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The Effects of Influencer Marketing and Flash Sale Discount Programs on the Purchasing Decisions of Generation Z Consumers in the Digital Era

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Abstract

As businesses increasingly compete for the attention of Generation Z consumers in digital marketplaces, understanding whether purchasing decisions are driven more by social influence or promotional incentives has become a critical issue for developing effective marketing strategies. Although influencer marketing and flash sale discount programs are widely used in e-commerce, previous studies have predominantly examined these strategies separately, providing limited evidence regarding their relative association with Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions. This study aims to analyze the relationship between influencer marketing and flash sale discount programs and the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers in the digital era. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 192 students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Mitra Bangsa University, selected through random sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SmartPLS. The results indicate that influencer marketing has a path coefficient of 0.361 on Generation Z purchasing decisions, while flash sale discount programs have a path coefficient of 0.592. These findings demonstrate positive relationships between both variables and purchasing decisions, with the relationship between flash sale discount programs and purchasing decisions being relatively stronger than that of influencer marketing. This study contributes to expanding the understanding of factors associated with Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions by integrating influencer marketing and flash sale discount programs into a single research model.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has changed the way people interact with various economic activities, including the processes of information searching and product purchasing (Amory et al., 2025; Fitria, 2024; Mawardah et al., 2026). The widespread expansion of internet access has driven the growth of e-commerce as one of the key sectors of the digital economy. In Indonesia, the internet penetration rate reached 80.66% in 2025, indicating that the majority of the population is connected to digital technologies and utilizes the internet for various daily activities (APJII, 2025). In line with this trend, Indonesia's e-commerce market is projected to reach approximately USD 90.35 billion in 2025, making it one of the largest digital markets in Southeast Asia (Mordor Intelligence, 2025).

These developments indicate that digital platforms function not only as transaction channels but also as increasingly important spaces for shaping consumer behavior and marketing activities.

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This condition aligns with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), which promotes economic growth through the strengthening of digital business and trade activities (United Nations, 2024a), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), which emphasizes the importance of innovation and technology utilization in supporting economic transformation (United Nations, 2024b). In the context of digital marketing, influencer marketing and flash sale programs represent innovative marketing strategies that have gained prominence on digital platforms (Joshi et al., 2025; Martaleni et al., 2022). Therefore, examining the influence of these two strategies on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers is relevant for understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior in the rapidly evolving digital economy.

The increasing number of businesses utilizing digital platforms has intensified competition within the e-commerce market (Ezirah et al., 2025; Hamima & Julia, 2026; Tisyani & Sushandoyo, 2023). This situation has encouraged companies to adopt marketing strategies capable of attracting consumer attention and increasing the likelihood of purchase. One of the most widely used strategies is influencer marketing, which involves leveraging individuals with significant influence on social media to communicate product information and promotional messages to their audiences. In addition, companies frequently employ flash sale programs that offer discounts for a limited period. Both strategies are widely implemented across e-commerce and social commerce platforms because they are considered effective in increasing product exposure and influencing consumers' purchasing behavior (Amelia, 2025).

Among various consumer groups, Generation Z represents an important segment for investigation because this generation has grown up alongside the development of the internet and social media (Juliansyah & Iriani, 2026). Individuals born between 1997 and 2012 exhibit a high level of engagement in digital activities, including searching for product information, comparing alternatives, and making online purchases (Panjaitan & Simanjuntak, 2024; Wibowo & Ayuningtyas, 2024). Previous studies have shown that Generation Z demonstrates a relatively strong response to digital marketing stimuli, including promotions delivered through influencers and flash sale programs (Aqsa et al., 2025; Mardiyanti & Kuswati, 2026). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions is essential for developing more effective marketing strategies.

Within the digital marketing literature, influencer marketing and flash sales have been extensively examined as factors that may influence consumer behavior. Previous studies indicate that the credibility, attractiveness, and relatability of influencers can shape positive perceptions of products and enhance consumers' purchase intentions and purchasing decisions (Larasati et al., 2025; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Rizomyliotis et al., 2026; Saima & Khan, 2020). Meanwhile, flash sales offer discounts for a limited period, creating perceptions of scarcity and time pressure that are associated with consumers' purchasing behavior (Fuad et al., 2026; Rosalina et al., 2024). These findings suggest that both digital marketing strategies have the potential to influence consumer purchasing decisions in an increasingly competitive e-commerce environment.

Although influencer marketing and flash sales have been recognized as digital marketing strategies that may influence consumer behavior, previous studies have generally examined these factors separately or within specific product contexts. Amelia (2025) found that influencer popularity and flash sales significantly affect impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z consumers. Similarly, Sarinah et al. (2025) investigated the influence of influencer marketing on Generation Z consumers' purchase perceptions of beauty products, while Putri et al. (2022) examined the effects of influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth, and brand image on purchasing decisions regarding Facetology beauty products. Furthermore, Fuad et al., (2026) highlighted the role of flash sales and limited-time offers in encouraging impulsive buying behavior among e-commerce platform users. These findings indicate that studies simultaneously examining the influence of influencer marketing and flash sales on Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions remain limited. Furthermore, most previous studies have focused on specific product categories, leaving a gap in understanding the broader effects of these two marketing strategies on Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions across different contexts.

Therefore, there remains a limited body of research that integrates these two digital marketing strategies within a single model to explain the purchasing decisions of Generation Z

consumers. Purchasing decisions represent the final outcome of consumers' evaluation and decision-making processes, which differ from impulsive buying behavior. Consequently, findings from previous studies have not fully explained how influencer marketing and flash sales influence Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions in a broader context. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the effects of influencer marketing and flash sales, both individually and simultaneously, on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers within the context of digital marketing.

Given these circumstances, this study is important for providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers in the digital era. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the effect of influencer marketing on Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions, examine the effect of flash sales on their purchasing decisions, and investigate the simultaneous effects of both variables on purchasing decisions. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of influencer marketing and flash sales into a single analytical model to explain the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers. The findings are expected to enrich the digital marketing literature while also providing practical insights for businesses in designing more effective marketing strategies on digital platforms.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to analyze the effects of influencer marketing and flash sale discount programs on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers in the digital era. A quantitative approach was selected because the study aimed to objectively examine the relationships and effects among variables through the measurement of numerical data obtained from respondents. The survey method was utilized to collect empirical data regarding Generation Z consumers' perceptions and behaviors related to influencer marketing, flash sale programs, and purchasing decisions (Creswell, John W., & Creswell, 2023).

The research framework consisted of two independent variables, namely influencer marketing (X1) and flash sale discount programs (X2), and one dependent variable, namely Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions (Y). The relationships among the research variables are presented in Figure 1.

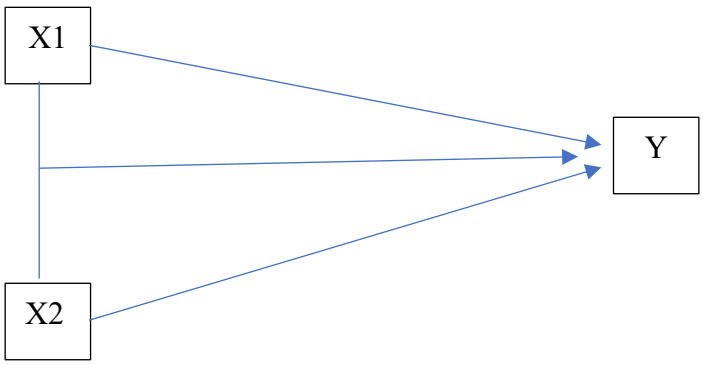


Figure 1. Relationships among the Research Variables

The study population comprised students of the Faculty of Economics and Business at Mitra Bangsa University, located at Jalan Raya Tanjung Barat No. 11, RT 11/RW 08, Pejaten Timur, Pasar Minggu, South Jakarta, Special Capital Region of Jakarta, Indonesia. The sample size was determined based on the Isaac and Michael Table at a 1% significance level, resulting in a total of 192 respondents. A random sampling technique was employed to select the participants.

Data were collected using instruments measuring influencer marketing, flash sale discount programs, and Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions. Prior to data collection, the instruments were subjected to validity and reliability testing to ensure that each item accurately and consistently measured the intended constructs.

Instrument validity was assessed through both content validity and empirical validity. Content validity was established by involving language experts, subject-matter experts, and

instrument development experts to evaluate the appropriateness of the indicators in relation to the research variables. Subsequently, empirical validity testing was conducted among students who belonged to the study population but were not included in the research sample. After the instruments were confirmed to be valid and reliable, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents selected as the research sample.

The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS software (Hair et al., 2011). The analysis began with the assessment of the measurement model (outer model) to evaluate construct validity and reliability through factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability values. Subsequently, the structural model (inner model) was assessed to examine the effects of influencer marketing and flash sale discount programs on Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions using path coefficient analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Construct Reliability and Validity

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the consistency of the instruments used to measure the research constructs. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Generation Z Purchasing Decisions	0,973	0,973	0,975
Influencer Marketing	0,976	0,978	0,977
Flash Sale Discounts	0,971	0,972	0,974

As shown in Table 1, all variables achieved Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results indicate that the instruments demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency in measuring the research constructs. Among the variables, Influencer Marketing exhibited the highest composite reliability value (0.977), followed by Generation Z Purchasing Decisions (0.975) and Flash Sale Discounts (0.974).

Measurement Model and Structural Model

Following the assessment of construct reliability, the analysis proceeded with the evaluation of the research model using SmartPLS. The results of the measurement model and structural model analyses are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships among Influencer Marketing, Flash Sale Discounts, and Generation Z Purchasing Decisions, together with the indicators representing each construct. In addition to displaying the factor loading values for each indicator, the figure also presents the path coefficients among the research variables.

Based on the SmartPLS analysis, the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) revealed that one indicator of the Influencer Marketing construct, namely X1.28, had a factor loading value of 0.40. This value was below the threshold adopted in this study (0.60), indicating that the indicator did not demonstrate adequate convergent validity. In contrast, the remaining 29 indicators of the Influencer Marketing construct achieved factor loading values above 0.60. For the Flash Sale Discounts construct, all 16 indicators exhibited factor loading values greater than 0.60, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Similarly, all 20 indicators of the Generation Z Purchasing Decisions construct recorded factor loading values above 0.60, suggesting that all indicators adequately represented the construct being measured.

The structural model (inner model) analysis indicated that the path coefficient from Influencer Marketing to Generation Z Purchasing Decisions was 0.361, whereas the path coefficient from Flash Sale Discounts to Generation Z Purchasing Decisions was 0.592. Both coefficients indicate positive relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable in

the research model. Furthermore, the path coefficient of Flash Sale Discounts was higher than that of Influencer Marketing, suggesting a relatively stronger relationship with Generation Z Purchasing Decisions within the proposed research model.

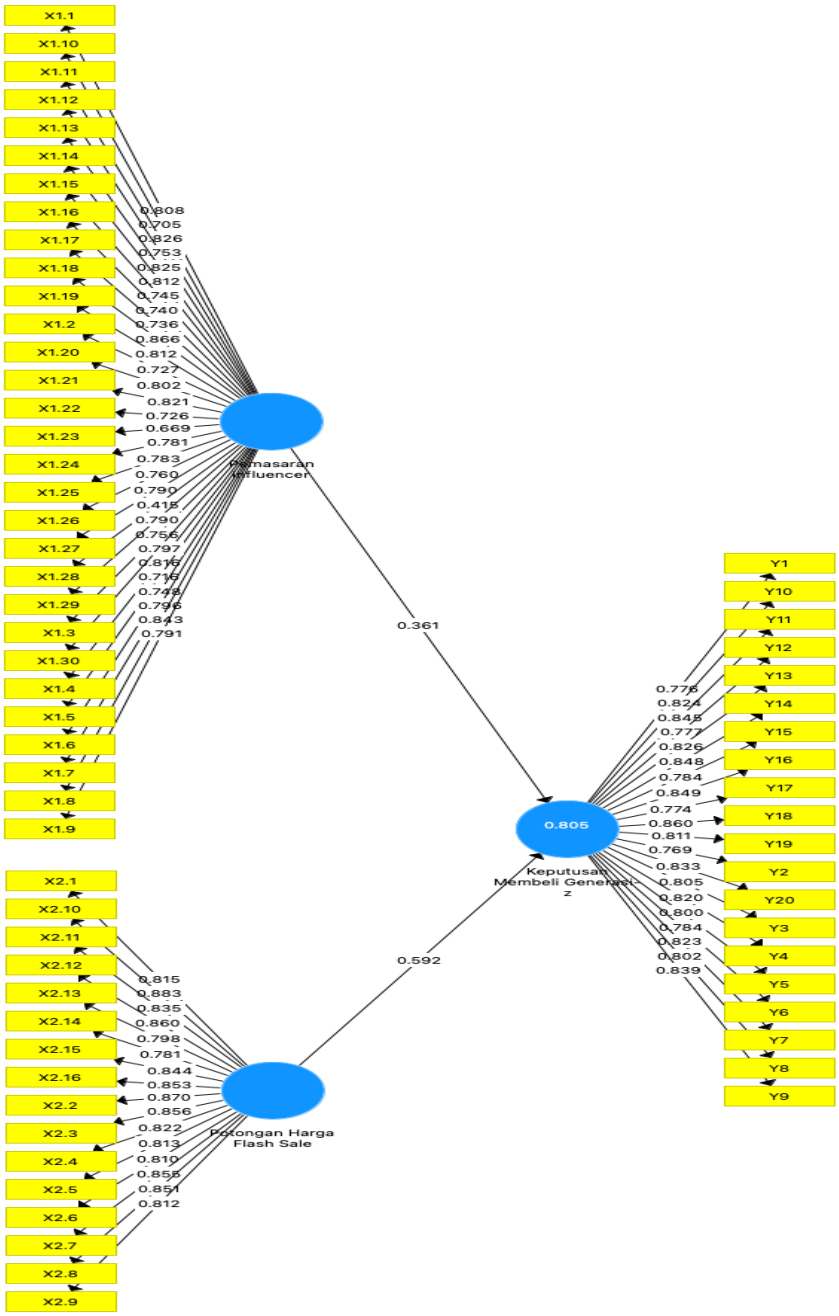


Figure 2. Measurement Model and Structural Model Results Generated by SmartPLS

Discussion

Relationship Between Influencer Marketing and Generation Z Purchasing Decisions

The results of the analysis indicate that Influencer Marketing has a path coefficient of 0.361 with Generation Z Purchasing Decisions. This value suggests a positive relationship between influencer marketing and purchasing decisions within the proposed research model. The finding indicates that product information and promotional messages delivered by influencers may serve as one of the factors considered by Generation Z consumers during their purchasing decision-making process.

The characteristics of Generation Z, who have grown up in a digital environment, make social media one of their primary sources of product and brand information. In this context, influencers

function as marketing communication intermediaries who facilitate the dissemination of product information through content that is easily accessible and understandable to their audiences. Furthermore, the interactions established between influencers and their followers allow marketing messages to be communicated in a more personalized manner, thereby increasing consumers' attention toward the promoted products.

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Wahyudi et al. (2026), who found that trust in influencers and brand image are associated with consumer behavior in digital environments. Similar results were reported by Kusumawardani & Sodikin (2025), who emphasized the importance of influencer credibility, communication style, and follower engagement in shaping consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, Doloksaribu & Simanjuntak (2024) demonstrated that influencer activities on social media are associated with increased consumer purchase intentions. The consistency of these findings suggests that influencer marketing remains a relevant strategy for reaching Generation Z consumers, who exhibit high levels of social media usage.

Nevertheless, the path coefficient of Influencer Marketing was lower than that of Flash Sale Discounts. This finding indicates that, within the proposed research model, the relationship between influencer marketing and purchasing decisions is relatively weaker than the relationship associated with price-based promotional programs. This result suggests that although information and recommendations provided by influencers may be considered during the purchasing process, Generation Z consumers also pay attention to other factors related to the economic benefits obtained from a transaction. Therefore, influencer marketing can be regarded as one of the factors associated with purchasing decisions; however, it is not the sole factor influencing the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers.

Relationship Between Flash Sale Discounts and Generation Z Purchasing Decisions

The results of the analysis indicate that Flash Sale Discounts have a path coefficient of 0.592 with Generation Z Purchasing Decisions. This value is higher than the path coefficient of Influencer Marketing, suggesting that, within the proposed research model, flash sale discounts exhibit a relatively stronger relationship with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers.

This finding indicates that flash sale programs may serve as an important factor considered by consumers during the purchasing process. As a sales promotion strategy that offers discounts for a limited period, flash sales can enhance product attractiveness and encourage consumers to consider making purchases more quickly. In the highly competitive e-commerce environment, such promotional strategies are widely employed to increase consumer attention toward the products being offered.

The findings of this study are consistent with those reported by Ahmad & Firman (2026), who identified a positive relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z consumers. Similar findings were reported by Fauzan & Ratnasari (2024), who found that flash sales constitute one of the factors associated with consumers' purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms. Furthermore, Nurhayati et al. (2025) explained that flash sale-based promotional strategies can enhance consumer interest in the products being offered, while Lutfiansyah & Syihabuddin (2026) demonstrated that flash sales represent one of the factors considered by Generation Z consumers during the purchasing process. The consistency of these findings suggests that discount-based promotions offered within a limited time frame remain relevant in influencing consumer behavior in digital environments.

Compared with Influencer Marketing, the higher path coefficient of Flash Sale Discounts indicates that economic considerations, particularly more attractive pricing offers, exhibit a relatively stronger relationship with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers within the proposed research model. This finding suggests that, in addition to considering information obtained through social media, Generation Z consumers also pay close attention to the financial benefits offered during the purchasing decision-making process.

Relationship Between Influencer Marketing, Flash Sale Discounts, and Generation Z Purchasing Decisions

Overall, the findings indicate that both Influencer Marketing and Flash Sale Discounts are positively associated with Generation Z Purchasing Decisions. These results suggest that purchasing decisions among this consumer group are related to both marketing communication factors obtained through social media and economic factors offered through price promotions. Within the context of digital marketing, influencers serve as sources of information that help consumers recognize and evaluate products, while flash sales provide additional appeal through more attractive pricing offers available for a limited period.

These findings are consistent with those reported by Lou & Yuan (2019), who found that influencer credibility and the informational value conveyed through social media can enhance consumers' trust in promoted products. Similar results were reported by Sokolova & Kefi (2020), who demonstrated that influencer credibility and parasocial relationships with followers contribute to increased consumer purchase intentions. Furthermore, a literature review conducted by Joshi et al. (2025), indicated that influencer marketing has evolved into one of the most widely adopted digital marketing strategies due to its ability to foster consumer engagement and influence the purchasing decision-making process.

From a price promotion perspective, the findings of this study support previous research suggesting that flash sale programs can increase consumer interest in products through perceptions of savings, time limitations, and opportunities to obtain products at lower prices. These conditions may encourage consumers to consider making purchases when they perceive that the benefits gained outweigh the costs incurred. The findings therefore suggest that, in addition to information obtained through social media, economic considerations also constitute an important factor associated with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study differ from those reported by Madinah et al. (2025), who found that influencer marketing had a significant effect on impulsive buying behavior, whereas flash sale promotions did not demonstrate a significant effect. This discrepancy may be attributed to differences in research focus. Madinah et al. (2025) examined impulsive buying behavior, which emphasizes the spontaneous aspects of consumer behavior, whereas the present study focuses on purchasing decisions, which reflect a broader and more deliberate decision-making process. Furthermore, differences in respondent characteristics, research contexts, and consumer perceptions of flash sale programs may also help explain the variation in findings.

The results of this study provide additional empirical evidence regarding the roles of influencer marketing and flash sale discounts in the context of Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions. Unlike many previous studies that examined these variables separately or within specific product contexts, the present study integrates both variables into a single research model, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions in the digital era. Accordingly, the findings suggest that both influencer-based communication strategies and price promotion strategies remain relevant considerations for businesses seeking to reach and attract Generation Z consumers.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations. First, it examined only two variables, namely Influencer Marketing and Flash Sale Discounts, and therefore did not encompass other factors that may also be associated with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers. Second, the study focused exclusively on Generation Z consumers; consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to other generational groups. Therefore, future research is encouraged to incorporate additional variables and involve more diverse respondent characteristics in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer purchasing behavior in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Influencer Marketing and Flash Sale Discounts are positively associated with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers in the digital era. The path

coefficient values indicate that Influencer Marketing has a relationship coefficient of 0.361 with purchasing decisions, whereas Flash Sale Discounts have a relationship coefficient of 0.592. These findings suggest that both digital marketing strategies are associated with the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers, with Flash Sale Discounts exhibiting a relatively stronger relationship than Influencer Marketing within the proposed research model.

The findings provide evidence that the purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers are associated not only with information and recommendations obtained through influencers but also with considerations of the economic benefits offered through price promotion programs. Therefore, businesses may consider combining influencer marketing and flash sale strategies to more effectively reach Generation Z consumers on digital platforms.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

ZZ contributed to conceptualization, methodology development, data collection, data analysis, manuscript drafting, and visualization. SS contributed to supervision, validation of research findings, methodological refinement, manuscript review and editing, resource support, and project administration.

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