

Effective Digital Marketing Strategies In Deciding To Buy Halal Products (Empirical Study On New Students Of The Faculty Of Economics, Semarang University)

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted to produce a formulation of the concept of Decision to Buy Halal Products in Generation Z with Digital Marketing as a new paradigm of business success perspective, in New Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang The Decision to Buy Halal Products in Generation Z was built through efforts to identify the Use of Social Media, Marketing Influencers and Lifestyle with the Understanding of Halal Products as a moderation of the relationship between the Use of Social Media and Lifestyle with the Decision to Buy Halal Products in Generation Z represented by New Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang. New students of the University of Semarang became the population, while a sample of 175 was calculated using the Lemeshow formula. Medelling Structural Equation (SEM) analysis with the application of the Partial Least Square (PLS) program, namely smartPLS.4.0 is used to prove the hypothesis. The results of hypothesis testing show that the Decision to Buy Halal Products is actualized through the Use of Social Media, Influencer Marketing and Lifestyle. The Use of Social Media, Marketing Influencers and Lifestyle directly has a significant effect on the positive direction of the Decision to Buy Halal Products, Understanding Halal Products is not able to moderate the relationship between the Use of Social Media and Lifestyle in the Decision to Buy Halal Products. The decision to buy Halal products in Generation Z is influenced by the Use of Social Media, Marketing Influencer and Lifestyle by 53.00%. The research model has a QSquare of 0.2809 (>0), which means that the model has strong predictive relevance. Understanding Halal Products in Deciding to Buy Halal Products in Generation Z.

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1. Introduction

Research on consumer behavior in making decisions to buy halal brands or products is a very interesting topic. Factors that affect consumer purchase decisions include religion, awareness, habits, attitudes, environmental or family influences, and perceived behavioral control. Studies have been conducted in countries with majority or minority Muslim populations that show increased concern or concern for halal products. Research on halal brands or products is one of the prominent topics that can be seen in several journals, such as for example Journal of Islamic Marketing, British Food Journal, International Journal of Commerce and Management, Management Research Review

(Emerald Publishing), International Journal of Food Marketing and Agribusiness (Taylor and Francis), Agriculture and Human Values (Springer), Comprehensive Review in Food Science and Food Safety (Wiley) and Meat Science (Elsevier).

Decision-making in general and strategic decision-making in particular have received a lot of attention both in organizational theory and strategic management literature. Generation Z's purchase decision is very important considering the rapid and dynamic changes in consumer behavior, in accordance with several different ways that Generation Z does in changing the economy. The use of digital platforms has made marketing and communication very efficient around the world. (Nadanyiová & Sujanska, 2023) Hinduan, et al., (2020) state that globalization, which used to be reserved only for giant multinational corporations, has facilitated small businesses to participate in the global arena. Today's generations speak and understand problems differently, so marketing to Generation Z requires special skills, because they grew up in an era dominated by digital devices, have a special connection to the internet and smartphones, and they are the first generation to grow up with digital technology and social media as their main means of interacting with the world.

Generation Z is poised to become a significant economic force and has attitudes and traits that distinguish them from previous generations. The choice of platform is influenced by the marketing strategy and target audience. . This has a significant effect on the way they search for product information, interact with brands, and make purchasing decisions, therefore, it is necessary to understand the use of technology that Generation Z uses in the purchase decision process. (Fatima & Erdogdu, 2023; Pinto & Paramita, 2021) (Lalwani & Kumar, 2021; Nadanyiova & Sujanska, 2023)

Generation Z generally has a high level of awareness regarding health and sustainability. They tend to look for products that are considered healthy and sustainable Halal products are often identified as an option that fits these values, as they meet halal standards that can also be related to health and sustainability. For most of Generation Z, religious values and ethics play an important role in decision-making, including when it comes to choosing food and products. Halal products are seen as an option that is in accordance with religious and ethical values that are upheld by the majority of Muslim consumers. (Amalia et al., 2020; Fiandari et al., 2022). (Rafiki et al., 2023)

Companies are currently interested in improving their capabilities by focusing on customer buying decisions to accept and use modern marketing tools that encourage companies to integrate and use digital marketing strategies and focus on the use of online platforms such as social media (Ahmed & Zahid, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2022; Tariq et al., 2022). The research will offer a comprehensive overview related to the topic of the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions, presenting whether future business trends depend on consumer preferences and attitudes.

Generation Z has an increasingly significant role in today's consumer market. The use of social media and (Lalwani & Kumar, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022). influencer marketing strategies in the digital era, are the two main aspects of marketing strategies, but comprehensively there has not been much research related to the use of social media and influencer marketing in the purchase decision of Generation Z halal products. Varkaris & Barbara (2017) found that social media has a partially significant impact on consumer buying behavior in Pakistan, Pakistani consumers under the age of 40 years old, have more complex purchasing behaviors, so consideration is needed in the formulation of their marketing strategies. (Fiandari et al., 2022)

In order for digital marketing to be successful, integration with traditional media such as print media, TV, direct mail, and personal selling is still needed as well as support as part of multichannel marketing communication. Along with the development of integrative marketing activities, a new concept called digital marketing has also emerged and brought about some dramatic changes in the field of marketing and replaced the traditional marketing communication that is common for many companies to communicate effectively with customers especially through integrative marketing communication and the world of online shopping (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018; Al-Dmour et al., 2021; Leo et al., 2021). Companies are currently interested in improving their capabilities by focusing on customer buying decisions to accept and use modern marketing tools that encourage companies to integrate and use digital marketing strategies and focus on the use of online platforms such as social media (Ahmed & Zahid, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2022; Tariq et al., 2022). The research will offer a comprehensive overview related to the topic of the relationship

between digital marketing and purchasing decisions, presenting whether future business trends depend on consumer preferences and attitudes.

Generation Z has an increasingly significant role in today's consumer market. The use of social media and influencer marketing strategies in the digital era are the two main aspects of marketing strategies. Generation Z tends to make purchasing decisions that reflect their personal values, including choosing halal products as part of their lifestyle and their desire to make consumption choices that align with the values of products that are committed to social issues or make a positive contribution to society. The use of social media, Marketing Influencer and lifestyle is indicated to be able to make Generation Z consider in deciding to buy halal products, therefore the formulation of the problem is how to organize the use of social media, Marketing Influencer and lifestyle to be able to reach and influence Generation Z in buying halal products.

The realization of an effective digital marketing strategy formulation that is expected to be able to reach and influence the decision to buy Generation Z halal products in the city of Semarang

Literature Review

Social Influence Theory

The Social Influence Theory developed by Herbert Kelman is a framework for understanding how individuals are influenced by the people around them. This theory proposes three main types of social influence, namely compliance, identification, and internalization. Social Influence Theory, or Social Influence Theory, discusses how individuals can be influenced by others in making decisions or changing their behavior. This theory recognizes that people often consider the views, norms, and actions of those around them before making decisions. This theory emphasizes the role of social identity in shaping behavior. Individuals can be influenced by the social group to which they belong, and they may adopt behaviors or values that are consistent with their group identity.

Social Influence Theory has far-reaching implications in a variety of contexts, including the fields of marketing, social psychology, and communication. An understanding of how individuals are affected by their social environment, helps explain many aspects of human behavior, including product purchase decisions, the adoption of innovation, and conformity to social norms.

Purchase Decision

Consumer behavior includes consumer purchase decisions. Consumer behavior can be summarized as the action of society to find, select, buy, use, evaluate, and dispose of goods and services that meet their needs and preferences (Belch and Belch, 2007). According to Peter and Donnelly (2007), a method by which consumers choose to buy different goods and brands. Halal Product Purchase Decision refers to the process by which consumers choose and purchase products that are considered halal. This purchase decision is influenced by certain considerations related to the principles of halal in Islam.

Consumers ensure that the product meets Islamic halal standards in terms of ingredients used, production process, and halal certification. The product must not contain prohibited ingredients, and the production process must be in accordance with Islamic rules. Consumers tend to choose products that have received halal certification from recognized authorities or institutions in implementing halal standards. This certification gives consumers confidence that the product has met halal requirements. Consumers can choose halal products from certain brands that are considered trustworthy in carrying out the halal production process. Trust in the brand can influence purchasing decisions

Social Media

Research by Khamis et al. (2017) states that social media is a type of micro-celebrity who practices self-presentation on social media, which is fulfilled through the creation of web images and the use of these images to attract and lock in a large number of followers. Research shows that participation in a company's social media activities has a positive impact on a person's purchasing decision. Erkan & Evans (2016) studied the impact of quality, validity, value, and selection of data in social media marketing as the main factors influencing purchasing decisions. According to Schivinski & Dabrowski (2016), social media has a major impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. The influence exerted on a brand is enormous (Francalanci & Metra, 2015). Influencers

provide great endorsers and reviews for a brand that will bring a high spike in sales of their goods, which is why marketers are willing to spend a lot of money to recruit influencers to promote their brand (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Chung & Cho (2014) found that social media users believe that influencers can initiate and increase purchase intent, but overall, influencer-generated content for a brand has a greater impact on consumer buying behavior (Sudha & Sheena, 2017).

Influencer Marketing

Brands, thanks to social networks and influencers, have a real power of influence on the younger generation of consumers. Consumers identify and create relationships with influencers, which encourages them to follow influencer recommendations. This relationship impacts young consumers on different levels. It is true that followers tend to buy what the person they want to use or wear, in this case they are the ones who are the influencers. Therefore, while partnerships are a strategy widely used by brands, they are not the only strategy. Nowadays, brands are aware of consumer behavior, and they know that their sales will increase if an influencer posts any kind of content with their products and especially if they don't get paid to do so. In fact, followers trust more in what an influencer says when there are no paid collaborations involved, so in addition to the partnership, the influencer feels rewarded, and the brand sends the gifted product in the hope that the influencer will use it.

The effectiveness of influencer marketing is identified through the key factors of its success (Ye et al., 2021). The key factors can be summarized in three categories such as influencer characteristics, content characteristics, and customer characteristics. Research on the subject has provided some evidence that influencer characteristics, such as social and physical attractiveness, can influence the formation of para-social relationships (Lee and Watkins, 2016; Sokolova and Kefi, 2019) and that the follower-influencer relationship is the key to the effectiveness of social media influencers (Hu, et al., 2020; Hwang and Zhang, 2018), while other factors that nurture followers' relationships with influencers, such as perceptions of similarity and wishful thinking, identification, admiration, emotional attachment to influencers, and perceptions of influencer popularity (De Jans et al., 2020; Ladhari, et al., 2020; Schouten, et al., 2019; Shan, et al., 2019).

Lifestyle

A reflection of a person's habits from his person as a whole through his or her life pattern when in or hanging out in his or her environment, as a result everyone must always understand the value of fundamental values that permeate their body in the form of religious and cultural values at the same time. This perspective shows that lifestyle always develops in accordance with the transformation that will become an individual trait. Lifestyle can be an identity, therefore lifestyle is a personal picture, this is an opportunity for marketers to improve consumer desires and satisfaction. Lifestyle is a unique part of human beings, so to fulfill it, a person must make decisions according to their world.

Some of the characteristics of the Generation Z lifestyle include (1) growing up in the era of advanced technology and the internet, so they are very skilled in using digital devices, the internet, and social media and dependence on smartphones, apps, and social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat is common. (2) groups that are more open to diversity and inclusivity. They promote gender equality, LGBT rights, and various other forms of diversity. (3) have a high concern for social and environmental issues. Engage in social movements, support charity campaigns, and strive to live sustainably. (4) have a desire to become an entrepreneur or work independently. They tend to look for creative ways to pursue their dreams and have a desire to create change. (5) Health awareness is increasing to achieve a balance between work, education, and personal time. (6) have a high awareness of brands and personal branding, so that they tend to be smart consumers to choose brands that reflect social values.

Understanding of halal products.

Halal products refer to products or services that meet certain standards and requirements in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Understanding halal products involves a number of aspects that include ingredients, production processes, and serving conditions that are in accordance with halal principles. Some of the main aspects in understanding halal products.

Halal criteria are divided into two, namely process-based and halal based on substance. Halal is based on the process, namely for food derived from plants and fish during the processing, storage, transportation and tools used are not used up for pigs and the additives are halal, while for food derived from slaughtered animals mention the name of Allah. Halal based on substance, namely (1). It does not contain pork, or animals that are prohibited by Islamic teachings to eat, (2) All forms of beverages that do not contain alcohol.

Food is said to be halal at least to meet three criteria, namely halal substances, halal how it is obtained, and halal how it is processed. The process of a food or beverage product to be included in the halal certification classification is a process that is in accordance with halal standards that have been determined by the Islamic religion. Halal products must use ingredients obtained and processed in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic religion. For example, meat must come from animals slaughtered in Islamic ways, without the presence of blood, and not mixed with haram products. . Halal certification can be defined as a systematic testing activity to find out whether an item produced by a company has met halal regulations, which will then result in a halal certificate.

2. Methods

2.1 Research Design.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is generation Z in Semarang City. The sampling technique is a way to determine the number of samples that are in accordance with the sample size that will be used as the actual data source, by paying attention to the characteristics and distribution of the population in order to obtain a representative sample. The population in this study is generation Z in the city of Semarang, with a case study on 396 new students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang (PMB USM, 2024). The determination of the number of samples in this study used the Krejcie and Morgan Method, resulting in a total of 175 people.

2.2 Research Outline

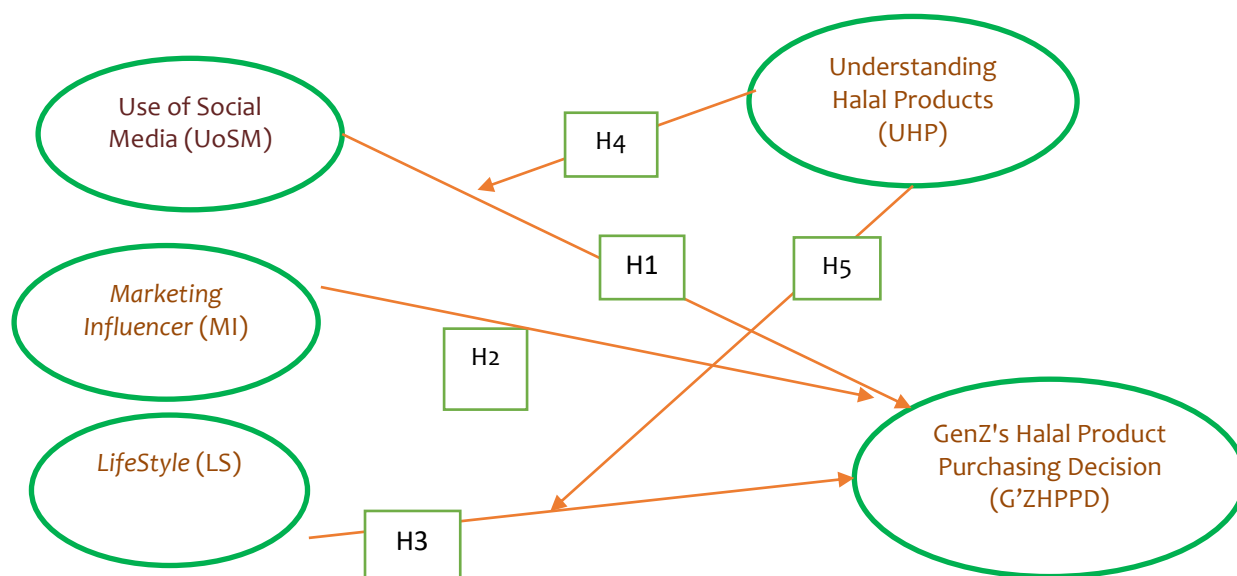


Fig. 1. Research Outline

2.3 Research Hypothesis

Based on Figure 1, the Research Hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1 : The use of Social Media affects the Purchase Decision of Halal Products Generation Z

H2 : Marketing Influencers Influence Generation Z Halal Product Purchase Decisions

H3 : Lifestyle affects Generation Z Halal Product Purchase Decisions

H4 : Understanding Halal Products is able to moderate the relationship between the use of social media in Generation Z Halal Product Purchase Decisions

H5 : Understanding Halal Products is able to moderate the relationship between Marketing Influencers in Generation Z Halal Product Purchase Decisions

2.4 Data Analysis

Structural Model Testing (*Outer Model*)

The Structural Model Designer begins with the stage of construct validity test consisting of convergent validity, by paying attention to the *value of the loading factor*, the value of AVE, and the validity of the discrimination shown by *the cross loading* value. The next stage of reliability testing is indicated by *the composite reliability* value (Hamid and Anwar, 2019).

Structural Model Testing (*Inner Model*)

The second step in model evaluation, namely *the Inner* model, is a structural model, based on the value of the path coefficient, to see how much influence between latent variables has with *bootstrapping* calculations. The evaluation was carried out by looking at the criteria of *the R-Square* value and the significance value. The following are the stages carried out in testing the structural model (*inner* model).

3. Results And Discussion

Result

The number of samples needed to produce accountable information according to the Krejcie and Morgan Method formula was 175 respondents, but as shown in Table 4.1. the number of questionnaires given to respondents was $175 + (10\% \times 175) = 193$, which can be used as data to be processed as 145

Table 1. Number of Questionnaires

Nr	Number of Questionnaires	Return Questionnaire	Questionnaire processed	Information
1	200	168	145	21 questionnaires do not return 34 Broken Questionnaires: a.incomplete (18) b.score equals all (16)

^a Source : primary data processed, 2024

Respondent Description

Respondents in this study were born between 2001 and 2006, with the age distribution as shown in Diagram 1.

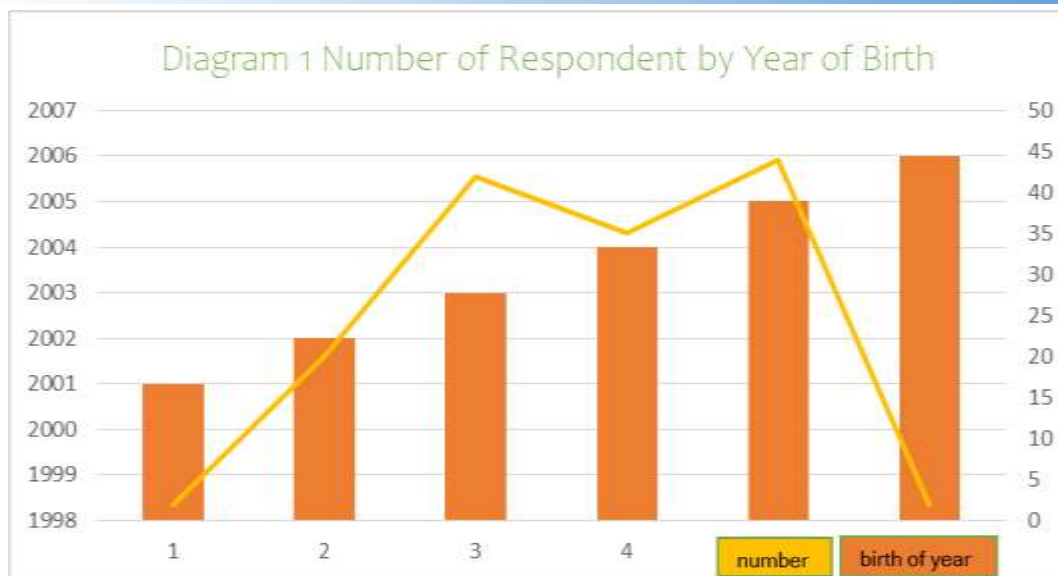


Fig. 2. Number of Respondents by Birth

Respondents were born between 2001 and 2006, with the largest number of 44 people with a birth year of 2005, this implies that Generation Z who buy products with halal considerations is the generation that is approaching adulthood. This reflects the evolution of perception of halal products, not only from a religious perspective, but also as part of a broader lifestyle that is in line with the times.

Diagram 2 shows that Generation Z in making decisions about Halal products is mostly done by women, this shows that women have a higher religious awareness than men.

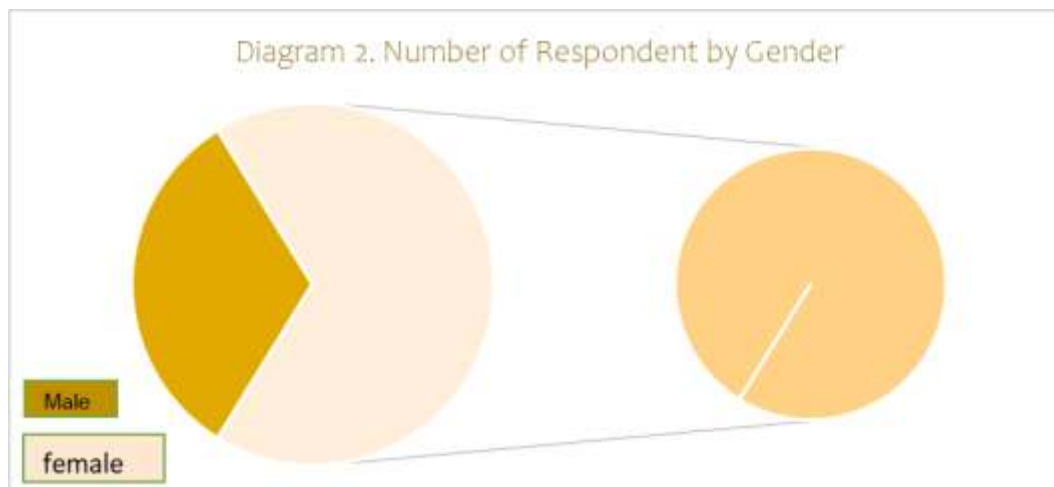


Fig. 3. Respondent Gender

Evaluasi Measurement (Outer) Model

1. Validity and Reliability Test

Figure 2 shows that the *loading factor* in several variable indicators gives a value below the recommended value of 0.6. A *loading factor* value below 0.6 means that the indicators used in this study are invalid or do not meet convergent validity, therefore to get a valid indicator, it is necessary to get rid of indicators that have a loading factor value of < 0.6 .

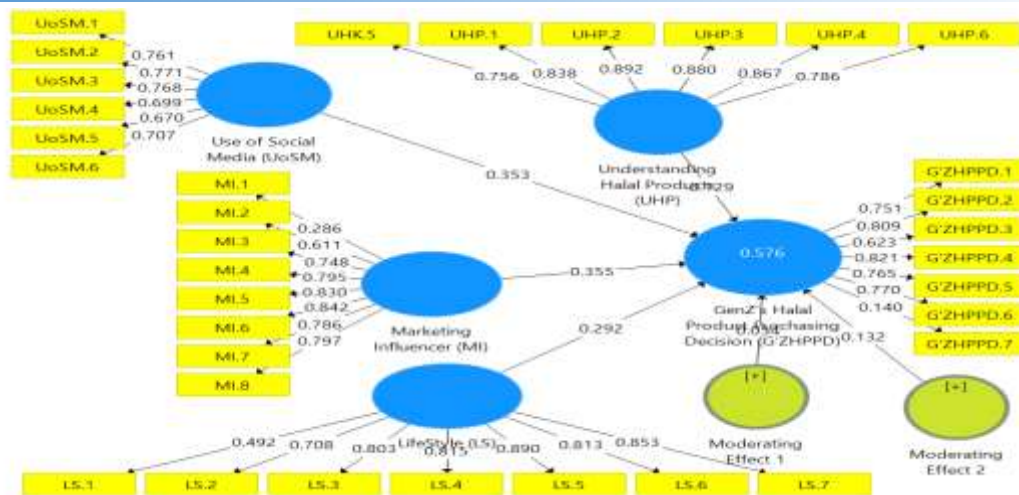


Fig. 4.Loading Factor

Figure 3 shows the value of the *loading factor* that has eliminated invalid indicators to produce variables with valid indicators.

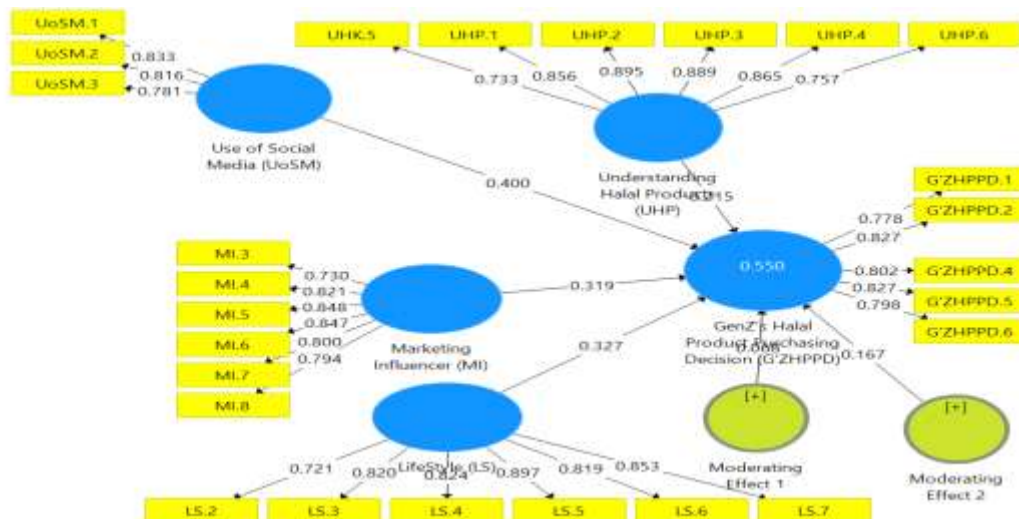


Fig. 5.Loading Factor

Another method to view *discriminant validity* is to look at the *square root of average variance extracted* (AVE) value. The recommended value when looking at *discriminant validity* through the AVE value must be above 0.5. Table 2 shows that the AVE value produced in this study has a > value of 0.5, which means that all constructs in this study can be used as research variables. The results of the Composite Reliability show that the value is satisfactory if it is above 0.7. Table 2 shows that the *composite reliability* of all constructs is above 0.7, which means that all constructs in the estimated model meet the *criteria for discriminant validity*.

Table 2.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Use of Social Media (UoSM)	0,742	0,851	0,656
Marketing Influencer (MI)	0,894	0,918	0,652
LifeStyle (LS)	0,904	0,927	0,679
Moderating Effect 1	1,000	1,000	1,000

Moderating Effect 2	1,000	1,000	1,000
Understanding Halal Products (UHP)	0,916	0,932	0,697
GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,866	0,903	0,650

^b Source : primary data processed, 2024

2. Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis was tested using the *Partial Least Square* (PLS) method, which is shown in Figure 4 Structural model in this study. The next step after the model meets the *Outer Model* criteria is to test the model with structural model testing (*Inner model*). The hypothesis was tested using *SmartPLS BootStrapping analysis* to determine the influence of latent variables/exogenous variables (variable X) on endogenous variables (Y). The results of the hypothesis test are known from the statistical t-coefficient and the *original sample estimate*, namely

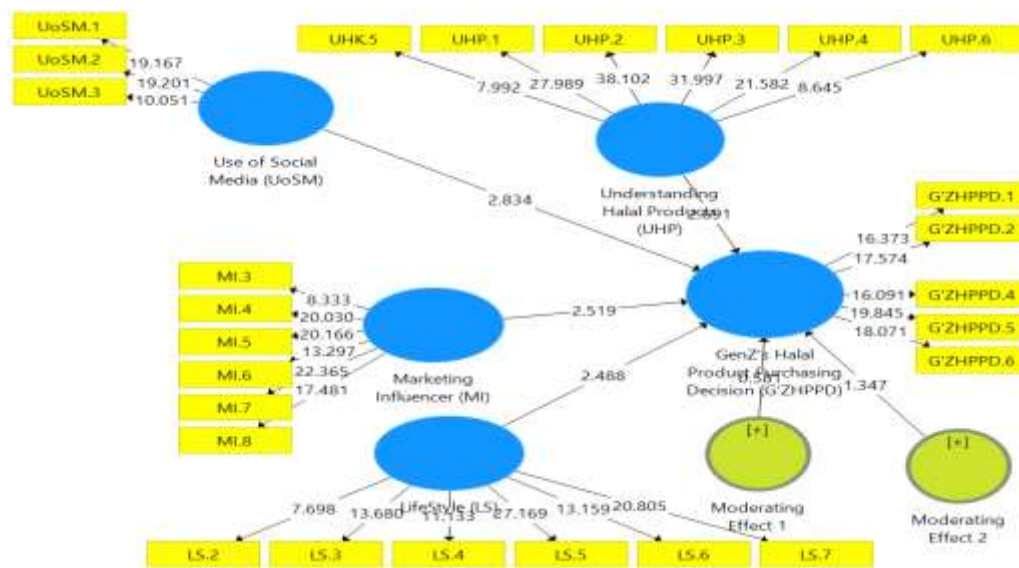


Fig. 6. Structural Model Bootstrapping

The results of the Hypothesis Test are shown in Table 3 if the statistical t is smaller than the table, then the research hypothesis is rejected. The *Coefficient of Original Sample* shows the direction of influence between construction variables.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	t Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Hypothesis
Understanding Halal Products (UHP)-> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,215	0,201	0,082	2,614	0,009	Supported
Moderating Effect 1 -> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,068	0,069	0,113	0,599	0,550	Not supported
Moderating Effect 2 -> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,167	0,138	0,118	1,424	0,155	Not supported

Use of Social Media (UoSM)-> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,400	0,414	0,146	2,737	0,006	Supported
Marketing Influencer (MI) -> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,319	0,296	0,129	2,470	0,014	Supported
LifeStyle (LS) -> GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,327	0,341	0,133	2,466	0,014	Supported

Source : Primary data processed, 2024

The direct effect of the Use of Social Media (X1) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang as shown in Table 3 shows that the statistical value is 2.737 (>1.96), meaning that the Use of Social Media (X1) is proven to have a significant effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y). The *original sample estimate* value is +0.400, indicating that the direction of influence of Social Media Use (X1) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is positive. This means that hypothesis 1 which states that the Use of Social Media (X1) has a direct effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is supported.

The statistical value of 2.470 (> 1.96) on *Marketing Influencer* (X2) as mentioned in Table 3. means that *Marketing Influencer* (X2) is proven to have a significant effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang. *Market Orientation* (X2) has an *original sample estimate* value of +0.319, meaning that the direction of influence of *Marketing Influencers* (X2) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is positive. This means that Hypothesis 2 which states that *Marketing Influencer* (X2) has an effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is supported.

Lifestyle has a direct effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang, as evidenced by the statistical value of 2,466 (> 1.96) as mentioned in Table 3. The *original sample estimate* value is +0.327, indicating that the direction of influence of Lifestyle (X3) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is positive. This means that hypothesis 3 which states that Lifestyle (X3) has a direct effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is supported.

The understanding of Halal Products (M) has been proven to have a significant influence on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang, this is shown by a statistical value of 2.614 (>1.96) as shown in Table 3. The *original sample estimate* value of +0.215 means that the direction of influence of Halal Product Understanding (M) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is positive. This proves that Halal Product Understanding (M) does not play a role as a moderation variable but acts as an independent variable with a positive direction.

The Indirect Influence of Social Media Use on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang have nThe statistical error of 0.599 (<1.96) as in Table 3 means that the indirect influence of Social Media Use on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y) moderated by Halal Product Understanding (M) is not significant. Understanding Halal Products (M) is proven to have a significant direct effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y), this is shown by a statistical t-value of 2.614 (>1.96). This means that Halal Product

Understanding functions as an independent variable not as a *moderator*, meaning hypothesis 4 which states that the influence of Social Media Use (X1) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y) moderated by Halal Product Understanding (M) is not supported.

The statistical value of 0.155 (<1.96) as in Table 3 means that the indirect influence of Lifestyle (X3) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang moderated by Holistic Marketing (M) is not significant. The Direct Effect of Understanding of Halal Products on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y) with a statistical value of 2.614 (>1.96) as shown in Table 3. means that the direct influence of Understanding of Halal Products (M) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y) is significant. This can be interpreted that Halal Product Understanding functions as an independent variable not as a *moderator*, meaning hypothesis 5 which states that the influence of Lifestyle (X3) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) moderated by Halal Product Understanding (M) is not supported

The highest value of *the original sample estimate* variable that affects the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang in Table 4.7. of +0.400 is the Use of Social Media (X1). This means that the use of Social Media (X1) has a higher influence on the Decision to Buy Halal Products of Generation Z (Y) compared to *Marketing Influencers* (X2) which is +0.319, and Lifestyle (X3) of +0.329 and the moderation variable of Halal Product Understanding (M) which is +0.215.

3. Evaluation of the Structural Model.

Table 4. shows the R-Square value of each research construct. *R Square* is used to test *the Good of Fit Model Structural*, which is to see the significance of the latent model, while the prediction of endogenous latent variables with reflection indicators through the Q Square value, provided that if *Q Square* > 0 , the latent variable has good relevance.

Table 4. R - Square Value

Variable	R – Square Adjusted	Q - Square {(1-(1-R ²))}
Y : GenZ's Halal Product Purchasing Decision (G'ZHPPD)	0,530	0,2809

^c Source : primary data processed, 2024

The value of *R - Square* in the construct of the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang is 0.530 as shown in Table 4. means that the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) is directly influenced by the Use of Social Media (X1) and *Marketing Influencer* (X2) and Lifestyle by 53.0%. The *Q Square* value of 0.2809 (> 0) shows that the model has strong *predictive relevance*.

Discussion

The results of the hypothesis test show that the use of Social Media (X1) is directly proven to have a significant effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang. The positive direction of the Use of Social Media (X1) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) means that the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) can be formed if the Halal Product (1) business actors are able to promote halal products through interesting content, such as reviews, testimonials, or creative campaigns. This creates a higher awareness among Generation Z about the importance of choosing products that are in accordance with

their religious values and beliefs. (2) be able to provide interactive social media features that allow Generation Z to conduct product investigations more easily, including checking halal labels, reading *reviews* from other users, and interacting directly with *brands* through comment columns or direct messages. This gives them more confidence in making purchasing decisions, (3) being able to present halal product advertisements that suit their interests and needs, which ultimately encourages them to make a purchase. The research findings are in line with the results of the Hakim, & Muda, (2018); Alam, & Yasin, (2019); Zulkifli, & Iqbal, (2020); Rahman, & Zainudin, (2021); Nurhasanah, & Wahyuni, (2021); Sari, & Hidayat, (2022); Fahmi, & Azmi, (2023)

Marketing *Influencer* (X2) has been proven to directly affect the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang. The explanation is that the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) can be formed if (1) halal product providers are able to foster the trust of halal product users through *influencers*, because Generation Z tends to trust influencers who are considered authentic and relevant, especially those who have values that are in line with them, including in terms of halal product preferences. *Influencers* who promote halal products are often seen as figures who provide honest recommendations based on personal experience, which creates a sense of trust in the products offered. (2) *Marketing Influencers* allow for **faster and wider dissemination of information** about halal products. The ability of *influencers* to reach thousands to millions of followers, information about halal products can spread quickly, introducing the product to a larger audience. This has created an increase in awareness about halal products among Generation Z, who are increasingly concerned about the halalness of the products they consume. (3) *influencers* who create interactive and *engaging content* such as product reviews, tutorials on use, or testimonials that attract the attention of Generation Z. Content like this often provides more detailed information about the benefits and halalness of the product, which makes it easier for Generation Z to explore before deciding to buy. The combination of easily accessible information and a sense of engagement with *influencers* makes them more confident in making purchasing decisions. (4) *influencers* are also often a symbol of aspiration for Generation Z, so when an *influencer* they admire uses or recommends halal products, this can create a desire to imitate buying halal products. This drives purchasing decisions that are not only based on the halalness of the product, but also because of the desire to follow the trends promoted by *influencers*. The results of the study are in line with the research of Hamdan, & Fauzi, (2018); Hasan, & Ali, (2019); Zulfiqar, & Murtaza, (2020); Amalia, & Rahman, (2021); Firdaus, & Hidayat, (2021); Syahputra, & Azizah, (2022); Nurhayati, & Fathoni, (2023).

The direct influence of Lifestyle on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang is proven. The explanation is that Generation Z, who was born and raised in the digital era, has unique characteristics in their lifestyle and consumption behavior. They are more likely to choose products that are in line with their personal values, consumption habits and preferences that reflect their religious identity. This means that the more religious the lifestyle that Generation Z individuals live, the more likely they are to buy halal products. Generation Z also shows a tendency to buy halal products not only because of religious factors, but also because halal products are often associated with better quality, health, and ethics. Awareness of sustainability and the social impact of consumption choices is also increasingly influencing their purchasing decisions.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that show that a religious and ethical lifestyle influences purchasing behavior, especially in the context of halal products. Generation Z, who is heavily influenced by global trends and access to technology, has a more directed preference for products that represent their personal and community values, such as the research of Rahman, *et al.*, (2015); Suki, (2016); Kurniawati, *et al.*, (2021); Suryani, & Hendrawan, (2020)

The direct influence of Understanding Halal Products (M) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang are significant, with a positive direction, it can be explained that the development of the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z when Generation Z understands that a halal product is in accordance with Islamic law and is produced in an ethical way, they tend to be more confident and confident to buy it. Halal products provide quality and safety guarantees for Muslim consumers, thus influencing their preferences.

Generation Z who have an understanding of halal products also feel that the purchase of these products is part of the fulfillment of religious obligations, which strengthens their identity as Muslim consumers. This makes them more loyal to brands or products that have been certified halal. Products that have a halal label are often considered to have better quality because they go through a strict certification process. Generation Z, who values transparency and product quality, tends to be more interested in halal products because they believe that they meet high standards in terms of hygiene and ethics. The research findings are in line with the results of Hasan and Harun (2016); Jamal and Sharifuddin (2015); Winata, (2020);

The indirect influence of the Use of Social Media (X1) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang moderated Understanding of Halal Products (M) is not significant. This can be explained that Halal Product Understanding (M) is not able to function as a moderating variable for the influence of Social Media Use on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y). These findings indicate that although Generation Z has a good understanding of the concept and importance of halal products, the understanding of halal products is not able to strengthen or weaken the relationship between social media content and purchasing decisions. This means that the decision to buy halal products by generation Z is more influenced by how social media presents information through product reviews or testimonials, recommendations, and promotions related to halal products, without being affected by the understanding of halal concepts. These results provide important insights that social media plays a big role in influencing the consumption behavior of Generation Z, even without having to rely on a deep understanding of halal products. The conclusion of the findings emphasizes the importance of a social media-based marketing strategy, which highlights an emotional and visual approach that appeals to Generation Z, rather than just focusing on education about halal products. Understanding halal products, while important, is not a crucial factor in strengthening the relationship between social media use and purchasing decisions in this context.

The results of the analysis of the indirect influence of *Marketing Influencer* (X2) on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang moderated Understanding of Halal Products (M) were not significant. These findings indicate that although Generation Z has a good understanding of the concept and importance of halal products, it is not able to strengthen the influence of *Marketing Influencers* on purchasing decisions. This means that the content presented by *influencers* on social media still has a strong influence on the decision to purchase halal products, regardless of how deep Generation Z's understanding of halal products is.

These results show that in the context of Generation Z, buying decisions are influenced more by *influencer perception and* attractiveness, such as credibility, authenticity, and emotional connection with the audience, compared to factors of deep understanding of halal products. Education about halal products is still important, but nevertheless the appeal of *Marketing Influencers* remains dominant in shaping generation Z purchasing decisions without being influenced by the level of understanding of halal products.

Understanding Halal Products is not able to moderate the influence of Lifestyle on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics,

University of Semarang. These findings indicate that although Generation Z has a good understanding of the concept and importance of halal products, it is not a consideration in making decisions to buy halal products. Lifestyles that include consumer preferences for trends, modern values, and consumption patterns are more dominant in influencing purchasing decisions, without reflecting the understanding of halal products.

This shows that Generation Z tends to make decisions to buy halal products based on the lifestyle they adopt, such as a preference for products that match their trends and identity, more than just knowledge of halal products. Understanding halal products is still important, but a lifestyle that reflects the tastes and preferences of Gen Z consumers has a stronger influence on purchasing decisions, without contemplating halal products.

4. Conclusions

Conclusion

- 1 The Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang can be manifested through the success of halal product providers, managing social media and *Marketing Influencers*, and identifying the lifestyle of halal product users.
- 2 The Use of Social Media, Lifestyle and *Marketing Influencers* directly and significantly affects the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang
- 3 Understanding Halal Products has a direct effect on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang but are unable to moderate the Use of Social Media and Lifestyle, meaning that Understanding Halal Products functions as an independent variable not as a moderator.

Advice

Understanding Halal Products is not able to moderate the influence of Social Media Use, Lifestyle and *Marketing Influencers* on the Decision to Buy Halal Products Generation Z (Y) Students of the Faculty of Economics, University of Semarang Further research can explore the influence of the quality of social media content (for example, visual, narrative, or educational elements) in relation to the lifestyle of Generation Z and the decision to purchase halal products. This can help understand whether certain types of content are more influential than just understanding halal products.

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