

The Influence of Social Media Influencer Live Streaming on Gen Z Consumers' Purchase Intention in Thailand

Narupon Sengsuebphol^{1,*}

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Abstract

This study investigates how influencer marketing, particularly through live streaming, influences consumer trust in influencer's image and purchase intention on social media platforms. A quantitative web-based survey was conducted using random sampling approach with 270 Gen Z participants in Thailand. The findings indicate that influencer live streaming significantly influences trust, which subsequently influences purchase intention. While influencer marketing also positively influences purchase intention, influencer live streaming exhibits a stronger association with both trust and purchase intention. These results suggest that live interaction and real-time demonstrations during influencer live streams foster trust and ultimately drive purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers. This research offers valuable insights for manufacturers, sellers, and consumers. Manufacturers can leverage influencer live streams with cost-effective sponsored content and real-time product demonstrations to build trust and boost sales. Sellers should prioritize building consumer trust by ensuring influencers have a deep understanding of the products they promote. Consumers benefit from a wider range of products and activities offered through live streams. Finally, influencers who showcase positive results from their activities can enhance consumer trust and increase their audience base for future advertising opportunities.

Keywords : Social media influencers, Trust, Purchase intention, S-commerce (social commerce)

¹ Lecturer, Faculty of Business Administration, Panyapiwat Institute of Management

*Corresponding author E-mail: naruponsen@pim.ac.th

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

After the global COVID-19 pandemic, people's lifestyles have changed. They tend to spend more time on their mobile phones for online shopping during lockdowns and social distancing. According to Cramer-Flood (2022), global electronic commerce (e-commerce) accounted for only 17.9% of total retail sales in 2020, but this share has grown to 19.0% in 2021 and 20.3% in 2022. The perceived risk of online shopping is the inability of consumers to see the functionality or feel the quality of the product (Zhang & Mao, 2008). This is where influencer marketing shines, as influencers provide insights and honest reviews that boost consumer confidence and purchase intention (Chopra, 2020). Influencer marketing has emerged as a powerful and budget-friendly strategy for companies looking to connect with their target audience. Unlike traditional advertising, influencer partnerships are often perceived as authentic endorsements, fostering trust and loyalty among consumers. While many businesses have incorporated influencers into their marketing mix, a comprehensive understanding of how to strategically leverage this tool to achieve specific marketing objectives is still lacking (Ye et al., 2021).

Lou and Yuan (2019) have also shown that influencer marketing becomes more effective than traditional advertising using celebrities who read scripts or act in posters and videos. Influencer marketing offers a more affordable approach to building brand awareness compared to these high-cost celebrity marketing strategies. Furthermore, the positive characteristics of influencers, such as originality and expertise, can create a positive impact on consumers' attitudes, ultimately leading to purchase intentions. According to Li and Peng (2021), they found that consumer image satisfaction is influenced by the attractiveness of influencers, and advertising trust is boosted by the two-way interaction between influencers and consumers during live streams. Additionally, live streaming's popularity stems from its two-way communication, allowing influencers and consumers to connect and share interests through immediate responses, which can stimulate purchase intention (Ghahtarani et al., 2020).

Trust is another crucial element in the successful relationship between consumers and brands. Brand trust can be established through positive word-of-mouth, security measures, and satisfaction delivered to consumers during online purchases (Ha, 2004). Moreover, strong brand trust is cultivated through the influence of credible and relatable individuals. Building on the work of Li and Peng (2023), it is evident that influencer characteristics play a vital role in shaping consumer trust, ultimately leading to positive brand perceptions. Specifically, the research highlights that an influencer's perceived expertise, originality of content, shared values or interests with the target audience (homophily), and level of engagement significantly influence the degree of trust consumers place in their endorsements (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Lee & Lee, 2016). In line with previous research (Hou et al., 2023), this study found that live streaming can positively influence consumer trust. For example, consumers who watch pre-recorded workout clips are less likely to purchase online workout courses compared to those who watch live-streaming sessions with real-time interaction between the fitness instructor and consumer.

However, Lin et al. (2022) found that influencer live streaming has primarily centered on e-commerce or shopping platforms with integrated live-streaming features, such as Lazada and Shopee.

In contrast, social commerce (s-commerce) live streaming typically takes place on social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, where the primary focus is social networking rather than selling products

(Han & Kim, 2016). Additionally, consumers often visit social media platforms to watch live streams to connect with friends, relax, and be entertained, and may not necessarily intend to purchase anything (Loiacono & McCoy, 2018). Notably, there is a lack of scholarly attention on the younger generation, particularly Gen Z, in Thailand, where people spend more than two hours daily on social media (Kemp, 2023).

1.2 Research Question

How does influencer marketing, particularly through live streaming, impact consumer trust and purchase intention on social media platforms?

1.3 Objectives

This research aims to investigate the relationships between influencer marketing, influencer live streaming, trust in influencer's image, and purchase intention on social media platforms. The research has four specific objectives:

- 1) To examine how social media influencers affect trust in influencer's image while users watch their content.
- 2) To investigate whether users are convinced to purchase products during influencer live streams based on the trustworthiness of the influencer.
- 3) To assess the impact of influencer live streaming on social media users' purchase intention.
- 4) To determine the influence of social media influencers on online purchase intention.

2. Literature review and Hypothesis development

2.1 influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is a strategic marketing approach that leverages the influence of individuals with a significant following to promote a brand, product, or service. These influencers, often seen as experts or role models in their respective niches, endorse brands to their audience through authentic content creation and engagement on social media platforms (Belanche et al., 2021). A rapidly growing industry according to Carter (2016), aims to boost brand awareness. Influencers create content that promotes products, and this study demonstrates the strong correlation between influencer marketing and social media success. To capture user attention, influencers need to showcase their active lifestyles and seamlessly integrate the products they endorse.

Influencer marketing is a relatively new field compared to celebrity marketing, as evidenced by the limited research available (Vrontis et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2021). Social media influencers, unlike celebrities, typically gain their fame through interactive platforms. They create original and valuable content, attracting a dedicated following. Conversely, celebrities often rise to fame through traditional media channels like television and radio, leveraging their talents in acting, music, or sports (Cocker et al., 2021). While some social media influencers have achieved celebrity status due to their passionate activities and fair product reviews, fostering a sense of relatability with their followers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), scholars often refer to them as "micro-celebrities" (Appel et al., 2020). These micro-celebrities attract sponsorships from popular brands and companies who seek to promote content and boost sales through various marketing campaigns (Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2020).

2.1.1 Influencer live-streaming

Live streaming is a real-time video broadcasting feature on social media platforms. It allows users to share live moments with their audience. These can range from casual interactions, such as answering questions or sharing daily activities, to more structured events like product launches or live performances. Viewers can engage with the streamer through comments, reactions, and questions, creating a dynamic and interactive experience (Dublino, 2024). With the internet becoming an integral part of daily life, visual content reigns supreme. Social media influencers are a powerful force, generating electronic word-of-mouth that increases brand awareness and consumer engagement (Kim & Kim, 2021). Unlike traditional celebrities known for singing or acting, social media influencers are experts in their fields, such as beauty, fitness, food, and fashion. These relatable figures have proven to be effective promoters (Van Reijmersdal et al., 2020).

Influencer live streaming offers a significant advantage over traditional advertising methods that rely on static images, text, and pre-recorded videos. It fosters a real-time communication environment (Sun et al., 2019). Followers with shared interests can ask questions and directly observe products during live sessions. Ki et al. (2020) highlight that consumers increasingly rely on online influencers for purchasing decisions due to the interactive nature of live streams. This interaction, coupled with promotions and offers on these platforms, translates to sales growth (Geng et al., 2020).

2.2 Trust in influencer's image

Trust in an influencer's image refers to the degree of confidence consumers place in the authenticity and credibility of an influencer's persona as portrayed on social media platforms. It encompasses beliefs about the influencer's values, expertise, and intentions, as well as the perception of their alignment with the consumer's own values and aspirations (Reinikainen et al., 2020). Influencer marketing leverages electronic word-of-mouth through social media influencers (SMIs) to promote brands and build awareness through their content (Evans et al., 2017). Li and Peng (2023) demonstrated that influencer characteristics like expertise, originality, shared interests (homophily), and interaction significantly impact consumer trust in advertising. Research also suggests that consumers tend to trust influencers more than celebrities, perceiving them as more relatable. For example, consumers might believe they can achieve a similar physique through a protein shake endorsed by a fitness influencer, while replicating an influencer's eyeshadow look might be more challenging. This highlights the role of trust as a mediator between influencer and consumer purchase intention (Schouten et al., 2019).

Live streaming fosters trust in an influencer's image by allowing real-time interaction with consumers. Consumers can ask live questions, such as seeking product feedback, which can boost trust during the live stream session. Hou et al. (2023) found that online workout course purchases increased significantly during live sessions with personal trainers compared to pre-recorded workout videos.

2.3 Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's decision-making process, specifically their willingness and plan to buy a specific product (Spears & Singh, 2004). Research suggests that factors like social presence, interaction with influencers, and enjoyment of content can influence how consumers perceive a social media influencer's image (Dabholkar et al., 2009). This image satisfaction, in turn, can directly influence a consumer's purchase intention.

Supporting this concept, Hou et al. (2023) found that perceived enjoyment and the feeling of social presence during live-streamed workouts directly influence consumers' purchase intention for the workout program. This effect is likely due to the ability to receive immediate feedback, allowing instructors to personalize routines for individual users in real-time. Additionally, trust plays a significant role, as Li and Peng (2021) found a positive correlation between trust in influencer marketing and purchase intention.

2.4 Hypothesis development

This study aims to investigate the relationship between influencer marketing, influencer live streaming, trust, and purchase intention on social media platforms. The proposed model is demonstrated in Figure 1.

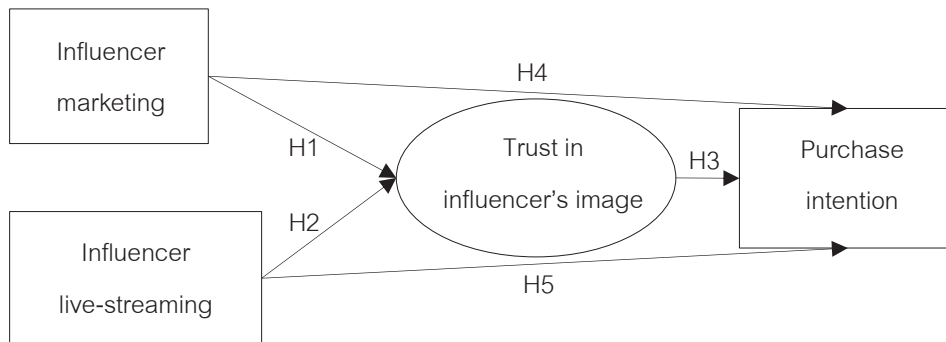


Figure 1 The proposed model

2.4.1 The impact of influencer marketing on consumers' trust

Previous research suggests that influencer content effectively generates product awareness and spreads positive word-of-mouth (Evans et al., 2017). For instance, influencer marketing has boosted protein shake sales, likely because consumers trust that influencers can help them achieve similar results (Schouten et al., 2019). Based on this evidence, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Influencer marketing positively influences consumer trust in influencer's image.

2.4.2 The impact of influencer live-streaming on consumers' trust.

Live-streaming commerce offers a distinct advantage over pre-recorded video platforms when it comes to building social presence (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). During live product demonstrations, viewers can ask questions in real-time, fostering a sense of connection with the influencer and the product. Conversely, pre-recorded workouts limit interaction to comments and emojis, hindering a sense of community. Live streaming bridges this gap by allowing users to receive immediate feedback and interact with others in real-time. This simultaneous interaction likely plays a key role in how users perceive the social aspects of live-streaming workouts.

Trust is a crucial factor driving purchase intention within online platforms (Kim & Park, 2013). Live-streaming workouts can enhance the credibility of digital transactions. In a high social presence environment, it's more difficult for sellers to hide product information or engage in deceptive practices (Gefen & Straub, 2003; Lu et al., 2016; Clement Addo et al., 2021). This format, characterized by high social presence, promotes a sense of closeness

between sellers (influencers) and buyers (consumers). This perceived decrease in social distance can directly contribute to increased online trust (Hou et al., 2023). Therefore it is hypothesized that :

H2: Influencer live streaming positively influences consumer trust.

2.4.3 The impact of trust on purchase intention.

Trust in advertising significantly impacts consumer behavior by shaping expectations and influencing purchase decisions. When consumers trust advertising messages, they perceive the product or service as less complex and risky. This, in turn, increases their confidence in achieving the desired results, ultimately leading to a stronger inclination to purchase (Gefen et al., 2003).

Previous research has consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between brand trust and purchase intention (Zhao et al., 2019; Sanny et al., 2020). For example, high trust in an influencer increases the perceived credibility of their social media posts, particularly on platforms like Instagram. This credibility, in turn, makes consumers more likely to seek additional product information before purchasing, a key pre-purchase behavior (Gamage & Ashill, 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3: Trust in influencers positively influences consumer purchase intention.

2.4.4 The impact of influencer marketing on purchase intention.

Social media influencers are everyday people who leverage various platforms to cultivate large followings. They captivate audiences with visually appealing content that reflects their lifestyles and purchasing choices (Enke & Borchers, 2019). These influencers, often referred to as "micro-celebrities" (Appel et al., 2020), have become a target for popular brands and companies seeking to boost sales through sponsored content and marketing campaigns (Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2020).

H4: There is statistically correlated between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention.

2.4.5 The impact of influencer live-streaming on purchase intention.

Influencer live-streaming has become a powerful advertising tool, allowing influencers to connect directly with consumers and promote products in real-time. This interactive format is rapidly gaining traction and becoming a key player in the online influencer economy (Lee & Theokary, 2021). Empirical studies support this notion, demonstrating that influencer live-streaming can stimulate impulse buying and purchase intention (Yan et al., 2022). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Influencer live-streaming is statistically associated with consumer purchase intention.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample Selection and Data Collection

Data collection for this study targeting young Thai adults with internet access and online shopping experience occurred between January and March 2024. We employed a simple random sampling approach to recruit participants who met the following criteria: over 18 years old, experience using social media, and currently enrolled as students. The online questionnaire was distributed throughout Thailand via LINE groups, where members were encouraged to participate and share the survey link with others who fit the criteria. Participation was voluntary.

A total of 300 surveys were distributed. Since this study employed 17 measurable items and Hair et al. (2011) suggested a minimum sample size of 10 times the number of measurement items, a minimum of 170 participants would be sufficient to avoid inaccurate estimates. The survey yielded a response rate of 92% (n=275). After applying exclusion criteria (no social media account, no social media shopping experience, or under 18 years old), the final sample size for analysis comprised 270 participants, representing a response rate of 90% based on the initial distribution.

3.2 Scale development

To test our conceptual model and hypotheses, we employed a quantitative web-based survey distributed to participants in Thailand. The questionnaire comprised three main parts. The first section gathered sociodemographic data (gender, age, education, occupation, income). The second section focused on participants' opinions and perceptions regarding how influencer live-streaming impacts purchase intention, with trust acting as a mediating factor. The third section explored participants' social media live-streaming habits. The four constructs of our research model were incorporated into the questionnaire and measured using established scales found in literature. We adapted these measurement items to align with our study's specific focus through expert review. Three social media influencer marketing specialists independently reviewed the instruments, informed of the study's objective. They assessed each item's Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) using a +1 for meeting criteria, 0 for neutral, and -1 for not meeting criteria. After collecting these ratings, we calculated the IOC score for each item. Finally, to assess the questionnaire's reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 30 randomly selected participants. Participants rated their responses on a five-point Likert scale. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly used in surveys to measure attitudes or opinions. Respondents are typically presented with a statement and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (McLeod, 2023; Likert, 1932). Cronbach's alpha was then used to calculate the questionnaire's internal consistency.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Data Collection Tool

An assessment of the questionnaire's reliability was conducted using SPSS 29 to calculate Cronbach's Alpha for each of the four factors measured in the study. Hair et al. (2011) and Hair et al. (2017) suggest that composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991) and an average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) are indicators of acceptable convergence validity.

3.4 Data analysis and statistic used

The study employed 17 measurable items. While Hair et al. (2011) suggested a rule of thumb of having a sample size 10 times the maximum number of measurement items, this "10-times rule" can lead to inaccurate estimates

(Goodhue et al., 2012). Therefore, a more robust power analysis is recommended to definitively determine if our sample size is adequate for covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) analysis (Dash & Paul, 2021).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondents' profile

An examination of the respondent demographics revealed a gender skew towards females (64%), with males constituting 27.3% and LGBTQ+ individuals representing 8.7% of the sample. The age distribution exhibited a concentration within the 21-30 year old range (73.9%). Educational attainment primarily consisted of bachelor's degrees (92.4%). Finally, regarding income, the most frequent monthly earnings category fell between 10,001 and 20,000 Thai Baht (58%).

4.2 Reliability test

As summarized in Table 1, the calculated Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.856 to 0.996, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency for all constructs. This is further supported by none of the reliability estimates falling below the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991). Additionally, all AVE values surpassed 0.5, suggesting sufficient convergent validity for the constructs within the measurement model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These results provide evidence that the questionnaire effectively captures the intended constructs with a high degree of internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 1 Results of the reliability tests

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Influencer marketing (IM)	4	.856	.992	.781
Influencer live-streaming (ILS)	4	.891	.993	.817
Trust in influencers' image (TRI)	5	.917	.996	.831
Purchase intention (PI)	4	.937	.995	.884
Total	17	.963	.828	.999

4.3 Correlation analysis

Table 2 shows the correlation matrix for all the variables included in this study. Appropriate with the suggestion Pallant (2013), the independent variables show at least some relation to the dependent variable (higher correlation to 0.3), and indicates that the correlation between independent variables is not very high (correlation less than 0.7) (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 2 Correlation matrix for the research model

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
IM1	1																
IM2	.687**	1															
IM3	.619**	.614**	1														
IM4	.605**	.537**	.589**	1													
ILS1	.526**	.455**	.483**	.577**	1												
ILS2	.575**	.531**	.558**	.584**	.634**	1											
ILS3	.589**	.502**	.517**	.620**	.651**	.687**	1										
ILS4	.543**	.527**	.494**	.579**	.699**	.656**	.704**	1									
TRI1	.533**	.549**	.511**	.554**	.606**	.609**	.576**	.615**	1								
TRI2	.492**	.466**	.537**	.593**	.622**	.597**	.640**	.622**	.672**	1							
TRI3	.550**	.549**	.542**	.542**	.594**	.630**	.630**	.641**	.712**	.757**	1						
TRI4	.477**	.534**	.475**	.491**	.550**	.505**	.568**	.627**	.635**	.680**	.677**	1					
TRI5	.534**	.465**	.492**	.507**	.618**	.540**	.583**	.618**	.673**	.704**	.723**	.658**	1				
PI1	.522**	.531**	.582**	.608**	.632**	.596**	.599**	.664**	.617**	.710**	.698**	.659**	.702**	1			
PI2	.594**	.539**	.549**	.598**	.621**	.596**	.631**	.666**	.609**	.670**	.646**	.640**	.650**	.799**	1		
PI3	.563**	.504**	.522**	.590**	.616**	.579**	.612**	.676**	.659**	.702**	.718**	.657**	.701**	.779**	.811**	1	
PI4	.577**	.554**	.489**	.562**	.560**	.547**	.576**	.623**	.601**	.640**	.669**	.605**	.633**	.747**	.781**	.764**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4 Validity test

Table 3 presents the discriminant validity results. As recommended by Hair et al. (2006), this analysis assesses the extent to which each construct is distinct from the others. The results indicate that discriminant validity is established for all constructs in this study. The square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlation between any two constructs, confirming their unique identity.

Table 3 Discriminant validity

Variable	Influencer marketing	Influencer live-streaming	Trust in influencer's image	Purchase intention
Influencer marketing (IM)	0.884			
Influencer live-streaming (ILS)	0.841	0.904		
Trust in influencers' image (TRI)	0.796	0.883	0.912	
Purchase intention (PI)	0.801	0.853	0.897	0.940

4.5 Structural model result

Following data distribution and collection, the survey responses were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques. Amos 22 software was employed to evaluate the overall model fit in relation to the four proposed factors. The following fit indices were examined: normed minimum discrepancy per degree of freedom (CMIN/DF), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), root mean

square residual (RMR), and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). Additionally, factor loadings for all items were assessed for significance and magnitude to confirm construct validity. The detailed fit index values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Total fit indices for the measurement models

Variable	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR
Influencer marketing (IM)	3.000	.989	.945	.992	.087	.010
Influencer live-streaming (ILS)	.592	.999	.989	1.000	.000	.002
Trust in influencers' image (TRI)	.409	.997	.991	1.000	.000	.003
Purchase intention (PI)	.026	1.000	1.000	1.000	.000	.001
Acceptable amount	≤ 2	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.95	< 0.08	Nearly 0
	(Schemelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Hu & Bentler, 1999)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Schemelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003)

An evaluation of the four individual constructs within the model revealed acceptable fit indices. While the influencer marketing construct exhibited a chi-square statistic to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) exceeding the preferred threshold of 2.0 (considered a good fit), it remained within the acceptable range according to Kline (1998) with a value below 3.0.

Table 5 Total fit indices for the structural model

Variable	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	RMR
Final model	1.517	.928	.902	.985	.044	.015
Acceptable amount	≤ 2	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.95	< 0.08	Nearly 0
	(Schemelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Hu & Bentler, 1999)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(Schemelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003)

Following this assessment of individual construct fit, the overall structural equation model was analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. The overall fit indices for the structural model, presented in Table 5, demonstrate a good fit across all indices, suggesting that the hypothesized relationships between the constructs are well-supported by the data.

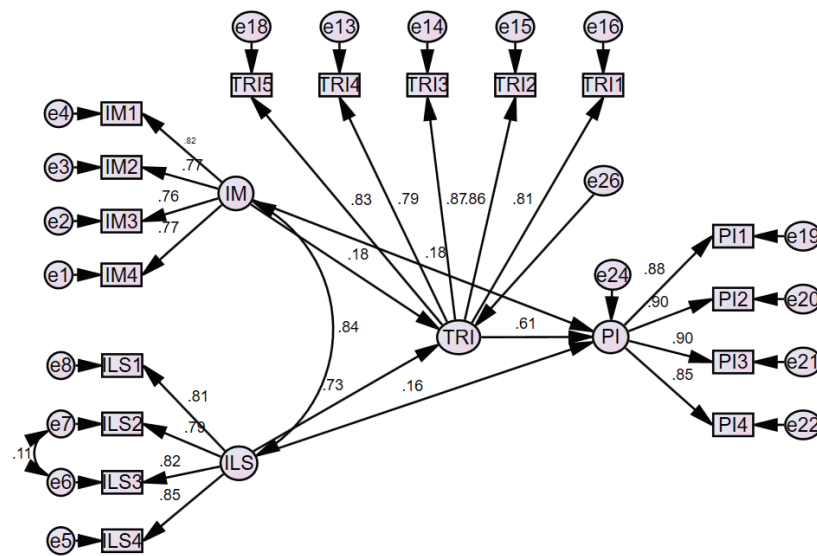


Figure 2
Structural model

The structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis estimated the hypothesized relationships between the four constructs in our model. The path coefficients for all hypothesized paths are presented in Table 6, with a visual representation of the paths provided in Figure 2. The overall model fit for the original sample yielded a chi-square statistic of 169.854 with 112 degrees of freedom (GFI = .928; AGFI = .902; CFI = .985; RMR = .015; RMSEA = .044), indicating acceptable fit according to established criteria. Furthermore, Table 6 details the individual tests for the significance of the relationships among the constructs, providing further insights into the strength and direction of the hypothesized effects.

Table 6 structural parameter estimates

Hypothesized path	P-value	Coefficient	Result
Hypothesis 1 : Influencer marketing (IM) → Trust (TRI)	.063	.181	Not supported
Hypothesis 2 : Influencer live streaming (ILS) → Trust (TRI)	.000*	.731	Supported
Hypothesis 3 : Trust (TRI) → Purchase intention (PI)	.000*	.613	Supported
Hypothesis 4 : Influencer marketing (IM) → purchase intention (PI)	.033*	.176	Supported
Hypothesis 5 : Influencer live streaming (ILS) → Purchase intention (PI)	.156	.164	Not supported

*p<.05

Hypothesis 1: Hypothesis 1 (H1: Influencer Marketing -> Trust) predicted a positive influence of influencer marketing on trust. However, the data did not provide statistically significant evidence to support this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: In contrast, Hypothesis 2 (H2: Influencer Live-Streaming -> Trust) was supported. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between influencer live-streaming and trust.

Hypothesis 3: Moving on to the relationship between trust and purchase intention, Hypothesis 3 (H3: Trust -> Purchase Intention) was also supported. The analysis demonstrated a positive and statistically significant effect of trust on purchase intention.

Hypothesis 4: Hypothesis 4 (H4: Influencer Marketing -> Purchase Intention) investigated the direct effect of influencer marketing on purchase intention. The results confirmed a positive and statistically significant relationship between these two constructs.

Hypothesis 5: Finally, Hypothesis 5 (H5: Influencer Live-Streaming -> Purchase Intention) examined the direct effect of influencer live-streaming on purchase intention. The analysis yielded a positive and statistically significant relationship, supporting this hypothesis.

Table 7 Total effect estimates

Dependent variable	Effect	Independent variable			
		IM	ILS	TRI	PI
Trust (TRI)	DE	0.181	0.731	0.000	0.000
	IE	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	TE	0.181	0.731	0.000	0.000
Purchase intention (PI)	DE	0.176	0.164	0.613	0.000
	IE	0.111	0.447	0.000	0.000
	TE	0.287	0.611	0.613	0.000

Table 7 explores the indirect effects of influencer marketing and influencer live-streaming on purchase intention mediated by trust. The analysis revealed the presence of significant indirect effects for both influencer marketing and influencer live-streaming, suggesting that trust plays a mediating role in the relationships between these constructs and purchase intention.

4.4 Discussion

This study investigated the relationships between influencer marketing, influencer live-streaming, trust, and purchase intention. The findings offer valuable theoretical and practical implications.

4.4.1 Hypothetical implications

Theoretical Implications: Our results demonstrate that influencer live-streaming fosters consumer trust, which in turn leads to increased purchase intention. While influencer marketing also has a positive association with purchase intention, the effect appears to be less pronounced compared to influencer live-streaming.

Contrary to previous research suggesting a positive correlation between influencer marketing and consumer trust (Evans et al., 2017; Schouten et al., 2019), this study found no significant relationship between the two constructs (Hypothesis 1). This discrepancy may be attributed to the unique characteristics of the Thai Gen Z consumer segment. It is possible that this demographic is increasingly skeptical of influencer endorsements due to the prevalence of sponsored content and heavily edited visuals, leading to perceptions of inauthenticity and a lack of trust. Our results suggest that understanding the specific cultural and generational factors is crucial for successful influencer marketing campaigns. Different age groups and cultures respond differently to influencer endorsements, and what works in one market might not be effective in another (Zniva et al., 2023).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly boosted the popularity of influencer live-streaming on social commerce (s-commerce) platforms. Understanding consumer behavior during these real-time interactions is crucial for increasing purchase intention. Our findings suggest that consumers are more likely to be persuaded by influencer recommendations if they are clearly explained during live streams and supported by demonstrably positive results (Hypothesis 2). This implies that individuals who watch live streams where influencers provide real-time demonstrations in response to audience comments are more likely to make purchase decisions. These results align with previous studies that show an increase in purchase intention among e-commerce consumers who engage in more interaction with others (Hou et al., 2023; Geng et al., 2020).

The mediating role of trust is further confirmed by our study (Hypothesis 3). Influencer live-streaming enhances users' trust in the influencer, which ultimately contributes to higher purchase intentions. Research by Geng et al. (2020) explores how consumers establish trust bonds with products and brands within the influencer live-streaming model. Interestingly, the study also suggests that influencer live-streaming has a stronger association with trust for consumers with a higher dependence on trust for purchase decisions. This implies that while influencer marketing remains a vital method for influencing purchase decisions, influencer live-streaming can be a powerful tool for building consumer trust.

The findings of this study indicate statistically correlated between influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention (Hypothesis 4). This aligns with previous research by (Kim & Kim, 2021; Lee & Kim, 2020) that highlights the effectiveness of influencer marketing in driving sales.

The results suggest that Gen Z consumers, particularly active on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, are influenced by the aspirational and relatable content created by influencers. The ability of influencers to showcase products in authentic and engaging ways, such as travel bloggers highlighting unique destinations or experiences, can inspire consumers to emulate their lifestyles by making similar purchases. This finding underscores the power of influencer marketing in shaping consumer behavior and driving purchase decisions.

While previous research (Lee & Theokary, 2021; Yan et al., 2022) has emphasized the positive impact of influencer live streaming on purchase intention, particularly in the context of impulse buying, the findings of this study do not fully support this notion (Hypothesis 5). This discrepancy can be attributed to several factors.

Firstly, the cultural context of consumer behavior plays a significant role. The phenomenon of "fear of missing out" (FOMO) and limited-time offers, which have driven purchase behavior in the Chinese market, may not be as prevalent among Thai consumers. Additionally, the entertainment value associated with live shopping in China, often incorporating interactive elements and gamification, may contrast with the perceived simplicity of live streaming platforms in the Thai market (Baird, 2023).

These findings suggest that while influencer live streaming holds potential as a marketing tool, its effectiveness in driving purchase intention may be contingent upon specific cultural factors and platform characteristics. Marketers should carefully consider the unique preferences and behaviors of their target audience when developing live streaming strategies.

Furthermore, the study highlights the need for further research to explore the specific elements of live streaming that resonate with Thai consumers and to identify strategies for optimizing the platform for driving sales.

4.4.2 Managerial implications

This study sheds light on consumer behavior in the context of influencer marketing and live-streaming, particularly for Gen Z consumers in Thailand. The findings offer valuable insights for businesses looking to leverage these strategies to drive purchase intention.

First, manufacturers can benefit by sponsoring content during influencer live streams. This allows influencers to demonstrate product features with real-time interaction, fostering trust with the audience and leading to both long-term competitive advantages and impulsive purchases.

Second, sellers should prioritize building consumer trust in the influencer. This can be achieved by ensuring the influencer has a strong understanding of the product. Unlike traditional pre-recorded advertisements, live streaming doesn't allow for referencing product specification sheets during demonstrations. A knowledgeable influencer will enhance consumer satisfaction with the influencer's image and the product itself.

Lastly, consumers stand to gain from the intense competition within the live-streaming space. This translates to a wider variety of products and activities offered, encompassing home and living goods, healthy food options, and other related services.

5. Suggestions and Benefits

5.1 Suggestions for future research

This study paves the way for further exploration in the ever-evolving landscape of influencer marketing and live-streaming. Here, we discuss several promising avenues for future research endeavors.

One potential area for future research lies in expanding the investigation to encompass influencer specialties beyond the current study's focus. Examining fields such as fitness, food, and travel could reveal how consumer behavior during live streams varies depending on the influencer's area of expertise. Analyzing how trust and purchase intention are affected by the influencer's specific knowledge and niche would provide valuable insights for businesses and marketers.

In addition, investigating these relationships within the context of specific s-commerce platforms could offer a more nuanced understanding. Researchers could explore whether the findings hold true across different platforms, as each platform may have unique characteristics that influence consumer behavior in distinct ways. By delving deeper into platform-specific dynamics, the generalizability of these findings can be refined.

5.2 Benefits of the research

This research into influencer marketing and live-streaming offers valuable contributions to both academic understanding and practical applications. By examining the relationships between these marketing strategies, trust, and purchase intention, the study sheds light on how Gen Z consumers in Thailand engage with influencer content. The findings provide theoretical advancements by demonstrating the distinct roles of influencer live-streaming and influencer marketing in influencing consumer behavior. The study highlights the importance of live-streaming for fostering trust, which ultimately translates to higher purchase intention. These insights refine our understanding of how consumers navigate the world of influencer marketing and live-commerce.

5.2.1 Practitioner benefit from the research

Our findings highlight the critical role of live streaming in influencer marketing. While traditional influencer marketing, as measured in this study, did not significantly impact trust, live streaming emerged as a key driver of both trust and purchase intention. This suggests that the dynamic and interactive nature of live streaming fosters a deeper connection between influencers and their audience especially on social media platform, leading to increased trust. This trust, in turn, directly influences consumers' decision to make a purchase.

For practitioners, these findings emphasize the importance of live streaming as a strategic tool. While influencer marketing remains valuable, focusing on live streaming on social media platforms such as Facebook, Tiktok and Youtube can yield higher returns in terms of trust building and sales. It's essential to create engaging and interactive live streams that offer genuine value to the audience, rather than solely focusing on product promotion like in e-commerce platform. By nurturing trust through authentic interactions, brands can significantly boost purchase intentions.

Additionally, the study underscores the need for careful measurement and evaluation of influencer marketing campaigns. While overall influencer marketing may not always yield significant trust benefits, specific formats like live streaming can be highly effective.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the influence of influencer marketing and live-streaming on purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in Thailand, with trust acting as a mediator. The findings revealed that influencer live-streaming plays a more significant role than influencer marketing in building trust with consumers, ultimately leading to increased purchase intention. These results suggest that live demonstrations, real-time interaction, and a strong understanding of the product by the influencer are crucial elements for fostering trust within the live-streaming environment. This research offers valuable insights for businesses seeking to leverage influencer marketing and live-streaming strategies, highlighting the importance of building trust through authentic and interactive content.

Lastly, the study paves the way for future research investigating the influence of influencer expertise, platform-specific dynamics, and the role of emotions in shaping consumer behavior within the ever-evolving landscape of influencer marketing and live-commerce.

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