

Developing a Digital Marketing Model to Improve Gen Z Purchase Decisions for Fashion Products in Bali

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of digital technology and dynamic changes in fashion trends influence consumer purchasing behavior, particularly among Generation Z (Gen Z) in Bali. In this context, the implementation of digital marketing by fashion MSMEs and the shopping experience (experiential marketing) are important factors influencing purchasing decisions. However, previous research has shown discrepancies in the findings regarding the influence of these two variables on purchasing decisions, so this study adds customer trust as a mediating variable. This study aims to examine and explain the influence of digital and experiential marketing on purchasing decisions by integrating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) theories. The study population included Gen Z in Bali who had purchased fashion products at least once in the past six months. A sample of 170 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. Data analysis was conducted using a quantitative approach with the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique. The results show that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions and customer trust. In contrast, experiential marketing has a positive but insignificant effect on purchasing decisions, although it has a significant effect on customer trust. Furthermore, customer trust was shown to partially mediate the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions and fully mediate the influence of experiential marketing on purchasing decisions. Theoretically, these results enrich the study of Consumer Behavior Theory, SOR Theory, and TPB in the context of digital marketing of fashion products. Practically, this study recommends that fashion MSMEs in Bali maintain consistent digital content, offer products with a local cultural touch, and enhance interactive communication with Gen Z to build consumer trust and loyalty.

Keywords: Digital Marketing; Experiential Marketing; Trust; Keputusan Pembelian; Gen Z

INTRODUCTION

Developing a digital marketing model for Generation Z (Gen Z) has become a strategic issue in modern marketing because Gen Z's digital behavior differs from that of previous generations. Gen Z, born between 1997

and 2012, is highly connected to digital technology and more likely to shop online. Pre-survey results indicate that social media marketing strategies heavily influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions for fashion products. Several studies (Alsaadi et al., 2024; Otopah et al., 2024; Mao et al., 2025; Fan et al., 2024; Duffet & Maraule, 2024; Hermaningtyas et al., 2022) have shown that digital marketing positively affects purchasing decisions. However, Hubbin et al. (2023), Pebrianti et al. (2020), and Azizah (2020) reported no significant influence. This creates the first research gap. Furthermore, experiential marketing is also a crucial factor because it provides consumers with a direct experience when interacting with a product. However, research findings on the influence of experience on purchasing decisions are still mixed (Hermaningtyas et al., 2022; Giantari et al., 2013; Imania & Widayanto, 2023), creating a second research gap.

This study adds trust as a mediator between digital marketing, experiential marketing, and purchasing decisions. Trust is crucial because Gen Z places great importance on the credibility of sellers or platforms when conducting online transactions. Previous research has shown that digital marketing can increase consumer trust (Hollebeek & Mackey, 2019; Herlissha & Fitri, 2021; Astari et al., 2022), and positive consumer experiences also influence trust (Astarina et al., 2017; Giantari, 2023). Furthermore, several studies (Koc & Ozkan, 2024; Duffet & Maraule, 2024; Saxena & Thakur, 2024) show that trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study integrates Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to provide a comprehensive perspective explaining how digital marketing and shopping experiences influence Gen Z's purchasing decisions for fashion products.

This study aims to examine and explain the relationships among digital marketing, experiential marketing, trust, and Gen Z purchasing decisions in Bali, while also developing a digital-based marketing strategy model relevant to this generation's characteristics. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the understanding of the integration of SOR and TPB theories in the context of digital consumer behavior. In practice, the research findings serve as a reference for fashion industry players in Bali in designing effective marketing strategies that strengthen customer trust and digital experiences. Furthermore, this research will produce a new conceptual model as an academic contribution that supports the development of digital marketing based on trust and consumer experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior Theory (*Blackbox*)

Consumer behavior is a complex process that encompasses how individuals and groups select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services to meet their needs and desires (Solomon, 2018). Understanding this behavior emphasizes that purchasing decisions are influenced not only by economic factors but also by psychological, social, and cultural aspects that shape consumer preferences. According to Kotler and Keller (2022), the black box model holds that marketing stimuli — such as product, price, promotion, and distribution — and environmental factors — such as culture, economics, politics, and technology — influence the purchasing decision process. These stimuli are processed in the consumer's "black box," which contains personal characteristics and decision-making stages, from need recognition to post-purchase behavior. The resulting responses are reflected in the choice of product, brand, place, time, and purchase amount. Purchasing behavior results from a dynamic interaction between external stimuli and internal factors; understanding this can help marketers develop communication strategies and build long-term relationships with consumers.

Theory Stimulus Organism Response

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, introduced by Woodworth (1929), extends Pavlov's (1927) classic model by emphasizing that behavior is not only triggered by external stimuli but is also influenced by an individual's internal processes before a response is produced. This theory explains that purchasing decisions are formed through the interaction of external stimuli, such as promotions and marketing experiences, with internal psychological processes including perception, emotion, and evaluation (Skinner, 1935; Loureiro et al., 2020). Islam and Rahman (2017) state that the "organism" functions as an internal mechanism that transforms stimuli into behavioral reactions. In this study, the stimulus is delivered through digital and experiential marketing, in the form of interactive promotional content and emotional experiences for consumers (Chen & Lin, 2021). This process builds trust as an organism — confidence and a sense of security in the brand — which then gives rise to responses in the form of purchasing decisions, both initial and repeat purchases (Hsu & Lin, 2015; Guo & Cai, 2024).

Theory Of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that individual behavior is formed from intentions influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). This theory expands on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by adding elements of tangible constraints, such as ability and

environmental factors. Attitudes toward behavior are formed from an individual's beliefs about the benefits or risks of an action (Hsu et al., 2017), while subjective norms describe the social influences of the surrounding environment that can determine a person's behavioral tendencies (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). Perceived behavioral control reflects the extent to which an individual feels they have the ability and support to act (Wang & Wong, 2020). In the context of digital marketing, TPB has proven relevant because experiential marketing and digital marketing can influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Wu & Cheng, 2018; Alalwan, 2018). Furthermore, trust plays a crucial role in reinforcing perceived behavioral control, as a sense of transaction security, product quality, and brand reputation increases trust and encourages repurchase intentions (Hsu et al., 2017).

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing merupakan strategi pemasaran yang memanfaatkan berbagai platform internet seperti Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, dan website untuk menarik minat konsumen terhadap produk atau jasa yang ditawarkan perusahaan (Amelia & Pradana, 2023). Menurut Adhyaksa et al. (2023), digital marketing adalah bentuk pemasaran berbasis platform online yang digunakan untuk menjangkau konsumen sasaran secara lebih efektif. Dibandingkan metode tradisional, pemasaran digital menawarkan keunggulan berupa biaya yang lebih efisien, jangkauan yang lebih luas, serta kemampuan untuk menyampaikan informasi yang lebih cepat, interaktif, dan komprehensif kepada calon konsumen. Selain itu, penggunaan media digital memungkinkan pengusaha untuk menyesuaikan strategi komunikasi secara real-time sesuai dengan respons pasar, sehingga meningkatkan peluang konversi pembelian dan loyalitas pelanggan (Kevin & Sari, 2018). *Digital marketing* dalam penelitian ini diukur menggunakan beberapa indikator yang diadaptasi dari Musnaini et al. (2020) antara lain (1) *Search Engine Optimization (SEO)*, (2) *Content Marketing*, (3) *Native Advertising*, (4) *Affiliate Marketing*, (5) *Sosial Media Marketing*, (6) *Ease of Access*.

Experiential Marketing

According to Harjadi and Arraniri (2021), experiential marketing is a marketing approach that focuses on creating emotional and sensory experiences for consumers, enabling them to feel the real difference between one product or service and another. This approach emphasizes direct interaction between consumers and brands through five main dimensions: sense, feel, think, act, and relate (Priansa, 2019). Through these five aspects, consumers not only evaluate products rationally but also experience emotional and symbolic involvement, which strengthens their relationship with the brand. In the context of this research, experiential marketing indicators represent the consumer's comprehensive experience, from sensory stimulation to forming emotional and social relationships with the brand, which ultimately can increase trust and purchasing decisions, adapted from Priansa (2019), Abdilhaq et al. (2020), Dessart et al. (2015), and Moraes et al. (2019), including: (1) visual sense, (2) color sense, (3) feel, (4) identity expression, (5) think, (6) act, and (7) relate.

Customer Trust

Trust (kepercayaan) merupakan keyakinan individu terhadap pihak lain berdasarkan persepsi bahwa harapan atau janji yang diberikan dapat diandalkan dan dipenuhi. Kepercayaan menjadi dasar penting dalam hubungan antara konsumen dan pelaku usaha karena mendorong terciptanya perilaku kooperatif, komitmen jangka panjang, serta loyalitas terhadap merek atau perusahaan. Menurut Winanda et al. (2022) dan Giantari et al. (2023), kepercayaan konsumen memiliki manfaat utama, antara lain meningkatkan kerjasama (*cooperation*) antara pelanggan dan penjual, memperkuat komitmen hubungan (*commitment*) yang saling menguntungkan, memperpanjang durasi hubungan (*relationship duration*), serta menjaga kualitas interaksi dalam memenuhi kebutuhan dan kepuasan pelanggan. Untuk mengukur tingkat kepercayaan pelanggan, digunakan beberapa indikator yaitu: (1) kompetensi; (2) kejujuran; (3) keamanan; dan (4) keandalan.

Purchase Decision

According to Tjiptono (2020), a purchasing decision is a process in which an individual chooses a product or service that meets their needs and desires. This process encompasses not only the act of purchasing but also complex psychological and evaluative stages, ranging from need recognition, information search, alternative assessment, purchasing decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Riadi, 2023; Gamal Thabroni, 2022). Purchasing decisions are influenced by various factors such as price, location, promotion, ease of access, and service quality (Sofyan et al., 2022). According to Kotler et al. (2020), purchasing decision indicators include product loyalty, purchasing habits, recommendations to others, and repeat purchases. In this study, purchasing decision indicators were adapted from Widyasthuti and Hidayat (2020), Hidayah and Pratama (2021), and Putri and Santosa (2020), including: (1) conformity to expectations, (2) effectiveness in obtaining the product, (3) recommendations to other parties, (4) interest in product updates, and (5) tendency to make repeat purchases (transactional).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From the existing business issues, research gaps, empirical studies, and integration of consumer behavior theory (black box model), SOR Theory, and TPB, the research conceptual framework is illustrated with the following image.

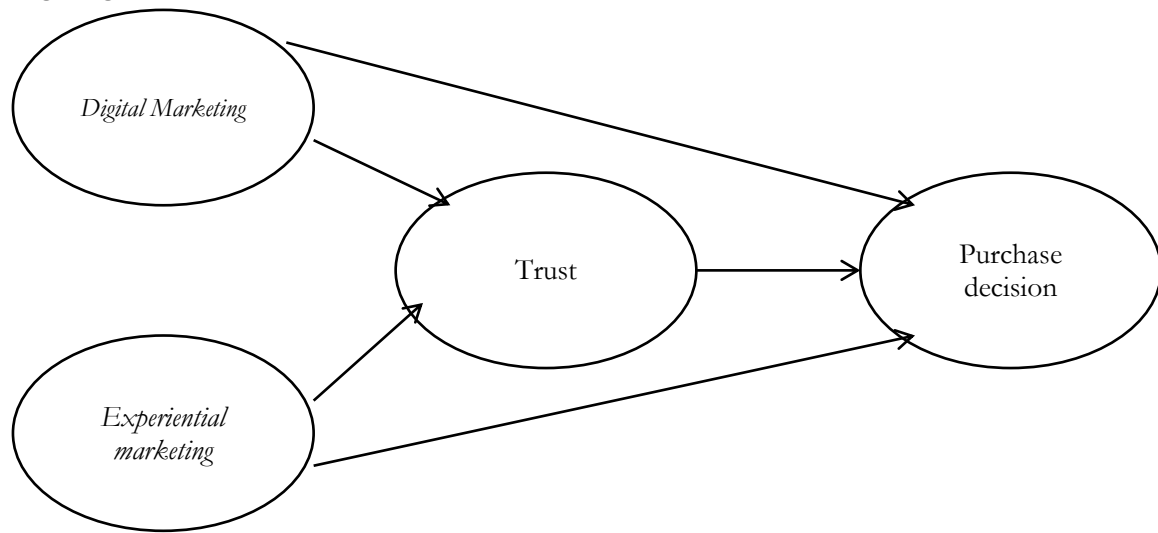


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Framework

Research Hypothesis:

- H1: Digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions
- H2: Experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions
- H3: Digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on trust
- H4: Experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on trust
- H5: Customer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions
- H6: Customer trust mediates the effect of digital marketing on purchasing decisions
- H7: Customer trust mediates the effect of experiential marketing on purchasing decisions

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a causal study that aims to analyze the relationships among variables influencing fashion product purchasing decisions among Generation Z in Bali. The focus of this study is Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, who have purchased fashion products through digital marketing channels from local MSMEs. The variables tested include digital marketing, experiential marketing, customer trust, and purchasing decisions. The study population comprises all Gen Z in Bali who meet these criteria, and a sample of 170 respondents was selected using a non-probability purposive sampling method. Respondent criteria include: (1) domiciled in Bali, (2) at least 17 years old, and (3) have purchased fashion products through MSME social media at least once in the last six months. Data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Before analysis, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability using the criteria of $r \geq 0.30$ and Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.60 . Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to test relationships among variables. In contrast, the data were described descriptively to provide a comprehensive picture of Gen Z consumer behavior.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting research and processing the research data, the results can be presented as follows. The characteristics of respondents by gender, age, educational level, and income are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Classification	Number of Respondents (people)	Percentage of Respondents
Gender	Male	49	28,8

	Female	121	71,2
	Total	170	100
Age	17 – 20 years old	53	31,2
	21 - 24 years old	82	48,2
	25 - 28 years old	35	20,6
	Total	170	100
Education	High School	21	12,4
	Diploma	23	13,5
	Bachelor's Degree	106	62,4
	Master's Degree	19	11,2
	Doctoral Degree	1	0,6
	Total	170	100
Occupation	Students	120	70,6
	Private Employees	20	11,8
	Self-Employed	6	3,5
	State Civil Apparatus	12	7,1
	Contract Workers	3	1,8
	State-Owned Enterprises	2	1,2
	Others	7	4,1
	Total	170	100
Income (IDR)	≤ 1.000.000	91	53,5
	>1.000.000-≤ 3.000.000,-	38	22,4
	>3.000.000,-≤ 6.000.000,-	26	15,3
	>6.000.000,-≤ 9.000.000,-	8	4,7
	> 9.000.000	7	4,1
	Total	170	100

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on the results in Table 1, the majority of local MSME brand consumers are female (121, 71.2%), while male respondents are fewer in number. In terms of age, the 21–24 year old group is the most dominant with 82 respondents (48.2%), reflecting the characteristics of young consumers from Generation Z. Based on their last education, the majority of respondents have a bachelor's degree, as many as 106 people (62.4%), indicating a relatively high level of literacy. Meanwhile, in terms of occupation, students or pupils dominate with 120 respondents (70.6%). Based on monthly income, most respondents have an income of less than Rp1,000,000, with 91 respondents (53.5%) indicating that local MSME brand consumers generally come from the lower- to middle-income purchasing power group. Testing the validity and reliability of the instrument was carried out using SPSS for Windows 24.0 and Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the validity and reliability testing for each variable can be presented in Table 2. The results of the validity and reliability testing of the instrument in Table 2 show that all variables are valid, as the factor correlations are positive and 0.361 or higher, indicating strong factors. The instrument is also reliable if Cronbach's Alpha > 0.6.

Table 2. Summary of Validity and Reliability Test Results for Research Instruments

Variables	Indicator	Correlation Coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
<i>Digital Marketing</i> (X _i)	(X1.1)	0,603	0,903	Valid
	(X1.2)	0,888		
	(X1.3)	0,884		
	(X1.4)	0,818		

	(X1.5)	0,879		
	(X1.6)	0,892		
<i>Experiential Marketing (X2)</i>	(X2..1)	0,881	0,906	Valid
	(X2..2)	0,824		
	(X2..3)	0,732		
	(X2.4)	0,924		
	(X2.5)	0,775		
	(X2.6)	0,812		
	(X2.7)	0,718		
<i>Customer Trust (M)</i>	(M1.1)	0,933	0,879	Valid
	(M1.2)	0,872		
	(M1.3)	0,757		
	(M1.4)	0,863		
<i>Purchase Decision (Y)</i>	(Y1.1)	0,880	0,916	Valid
	(Y1.2)	0,777		
	(Y1.3)	0,911		
	(Y1.4)	0,917		
	(Y1.5)	0,884		

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Furthermore, the descriptive analysis of the variables explains respondents' perceptions of social media marketing, brand engagement, brand trust, and purchasing decisions, obtained through the distribution of questionnaires, both offline and online. Quantitative assessment uses an interval scale by calculating an average score for each assessment category. Based on the tabulation of respondents' answers to five statements on social media marketing, 170 respondents answered. It is possible to tabulate the number of responses for all respondents in each category, as shown in the following table.

Table 3. Description of Respondents' Answers to Digital Marketing

No	Statements	Respondents' Response Frequency					Average	Criteria
		SD	D	E	A	SA		
1	I trust stores that appear on the first page of search results more.	8	20	61	53	28	3,43	Good
2	I am drawn to buying a product because I see engaging content (photos, videos, articles).	7	7	17	67	72	4,12	Good
3	I have seen fashion product ads that look like regular social media posts.	8	3	20	93	46	3,98	Good
4	I follow several accounts that frequently share discount codes or affiliate links.	5	20	30	61	54	3,82	Good
5	I have gotten to know many Balinese fashion MSMEs through social media.	6	10	31	69	54	3,91	Good

6	Social media makes it easy for me to compare prices and product styles from various MSMEs.	9	2	10	53	96	4,32	Very Good
Overall Average of Digital Marketing							3,93	Good

Sumber: Data primer diolah, 2025

Table 3 shows that social media marketing is generally good, with an average score of 3.93. Social media usage facilitates comparisons of prices and product models from various MSMEs. Fashion has the highest score, while the lowest score indicates that Gen Z tends not to associate a store's position in search results with trust.

Table 4. Description of Respondents' Responses to Experiential Marketing

No	Statements	Respondents' Response Frequency					Average	Criteria
		SD	D	E	A	SA		
1	Local fashion MSME products have attractive visual designs.	5	9	48	82	26	3,68	Good
2	I like the colors and patterns of the fashion MSME products I see.	6	17	57	63	27	3,52	Good
3	I feel proud to be wearing locally made Balinese products.	6	9	51	72	32	3,68	Good
4	Buying fashion products from MSMEs makes me feel closer to local culture.	5	6	37	80	42	3,87	Good
5	I often consider the quality and value of the product before purchasing.	6	8	44	83	29	3,71	Good
6	I prefer local fashion products over mass-produced products from abroad.	5	11	37	84	33	3,76	Good
7	I buy from fashion MSMEs because I feel close to the owner or brand.	8	5	28	54	75	4,08	Good
Overall Average of Experiential Marketing							3,76	Good

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Table 4 shows that emotional and relational closeness between consumers and MSME fashion owners or brands is the primary driver of purchasing behavior. Consumers are more attracted to the personal relationships and humanistic values offered by MSMEs than to those of large brands, which tend to be impersonal. Conversely, visual aspects such as product color and pattern have the least influence, indicating that most respondents do not consider aesthetics much in their purchasing decisions.

Table 5. Description of Respondents' Responses to Customer Trust

No	Statements	Respondents' Response Frequency					Average	Criteria
		SD	D	E	A	SA		
1	The fashion MSME answered my questions clearly and convincingly.	6	7	27	72	58	3,99	Tinggi
2	The local fashion MSME did not exaggerate the quality of its products in promotions.	7	5	20	46	92	4,24	Sangat Tinggi
3	I felt safe transacting with the local fashion MSME.	4	12	50	57	47	3,77	Tinggi
4	The local fashion MSME delivered the order on time.	7	26	50	58	29	3,45	Tinggi
Overall Average of Customer Trust							3,86	Tinggi

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Table 5 shows that overall brand trust is high, averaging 3.86. The highest average score was obtained for the statement that local fashion MSMEs do not over-promote their products, indicating that their promotions are considered honest, realistic, and in line with actual quality. Conversely, the lowest score was for delivery timeliness, indicating that most respondents considered local fashion MSMEs to be inconsistent and not yet fully reliable in meeting promised delivery times.

Table 6. Description of Respondents' Answers Regarding Purchasing Decisions

No	Statements	Respondents' Response Frequency					Average	Criteria
		SD	D	E	A	SA		
1	The product I purchased met my expectations.	1	7	29	94	39	3,96	Good
2	I regularly search for local fashion products, both online and offline.	8	22	54	56	30	3,46	Good
3	I have recommended fashion MSME products to others.	4	11	39	73	43	3,82	Good
4	I look forward to new collections or products from fashion MSMEs that I like.	5	11	43	67	44	3,79	Good
5	I plan to repurchase products from fashion MSMEs that I have tried.	3	10	34	69	54	3,95	Good
Overall Average of Purchase Decision							3,80	Good

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Table 6 shows that overall purchasing decisions were good, with an average of 3.80. The highest average indicates that MSME fashion products meet consumer expectations, indicating a high level of satisfaction. Conversely, the lowest score indicates that consumers are not regularly or consistently seeking local fashion products, either online or offline.

SEM PLS Result

This study employed a two-stage approach to model measurement prior to hypothesis testing, aiming to ensure the validity and reliability of the research model. The first stage involved a convergent validity analysis, followed by a discriminant validity analysis.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is measured through the factor loading values of the latent variables and their indicators. This study used loading values between 0.50 and 0.60, which are considered adequate, given that this research is in the early stages of developing a measurement scale. Furthermore, the number of indicators per construct is relatively small, ranging from three to five.

Table 7. Convergent Validity Test Results

	<i>Digital Marketing (X1)</i>	<i>Experiential Marketing (X2)</i>	<i>Customer Trust (M1)</i>	<i>Purchase Decision (Y1)</i>
X _{1.1}	0,704			
X _{1.2}	0,851			
X _{1.3}	0,838			
X _{1.4}	0,684			
X _{1.5}	0,777			
X _{1.6}	0,858			
X _{2.1}		0,796		
X _{2.2}		0,757		
X _{2.3}		0,833		
X _{2.4}		0,853		

X _{2.5}		0,846		
X _{2.6}		0,849		
X _{2.7}		0,841		
M _{1.1}			0,890	
M _{1.2}			0,798	
M _{1.3}			0,839	
M _{1.4}			0,680	
Y _{1.1}				0,746
Y _{1.2}				0,767
Y _{1.3}				0,836
Y _{1.4}				0,853
Y _{1.5}				0,884

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table 7, all values in the convergent validity test were above 0.60. This indicates that the research data is valid because the reflective indicators have a strong correlation with the latent variables they measure.

Discriminant Validity using Cross-Loading

Reflective indicators are measured through cross-loading analysis of latent variables. An indicator is considered valid if its cross-loading value is higher on the measured variable than on other variables. Furthermore, a discriminant validity value above 0.5 indicates that the latent variable functions effectively as a discriminator in the research model.

Table 8. Results of the Discriminant Cross-Loading Validity Test

	<i>Digital Marketing (X1)</i>	<i>Experiential Marketing (X2)</i>	<i>Customer Trust (M1)</i>	<i>Purchase Decision (Y1)</i>
X _{1.1}	0,704	0,546	0,558	0,473
X _{1.2}	0,851	0,651	0,658	0,568
X _{1.3}	0,838	0,678	0,642	0,519
X _{1.4}	0,684	0,502	0,532	0,528
X _{1.5}	0,777	0,607	0,650	0,524
X _{1.6}	0,858	0,699	0,686	0,503
X _{2.1}	0,642	0,796	0,630	0,459
X _{2.2}	0,543	0,757	0,561	0,486
X _{2.3}	0,588	0,833	0,656	0,539
X _{2.4}	0,653	0,853	0,611	0,464
X _{2.5}	0,669	0,846	0,593	0,501
X _{2.6}	0,662	0,849	0,631	0,501
X _{2.7}	0,750	0,841	0,746	0,525
M _{1.1}	0,720	0,710	0,890	0,600
M _{1.2}	0,695	0,626	0,798	0,558
M _{1.3}	0,632	0,626	0,839	0,611
M _{1.4}	0,478	0,502	0,680	0,516
Y _{1.1}	0,488	0,489	0,546	0,746
Y _{1.2}	0,452	0,337	0,479	0,767
Y _{1.3}	0,580	0,505	0,586	0,836
Y _{1.4}	0,525	0,505	0,620	0,853
Y _{1.5}	0,630	0,598	0,655	0,884

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table 8, the analysis results show that all cross-loading values for each indicator in each variable exceed 0.5. This indicates that the research data are valid, that the latent variables act as good discriminators in the model, and that the set of indicators used is not unidimensional.

Discriminant Validity using AVE

Another method for assessing discriminant validity is to compare the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations among constructs in the model. A construct is considered to have good discriminant validity if the AVE value is greater than 0.50, in accordance with applicable measurement recommendations.

Table 9. Results of the Convergent Validity Test AVE

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Marketing (X1)	0,622
Experiential Marketing (X2)	0,682
Customer Trust (M1)	0,649
Purchase Decision (Y1)	0,671

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table 9, all AVEs are ≥ 0.5 , indicating valid data because the latent variables explain more than half of the variance in their indicators.

Based on Table 10, all constructs—digital marketing, experiential marketing, customer trust, and purchasing decisions — meet the criteria for discriminant validity, as the RSAVE values are greater than the correlations between the constructs.

Table 10. Root Square of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Construct Correlations

	Digital Marketing (X1)	Experiential Marketing (X2)	Customer Trust (M1)	Keputusan Pembelian (Y1)
Customer Trust (M1)	0,806			
Digital Marketing (X1)	0,791	0,788		
Experiential Marketing (X2)	0,770	0,783	0,826	
Purchase Decision (Y1)	0,710	0,659	0,603	0,819

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Reliability

Block indicators that measure the internal fit of the construct's constituent indicators indicate the extent to which they reflect unobserved latent factors. Cronbach's Alpha can be used to measure reliability. Composite reliability values are also used, with the same interpretation as Cronbach's Alpha. The accepted threshold for composite reliability is 0.7, although this is not an absolute standard.

Table 11. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Digital Marketing (X1)	0,816	0,880
Experiential Marketing (X2)	0,876	0,907
Customer Trust (M1)	0,922	0,937
Purchase decision (Y1)	0,876	0,910

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table 11, all Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each variable exceed 0.7, thus indicating that the research data have good reliability.

Inner Model Results

Model measurement was carried out using R-Square for dependent latent variables and Q-Square to assess predictive relevance; a Q-Square value > 0 indicates good predictive ability in the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach.

R-Squared

The R-square value is used to calculate Q-square as a goodness-of-fit test and to show the extent to which the exogenous variable influences the endogenous variable, with a value range of 0 to 1. If the R-square value is close to 0, the weaker the exogenous variable's influence on the endogenous variable; conversely, if it is close to 1, the stronger the exogenous variable's influence on the endogenous variable.

Table 12. R-square Test Results

	<i>R Square</i>	<i>R Square Adjusted</i>
Customer Trust	0,685	0,681
Purchase decision	0,530	0,521

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on Table 12, the R-square for the digital marketing and experiential marketing variables on customer trust is 0.685, indicating that these two variables account for 68.5% of the variance in customer trust. In contrast, 31.5 percent is explained by other factors outside the model. In addition, the R-square value for the digital marketing, experiential marketing, and customer trust variables on purchasing decisions is 0.530, indicating an influence of 53 percent, with the remaining 47 percent explained by variables outside the model.

Goodness of Fit Model (Q2)

Inner model testing is performed by assessing the Q-square statistic as a goodness-of-fit indicator. A Q-square value greater than zero indicates that the model is predictive, while a value below zero indicates that the model is less predictive.

$$Q^2 = 1 - [(1-R_1^2) (1- R_2^2)] = 1 - [(1-0,685) (1-0,530)] = 0,852$$

Based on the calculation results, a Q-square value of 0.852 was obtained, which is greater than zero, indicating that the model is predictive and falls within the outstanding category. This value indicates that variations in the exogenous construct explain 85.2 percent of the endogenous construct, while other variables outside the model influence the remaining 14.8 percent.

Direct Effect Test Results

Five direct effect hypotheses were tested using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method via t-tests for each path between variables. The testing process used bootstrapping to address potential data abnormalities, and the results of the direct effect analysis are presented in Table 13 and Figure 2.

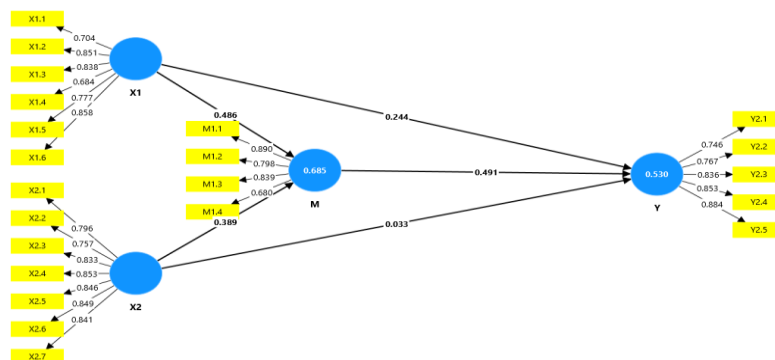


Figure 2. Full model printout

Source: Processed data, 2024

Table 13. Results of the Direct Effect Test

	Path coefficient	t statistics	P Values	Information
Digital Marketing (X₁) -> Purchase Decision (Y₂)	0,244	2,184	0,029	Sig.
Experiential Marketing (X₂) -> Purchase Decision (Y₂)	0,033	0,322	0,748	Not Sig.
Digital Marketing (X₁) -> Customer Trust (Y₁)	0,486	7,147	0,000	Sig.

Experiential Marketing (X₂) -> Customer Trust (Y₁)	0,389	5,521	0,000	Sig.
Customer Trust (Y₁)-> Purchase Decision (Y₂)	0,491	4,756	0,000	Sig.

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

The following explains the results of the direct influence hypothesis test, as presented in Table 13 and Figure 2.

Hypothesis testing on the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions yielded a regression coefficient of 0.244, indicating a positive effect. The p-value of 0.029, which is less than 0.05 ($0.029 < 0.05$), indicates that digital marketing significantly influences purchasing decisions. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (H1), which states that digital marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, is accepted.

- Hypothesis testing on the influence of experiential marketing on purchasing decisions yielded a regression coefficient of 0.033, indicating that experiential marketing has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. The p-value of 0.748, which is greater than 0.05 ($0.748 > 0.05$), indicates that experiential marketing has an insignificant effect on purchasing decisions. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 (H2), which states that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, is rejected.
- Hypothesis testing on the influence of digital marketing on customer trust yielded a regression coefficient of 0.486, indicating that digital marketing has a positive effect on customer trust. The p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), indicates that digital marketing has a significant effect on customer trust. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer trust, is accepted.
- Hypothesis testing on the influence of experiential marketing on customer trust yielded a regression coefficient of 0.389, indicating that experiential marketing has a positive effect on customer trust. A p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), indicates that experiential marketing has a significant effect on customer trust. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H4), which states that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer trust, is accepted.
- Hypothesis testing on the influence of customer trust on purchasing decisions yielded a regression coefficient of 0.491, indicating that customer trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. A p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), indicates that customer trust has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 (H5), which states that customer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, is accepted.

1) Testing the Direct and Indirect Influence of Variables

This study examines the role of consumer trust as a mediator in the indirect influence between digital marketing and experiential marketing on purchasing decisions. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.16 below.

Table 14. Summary of Mediating Variable Test Results

Variable Relationship	Effect				Information
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	
Digital Marketing (X₁) -> Customer Trust (Y₁) -> Purchase Decision (Y₂)	0,239 (Sig.)	0,244 (Sig.)	0,486 (Sig.)	0,491 (Sig.)	Partial Mediation
Experiential Marketing (X₂) -> Customer Trust (Y₁) -> Purchase Decision (Y₂)	0,191 (Sig.)	0,033 (Non-Sig.)	0,389 (Sig.)	0,622 (Sig.)	Full Mediation

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Note: Significance (Sig.) = t -statistic > 1.96 at $\alpha = 5\%$

Based on Table 14, the results indicate that customer trust acts as a mediating variable in the relationships between digital marketing and experiential marketing and in their influence on purchasing decisions. Regarding the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions, the test results show that effects A, C, and D are significant. In contrast, effect B, which describes the direct influence, is also significant. Thus, customer trust is partially shown to mediate. This means that the higher the implementation of digital marketing, the higher the customer trust, which ultimately strengthens the purchasing decision. Meanwhile, in the relationship between experiential marketing and purchasing decisions, effects A, C, and D are significant, whereas effect B is not significant, indicating that customer trust fully mediates. Thus, the better the implementation of experiential marketing, the

higher customer trust, which then drives increased purchasing decisions, demonstrating the role of customer trust as a key link in the relationship.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Digital Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

Statistical analysis indicates that digital marketing has a positive, significant influence on purchasing decisions among fashion MSMEs in Bali. Effective digital marketing strategies across social media, creative content, paid advertising, and online interactions can increase the likelihood that consumers will make a purchase. Strategies that are less attractive or difficult to access actually decrease consumer purchase intention. This finding aligns with the black-box model of consumer behavior, which posits that digital marketing stimuli are processed through psychological factors and personal characteristics, leading to a response that increases trust and ultimately drives a purchase decision (Kotler & Keller, 2022). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory asserts that digital promotions trigger cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes that ultimately drive purchase decisions. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) also highlights the role of positive attitudes, social support, and easy access to digital information in strengthening purchase intentions. The most influential element of digital marketing is the ease with which MSME products can be compared and contrasted on social media. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Handayani and Sari (2020), Adek & Ningrum (2025), Lee & Lee (2025), and several other studies, which show that digital marketing has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Purchasing Decisions (Non-Significant)

The analysis shows that experiential marketing has a positive but insignificant effect on purchasing decisions for fashion MSMEs in Bali. Experiential marketing strategies have a positive impact on purchasing decisions, but the effect is not statistically strong enough. Consumers who have pleasant experiences through the senses, feelings, thoughts, actions, and relationships tend to be attracted to fashion MSME products. However, these experiences are not yet the primary factor in purchase decisions. The black box model of consumer behavior theory explains that marketing stimuli in the form of experiential marketing penetrate the consumer's internal processes, encompassing personal, social, and psychological aspects; this process does not always result in a purchase decision if the experience is not dominant compared to other factors (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory, experiential marketing acts as a stimulus that shapes consumer trust and emotional perceptions, but is not strong enough to elicit a response in the form of a purchase decision (Eroglu et al., 2020). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), purchasing decisions are influenced by attitudes toward the product, social norms, and behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). Experiential marketing does build positive attitudes, but social or financial constraints can hinder purchases. The most dominant indicator in this variable is a feeling of closeness to local culture (identity expression), with an outer loading of 0.853, indicating that purchasing fashion products from MSMEs in Bali is considered a form of cultural identity and regional pride expression. This phenomenon aligns with research by Bhattacharjee et al. (2017) and Schmitt (2010), which emphasizes that consumption of local products reflects consumers' social identity and emotional involvement. These findings also support the research findings of Ismail et al. (2018), Chen & Lim (2020), Ardiansyah & Suryani (2021), and Halim & Pratama (2022), which concluded that experiential marketing has a positive but insignificant effect on purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Digital Marketing on Customer Trust

The analysis shows that digital marketing has a positive and significant impact on customer trust in fashion MSME products in Bali. Effectively implemented digital marketing strategies, such as consistent content, transparent product information, customer testimonials, and active social media interaction, can increase consumer trust in local products. Inconsistent, poorly communicative, or seemingly inauthentic strategies actually decrease trust and raise doubts about purchasing decisions. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory explains that digital marketing stimuli trigger consumers' cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes, fostering trust in a product (Lee & Hong, 2016). Meanwhile, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) highlights that positive attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control shape strong trust (Ajzen, 1991; Yadav & Rahman, 2017). The most influential element of digital marketing is the ease of comparing product prices and models through social media (X1.6). Customer trust is reflected through indicators of competence, honesty, security, and reliability, with competence as the most dominant factor (outer loading 0.890). MSME competencies, including knowledge and skills, play a crucial role in building positive consumer perceptions (Ali et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2020). Several other studies (Abid et al., 2023; Ebrahim, 2020; Pambudiantono & Fitriyah, 2023; Meriana & Irmawati, 2023) also confirm that digital marketing significantly strengthens trust and drives purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Experiential Marketing on Customer Trust

Research results show that experiential marketing has a positive and significant impact on customer trust in fashion MSME products in Bali. Effectively implemented experiential marketing strategies that encompass the senses, feelings, thoughts, actions, and relationships can increase confidence in product quality and credibility. Consumers feel more trusting when they have authentic, enjoyable, and meaningful experiences, as positive experiences not only provide functional value but also foster emotional closeness and a sense of social attachment to the brand. The black box model of consumer behavior explains that experiential marketing serves as a stimulus that is processed psychologically and socially, thereby increasing trust (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory, experiential marketing stimuli evoke emotional and cognitive reactions that strengthen perceptions of brand credibility (Eroglu et al., 2020). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) asserts that positive attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control strengthen trust (Ajzen, 2020). The aspect of identity expression, or a feeling of closer connection to local culture, emerged as the most dominant indicator (outer loading 0.853), indicating that purchasing MSME fashion products serves as a means of expressing cultural identity (Bhattacharjee et al., 2017). These results are consistent with research by Khoirunnisa & Astini (2021), Wijaya et al. (2023), and Rizky et al. (2023), which demonstrated that experiential marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer trust.

The Influence of Customer Trust on Purchasing Decisions

The analysis results show that customer trust has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for fashion MSMEs in Bali. A high level of trust makes consumers more confident in the quality, safety, and suitability of products to their needs, thus strengthening their purchasing decisions. Trust plays a crucial role as a foundation of confidence, reducing risk and increasing a sense of security during transactions. The Black Box Model explains that trust arises from consumers' internal processes in response to marketing stimuli, leading to purchasing decisions. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) perspective holds that marketing stimuli elicit cognitive and emotional responses that foster trust. At the same time, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that trust strengthens positive attitudes and purchase intentions. The most dominant indicator in this variable is the competence of MSME actors, reflected in the ability to answer consumer questions clearly and convincingly (outer loading 0.890). This finding aligns with research by Ali et al. (2021) and Shin et al. (2016), which emphasizes that competence and professional communication strengthen trust and, in turn, influence purchase decisions.

The Role of Customer Trust in Mediating the Influence of Digital Marketing on Purchasing Decisions (Partial Mediation)

Research results indicate that customer trust partially mediates the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions for fashion MSMEs in Bali. This demonstrates that digital marketing strategies can directly influence purchasing decisions, although some of their influence is still channeled through consumer trust. This situation illustrates that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends not only on the intensity of promotions but also on the strategy's ability to build trust. The Black Box Model theory explains that digital marketing stimuli are processed by consumers' psychological aspects, resulting in trust, which then triggers purchasing decisions. The SOR Theory perspective holds that trust results from cognitive and emotional reactions to digital stimuli.

In contrast, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits that trust strengthens purchase intentions through positive attitudes and supportive social norms. Trust arises because consumers feel confident in the brand's integrity, credibility, and transparency, ultimately reducing the perception of risk in online transactions. When digital marketing strategies present honest information, communicative interactions, and tangible evidence of product quality, consumers will be more trusting and more inclined to make purchases. This research is also supported by several studies conducted by Mahardika and Sholahuddin (2025); Nugraha et al. (2025); Pradana and Rahman (2025), which found that trust significantly mediates the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions.

The Role of Customer Trust in Mediating the Influence of Customer Experiential Marketing on Purchasing Decisions (Full Mediation)

The research results show that customer trust acts as a full mediator between experiential marketing and purchasing decisions for fashion MSMEs in Bali. This demonstrates that experiential marketing does not directly influence purchasing decisions; instead, its effect emerges after consumers develop trust in the brand. Experiential marketing strategies can only drive purchasing decisions when they first cultivate trust. This phenomenon illustrates that positive consumer experiences, such as pleasant interactions, comfort, and an authentic impression of the brand, form the basis for establishing trust before ultimately leading to purchase. This view aligns with the Black Box Model, where experiential marketing serves as a stimulus that is processed through consumer perceptions and

emotions, resulting in trust—an internal response that drives purchase decisions. The SOR Theory perspective asserts that stimuli, in the form of consumers' emotional and cognitive experiences, create trust, which serves as a bridge to purchase decisions. The TPB theory further supports these findings by explaining that trust strengthens positive attitudes and perceived behavioral control, thereby driving stronger purchase intentions. Experiential marketing strategies that successfully address the senses, feelings, thoughts, actions, and relationships have been shown to increase credibility and emotional closeness between consumers and brands. This sense of trust is the primary foundation for forming real purchasing decisions. The results of this study are consistent with studies conducted by El-Adly & Eid (2017), Chen et al. (2016), Kim and Choi (2016), Rather & Camilleri (2019), Iglesias et al. (2019), and Rather (2020), which state that consumer trust can change consumers' emotional experiences, improving purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that this study provides theoretical contributions to the Theory of Consumer Behavior, Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory, and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) through a more comprehensive explanation of the relationship between digital marketing, experiential marketing, customer trust, and purchasing decisions for fashion MSME products in Bali. This understanding helps explain how digital marketing strategies and customer experience can build trust and influence consumer purchasing behavior, especially for Generation Z. Fashion MSME entrepreneurs are advised to maximize digital marketing strategies through social media, such as using clear titles, appropriate keywords, and creating unique, relevant, and consistent content to increase consumer visibility and interest. The application of local cultural touches is also important, for example, adapting traditional Balinese motifs into modern designs such as hoodies, tote bags, or sneakers with endek motifs to attract the attention of Gen Z, who like unique and exclusive products. The interactive communication aspect is another key to building trust, as every consumer question must be answered quickly and convincingly. A responsive and authentic attitude will strengthen the perception of reliability and credibility of local brands. An integrated strategy of digital marketing, emotional experiences, and trust has been proven to increase purchasing decisions while strengthening consumer loyalty to Balinese fashion MSME products.

Transparency

The authors declare that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent report of the research conducted; that no important aspects of the research have been omitted; and that any deviations from the research plan have been explained. This research adhered to all applicable ethical practices at the time of writing.

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