Examining Influencers Role in TikTok Shop's Promotional Strategies and Consumer Purchases

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ABSTRACT

TikTok Shop, a new feature by TikTok, facilitates direct transactions within the app, representing an innovative entrepreneurship venture. This study assesses how product quality and free shipping promotions influence purchase decisions, with influencers as mediators, a key element in digital entrepreneurship. Surveying 352 students from PTS Lubuklinggau City through online questionnaires, the research adopted a quantitative approach using SEM-PLS analysis via Smart-PLS software. Findings indicate that product quality significantly positively affects influencers, encouraging them to endorse products, a testament to the entrepreneurship success of quality management. Similarly, free shipping promotions positively impact influencers, highlighting their effectiveness in influencer marketing and entrepreneurship marketing strategies. Importantly, product quality significantly influences consumer purchasing decisions, showcasing its critical role in sales success and entrepreneurship value creation. However, the impact of free shipping on purchase decisions, while positive, is not significant, suggesting that it alone may not drive consumer buying behavior. Influencers significantly affect purchasing decisions, directly and indirectly, demonstrating their crucial role in marketing strategies and entrepreneurship ecosystems. They enhance the effect of product quality and free shipping on consumer choices, acting as a bridge between the product features and the consumers' decisions to buy. This study reveals the complex dynamics of influencer marketing within the TikTok Shop ecosystem, emphasizing the importance of product quality and strategic promotions in driving purchase decisions and fostering entrepreneurship growth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has revolutionized various aspects of life, particularly in the realm of shopping. Traditionally, shopping involved direct interaction between buyers and sellers. However, the emergence of online platforms has drastically altered this landscape, enabling transactions to be conducted virtually [1]. Among these platforms, TikTok has distinguished itself as a formidable force in the social media domain. According to Statista's 2023 report, TikTok ranks as the sixth-largest social media platform globally,

boasting over 1 billion users, with DataIndonesia.id highlighting Indonesia's significant contribution of 113 million active users as of April 2023 [2] [3]. TikTok's user demographics in Indonesia present a fascinating picture. Data from ginee.com reveals that Jakarta leads as the city with the highest TikTok user base, accounting for 22% of the user [4] [5]. It's closely followed by East Java (18%), West Java (13%), North Sumatra (8%), Central Java (7%), South Sulawesi (6%), South Sumatra (3%), with Yogyakarta, Jambi, and South Kalimantan each contributing 2%. Gender-wise, the platform is predominantly used by females, who represent 57% of the users, leaving males with a 43% share, according to January 2022 data from Exploding Topics [6] [7].

TikTok's influence extends beyond mere entertainment; it has evolved into a robust social commerce ecosystem [8]. Leveraging the popularity of short videos and interactive features, TikTok offers sellers and entrepreneurs a unique marketing and sales platform [9]. The introduction of TikTok Shop marks a significant milestone, streamlining the buying and selling process within the app and eliminating the need for external websites or additional apps [10]. Amidst stiff competition, TikTok Shop is enhancing its appeal by implementing strict product quality regulations and offering enticing promotions like free shipping across Indonesia [11] [12]. The platform's regulatory framework categorizes products into distinct groups: "Prohibited Products" that are banned due to local laws, "Restricted Products" requiring TikTok Shop's prior approval, "Unsupported Products" that are not yet allowed, and "Invitation Only Products" available exclusively to a select group of sellers. This system ensures a controlled and quality-assured marketplace [13] [14].

Furthermore, TikTok Shop's strategy of offering free shipping to incentivize purchases reflects a broader trend in e-commerce, where delivery fees are often perceived as a barrier to online shopping [15]. This approach aligns with digital marketing strategies that leverage self-promotion on social media and influencer marketing, the latter gaining prominence as a key driver in consumer purchasing decisions [16]. Research indicates a significant reliance on influencer recommendations, with a staggering 1500% increase in interest over the past three years [17] [18]. Yet, despite extensive research on various factors influencing purchasing decisions, such as product quality, promotional strategies like free shipping, and the impact of influencers, there remains a notable gap [19] [20]. Previous studies have not fully explored the role of influencers as an intervening variable that could mediate the relationship between product quality, promotional strategies, and the final purchasing decision [21] [22]. This gap presents an opportunity for further research to unravel the intricate dynamics between these variables and their collective impact on consumer behavior in the evolving landscape of online shopping [23] [24].

2. THE COMPREHENSIVE THEORETICAL BASIS

This study utilizes a quantitative approach to scrutinize the impact of product quality and free shipping promotions on purchasing decisions at TikTok Shop, while also exploring the mediating effect of influencers [25]. Focusing on a sample of 352 PTS students from Lubuklinggau City, selected through the Slovin formula and purposive sampling, the study aims to ensure a relevant and informed respondent base [26] [27]. The research employs Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis to dissect the intricate interplay between these variables, seeking to offer a comprehensive understanding of how product quality, promotional strategies, and the influential power of influencers coalesce to shape consumer purchasing behavior on this burgeoning online platform [28] [29]

2.1. Literature Review
2.1.1. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity represents a crucial concept in the realm of quantitative research, particularly in studies employing constructs to measure complex phenomena [30]. It refers to the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards, demonstrating that measures not designed to assess a particular construct do not accidentally do so [31]. In the context of research examining the impact of influencers, product quality, and promotional strategies on consumer purchasing decisions, discriminant validity ensures that each construct whether it's the influence of influencers, the perceived quality of products, or the attractiveness of free shipping promotions measures unique aspects of the phenomenon under investigation [32]. This is vital for the integrity of the study, as it helps in avoiding overlap between constructs, ensuring that each contributes independently to our understanding of the purchasing decision process [33]. For instance, when assessing the distinct influence of product quality and influencers on purchasing decisions, discriminant validity ensures that the perceived value added by influencers is not merely a reflection of product quality perceptions or vice versa [34]. Establishing discriminant validity involves statistical tests, such as analyzing the

crossloadings of items and comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlation between constructs] [35]. This rigorous validation process reinforces the reliability of findings, enabling researchers and practitioners to draw more precise conclusions about the factors influencing consumer behavior in digital marketplaces like TikTok Shop. Through this lens, discriminant validity not only strengthens the methodological foundation of a study but also enhances the practical applicability of its findings, guiding marketers, influencers, and policymakers in their strategies and decision-making processes.

2.1.2. Product Quality

Product quality is a crucial element that significantly influences the purchasing decision and subsequent satisfaction of the buyer. As outlined by [36], product quality is essentially the assessment of a brand or product's capacity to perform its expected function [37]. Expanding on this notion, they articulates the traditional perspective of quality, encompassing aspects like reliability, user convenience, aesthetics, and performance. These facets serve as direct indicators of a product's value [38] [39]. From a strategic standpoint, quality is about meeting the consumer's needs and aligning with their preferences [40]. From the previous article the author further refined this concept by stating that product quality requires a product or service that offers added value that is superior to that offered by competitors.

2.1.3. Free Shipping Promo

In the realm of online transactions, the concept of Free Shipping Promo emerges as a pivotal marketing strategy [41]. As indicated by previous author, marketers deploy promotions to disseminate product information and sway consumer interest. Promotions are instrumental in introducing products or services to the public, facilitating recognition and acceptance [42]. Himayati (2008), as cited by Tusanputri (2021), highlights that in online transactions, consumers must factor in shipping costs, which vary based on the quantity, weight, and size of the items, as well as the distance between the seller and the consumer [43]. Describes the Free Shipping Promo as a strategic incentive, exempting consumers from additional delivery costs, thus making the offering more appealing and stimulating buyer interest [44] [45].

2.1.4. Influencers

In the digital marketing landscape, Influencers have emerged as pivotal figures [46]. As defined by Hariyanti (2018), influencers are individuals with significant social media followings, capable of swaying the behavior of their audience. De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders (2017), characterize influencers as individuals exerting considerable sway among social media users [47] [48]. This influence has given rise to influencer marketing, a technique wherein advertisers collaborate with influencers to promote products, brands, or organizations through their social media profiles [49] [50]. Lengkawati (2021) elaborates on this concept, describing influencer marketing as an engagement strategy where individuals with substantial followings endorse products, aiming to influence others and prompt them to make purchasing decisions [51] [52].

2.1.5. Buying Decision

Making a purchase involves a comprehensive process of evaluating different options before reaching a decision[53]. This decision-making phase is when consumers are actively involved in selecting products[54][55]. Consumer groups are generally classified into two categories: end-users, who are individuals or households buying for personal use, and organizational consumers, which include businesses, industry entities, retailers, and non-profits, all purchasing for operational or organizational goals[56][57]. The purchasing decision is viewed as a behavioral process where various parties assess and choose from a range of alternatives to find the most suitable option[58][59]. The buying decision is a crucial moment where different potential actions are weighed before finalizing the choice of a product or service[60][61].

2.2. Hypotheses

Hypothesis that is an initial answer or prediction tentatively proposed as a response about formulation of the problem in research[62][63]. This answer is based on related theories, but not yet based on facts empirically obtained from data collection[64][65].
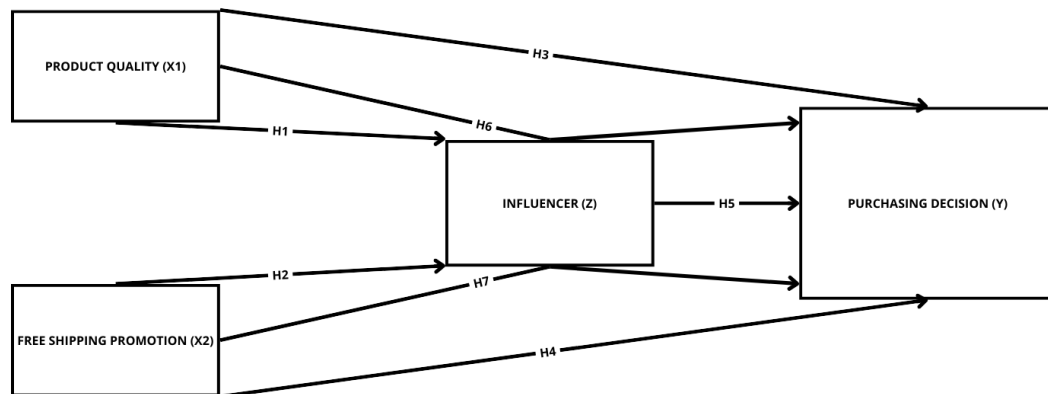
Figure 1. Research Models

Based on Figure 1, a hypothesis or conjecture can be described Meanwhile in this research, namely:

H1: Product quality matters to influencer on TiTok Shop.

H2: The free shipping promotion has an effect to influencer on TikTok Shop.

H3: Product quality matters to decision purchases at the Tiktok Shop.

H4: The free shipping promotion has an effect to decision purchases at the Tiktok Shop.

H5: Influencers influential to decision purchases at the Tiktok Shop.

H6: Product quality matters to decision purchase intervened by influencers.

H7: Free shipping promotion has an effect to decision purchase intervened by influencers.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before entering the process of analyzing data from respondents, several characteristics need to be detailed and described by participants who have answered the questionnaire in this study. Of the total 352 respondents, there were 100 respondents of this type sex male (28.4%) and 252 respondents were of the same gender sex women (71.6%) who are actively participating.

Furthermore, this research is dominated by respondents with a range age between 17 to 26 years, who can categorically be identified as generation Z. Additionally, it can be noted that most research participants come from the study program management, by the number of participants as many as 116 people (32.9%). Followed by the study program accountancy as many as 100 respondents (28.4%), study program manipulation system computer as many as 44 respondents (12.5%), study program technique informatics 28 respondents (8%), study program law as many as 24 respondents (6.8%), system information as many as 20 respondents (5.7%), study program agrotechnology as many as 12 respondents (3.4%) and study program fisheries 8 respondents (2.3%).

In this study, the convergent validity test was carried out twice to obtain loading factor value >0.70 items that have loading factor value <0.70 will be removed and re-estimated. Below are the results of the outer model test which shows mark outer loading use analysis SmartPLS 4.0.9.6.

Table 1. Outer Loading Results

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
X1.1	0.773			
X1.10	0.768			
X1.11	0.792			
X1.12	0.821			

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Convergent SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
X1.2	0.830			
X1.3	0.771			
X1.4	0.599			
X1.5	0.772			
X1.6	0.748			
X1.7	0.794			
X1.8	0.858			
X1.9	0.756			
X2.1		0.689		
X2.2		0.743		
X2.3		0.785		
X2.4		0.798		
X2.5		0.795		
X2.6		0.807		
X2.7		0.811		
X2.8		0.807		
X2.9		0.852		
X2.10		0.758		
X2.11		0.820		
X2.12		0.665		
Z1			0.752	
Z2			0.797	
Z3			0.802	
Z4			0.819	
Z5			0.810	
Z6			0.825	
Z7			0.732	
Z8			0.822	
Z9			0.801	
Y1				0.723
Y2				0.725
Y3				0.755
Y4				0.708
Y5				0.765
Y6				0.767
Y7				0.761
Y8				0.751
Y9				0.708
Y10				0.767
Y11				0.836
Y12				0.766
Y13				0.731
Y14				0.745
Y15				0.673

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Convergent SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

In Table 1, the results of the outer loading analysis reveal that out of the total indicators, 44 variable indicators successfully surpassed the threshold value of 0.70, thus affirming their validity and demonstrating strong correlational relationships within the constructs. This indicates that these indicators are reliable and contribute effectively to the conceptual integrity of the model. However, there are exceptions where four specific indicators did not meet the expected criterion, with their loading values falling below the 0.70 mark. Specifically, indicator X1.4 recorded a loading value of 0.599, X2.1 was at 0.689, X2.12 reached 0.665, and Y.15 was noted at 0.673. These results signal a critical need for a thorough re-evaluation and possible elimination of

these underperforming items to refine and enhance the overall accuracy and reliability of the model. Addressing these discrepancies is essential for improving the model's validity and ensuring that it accurately reflects the underlying constructs it intends to measure.

Following the exclusion of these four indicators, the re-evaluated model includes 44 indicators spanning constructs such as product quality, free shipping promotions, influencer impact, and purchasing decisions. All these indicators now have loading factors above the 0.70 threshold, establishing their reliability and validating them for use in further analytical processes.

Table 2. Outer loading results of re-estimation

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
X1.1	0.775			
X1.10	0.767			
X1.11	0.795			
X1.12	0.833			
X1.2	0.832			
X1.3	0.779			
X1.4	0.765			
X1.5	0.739			
X1.6	0.791			
X1.7	0.866			
X1.8	0.760			
X2.1		0.767		
X2.2		0.817		
X2.3		0.733		
X2.4		0.781		
X2.5		0.809		
X2.6		0.805		
X2.7		0.803		
X2.8		0.830		
X2.9		0.814		
X2.10		0.858		
Z1			0.752	
Z2			0.796	
Z3			0.802	
Z4			0.819	
Z5			0.809	
Z6			0.825	
Z7			0.733	
Z8			0.824	
Z9			0.801	
Y1				0.738
Y2				0.773
Y3				0.839
Y4				0.769
Y5				0.727
Y6				0.740
Y7				0.731
Y8				0.756
Y9				0.708
Y10				0.760

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Convergent SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
Y11				0.768
Y12				0.764
Y13				0.758
Y14				0.703

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Convergent SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

To assess whether a construct has sufficient discriminant validity, its loading values should be compared with those of other indicators. It is crucial that the construct's loading surpasses those of the others, maintaining a minimum benchmark of 0.70 to be considered significant.

Table 3. Cross loading values

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
X1.1	0.775			
X1.2	0.767			
X1.3	0.795			
X1.4	0.833			
X1.5	0.832			
X1.6	0.779			
X1.7	0.765			
X1.8	0.739			
X1.10	0.791			
X1.11	0.866			
X1.12	0.760			
X2.1		0.767		
X2.2		0.817		
X2.3		0.733		
X2.4		0.781		
X2.5		0.809		
X2.6		0.805		
X2.7		0.803		
X2.8		0.830		
X2.9		0.814		
X2.10		0.858		
Z1			0.752	
Z2			0.796	
Z3			0.802	
Z4			0.819	
Z5			0.809	
Z6			0.825	
Z7			0.733	
Z8			0.824	
Z9			0.801	
Y1				0.738
Y2				0.773
Y3				0.839
Y4				0.769
Y5				0.727
Y6				0.740
Y7				0.731
Y8				0.756
Y9				0.708

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Discriminant SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

	Product quality	Free Shipping Promo	*Influencers*	Buying decision
Y10				0.760
Y11				0.768
Y12				0.764
Y13				0.758
Y14				0.703

Source: Validity Data Processing Results Discriminant SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

When all indicators are standardized, this metric equates to average communalities, which are employed to assess the reliability of latent variable scores. To evaluate a construct's reliability, two methods are typically used: examining the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values, both of which should exceed 0.7 to indicate sufficient reliability.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha results

	Cronbach's Alpha	*Composite Reliability*	*Results*
Product Quality (X1)	0.940	0.942	Reliable
Free Shipping Promo (X2)	0.938	0.941	Reliable
Influencers (Z)	0.928	0.930	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.941	0.943	Reliable

Source: Reliability Test Data Processing Results SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

To decide whether to accept or reject a tested hypothesis, one must examine the significance markers between constructs, such as t-statistics and p-values, a critical step in entrepreneurship research. This method relies on empirical observations rather than theoretical statistical assumptions, aligning with the pragmatic nature of entrepreneurship. The measurements and standard errors are empirically determined, reflecting the data-driven decision-making in entrepreneurship ventures. In the context of this study, the bootstrapping resampling technique, favored for its flexibility and robustness in entrepreneurship research, is used for hypothesis testing.

A hypothesis is deemed accepted when the t-statistic value surpasses 1.96 or when the p-value falls below 0.05, indicating a statistically significant result. This threshold is crucial in validating business models and strategies in entrepreneurship studies. Expanding on this, the acceptance of a hypothesis implies a strong evidence of the relationship it proposes, validated through empirical data analysis, an essential aspect of entrepreneurship validation. Conversely, a rejection points to insufficient evidence supporting the hypothesized relationship, guiding entrepreneurs in decision-making. This empirical approach to hypothesis testing allows researchers and entrepreneurship to make informed decisions based on observed data trends, enhancing the reliability of the study's conclusions and its applicability in entrepreneurship settings. Furthermore, the use of bootstrapping resampling aids in addressing sample size limitations and provides a robust method for estimating the sampling distribution, thus reinforcing the credibility of the hypothesis testing process in entrepreneurship research.

Table 5. Calculation Results Bootstrapping Hypothesis Testing

Code	Hypothesis	Original Sample	Q Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
H1	Influence of Product Quality (X1) on Influencers (Z)	0.391	7,451	0,000	Accepted
H2	The Effect of Free Shipping Promo (X2) on Influencers (Z)	0.478	9,029	0,000	Accepted
H3	Influence of Product Quality (X1) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0.317	5,489	0.00 0	Accepted
H4	The Effect of Free Shipping Promos (X2) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0.115	1,819	0.069 _	Rejected
H5	Influence of Influencers (Z) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0.443	8,186	0,000	Accepted

Source: Results of Calculation Data Processing Bootstrapping SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

Result of Table 5. Calculation Results Bootstrapping Hypothesis Testing can be described as follows:

1. There is a significant influence on the Product Quality variable (X1) on Influencers (Z), because it has a p-value of 0.000 <0.05 or it can be interpreted that H 0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. The exogenous construct of Product Quality shows a positive influence of (Original Sample = 0.391) on the Influencer construct. The T-statistic value for this relationship is 7.451 which is greater than 1.96. Therefore, the first hypothesis can be concluded that product quality has a positive and significant influence on influencers. In previous research, no research was found that used influencers as the dependent variable, so this research provides new findings indicating that product quality has a significant impact on influencers' decisions when they intend to promote a product. These findings highlight the importance of product quality as a critical factor that influences influencers' views and decisions in the context of product promotion, so it is an aspect that needs serious attention in marketing strategies and partnerships with influencers.

2. There is a significant influence on the Free Shipping Promo variable (X2) on Influencers (Z), because it has a p-value of 0.000 <0.05 or it can be interpreted that H0 is rejected and H2 is accepted. The exogenous construct of the Free Shipping Promo shows a positive influence of (Original Sample = 0.478) on the Influencer construct. The T-statistic value for this relationship is 9.029 which is greater than 1.96. Therefore, the second hypothesis can be concluded that the free shipping promo has a positive and significant influence on influencers. It has not been found in previous research that examines the influence of free shipping promo variables on influencers, so this research found that free shipping promo offers have a significant impact on influencers' decisions when they try to market a product. These findings highlight the importance of the strategy of offering free shipping as a factor that can influence influencers' decisions and approaches in promoting certain products, creating a close link between promotional policies and the influence wielded by influencers. This research presents new findings by showing the influence of free shipping promotions on significant influencers, something that has not been studied in depth in previous research.

3. The Product Quality variable (X1) significantly impacts Purchasing Decisions (Y), as evidenced by a p-value less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the third hypothesis (H3). Product Quality positively affects Purchasing Decisions, with an original sample value of 0.317 and a T-statistic of 5.489, exceeding the 1.96 threshold. Thus, it's established that product quality significantly influences purchasing decisions. This finding corroborates studies indicating a positive and significant effect of product quality on purchasing decisions, contrasting with other research that found product quality to have a negligible or negative impact on purchase decisions.

4. The Free Shipping Promo variable (X2) does not significantly affect Purchase Decisions (Y), indicated by a p-value of 0.069 >0.05 threshold. This outcome leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H0) and the rejection of the fourth hypothesis (H4). Despite the Free Shipping Promo showing a positive impact on Purchase Decisions with an original sample value of 0.115, its T-statistic value of 1.819 falls below the required 1.96, suggesting that its influence on purchasing decisions is positive but not significant. This finding aligns with previous studies where the free shipping promotion was found not to have a substantial impact on purchasing decisions, contrasting with other research that reported a significant positive effect of free shipping promotions on purchase decisions.

5. The influence of the influencer variable (Z) on purchasing decisions (Y) is significant, as indicated by a p-value <than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of hypothesis five (H5). The positive impact of influencers on purchasing decisions is demonstrated by an original sample value of 0.443 and a T-statistic of 8.186, which is well above the threshold of 1.96. This confirms that influencers significantly and positively affect purchasing decisions. Contrary to some previous findings suggesting that influencer marketing had a limited role in purchase decisions, this research aligns with other studies that recognized the substantial positive influence of influencers on the purchasing process.

Table 6. Calculation Results Bootstrapping Effects Mediation / Intervening

Code	Hypothesis	*Original Sample*	Q Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
H6	The Influence of Product Quality (X1) Through Influencers (Z) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0.173	5,477	0.0 00	Accepted
H7	The Effect of Free Shipping Promos (X2) Through Influencers (Z) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)	0.212	6,309	0.00 0	Accepted

Source: Results of Calculation Data Processing Bootstrapping SmartPLS 4.0.9.6 2023

Result of Table 6. Effect Bootstrapping Calculation Results Mediation/Intervening can be described as follows:

1. There is influence significant in the Product Quality variable (X1) through Influencer (Z) on Purchasing Decisions (Y), because the p-value is 0.000 <0.05 or can be interpreted as meaning that H0 is rejected and H6 is accepted . The results of the analysis of the mediating /intervening variables of this research show that influencers can have an indirect influence on product quality variables decision purchase. Construct exogenous show influence positive of (Original Sample = 0.173) against Purchase Decision construct. The T-statistic value for this relationship is 5.477 greater from 1.96. Hence, the sixth hypothesis was concluded that influencers can indirectly influence connection product quality towards decision purchases at the Tiktok Shop. Influencers have never been used as an intervening variable in previous research, so it does not yet exist a study that gives the statement that the influence of influencers can be felt indirectly in the decision process purchase. Therefore, this research can be an important reference for future research. The results of this research indicate that indirectly, influencers can have an influence on relationships between product quality and decisions purchase. Research shows that influencers are able to make an impact positive to consumers through their expertise and the content they produce about quality products. It creates an indirect impact in the decision process purchase consumer. Involvement of influencers in providing in -depth information and reviews regarding the product can form perception positive to the quality of the products being promoted.

2. There is influence significant in the variable Free Shipping Promo (X2) via Influencer (Z) on Purchase Decisions (Y), because the p-value is 0.000 <0.05 or can be interpreted as meaning that H0 is rejected and H7 is accepted. The results of the mediation/intervening variable analysis of this research show that influencers can have an indirect influence on the free shipping promo variable decision purchase.

Construct exogenous show influence positive of (Original Sample = 0.212) against Purchase Decision construct. The T-statistic value for this relationship is 6.309 greater from 1.96. Hence, the seventh hypothesis was concluded that influencers can indirectly influence free shipping promo links to decision purchases at the Tiktok Shop. In this research, it was found that partially, the free shipping promo had an effect positive but not significant to decision purchase. That is, if Viewed in isolation, this promo did not have a major impact on uptake decision purchases by consumers. Even though the free shipping promo does not directly have a significant influence, the research found that if the free shipping promo was discussed by influencers, it can have a significant indirect impact on decision purchase consumers. Influencers can provide a more detailed and in-depth understanding of the benefits giving incentives through free shipping promos. Information provided by influencers can help consumers understand that using free shipping promos can provide benefits. The result shows that the role of influencers can indirectly increase the effect of the free shipping promo on decision purchase.

4. CONCLUSION

This research relates to the influencer variable, an integral part of the entrepreneurship marketing strategy, which is used as an intervening variable with a simultaneous relationship with the independent variable. This can cause endogeneity problems, a common challenge in entrepreneurship research, which affect the validity of the results. For example, popular influencers, acting as brand ambassadors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, indirectly influence perceptions about product quality, making it difficult to determine whether the influence comes from product quality or the influencer's marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, this research may be conducted in a specific time context or situation that may change over time, a factor crucial in the fast-paced entrepreneurship environment. For example, promotional strategies or consumer purchasing habits may change as social media platforms like TikTok develop, reflecting the dynamic nature of digital entrepreneurship.

Therefore, the results of this study, while offering valuable entrepreneurship insights, are less relevant in the long term. For marketers and business owners, this study underscores the importance of integrating influencers into their promotional strategies, a tactic increasingly vital in entrepreneurship marketing, as a means to enhance the perceived value of product quality and promotional offerings. This approach requires a strategic alignment, a core principle in entrepreneurship, between the influencer's audience demographics and the product's target market, ensuring that promotional content is authentic and relevant to the intended consumers. Such strategic collaborations can boost brand visibility, credibility, and ultimately, consumer trust, leading to increased conversion rates and sales, essential goals in entrepreneurship ventures.

On the other hand, influencers, as key stakeholders in the entrepreneurship marketing process, are reminded of the significant impact their endorsements have on consumer purchasing decisions. This influence comes with a responsibility to maintain authenticity and transparency when promoting products or services, a cornerstone of ethical entrepreneurship. Adhering to these ethical standards ensures long-term trust and loyalty from their followers, enhancing the influencer's value proposition to both their audience and business partners, a critical aspect of sustainable entrepreneurship. Essentially, this study emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between high-quality products, effective promotional strategies, and influencer credibility in driving consumer purchasing behavior in the digital age, a triad central to entrepreneurship success.

Although the study offers valuable insights, it is not without its limitations, a common aspect in entrepreneurship research. The research focuses on a specific demographic (students from Lubuklinggau City) and platform (TikTok Shop), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations and online shopping environments, a key consideration in scaling entrepreneurship ventures. Moreover, the study's reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires could introduce response bias, a methodological challenge in entrepreneurship studies. Future research could broaden the demographic scope and incorporate qualitative measures to deepen the understanding of the influencer's impact on consumer behavior, aligning with the comprehensive approach needed in entrepreneurship research. Investigating the role of emerging social commerce features and technologies in influencing consumer decisions can also provide comprehensive insights into the evolving online shopping landscape, a critical area in digital entrepreneurship.

To enhance the research quality, the author suggests adding variables such as price, cashback, quality service, online reviews, and other promotions that can influence TikTok Shop user purchase decisions, as well as applying the research to a broader population, reflecting the scalability concern in entrepreneurship. From the entrepreneurship perspective, enhancing promotions by offering free shipping could be beneficial, a strategy

reflecting the innovative approach in entrepreneurship. Test results indicate that the free shipping promotion has a low influence on purchasing decisions. Therefore, the free shipping promotion could be an effective strategy in enhancing product appeal and improving consumer purchasing decisions, a tactic that can lead to entrepreneurship success. More specific examples or case studies to illustrate key points could further enrich the entrepreneurship insights derived from this study.

5. DECLARATIONS

5.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: R.A.; Methodology: A.F., D.; Software: I.I.; Validation: R.A.; Formal Analysis: A.F. and I.I.; Investigation: R.A.; Resources: R.A.; Data Curation: I.N.H.; Writing Original Draft Preparation: R.A.; Writing Review and Editing: R.A. and I.N.H.; Visualization: I.N.H.; All authors, R.A., A.F., I.I., and I.N.H., have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

5.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

5.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

5.5. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

5.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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