



## **BUILDING TRUST IN SOCIAL COMMERCE: HOW PRODUCT QUALITY AND STORE REPUTATION INFLUENCE GEN Z BEAUTY PURCHASE DECISIONS ON TIKTOK SHOP**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines how product quality and store reputation shape consumer trust and purchase decisions in social commerce, with a specific focus on Generation Z consumers in the TikTok Shop ecosystem. Addressing the growing complexity of digital consumer behavior, particularly in the beauty sector where product safety and credibility are critical, this research advances the understanding of how intrinsic and extrinsic signals operate within highly interactive, socially embedded platforms. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were collected from 170 Generation Z consumers with prior purchase experience of Madame Gie products on TikTok Shop. The proposed model was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess both direct and mediated relationships. The findings reveal that product quality influences purchase decisions both directly and indirectly through consumer trust, indicating a partial mediation mechanism. In contrast, store reputation exerts a direct effect on purchase decisions without being mediated by trust, suggesting a heuristic-driven decision pathway. Consumer trust also significantly reduces perceived risk and strengthens purchase intention. This study contributes theoretically by uncovering an asymmetric mediation mechanism in social commerce, challenging the assumption of uniform trust pathways. It also offers practical insights for firms to strategically manage product safety, regulatory transparency, and digital reputation to effectively engage Generation Z consumers.

**Keywords:** Social Commerce; Consumer Trust; Product Quality; Store Reputation; Purchase Decision; Generation Z; Tiktok Shop; Asymmetric Mediation

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed consumer purchasing behavior, shifting transactions from conventional settings to digitally mediated environments. This transformation is reflected in the growing reliance on e-commerce platforms as primary channels for product search, comparison, review evaluation, and purchase execution. Indonesia represents one of the largest digital markets in Southeast Asia, with a continuously expanding base of e-commerce users (Reportal, 2024). In this evolving landscape, purchase decisions are no longer determined solely by product attributes, but are increasingly shaped by external factors such as seller reputation, user-generated content, and trust in digital transactions.

This transformation has been further accelerated by the emergence of social commerce, particularly through platforms such as TikTok Shop. Unlike traditional e-commerce, TikTok Shop integrates entertainment, short-form video content, live streaming, and real-time transactions into a unified digital ecosystem. According to APJII (2025), while Shopee remains the dominant e-commerce platform in terms of user access, TikTok Shop has demonstrated rapid growth and increasing market relevance. This trend highlights the platform's strategic importance, especially among Generation Z consumers, who are characterized by high digital adaptability, critical thinking, and strong responsiveness to visual content and peer-generated recommendations (Ratnasari & Ali, 2025).

Within this context, the cosmetic industry has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors in social commerce. Cosmetic products are inherently suitable for digital promotion due to their visual appeal and the effectiveness of demonstrations, tutorials, and user reviews. Madame Gie, a local Indonesian cosmetic brand, previously demonstrated strong market performance. Data from Kompas Dashboard (2022) indicate that the brand once held the top position in the local bronzer category.

However, this position has declined in recent years due to intensifying competition and shifting consumer preferences. GoodStats (2024) further reports that Madame Gie is no longer ranked among the top ten beauty brands in Indonesia's e-commerce market.

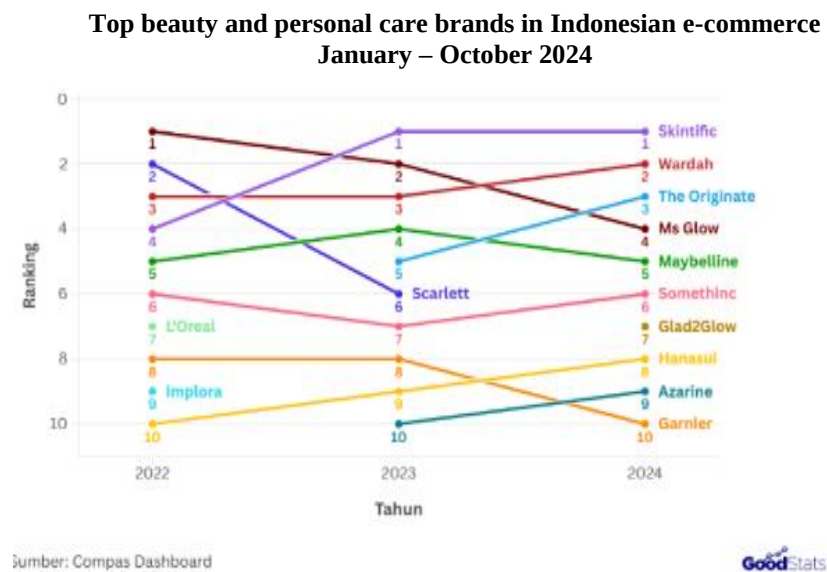


Figure 3. Top beauty and personal care brands in Indonesian e-commerce (Source: GoodStats, 2024).

Beyond competitive dynamics, consumer trust in cosmetic products is also highly sensitive to safety-related issues. In 2022, the Indonesian National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) withdrew several Madame Gie products due to the presence of hazardous substances, including prohibited colorants such as K3, Red K10, and Red K104 (Putri & Asri Humaira, 2024). Given that cosmetic products are directly applied to the body, concerns regarding safety, quality, and claim accuracy become critical determinants of consumer decision-making. Consequently, product quality and store reputation extend beyond conventional marketing attributes, functioning as key signals in building consumer trust within digital environments.

Prior studies have established that product quality and store reputation significantly influence consumer trust and purchase decisions in e-commerce contexts (Purba et al., 2023; Wulansari et al., 2025; Pasi & Sudaryanto, 2021; Simarmata et al., 2021; Malak et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2021; Khulwani & Savitri, 2023; Eza Faisal & Savitri, 2023). However, the mediating role of trust remains inconclusive, particularly in the relationship between store reputation and purchase decisions (Kusumawati & Diyani, 2021). This inconsistency suggests that the mechanisms underlying trust formation in digital contexts—especially within social commerce—require further investigation.

Moreover, existing studies predominantly focus on conventional e-commerce platforms, leaving a gap in understanding how these relationships operate in more dynamic, visually driven, and socially interactive environments such as TikTok Shop. At the same time, the

integration of product-related risk factors, particularly cosmetic safety concerns, remains underexplored in trust-based consumer behavior models.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of product quality and store reputation on purchase decisions within TikTok Shop, as well as to investigate the mediating role of consumer trust among Generation Z consumers in Karawang. By addressing these gaps, this research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of digital consumer behavior literature and provide practical insights for managing product quality, store reputation, and consumer trust in the social commerce-driven cosmetic industry.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Product Quality and Consumer Trust in the Marketing Perspective**

Within marketing management, product quality is central to value creation, shaping consumers' evaluation of benefits and risks (Kotler & Keller, 2021). However, prior research increasingly challenges the traditional view of quality as purely functional, emphasizing its expanded role in digital environments where safety, effectiveness, and claim reliability become equally critical.

From a signaling theory perspective, product quality operates as an intrinsic signal that mitigates information asymmetry in online transactions. Empirical evidence suggests that credible product attributes enhance trust formation in digital marketplaces (Malak et al., 2021). Similarly, Simarmata et al. (2021) confirm that perceived quality significantly influences trust. Nevertheless, existing studies tend to treat product quality as a uniform construct, with limited attention to context-specific dimensions such as product risk.

In the cosmetic industry, where products are directly applied to the body, safety concerns intensify the role of quality in shaping trust. This suggests that product quality not only delivers functional value but also reduces perceived risk, thereby strengthening trust more significantly than in low-risk product categories.

*H<sub>1</sub>: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust.*

### **2. Store Reputation and Consumer Trust in Digital Consumer Behavior**

Trust formation in digital consumer behavior is largely driven by external information cues due to the absence of direct interaction (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2022). Store reputation, reflected through ratings, reviews, and service consistency, has been widely recognized as a key determinant of trust.

Prior studies consistently demonstrate that reputation functions as an extrinsic signal of credibility (Tang et al., 2021; Malak et al., 2021). However, a critical gap remains in understanding how reputation operates in highly interactive social commerce environments. While traditional e-commerce studies emphasize rational evaluation of reputation, emerging platforms such as TikTok Shop rely heavily on socially embedded and visually driven information.

For Generation Z consumers, reputation is not merely evaluated cognitively but also interpreted through social validation mechanisms. This suggests that reputation may operate more dynamically, influencing trust formation through both cognitive and social pathways.

*H<sub>2</sub>: Store reputation has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust.*

### **3. Product Quality and Purchase Decision in the Customer Value Perspective**

Customer value theory posits that purchase decisions result from a trade-off between perceived benefits and associated risks. Product quality plays a central role in shaping this evaluation by directly influencing perceived value.

Empirical findings confirm that product quality significantly affects purchase decisions (Hidayat & Rayuwanto, 2022; Wulansari et al., 2025). However, prior studies often assume a linear relationship between quality and purchase behavior, without considering the moderating role of perceived risk or digital context.

In social commerce, where consumers rely on indirect information, product quality also serves as a risk-reduction mechanism. This dual role—enhancing value while mitigating risk—suggests that the effect of quality on purchase decisions may be stronger in high-risk product categories such as cosmetics.

*H<sub>3</sub>: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.*

#### **4. Store Reputation and Purchase Decision in Social Commerce**

In social commerce, purchase decisions are shaped not only by rational evaluation but also by social influence mechanisms such as reviews, ratings, and peer recommendations. Store reputation has been widely identified as a key determinant of purchase behavior.

Previous studies show that reputation directly influences purchase decisions by signaling credibility and professionalism (Tang et al., 2021; Wulansari et al., 2025). However, a comparative perspective reveals that the strength of this relationship may vary depending on the platform context.

Unlike traditional e-commerce, TikTok Shop integrates social interaction and real-time feedback, enabling reputation to function as a heuristic cue rather than purely a cognitive evaluation. This suggests that reputation may exert a more immediate and direct influence on purchase decisions in social commerce environments.

*H<sub>4</sub>: Store reputation has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.*

#### **5. The Mediating Role of Trust in the Relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decision**

Trust has been widely conceptualized as a mechanism that reduces perceived risk and facilitates decision-making in digital environments. In this context, product quality contributes to trust formation, which subsequently influences purchase decisions.

Empirical evidence supports the mediating role of trust in the relationship between product quality and purchase decisions (Simarmata et al., 2021). However, existing studies often assume that mediation effects are uniform across different antecedents.

A more critical perspective suggests that the strength of mediation may depend on the nature of the signal. As an intrinsic signal, product quality directly influences both cognitive evaluation and trust formation, making mediation effects more likely to occur.

*H<sub>5</sub>: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through consumer trust.*

#### **6. The Mediating Role of Trust in the Relationship between Store Reputation and Purchase Decision**

The mediating role of trust in the relationship between store reputation and purchase decisions remains theoretically contested. While some studies suggest that reputation influences decisions through trust, others indicate a direct effect (Kusumawati & Diyani, 2021).

This inconsistency highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of mediation mechanisms. In particular, reputation may function as a sufficiently strong signal that reduces the necessity of trust as an intermediary variable.

In social commerce environments, where decisions are often made rapidly based on visible social cues, reputation may bypass trust and directly influence purchase behavior. This suggests that mediation effects are context-dependent rather than universal.

*H<sub>6</sub>: Store reputation has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions through consumer trust.*

## 7. Consumer Trust and Purchase Decision in Digital Transaction Risk Perspective

In digital transaction theory, trust is a key determinant of purchase behavior, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty. Consumers with higher levels of trust are more likely to engage in transactions.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that trust significantly influences purchase decisions in digital marketplaces (Malak et al., 2021; Pasi & Sudaryanto, 2021). However, trust should not be viewed as a static construct, but rather as a dynamic mechanism shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic signals.

In social commerce, where interactions are fast-paced and perception-driven, trust becomes even more critical as a foundation for decision-making. This reinforces its central role in linking evaluation processes with behavioral outcomes.

*H<sub>7</sub>: Consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.*

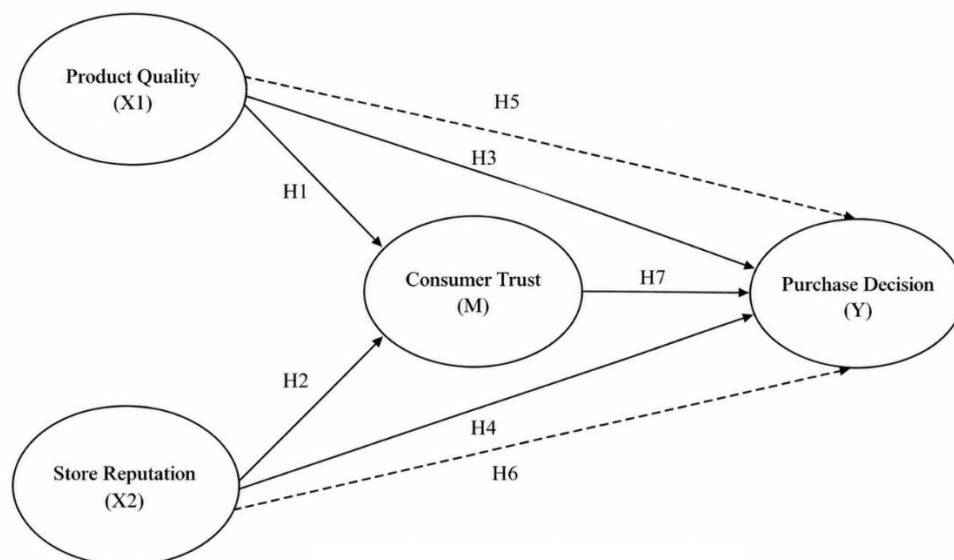


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

## C. METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach with a descriptive-verify design to examine the causal relationships among product quality, store reputation, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. A cross-sectional survey method was employed to collect primary data using a structured questionnaire.

The population consists of consumers who have previously purchased Madame Gie products via TikTok Shop and reside in Karawang Regency, Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure the relevance of respondents to the research objectives. The selection criteria include: (1) residing in Karawang; (2) belonging to Generation Z; (3) aged between 21–28 years (approximately born between 1997 and 2004); (4) having prior experience purchasing Madame Gie products on TikTok Shop; and (5) willingness to complete

the questionnaire. This age range was selected to represent Generation Z consumers who are actively engaged in digital transactions.

A total of 170 respondents were included in the sample. The sample size was determined based on the requirements of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Hair et al. (2021), the minimum sample size should be 5–10 times the number of indicators. Given that this study employs 40 indicators, the sample size is considered sufficient to ensure robust and reliable model estimation.

Data collection was conducted between January and February 2026 using an online survey distributed via Google Forms. The measurement instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Questionnaire items were adapted from prior studies and adjusted to reflect the context of TikTok Shop and cosmetic product consumption. The operationalization of variables is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Operationalization of Variables**

| Variable          | Operational Definition                                                | Indicators                                                                         | Items | Source                 |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| Product Quality   | Consumers' perception of a product's ability to meet expectations     | Performance, durability, conformity, safety, design                                | 10    | Purba et al. (2023)    |
| Store Reputation  | Consumers' perception of the credibility of the seller/store          | Credibility, public trust, consistency, image                                      | 10    | Purba et al. (2023)    |
| Consumer Trust    | Consumers' belief in the security and integrity of the seller/product | Security, integrity, credibility                                                   | 10    | Pasi Sudaryanto (2021) |
| Purchase Decision | The process of evaluating and making purchase decisions               | Need recognition, information search, evaluation, decision, post-purchase behavior | 10    | Pasi Sudaryanto (2021) |

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis followed a two-step approach, consisting of measurement model (outer model) evaluation and structural model (inner model) assessment.

The outer model evaluation aimed to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings ( $> 0.70$ ) and Average Variance Extracted ( $AVE > 0.50$ ). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio ( $HTMT < 0.90$ ). Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with threshold values above 0.70.

The inner model evaluation was conducted to examine the relationships among variables. This included the assessment of R-square ( $R^2$ ) to determine the explanatory power of the model, F-square ( $f^2$ ) to evaluate effect size, and path coefficients to assess the direction and strength of relationships.

Hypothesis testing was performed using the bootstrapping procedure. Statistical significance was determined based on p-values  $< 0.05$  and t-statistics  $> 1.96$ . Additionally, mediation analysis was conducted through the examination of indirect effects to evaluate the role of consumer trust in mediating the relationships between product quality and store reputation on purchase decisions.

## **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Respondent Profile**

Based on the research findings, the respondents are predominantly Generation Z individuals aged 21–28 years, indicating that early adulthood represents the primary user group of TikTok Shop for purchasing Madame Gie cosmetic products.

In terms of gender, female respondents dominate, which is consistent with the nature of cosmetic products as primarily targeted toward women. All respondents reside in Karawang Regency, ensuring that the data align with the focus and objectives of the study.

Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents are students, reflecting that Madame Gie products are widely favored by young consumers with high levels of digital engagement. In terms of income, most respondents earn below IDR 1,000,000, reinforcing that Madame Gie products are aligned with the lower–middle market segment, consistent with the brand's positioning as affordable cosmetics. This finding is supported by Khulwani and Savitri (2023), who argue that allowances derived from family income are commonly used by young consumers for saving and purchasing various needs and wants, including beauty products, electronics, fashion, and accessories.

### **2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine respondents' perceptions of product quality, store reputation, consumer trust, and purchase decisions related to Madame Gie products on TikTok Shop. The mean scores for all variables fall within the “agree” category.

These results provide an initial indication that the research variables are positively perceived by respondents and are therefore appropriate for further analysis in the structural model evaluation stage.

### **3. Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

The measurement model (outer model) describes how latent variables are operationalized through their respective indicators, enabling the evaluation of the relationships between constructs and indicators in terms of validity and reliability. This assessment ensures that the indicators adequately represent their corresponding constructs (Ramanudin et al., 2021). The results of the outer model evaluation are presented in Figure 3.

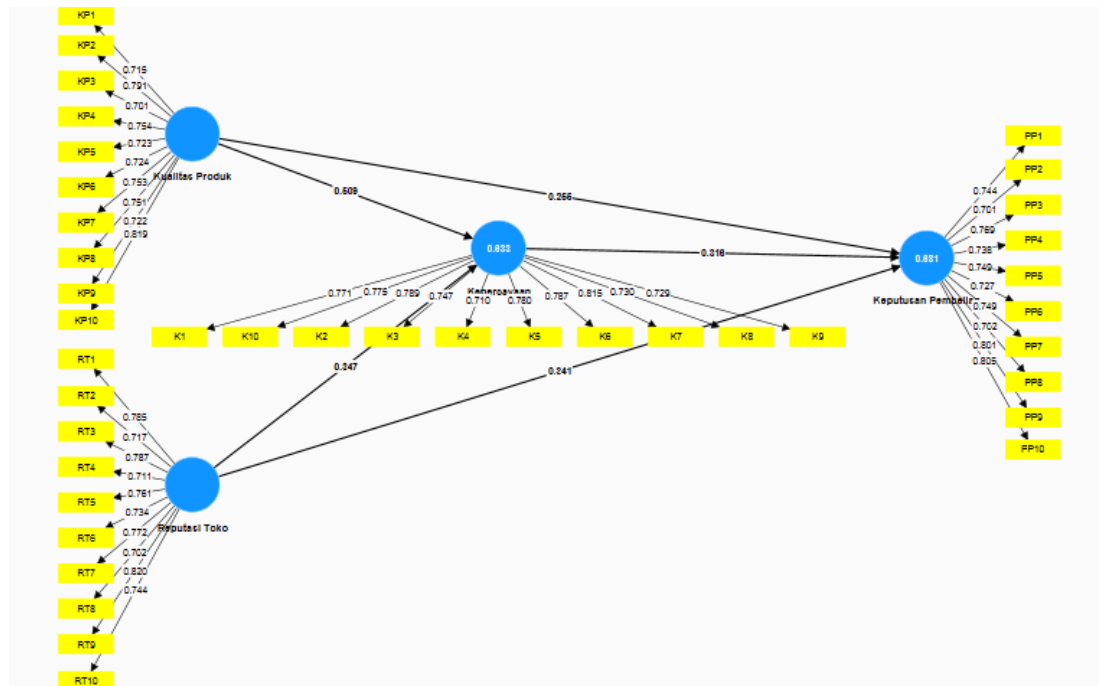


Figure 3. Outer Model Test Results

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed by the researcher (2025)

#### 4. Convergent Validity

Table 2. Outer Loading Factor

| Product Quality (X1) | Store Reputation (X2) | Trust (M)   | Purchase Decision (Y) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| PQ1 = 0.715          | SR = 0.785            | T1 = 0.771  | PD1 = 0.744           |
| PQ 2 = 0.791         | SR2 = 0.717           | T2 = 0.789  | PD2 = 0.701           |
| PQ 3 = 0.701         | SR3 = 0.787           | T3 = 0.747  | PD3 = 0.769           |
| PQ 4 = 0.754         | SR4 = 0.711           | T4 = 0.710  | PD4 = 0.738           |
| PQ5 = 0.723          | SR5 = 0.761           | T5 = 0.780  | PD5 = 0.749           |
| PQ6 = 0.724          | SR6 = 0.734           | T6 = 0.787  | PD6 = 0.727           |
| PQ7 = 0.753          | SR7 = 0.772           | T7 = 0.815  | PD7 = 0.749           |
| PQ8 = 0.751          | SR8 = 0.702           | T8 = 0.730  | PD8 = 0.702           |
| PQ9 = 0.722          | SR9 = 0.820           | T9 = 0.729  | PD9 = 0.801           |
| PQ10 = 0.819         | SR10 = 0.744          | T10 = 0.775 | PD10 = 0.805          |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

All loading factor values exceed 0.70, indicating that all indicators meet the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

| Variable              | AVE   | Description |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------|
| Trust (M)             | 0.584 | Valid       |
| Product Quality (X1)  | 0.557 | Valid       |
| Store Reputation (X2) | 0.569 | Valid       |
| Purchase Decision (Y) | 0.561 | Valid       |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

All constructs have AVE values above 0.50, confirming that the indicators are valid and meet the required standards for convergent validity (Ramanudin et al., 2021).

#### 5. Discriminant Validity

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| Variable | Trust | Product Quality | Store Reputation | Purchase Decision |
|----------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
|----------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|

|                   |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Trust             | 0.764 |       |       |       |
| Product Quality   | 0.758 | 0.746 |       |       |
| Store Reputation  | 0.712 | 0.716 | 0.754 |       |
| Purchase Decision | 0.752 | 0.748 | 0.748 | 0.749 |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

The square root of AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, indicating that discriminant validity has been achieved.

**Table 5. HTMT Ratio**

| Variable          | Trust | Product Quality | Store Reputation | Purchase Decision |
|-------------------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Product Quality   | 0.823 |                 |                  |                   |
| Store Reputation  | 0.770 | 0.779           |                  |                   |
| Purchase Decision | 0.818 | 0.805           | 0.814            |                   |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

All HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90, confirming that discriminant validity is established (Hair et al., 2021).

## 6. Reliability Test

**Table 6. Reliability Results**

| Variable          | Cronbach's Alpha | CR (rho_a) | CR (rho_c) |
|-------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Trust             | 0.920            | 0.921      | 0.929      |
| Product Quality   | 0.911            | 0.912      | 0.933      |
| Store Reputation  | 0.916            | 0.919      | 0.926      |
| Purchase Decision | 0.913            | 0.914      | 0.927      |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

All constructs exceed the threshold value of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency and reliability.

## 7. Structural Model (Inner Model)

**Table 7. R-Square**

| Variable          | R <sup>2</sup> | Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Trust             | 0.633          | 0.629                   |
| Purchase Decision | 0.681          | 0.675                   |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value for trust (0.629) indicates that product quality and store reputation explain 62.9% of its variance. Meanwhile, the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value for purchase decision (0.675) indicates that product quality, store reputation, and trust explain 67.5% of its variance. These values suggest that the model has strong explanatory power.

**Table 8. F-Square**

| Relationship                         | Value |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Product Quality → Trust              | 0.344 |
| Product Quality → Purchase Decision  | 0.115 |
| Store Reputation → Trust             | 0.160 |
| Store Reputation → Purchase Decision | 0.074 |
| Trust → Purchase Decision            | 0.153 |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

The results indicate that most relationships fall within the moderate effect size category, except for the effect of store reputation on purchase decisions, which is categorized as weak (Hair et al., 2021).

## 8. Hypothesis Testing

**Table 9. Hypothesis Test Results**

| Relationship                                 | Coefficient | t-statistic | p-value |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| Product Quality → Trust                      | 0.509       | 5.884       | 0.000   |
| Store Reputation → Trust                     | 0.347       | 3.677       | 0.000   |
| Product Quality → Purchase Decision          | 0.255       | 2.224       | 0.026   |
| Store Reputation → Purchase Decision         | 0.341       | 3.025       | 0.003   |
| Product Quality → Trust → Purchase Decision  | 0.161       | 2.366       | 0.018   |
| Store Reputation → Trust → Purchase Decision | 0.110       | 1.956       | 0.051   |
| Trust → Purchase Decision                    | 0.316       | 2.443       | 0.015   |

Source: SmartPLS 4 output processed (2025)

The results indicate that all direct and indirect relationships are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), except for the indirect effect of store reputation on purchase decisions through trust ( $p = 0.051$ ), which is not statistically significant.

## 9. Discussion

The findings indicate that product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust. This relationship can be explained by the inherent characteristics of cosmetic products, which involve high perceived risk due to direct physical application. In this context, product quality extends beyond functional performance to include safety, compatibility, and the consistency of product claims. Generation Z consumers, in particular, are increasingly sensitive to product safety issues, especially following regulatory interventions such as BPOM product withdrawals. Consequently, high product quality reduces perceived risk and strengthens consumer trust. This finding aligns with prior studies emphasizing product quality as a key determinant of trust in digital environments (Malak et al., 2021; Meilatinova, 2021) and as a credibility signal in conditions of information asymmetry (Bugshan & Attar, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, this result reinforces signaling theory, where product attributes function as intrinsic signals that shape consumer perceptions under uncertainty. In social commerce, product quality not only influences perceived value but also activates psychological mechanisms that foster trust. Practically, this suggests that firms such as Madame Gie must ensure consistent product quality, particularly in terms of safety assurance and transparency, including clear disclosure of BPOM certification, ingredients, and product claims.

Store reputation is also found to significantly influence consumer trust. In the TikTok Shop environment, where direct product evaluation is limited, store reputation becomes a primary indicator of seller credibility. Consumers rely heavily on observable signals such as ratings, reviews, transaction history, and seller responsiveness. For Generation Z, who are accustomed to consuming socially generated information, reputation serves as a form of social validation. This finding is consistent with prior research demonstrating that seller reputation plays a critical role in trust formation in digital marketplaces (Tang et al., 2021; Yeon et al., 2019).

Theoretically, this result confirms that store reputation functions as an extrinsic signal that reduces uncertainty in online transactions. From a managerial standpoint, sellers must actively manage their reputation by maintaining service consistency, responding promptly to customers, and effectively handling reviews, as these factors directly shape trust perceptions.

Product quality is further shown to have a significant effect on purchase decisions. This indicates that consumers do not rely solely on promotional stimuli but also evaluate the functional and safety attributes of products. In the cosmetic sector, where health-related risks are salient, product quality becomes a decisive factor. This finding supports prior studies showing that product quality enhances perceived value and drives purchase behavior (Sohn & Kim, 2020; Liu et al., 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding strengthens customer value theory, where purchase decisions result from a trade-off between perceived benefits and risks. Practically, firms must ensure that product quality is not only maintained but also effectively communicated through educational and informative content that highlights safety, usage, and benefits.

Store reputation is also found to significantly influence purchase decisions. Notably, in the TikTok Shop context, reputation does not merely build trust but can directly trigger purchasing behavior. This is due to the platform's characteristics, where real-time ratings, reviews, and user-generated content are highly visible. For Generation Z consumers, such information acts as a decision shortcut, enabling rapid purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with prior studies indicating that reputation and online reviews directly influence purchase behavior (Chen et al., 2017; Hajli, 2015).

Theoretically, this suggests that decision-making in social commerce is not always driven by extensive cognitive evaluation but can be influenced by immediate social cues. Practically, this implies that sellers should prioritize maintaining high ratings, enhancing customer experience, and encouraging positive reviews, as reputation directly affects conversion.

Consumer trust is also found to significantly influence purchase decisions. In digital transactions, trust serves as a critical mechanism for reducing uncertainty and perceived risk. This is particularly relevant for cosmetic products, where risks extend beyond financial concerns to include health and safety. This finding is consistent with studies identifying trust as a central determinant of online purchasing behavior (Hajli, 2017; Bugshan & Attar, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, this reinforces the role of trust as a risk-reduction mechanism in digital consumer behavior. Practically, firms must build trust through transparency, consistent product quality, and honest communication with consumers.

The mediation analysis reveals that consumer trust partially mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase decisions. This indicates that product quality influences purchase decisions both directly and indirectly through trust. In contrast, trust does not mediate the relationship between store reputation and purchase decisions, suggesting that reputation exerts a more dominant direct effect.

Theoretically, this finding contributes to the literature by highlighting an asymmetric mediation mechanism, where trust operates selectively depending on the nature of the antecedent variable. Practically, this implies that while improving product quality should be accompanied by trust-building strategies, store reputation can be leveraged directly to drive purchase behavior.

Finally, this study has several limitations. The sample is restricted to Generation Z consumers in Karawang, limiting generalizability. The cross-sectional design does not capture temporal dynamics, and the focus on a single cosmetic brand may limit broader applicability. Future research is therefore encouraged to expand the scope, adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches, and explore additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in social commerce.

## E. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study demonstrates that product quality and store reputation influence consumer trust and purchase decisions through distinct mechanisms within the TikTok Shop ecosystem. Product quality affects purchase decisions both directly and indirectly through consumer trust, indicating a partial mediation effect. In contrast, store reputation exerts a direct influence on purchase decisions without being mediated by trust. This asymmetry suggests that not all antecedents in social commerce operate through identical psychological pathways, challenging the assumption of uniform mediation effects in prior consumer behavior models.

The findings highlight the hybrid decision-making pattern of Generation Z consumers, who combine cognitive evaluation with heuristic processing. Product quality functions as a cognitively grounded signal that reduces perceived risk and fosters trust formation, particularly in the context of cosmetic products where safety and compatibility are critical. Meanwhile, store reputation operates as a heuristic cue that facilitates rapid decision-making, especially within TikTok Shop, where real-time reviews and user-generated content are highly visible. These findings indicate that social commerce environments amplify the role of social signals in accelerating purchase decisions.

From a theoretical perspective, this study refines signaling theory by distinguishing between intrinsic signals (product quality) and extrinsic signals (store reputation), showing that each triggers different consumer responses. It also extends trust-based models by demonstrating that trust does not universally mediate all relationships but operates selectively depending on the antecedent.

From a managerial standpoint, the results emphasize the importance of maintaining product quality, particularly in terms of safety, regulatory compliance (e.g., BPOM certification), and transparency. Sellers must also actively manage store reputation through service consistency, responsiveness, and review management. Given the heuristic nature of decision-making in TikTok Shop, reputation should be treated as a direct driver of purchase decisions. Marketing strategies should prioritize informative and educational content to align with Generation Z consumers.

This study is limited by its focus on Generation Z in a single region, its cross-sectional design, and its focus on a single brand. Future research should expand the sample scope, adopt longitudinal approaches, and include variables such as influencer credibility, e-WOM, and perceived risk.

In terms of novelty, this study reveals an asymmetric mediation mechanism in social commerce, where consumer trust mediates the effect of product quality but not store reputation.

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