moreover, Corboș et al. (2024) highlighted that green attitude, coupled with effective green communication, plays a pivotal role in influencing consumers' actual green buying behavior. This finding illustrates how strategic communication efforts can help bridge the persistent gap between pro-environmental attitudes and concrete consumer actions.

Green Purchase Intention (GPI)

Green purchase intention refers to a consumer's deliberate intention to buy environmentally friendly products. It reflects a growing awareness of ecological issues and a desire to mitigate environmental harm through responsible consumption. Consumers with high levels of green purchase intention tend to value sustainability, perceive eco-friendly products as beneficial, and are motivated by emotional, social, and functional values (Amin & Tarun, 2021; Rashid & Lone, 2024; Sun & Xing,

2022).

Green purchase intention is shaped by various psychological and informational factors, including environmental knowledge, perceived effectiveness of green behavior, and credibility of environmental claims (Nguyen et al., 2019; Amoako et al., 2020). As digital platforms increasingly serve as primary information sources, exposure to eco-conscious messages, particularly those delivered by social media influencers and online marketing campaigns, can significantly strengthen consumers' green intentions (Jalali & Khalid, 2021; Teixeira et al., 2023).

Although green purchase intention does not always lead to actual purchasing behavior, it remains a strong predictor of eco-friendly consumption patterns (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Zhuo et al., 2022). A deeper understanding of green purchase intention, therefore, enables marketers and policymakers to design better strategies to promote sustainable products and shift consumer behavior toward environmental responsibility.

The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Green Purchase Intention

Recent empirical studies highlight the growing influence of social media influencers in promoting sustainable consumption. Influencers' perceived opinion leadership significantly contributes to shaping consumer behavior, including green purchasing, as consumers tend to rely on their guidance when making eco-conscious decisions (Casaló et al., 2020). Moreover, the perceived credibility of influencers, particularly in terms of trustworthiness and expertise, further enhances the persuasiveness of environmental claims, which in turn reinforces green consumption intentions (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

The effectiveness of influencer-driven environmental messaging is also contingent upon the alignment between an influencer's identity and the content being promoted. A strong influencer–message fit fosters emotional connection and enhances message authenticity, which, in turn, increases persuasive impact (Schouten et al., 2021). Additionally, emotional engagement and value-based messaging from influencers are key drivers of favorable consumer attitudes and intentions toward sustainable products (Lim et al., 2017). Notably, the manner in which influencers frame their roles, either as educators (*informers*) or entertainers, also affects consumer responsiveness, with informative and value-aligned content leading to stronger green purchase intention (Zhao et al., 2024).

Drawing from these findings, social media influencers are seen as key agents in promoting sustainable behavior. Their capacity to influence consumer perceptions and elicit emotional engagement with environmental issues has been consistently linked to higher levels of green purchase intention. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H_1: Social media influencers have a positive effect on green purchase intention.

The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Green Trust

Social media influencers play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions, particularly in building green trust, which refers to consumers' confidence in the environmental claims associated with products. According to Zhao et al. (2024), influencers perceived as authentic and informative can significantly enhance consumers' willingness to trust green-related messages. When influencers communicate sustainability themes consistently and integrate eco-friendly lifestyles into their

content, their perceived credibility increases, thereby reinforcing consumer trust (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Moreover, Casaló et al. (2020) highlighted that influencers who act as opinion leaders are more persuasive in influencing trust-related outcomes, especially when followers identify with them and regard them as reliable sources of environmental values.

Green trust is further strengthened when influencers' personal values align with the messages they convey. Jalali & Khalid (2021) demonstrated that when influencers visibly integrate eco-conscious habits in their lifestyles and communication, audiences are more likely to perceive the messages as genuine and internalize them. This finding aligns with Chuah et al. (2020), who emphasized that green trust is sustained through consistent environmental behavior demonstrated by both organizations and individuals. In this respect, the influencer's role extends beyond content creation to include modeling sustainable behaviors that enhance perceived integrity and value congruence.

In addition, green trust has been identified as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between influencer communication and green purchase intention. Amin & Tarun (2021) pointed out that green trust acts as a psychological assurance that validates consumers' environmentally conscious decisions. Supporting this, Nguyen-Viet & Thanh Tran (2024) asserted that green advertising by influencers significantly enhances consumer trust when the messaging is clear, consistent, and emotionally resonant. Based on the converging insights from these studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_2: Social media influencers have a positive effect on green trust.

The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Green Attitude

Social media influencers play a key role in shaping consumer attitudes toward environmentally friendly products, commonly referred to as green attitudes, through persuasive messaging and engaging content. Casaló et al. (2020) found that influencers, acting as opinion leaders, can positively influence followers' perceptions of sustainability. By consistently promoting eco-friendly values, influencers contribute to the formation of social norms that encourage pro-environmental attitudes (Zhao et al., 2024).

Visual content, in particular, is highly effective in influencing green attitudes. Jalali & Khalid (2021) demonstrated that images reflecting environmental concerns significantly affect followers' perceptions. When influencers share visually compelling eco-friendly messages, they foster environmental awareness and foster positive attitudes toward green products (Chen et al., 2020). Sustained exposure to such sustainability-oriented content further strengthens favorable green brand attitudes among followers.

In addition, the emotional bond between influencers and their followers, often conceptualized as parasocial interaction, plays a crucial role in shaping green attitudes. Ki et al. (2020) found that influencers who build authentic relationships with their audiences are more effective in influencing attitudes and behaviors. By promoting sustainable lifestyles in a relatable manner, influencers enhance message persuasiveness and encourage the development of more favorable green attitudes among followers (Shehawy & Khan, 2024). Based on this literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_3: Social media influencers have a positive effect on green attitude.

The Effect of Green Trust on Green Purchase Intention

Green trust plays a significant role in influencing consumers' green purchase intention by reducing skepticism and enhancing the perceived credibility of environmental claims. Research by Rashid & Lone (2024) showed that consumers who trust a product's environmental assertions are more likely to develop intentions to purchase eco-friendly products. This trust is particularly crucial in markets where greenwashing is prevalent, as transparency helps build a reliable connection between consumers and brands (Sun & Shi, 2022).

Trust is further amplified through social media influencers who provide credible and transparent environmental information. Teixeira et al. (2023) highlighted that influencers whose values align with sustainability are more effective in fostering trust, especially among younger consumers. This enhanced trust, in turn, directly influences consumer intention to purchase green products. Supporting this argument, Sugiarti et al. (2023) showed that influencer credibility is a key determinant in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions.

Moreover, green trust is strengthened by product-related factors, such as perceived quality and transparent communication of environmental claims. When brands clearly and consistently communicate their sustainability initiatives, they enhance consumer trust, which subsequently leads to stronger green purchase intentions (Corboș et al., 2024). Based on this body of research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_4: Green trust has a positive effect on green purchase intention.

The Effect of Green Attitude on Green Purchase Intention

Consumer attitudes toward environmentally friendly products (green attitude) are widely recognized as critical determinants of green purchase intention. Chen et al. (2020) suggested that individuals with positive attitudes toward sustainability and eco-friendly consumption are more likely to exhibit strong intentions to purchase green products. Such positive attitudes stem from environmental awareness and the belief that personal consumption choices can meaningfully contribute to sustainability efforts.

Findings from Yadav & Pathak (2017), as well as recent results by Teixeira et al. (2023), consistently showed that green attitude is a significant predictor of green purchase intention. The more favorable consumers' attitudes toward environmental protection, the greater their likelihood of engaging in green purchasing behavior. This relationship is supported by Sinh (2024), who found that green attitude amplifies the link between personal values and sustainable consumption intentions.

Moreover, although green attitude is influenced by factors such as environmental concern, it remains a central driver of green purchase intention. Consumers with positive sustainability-oriented attitudes are more inclined to select eco-friendly products, particularly among younger generations whose consumption decisions are strongly guided by environmental values (Putri et al., 2021). Based on this growing body of research, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_5: Green attitude has a positive effect on green purchase intention.

The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Green Purchase Intention Mediated By Green Trust

Green trust plays a critical mediating role in the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention. Hu et al. (2019) emphasized that trust in influencers significantly shapes consumer behavior, particularly in the context of endorsing sustainable products. When consumers trust an influencer, they are more inclined to believe in the credibility of the eco-friendly products being promoted, which subsequently strengthens their intention to purchase.

Similarly, Jannah et al. (2024) highlighted that green trust is a key factor in strengthening consumer engagement with environmentally responsible brands. Amin & Tarun (2021) further argued that green trust connects consumers' environmental values with green purchase intentions, such that higher levels of trust lead to stronger purchasing tendencies. Chuah et al. (2020) also noted that environmental concern, when combined with green trust, increases consumer engagement with brands that actively promote sustainability. These findings suggest that influencers who authentically endorse green products can effectively enhance consumer trust and, in turn, stimulate green purchase intentions.

Additionally, Nguyen-Viet & Thanh Tran (2024) pointed out that green trust mediates the effects of green advertising and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives on consumer behavior, underscoring its central role in driving sustainable consumption. Collectively, this body of research indicates that green trust is essential for translating influencer endorsements into genuine green purchase intentions. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_6: Green trust mediates the effect of social media influencers on green purchase intention.

The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Green Purchase Intention Mediated By Green Attitude

Green attitude plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention. Chen et al. (2020) found that consumers with positive green attitudes are more receptive to green brand messages and, consequently, exhibit stronger intentions to purchase sustainable products. This aligns with Lim et al. (2017), who emphasized that customer attitude mediates the impact of influencer marketing on purchase behavior.

Further supporting this, Corboș et al. (2024) argued that influencers actively shape consumer attitudes in sustainability contexts, thereby encouraging more eco-friendly purchasing decisions. Similarly, Putri et al. (2021) observed that attitudes significantly mediate the effect of environmental knowledge on green product purchase intentions. These findings highlight the importance of aligning influencer messages with consumers' environmental values to strengthen green purchasing behavior.

In addition, Shehawy and Khan (2024) identified that green awareness moderates the relationship between green attitude and purchase intentions, further underlining the importance of cultivating a positive green attitude through influencer-driven communication. Collectively, this body of research emphasizes the pivotal role of both social media influencers and consumer attitudes in promoting sustainable consumption behaviors. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_7: Green attitude mediates the effect of social media influencers on green purchase intention.

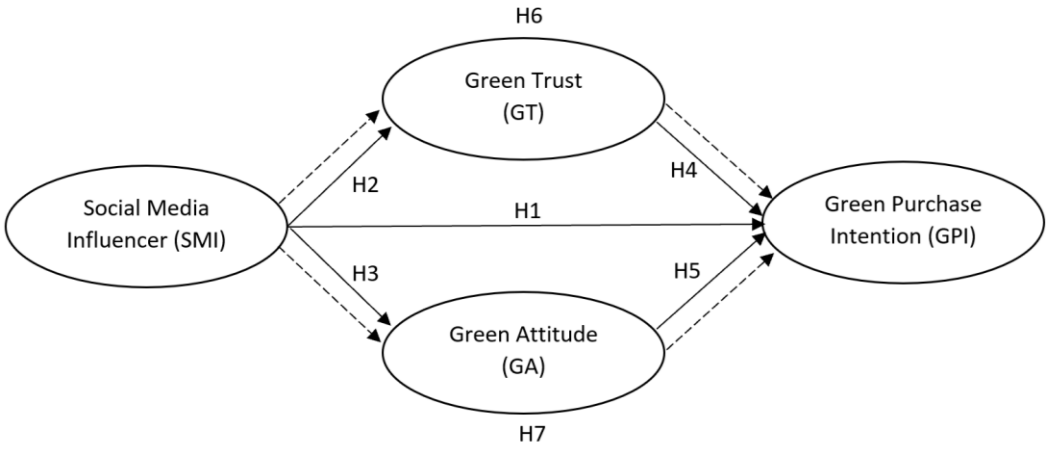


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the influence of social media influencers (SMIs) on green purchase intention (GPI), both directly and indirectly through green attitude (GA) and green trust (GT) as mediating variables. The unit of analysis comprised Generation Z individuals in the Greater Jakarta area who actively used social media and followed influencers with an expressed concern for environmental issues. A nonprobability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, was employed to ensure that respondents met the predetermined selection criteria.

It should be noted that the use of purposive sampling may introduce potential bias, particularly regarding sample representativeness, as the study focuses on a specific subgroup of Generation Z social media users in Greater Jakarta. Accordingly, the findings should not be generalized to the broader Generation Z population. Furthermore, although no formal control variables were incorporated into the model, demographic information, including gender, education level, and income, was collected and reported to provide contextual insight for interpreting the results.

A total of 295 respondents participated in this study, exceeding the minimum sample size of 200 recommended by Hair et al. (2019) for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. Data was collected through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents who met the specified criteria. The study examined four primary constructs: social media influencers (SMIs), green attitude (GA), green trust (GT), and green purchase intention (GPI). Each construct was measured using multiple items adapted from established studies. Specifically, social media influencers were measured using two items adapted from Teixeira et al. (2023), green attitude using four items adapted from Teixeira et al. (2023), green trust using five items adapted from Amin & Tarun (2021), and green purchase intention using five items adapted from Panopoulos et al. (2023). All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the relationships among the constructs in the research model. To assess mediation effects, this study employed a bootstrapping procedure, which enables the estimation of confidence intervals for indirect effects (Hayes, 2022).

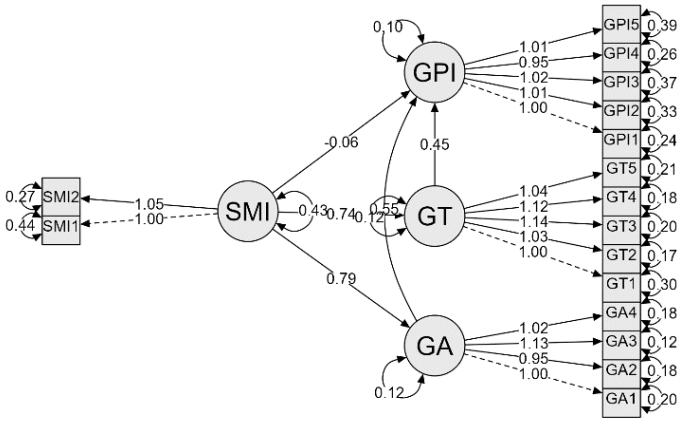


Figure 2. SEM output

RESULTS

The results of the validity and reliability tests presented in Table 1 indicate that all variables and indicators in this study meet the required criteria for validity and reliability. Each indicator exhibits a factor loading exceeding the threshold value of 0.60, which, according to Hair et al. (2019), provides strong evidence of convergent validity. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceed 0.80, thereby confirming a satisfactory level of internal consistency and reliability.

Table 1. Validity and reliability test results

Variables and Indicators		Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Social Media Influencers (SMIs)			0.818	Reliable
SMI1	When seeking information about environmentally friendly products, I consult influencers' opinions on social networks.	0.815		Valid
SMI2	Influencers' opinions on social networks affect my intention to purchase environmentally friendly products.	0.812		Valid
Green Attitude (GA)			0.904	Reliable
GA1	My environmental awareness influences my intention to buy environmentally friendly products.	0.893		Valid
GA2	My positive beliefs about environmental well-being impact my intention to purchase environmentally friendly products.	0.830		Valid
GA3	My feelings about environmental well-being impact my intention to buy environmentally friendly products.	0.782		Valid
GA4	My pro-environmental behavior influences my attitude toward purchasing environmentally friendly products.	0.732		Valid

Variables and Indicators		Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
Green Trust (GT)			0.904	Reliable
GT1	The reputation of environmentally friendly products is generally reliable.	0.715		Valid
GT2	The environmental performance of eco-friendly products is generally dependable.	0.750		Valid
GT3	Environmental claims made by eco-friendly products are generally trustworthy.	0.705		Valid
GT4	The environmental concern demonstrated by eco-friendly products meets my expectations.	0.736		Valid
GT5	Eco-friendly products keep their promises and commitments to environmental protection.	0.830		Valid
Green Purchase Intention (GPI)			0.859	Reliable
GPI1	I choose to buy environmentally friendly products.	0.834		Valid
GPI2	I intend to buy eco-friendly products in the future because of their positive contribution to the environment.	0.846		Valid
GPI3	I buy eco-friendly products even though they are more expensive compared to non-green products.	0.803		Valid
GPI4	I prefer eco-friendly products over non-green products when the product quality is similar.	0.702		Valid
GPI5	I often buy products that use recycled or recyclable packaging.	0.797		Valid

Source: Data processed (2024)

In evaluating the suitability of the structural model with empirical data, several goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices were used. The results show that the proposed model demonstrates an acceptable to good level of fit. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.949 and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) value of 0.938 exceed the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating a good model fit. In addition, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.047 is below the cut-off value of 0.08, indicating an acceptable fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.074 falls within an acceptable range, indicating a reasonably good model fit. Overall, these results suggest that the proposed model demonstrates adequate compatibility with the empirical data and is suitable for further interpretation.

Table 2. Respondent profile

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	115	38.983
Female	180	61.017
Work		
Civil Servants	2	0.678
Private Sector Employee	17	5.763

	Frequency	Percentage
Entrepreneurial	4	1.356
Student	272	92.203
Education		
High School	59	20
Diploma	54	18.305
Undergraduate	180	61.017
Postgraduate	2	0.678
Income		
Under 5,000,000 IDR	253	85.763
5,000,000 – 10,000,000 IDR	36	12.203
10,000,001 – IDR 20,000,000 IDR	4	1.356
More than 20,000,000 IDR	2	0.678
The Most Commonly Used Social Media		
Facebook	2	0.678
Instagram	169	57.288
TikTok	112	37.966
X (Twitter)	12	4.068

Based on Table 2, the respondents' demographic profiles reveal several dominant characteristics. The majority of respondents were female (61.017%, n = 180), and most were students (92.203%, n = 272). In terms of educational background, the sample was predominantly composed of bachelor's degree holders (61.017%, n = 180). Regarding income level, most respondents reported monthly earnings below IDR 5,000,000 (85.763%, n = 253). In addition, Instagram emerged as the most frequently used social media platform among respondents (57.288%, n = 169). Overall, these data indicate that the sample largely consists of female undergraduate students with relatively low-income levels who actively use Instagram as their primary social media platform.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing (direct)

Hypothesis	Estimate	p-value	Decision
H1: SMI → GPI	-0.061	0.685	Not Supported
H2: SMI → GA	0.786	0.000	Supported
H3: SMI → GT	0.739	0.000	Supported
H4: GA → GPI	0.550	0.000	Supported
H5: GT → GPI	0.453	0.000	Supported

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on the data in Table 3, the results of the direct influence analysis show several important findings. Social media influencers (SMIs) do not exert a significant direct influence on green purchase intention (GPI), as indicated by an estimated coefficient of −0.061 and a p-value of 0.685; therefore, H1 is not supported. In contrast, SMIs have a positive and significant influence on green attitude (GA) and green trust (GT), with estimated coefficients of 0.786 and 0.739 (both $p<0.001$), respectively, thereby supporting H2 and H3. Furthermore, both GA and GT exhibit positive and significant effects on GPI, with estimated coefficients of 0.550 and 0.453, respectively (both $p<0.001$), thus supporting H4 and H5.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing (Mediation)

Hypothesis	Estimate	p	95% Confidence Interval		Decision
			Lower	Upper	
H6: SMI → GA → GPI	0.200	0.000	0.120	0.293	Supported
H7: SMI → GT → GPI	0.167	0.000	0.102	0.255	Supported

Source: Data processed (2024)

The mediation analysis presented in Table 4 highlights the significant roles of green attitude (GA) and green trust (GT) as mediating variables. Social media influencers (SMIs) exert a significant indirect effect on green purchase intention (GPI) through GA, with an estimated coefficient of 0.200 ($p<0.001$; 95% confidence interval: 0.120 to 0.293), thereby supporting H6. Similarly, SMIs demonstrate a significant indirect influence on GPI through GT, with an estimated 0.167 ($p<0.001$; 95% confidence interval: 0.102 to 0.255), supporting H7. These two results show that both GA and GT play important mediating roles in the relationship between SMIs and GPI.

Overall, the results indicate that although social media influencers do not directly influence green purchase intention, they have a significant role in shaping consumers' green attitude and green trust. In turn, both green attitude and green trust positively affect green purchase intention. These findings underscore the importance of social media influencers in fostering favorable attitudes and building consumer trust toward environmentally friendly products, which ultimately encourages green purchasing intention. Accordingly, marketing strategies that leverage social media influencers should prioritize the development of positive attitudes and the strengthening of consumer trust in eco-friendly products, rather than focusing solely on directly stimulating purchase intentions.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the role of social media influencers in shaping Generation Z's green purchase intention by emphasizing the mediating effects of green attitude and green trust. The findings provide important insights into how influencer marketing contributes to pro-environmental behavior and highlight the complexity of consumer decision-making in the digital era.

The analysis shows that social media influencers do not have a significant direct influence on green purchase intention. This aligns with previous research suggesting that exposure to sustainability-oriented influencer content alone is insufficient to directly stimulate purchasing behavior (Zhao et al., 2024; Teixeira et al., 2023). Despite being active on social media, Generation Z consumers are not automatically persuaded to make green purchases solely based on influencer promotions. Instead, their behavioral intentions appear to be shaped by deeper psychological mechanisms, particularly attitude formation and trust development.

Despite the absence of direct effects, this study confirms that social media influencers play a critical role in shaping positive green attitudes and fostering green trust. These indirect effects serve as essential pathways linking influencer communication to consumer behavioral intention. Green attitudes are strengthened through repeated exposure to authentic and value-driven messages that resonate with Generation Z's strong concern for environmental responsibility and ethical consumption (Amin & Tarun, 2021; Corboș et al., 2024). Influencers who demonstrate transparency, consistency, and genuine commitment to sustainability are more effective in influencing attitudes, as their credibility enhances message acceptance (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2021).

Green trust also emerges as a key mediator in the relationship between influencers and purchase intention. It is essential in reducing consumer skepticism toward sustainability claims, particularly among a generation that is highly aware of greenwashing and skeptical of corporate motives (Chuah et al., 2020; Jalali & Khalid, 2021). Influencers can strengthen green trust by displaying long-term engagement with sustainable lifestyles, endorsing environmentally responsible brands, and participating in environmental initiatives. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing that influencer credibility, expertise, and perceived authenticity are fundamental drivers of consumer trust (Shahahbuddin, 2024; Jin et al., 2019).

The findings also validate theoretical perspectives that emphasize the importance of mediation mechanisms in influencing behavioral intention. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes toward behavior and perceived behavioral control are stronger predictors of intention than external stimuli alone (Amoako et al., 2020). This suggests that influencer marketing influences green purchase intention indirectly through consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations, making the effect of influencers more indirect and dependent on the consumer's internal belief systems. Similarly, the Value–Belief–Norm theory posits that pro-environmental behavior is driven by internalized values, environmental concern, and personal norms rather than by external persuasion alone (Amin & Tarun, 2021; Liao, 2024). The present study empirically supports these theoretical frameworks by demonstrating the central role of green attitude and green trust as mediators.

Moreover, emotional engagement emerges as an important complementary factor. Influencer content that evokes empathy, concern, or urgency about environmental issues can positively influence consumer responses, particularly when combined with personal storytelling or visually engaging content (De Veirman et al., 2017; Sun & Shi, 2022). Generation Z, with their high digital fluency and visual literacy, is especially responsive to such content formats, making platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube highly effective for sustainability-related communication (Amin & Tarun, 2021; Sugiarti et al., 2023).

This study also underscores the importance of perceived congruence between influencers and the sustainability messages they endorse. When influencers' identities, lifestyles, and values align with the environmental principles they promote, consumers are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and trust, ultimately strengthening green purchase intention (Ki et al., 2020). In contrast, a lack of congruence may weaken message credibility and limit behavioral impact, regardless of influencer popularity.

Overall, this study enhances the understanding of influencer marketing effectiveness in the context of sustainable consumption by demonstrating that social media influencers influence green purchase intention indirectly through green attitude and green trust. These mediating mechanisms are essential for translating environmental awareness into behavioral intention, particularly among Generation Z consumers who prioritize authenticity, ethical values, and social impact. By integrating green attitude and green trust as key explanatory constructs, this study contributes to a more nuanced and theoretically grounded understanding of how influencer marketing can promote sustainable consumption.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the influence of social media influencers on green purchase intention among Generation Z by focusing on the mediating roles of green trust and green attitude. The findings reveal that social media influencers do not exert a significant direct influence on green purchase intention. This suggests that mere exposure to environmentally themed content shared by influencers is insufficient to immediately drive green purchasing behavior among Generation Z

consumers. However, the results demonstrate that social media influencers have a significant and positive impact on both green trust and green attitude, highlighting their ability to foster confidence in eco-friendly product claims and to shape favorable perceptions of environmentally responsible consumption.

Moreover, both green trust and green attitude significantly mediate the relationship between social media influencers and green purchase intention. These findings suggest that although influencers may not directly persuade Generation Z to purchase green products, they exert an indirect influence by cultivating trust and fostering positive environmental attitudes. In other words, the influencers' effectiveness lies in their ability to shape internal psychological constructs rather than merely promoting products. This study, therefore, contributes to the growing body of literature on sustainable consumer behavior by underscoring the psychological pathways through which influencer marketing operates in the context of green consumption. It emphasizes that the journey from message exposure to actual purchase intention is complex and highly dependent on intermediary factors such as trust formation and attitudinal development.

Importantly, these findings directly address the research gap identified in the introduction concerning the inconsistent empirical evidence on the direct effect of social media influencers on green purchase intention. By demonstrating that this relationship is fully mediated by green trust and green attitude, the study provides clearer theoretical insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying Generation Z's green purchasing behavior. In doing so, the study not only reconciles previous contradictory evidence but also strengthens the theoretical integration of influencer marketing and consumer psychology in sustainability research. Overall, this study advances the green marketing literature by highlighting the indirect yet crucial role of trust and attitude in translating influencer communication into meaningful behavioral intentions among young consumers.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The outcomes of this research offer strategic implications for marketing professionals, brand managers, and producers of eco-friendly products targeting Generation Z consumers. First, marketers should prioritize collaborations with social media influencers who demonstrate authenticity, consistency, and credibility in promoting sustainable lifestyles. Rather than emphasizing popularity or follower counts alone, it is crucial to evaluate an influencer's alignment with environmental values and their ability to communicate sustainability messages in a credible and meaningful manner.

Second, content strategies should be designed to foster both emotional engagement and cognitive understanding among consumers. This can be achieved through storytelling, educational content, and real-life demonstrations of eco-friendly behaviors. Transparent communication, such as clearly explaining a product's environmental benefits or disclosing sustainable sourcing and production practices, can enhance consumer trust and mitigate skepticism regarding greenwashing.

Third, brands are encouraged to leverage interactive features available on social media platforms to promote two-way communication with consumers. Tools such as question-and-answer sessions, polls, and discussion forums can encourage audience participation and allow consumers to share their experiences and perspectives. Additionally, brands could invest in digital campaigns and influencer-led environmental education initiatives that build awareness and reinforce positive attitudes toward green behavior. The findings also highlight the need for consistent messaging across platforms to strengthen brand trust and the perceived authenticity of eco-friendly claims. By

leveraging these insights, brands can design more effective campaigns that not only raise awareness but also cultivate long-term pro-environmental behavioral intentions among Generation Z consumers.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings and that provide directions for future research. First, the geographical scope of the study is limited, which may constrain the generalizability of the results. Generation Z consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward sustainability are likely to differ across cultural and regional contexts. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to replicate this research in different countries or cultural settings to examine potential cross-cultural variations in the influence of social media influencers on green purchase behavior.

Second, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to capture changes in attitudes, trust, and behavioral intentions over time. Longitudinal research designs would allow scholars to observe how repeated exposure to influencer-generated sustainability content shapes green trust and green attitude, and whether these effects translate into sustained green purchasing behavior in the long term.

Third, this study focuses primarily on individual-level psychological constructs (i.e., trust and attitude) without accounting for broader contextual or external factors that may influence green purchase intention. Future studies could incorporate additional moderating or mediating variables such as environmental awareness, regulatory support, peer influence, or economic incentives. These factors may further enrich the model and provide a more holistic view of green consumer decision-making.

Finally, future studies could examine the differential effects of various types of social media influencers, such as micro-influencers, macro-influencers, and celebrity endorsers, on green trust and green attitude. Investigating these distinctions may provide more nuanced insights into how influencer characteristics and endorsement strategies influence sustainable consumption and help practitioners optimize influencer selection in green marketing campaigns.

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