

Lifestyle as a Mediator: The Influence of Content Marketing, Brand Equity, and Influencers Marketing on Aerostreet Purchase Decisions

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Abstract

Lifestyle as a Mediator: The Influence of Content Marketing, Brand Equity, and Influencer Marketing on Aerostreet Purchase Decisions in Three Sub-Districts of Jember City. This study aims to analyze the direct and indirect effects of content marketing, brand equity, and influencer marketing on purchase decisions, with lifestyle as a mediating variable. The research was conducted among Generation Z consumers who use Aerostreet products in Jember City, characterized by digital-based consumption and active lifestyles. This study uses a quantitative method with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents who met the criteria. The variables examined include content marketing, brand equity, influencer marketing, lifestyle, and purchase decision. The analysis results indicate that content marketing, brand equity, and influencer marketing have a direct effect on lifestyle. Content marketing and influencer marketing have a direct effect on purchase decisions, while brand equity does not have a direct effect on purchase decisions; however, it does not play a significant role as a mediator between the three independent variables and purchase decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of developing digital marketing strategies that align with the lifestyle of Generation Z, as well as the need to enhance content authenticity and brand relevance through consistent and personalized approaches.

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1. Introduction

The advancement of technology and the widespread use of social media have significantly transformed consumer behavior, particularly among Generation Z, who are known for their digital savviness. Aerostreet, a local footwear brand, must adopt a marketing strategy that resonates with this generation's lifestyle, values, and consumption patterns. Priporas et al. (2017) highlight that Generation Z is highly connected to the digital world and has elevated expectations for personalized experiences and direct engagement with brands through digital platforms. Similarly, Djafarova and Bowes (2021) emphasize that social media plays a crucial role in shaping Gen Z's purchasing decisions, as they are heavily influenced by visual content, peer reviews, and influencer endorsements. In the context of local brands like Aerostreet, aligning marketing strategies with Gen Z's digital lifestyle can significantly enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty (Smith, 2019).

Content marketing has become a cornerstone of digital marketing, aimed at building relationships through engaging and relevant content. Prastiwi (2024) confirms that content marketing has a significant and positive influence on purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers in Surabaya. Similarly, Anggreani et al. (2024) demonstrate that content marketing,

along with electronic word of mouth, significantly influences skincare purchase decisions on TikTok Shop.

In addition to content marketing, brand equity plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions. According to Saragih et al. (2024), strong brand equity and engaging content marketing significantly affect purchase decisions. However, other studies, such as Ulya et al. (2021), suggest that the influence of brand equity on purchase decisions can vary depending on product category and consumer context.

Another increasingly relevant strategy is influencer marketing. Alfianto et al. (2023) found that influencer marketing significantly influences purchase decisions, especially when consumers feel aligned with the influencer's lifestyle and values. However, Hidayatullah et al. (2025) found that although influencers can raise brand awareness, their direct influence on purchase decisions is limited suggesting the need for mediating factors such as lifestyle.

Lifestyle itself, as a set of consumption habits, interests, and values, has a strong impact on consumer behavior. According to Lestari (2023), both brand equity and lifestyle significantly influence iPhone purchase decisions. The interplay between marketing strategies and lifestyle in shaping consumer decisions, especially in the context of Generation Z, warrants deeper exploration.

This study seeks to fill this research gap by examining lifestyle as a mediating variable that connects content marketing, brand equity, and influencer marketing to purchase decisions.

2. Methods

This study employs a quantitative research method with a Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, which is suitable for analyzing complex relationships between multiple latent variables. The population in this study consists of Generation Z consumers in three sub-districts of Jember City who use Aerostreet footwear products. The sample includes 100 respondents, aged 18 to 27 years, residing in Kaliwates, Patrang, and Summersari sub-districts. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance to the research objectives.

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online and offline, and all items were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The variables in this study are:

Content Marketing (X1),

- Brand Equity (X2),
- Influencer Marketing (X3) as independent variables,
- Lifestyle (Z) as a mediating variable, and
- Purchase Decision (Y) as the dependent variable.

Each construct was measured using specific indicators adopted and adapted from previous validated studies.

- Content marketing is measured through indicators such as relevance, accuracy, clarity, discoverability, and consistency (Chairina, 2020).
- Brand equity includes brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty (Shimp, 2013).
- Influencer marketing adopts the TEARS model: trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect, and similarity (Shimp, 2014).
- Lifestyle is measured through activity, interest, and opinion (Sunarto, 2009).
- Purchase decision is assessed based on recognition of needs, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase action, and post-purchase behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted in several stages:

- Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), including convergent validity (outer loading and AVE), discriminant validity (cross-loading and Fornell-Larcker criterion), and reliability (composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha).

- Evaluation of the structural model (inner model), including path coefficients, t-statistics for hypothesis testing (bootstrapping), and the R-square (R^2) to determine the explanatory power of the model.
- Indirect effect analysis was conducted to assess the mediating role of lifestyle in the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

This comprehensive approach ensures that the model is statistically robust and the findings are valid and reliable in explaining the influence of marketing strategies on Generation Z's purchasing decisions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

This section presents the key findings extracted from the research data. The presentation begins with a general overview of the characteristics of the participating respondents, followed by the results of the inferential statistical analysis using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to test the research model.

The respondents in this study reflect Generation Z in three sub-districts of Jember City, with a total of 100 individuals aged between 18 and 27 who are consumers of Aerostreet products. Based on their profile, the majority of respondents were female, indicating that the Aerostreet brand holds a strong appeal among young women. Most of them are university students or early-career professionals who actively use social media and rely on recommendations from friends as their primary source of product information. Their main reasons for choosing Aerostreet were its trendy design, affordable price, and perceived good quality. In general, their perception of Aerostreet's marketing efforts was very positive. Content marketing was considered relevant and engaging, brand equity was perceived as strong, and the role of influencers was acknowledged as highly effective in influencing their decisions.

To test the hypotheses, the data was analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0. This analysis involved two main stages: evaluating the measurement model (outer model) to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, and evaluating the structural model (inner model) to test the relationships between variables.

Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation

This analysis aimed to ensure the research instrument was both valid and reliable. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loading values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). After removing several indicators with loadings below 0.7 (X1.3, X1.5, X2.3, X3.2, X3.3, X3.5, Z1.1, Y1.1, Y1.4, and Y1.5), all remaining indicators showed outer loading values above 0.7, signifying strong validity. Furthermore, the AVE values for all constructs were above the 0.50 threshold: Content Marketing (0.682), Brand Equity (0.670), Influencer Marketing (0.799), Lifestyle (0.698), and Purchase Decision (0.886). This confirms that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which confirmed that each variable was conceptually distinct. Finally, the reliability tests yielded highly satisfactory results. The Cronbach's Alpha for all variables was above 0.70, and the Composite Reliability was also above the 0.70 threshold, with values of 0.812 for Content Marketing, 0.762 for Brand Equity, 0.753 for Influencer Marketing, 0.785 for Lifestyle, and 0.901 for Purchase Decision. These figures prove that the research instrument used is consistent and dependable.

Structural Model (Inner Model) Evaluation

Once the measurement model was confirmed as valid and reliable, the structural model was evaluated to test the research hypotheses. First, the coefficient of determination (R-Square) was assessed. The Lifestyle (Z) variable obtained an R-Square value of 0.736, meaning that 73.6% of the variance in Lifestyle can be explained by Content Marketing, Brand Equity, and Influencer

Marketing. The Purchase Decision (Y) variable achieved an R-Square value of 0.576, indicating that 57.6% of the variance in Purchase Decision is explained by this model. Both of these values are considered strong. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the T-Statistics and P-Values for each path. The results showed that Content Marketing (p values=0.036, T=2.130), Brand Equity (p values=0.000, T=7.238), and Influencer Marketing (p values=0.002, T=3.113) all had a significant positive effect on Lifestyle. Likewise, Content Marketing (p values=0.000, T=6.968) and Influencer Marketing (p values=0.000, T=4.995) had a significant positive effect on Purchase Decision. However, the path from Brand Equity (p values=0.190, T=1.321) and Lifestyle (p values=0.293, T=1.057) to Purchase Decision was not significant. Finally, the indirect effects testing for the mediating role of lifestyle (H8, H9, H10) concluded that lifestyle was not a significant mediator, as the direct effects were more dominant.

3.2. Discussion

The research findings show that all three tested marketing strategies (Content Marketing, Brand Equity, and Influencer Marketing) have a positive and significant influence on the Lifestyle of Generation Z consumers. This implies that the content created by Aerostreet on social media successfully resonates with the daily values and interests of its audience. A strong brand image (brand equity) makes consumers feel that using Aerostreet products is part of their desired identity and lifestyle. Similarly, when influencers feature these products in their activities, it effectively shapes the perception that Aerostreet is a choice that aligns with current lifestyle trends. This finding confirms that modern marketing sells not just a product, but an identity integrated into the consumer's life.

The analysis found that Content Marketing and Influencer Marketing have a significant direct influence on Purchase Decision. This means that engaging content and reviews from trusted influencers can serve as a direct trigger for consumers to buy a product without much other consideration. This is consistent with previous research highlighting the power of digital recommendations in driving sales in the current era.

An interesting finding emerged regarding Brand Equity. The analysis showed that Brand Equity does not have a significant direct influence on Purchase Decision. Although consumers recognize Aerostreet as a strong and quality brand, this brand image alone is not enough to spontaneously drive them to make a purchase. This finding suggests that for Generation Z, purchase decisions may be more influenced by more dynamic and immediate factors, such as current trends displayed by influencers or attractive promotional content, rather than the established reputation of the brand itself.

On the other hand, lifestyle is generally recognized as a powerful determinant of consumer choices, this research did not find a significant direct influence of lifestyle on purchasing decisions for Aerostreet products. This suggests that for this particular brand, other factors might be more dominant in driving consumer purchases, or that the link between lifestyle and buying behavior is more intricate and requires further exploration beyond the scope of this study.

The most surprising finding of this research is that Lifestyle does not act as a significant mediator in the relationship between marketing strategies (Content Marketing, Brand Equity, Influencer Marketing) and Purchase Decision. In simple terms, this can be interpreted as follows: although marketing strategies successfully shape lifestyle, and that lifestyle itself encourages purchases, the "marketing -> lifestyle -> purchase" pathway is not the primary route.

Instead, the direct influence from Content Marketing and Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision turned out to be stronger. This indicates that Aerostreet's marketing strategy is highly effective at creating a "shortcut" in the consumer's mind. A consumer might see content from an influencer, feel it resonates with them, and immediately decide to buy, with this process happening so quickly that the role of lifestyle as an intermediary becomes less dominant. This implies that Aerostreet's digital marketing strategy is not only successful in building a long-term image but is also very powerful in driving direct and immediate sales conversions.

4. Conclusion

The research concludes that content marketing, brand equity, and influencer marketing directly influence lifestyle. Content marketing and influencer marketing also directly affect purchasing decisions, but brand equity does not have a direct impact on purchasing decisions. The findings of this study indicate that lifestyle does not exert a statistically significant influence on purchasing decisions, and it does not act as a significant mediator between the three independent variables and purchasing decisions. This emphasizes the importance of developing digital marketing strategies aligned with Generation Z's lifestyle and improving content authenticity and brand relevance through consistent and personalized approaches.

This research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study is limited to Generation Z consumers in Jember City, aged 18–27 years old, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other age groups or regions. Second, the sample size of 100 respondents using purposive sampling may introduce selection bias and limit the representation of the overall consumer population. Third, the cross-sectional research design used does not allow for the observation of changes in consumer behavior over time. Lastly, the study only considers lifestyle as a mediating variable, while other potential mediators such as brand awareness or perceived value were not included in the model.

The research recommends that companies, especially Aerostreet, continue to develop and adapt their content marketing and influencer marketing strategies to align with the lifestyle and values of Generation Z. Strengthening brand equity is also necessary through more personal, transparent, and sustainable approaches to build loyalty and increase future purchasing decisions. It is suggested that Aerostreet focus on directly strengthening influencer marketing, brand equity, and content marketing that can build personal relationships and consumer trust, thereby more effectively increasing purchasing decisions without over-relying on changes in consumer lifestyle.

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