

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

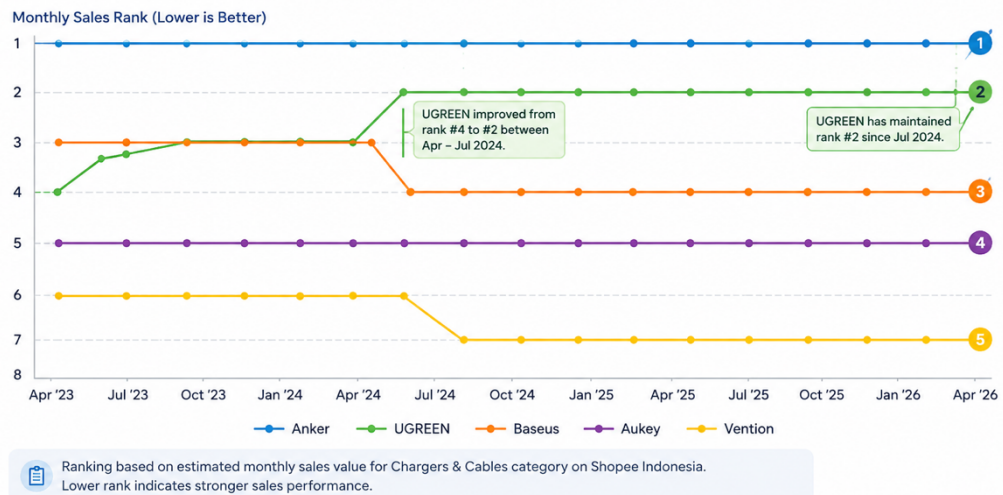
In today's digital marketplace, consumers increasingly rely on influencer-generated content and online product reviews to guide their purchasing decisions. As digital marketing continues to evolve, transparency and honesty have become essential factors in building consumer trust. Practices such as clear sponsorship disclosure and unbiased product reviews help reduce information asymmetry and enhance the credibility of marketing communications. Consequently, brands that prioritize honest digital marketing are more likely to foster long-term customer trust and strengthen their competitive position. One such brand is UGREEN, a global consumer electronics accessories company that has established a strong presence in the Indonesian market through transparent digital marketing initiatives and extensive engagement across e-commerce and social media platforms, making it a relevant context for examining the role of honesty in digital marketing.

Founded in Shenzhen, China, in 2012, the company has expanded its operations to more than 180 countries and serves over 300 million users worldwide. Its product portfolio includes chargers, power banks, USB hubs, docking stations, cables, headphones, NAS devices, and other smart accessories. The company emphasizes innovation and quality, supported by more than 2,100 global patents and dozens of international product design awards. In Indonesia, UGREEN has established a strong presence through its official stores on major e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and TikTok Shop. Among these channels, Shopee is one of the company's strongest marketplaces, where its official store has accumulated approximately 544,300 followers, making it one of the most-followed consumer electronics accessory brands on the platform.

Shopee Indonesia – Chargers & Cables Category

Monthly Sales Rank of Top Brands (Lower Rank = Better Performance)

Anker maintains the #1 position throughout the period, while UGREEN shows consistent improvement and closed the gap to rank #2 in early 2026.



Source: Moojing Merchant Dashboard – Shopee Indonesia (Apr 2023 – Apr 2026)

MOOJING

Graphic 1 Online Shop Performance Data by MOOJING

UGREEN has demonstrated a significant improvement in its marketplace competitiveness within Indonesia's consumer electronics sector. While Anker has historically maintained a leading position in the chargers and cables category, UGREEN has experienced rapid growth in recent years through an expanded product portfolio, competitive pricing strategies, and strong consumer acceptance. This upward trajectory indicates that the competitive gap between the two brands has narrowed considerably, reflecting UGREEN's increasing ability to compete with established market leaders in Indonesia's e-commerce ecosystem. This trend is further supported by recent Shopee marketplace statistics. Within approximately two years, UGREEN's official store has accumulated nearly one million product reviews, surpassing Anker's approximately 800 thousand reviews despite Anker's earlier presence in the Indonesian market. Since product reviews generally accumulate following completed purchases, this substantial difference suggests a higher volume of customer transactions and indicates that UGREEN has recently achieved stronger marketplace traction than its primary competitor.

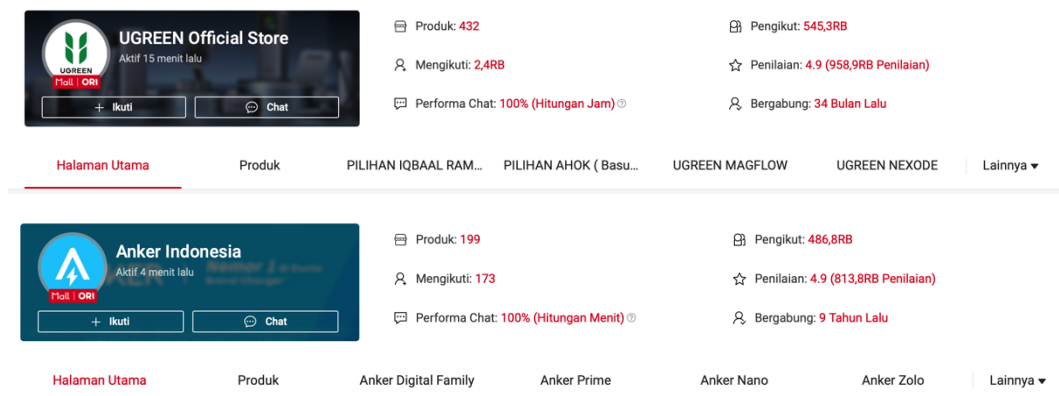


Figure 1 Shopee Statistics of Anker and UGREEN

UGREEN currently has a larger follower base on Shopee Indonesia. The official UGREEN store has approximately 544.3 thousand followers, while the official Anker Indonesia store has approximately 485 thousand followers, giving UGREEN an advantage of around 59 thousand followers (12%). This larger follower base suggests stronger marketplace visibility, greater customer reach, and a larger audience that actively follows the brand for product updates and promotions. Although follower count alone does not directly measure sales or market share, it is widely recognized as an indicator of brand popularity and customer engagement within e-commerce platforms.

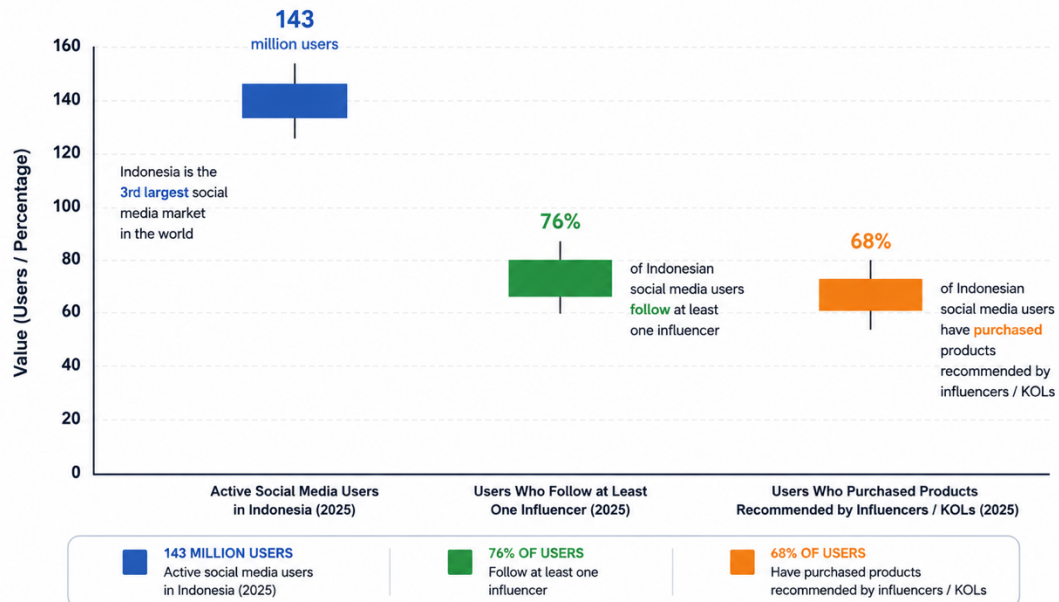
For academic research, this evidence supports selecting UGREEN as a relevant research object because it demonstrates that the brand has achieved significant recognition and consumer engagement in Indonesia while competing directly with established brands such as Anker. The large number of followers also provides evidence of an active customer community, making it suitable for studies examining consumer perceptions, brand trust, purchase intention, or influencer marketing.

The transformation of communication technology in the twenty-first century has significantly influenced the development of business activities, consumer behaviour, and marketing communication practices around the world. The rapid advancement of internet technology, smartphones, and social media platforms has fundamentally changed the way consumers access information, communicate with others, and make purchasing decisions. In the modern business environment, companies are no longer able to rely solely on conventional marketing methods because consumers increasingly spend their time in digital environments where information is delivered interactively, instantly, and continuously. Indonesia is the third largest social media market in the world with approximately 143 million active users, while 76% of Indonesian users follow at least one influencer and 68% have purchased products recommended by influencers or Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs).

The rapid growth of social media usage in Indonesia has significantly strengthened the influence of digital marketing activities. Indonesia currently has approximately 143 million active social media users, making it one of the largest social media markets globally. Furthermore, around 76% of Indonesian social media users follow at least one influencer, while 68% have purchased products recommended by influencers or Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). These findings indicate that influencer marketing has become highly influential in shaping consumer purchasing behaviour in Indonesia.

Key Data on Social Media & Influencer Marketing in Indonesia (2025)

Comparative Overview of Social Media Users, Influencer Following, and Purchase Behavior



Graphic 2 Social Media Data in Indonesia by INSG (2025)

The growing number of sponsored collaborations has caused consumers to become more aware of commercial persuasion attempts within influencer-generated content. Audiences increasingly question whether influencers genuinely recommend products based on honest experiences or merely promote products because of financial incentives. This issue has made transparency and authenticity central concerns within modern influencer marketing practices. Transparency in influencer marketing refers to the openness of influencers regarding sponsorship relationships and commercial collaborations with brands. Transparency can be demonstrated through hashtags such as #ad, #sponsored, #paidpartnership, or explicit verbal disclosures indicating that content is sponsored by companies. Transparency is considered important because ethical marketing communication requires companies and influencers to inform audiences when content contains commercial intentions. Consumers have the right to know whether influencers are being compensated for product promotions.

Open sponsorship disclosure may improve perceptions of honesty because audiences perceive influencers as ethical communicators who do not hide persuasive intentions. The deliberate selection of influencer-centric dimensions, specifically Influencer Transparency and Influencer Credibility, as the primary independent variables rests on the shifting paradigm of consumer decision-making within contemporary digital ecosystems. Modern consumers display heightened scepticism toward direct, brand-generated commercial claims, particularly when evaluating high-involvement, utilitarian technology products like UGREEN accessories. Consequently, social media influencers serve as essential third-party informational intermediaries. Focusing both independent variables on the influencer establishes a necessary dual-lens framework, while Influencer Transparency addresses the communicative and operational dimension, evaluating sponsorship disclosures, balanced reviews, and objective delivery (Boerman et al., 2017), Influencer Credibility evaluates the perceptual and intrinsic dimension of the source, encompassing perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990).

Isolating brand perception alone fails to capture how consumer trust is initially forged in modern digital environments. By anchoring both antecedent variables on the influencer, this study directly isolates how third-party digital communication activates or mitigates consumer scepticism, serving as the critical primary driver that downstream transfers into Brand Trust and ultimately governs Purchase Intention. On the other hand, several studies found contradictory results. Some researchers argue that sponsorship disclosure may reduce persuasive effectiveness because consumers become more sceptical when they realize that content is commercial promotion. De Veirman et al. (2017) suggested that excessive commercialization may reduce perceived authenticity because audiences may perceive influencers as prioritizing financial gain over honest recommendations. Similarly, Lee and Johnson (2021) found that sponsorship disclosure did not significantly improve consumer responses in certain situations.

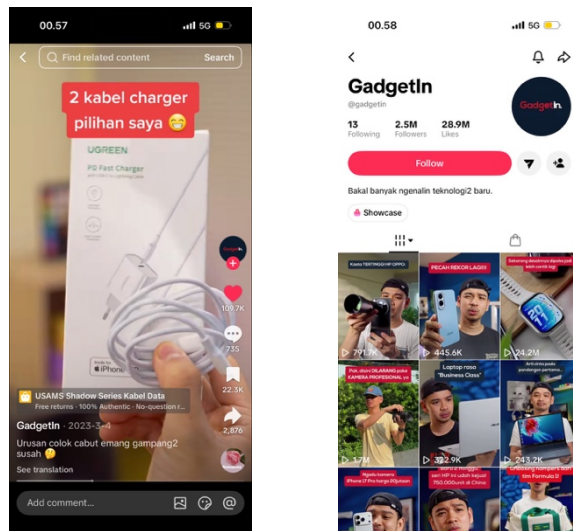


Figure 2 Gadgetin TikTok Profile and Post

One example of transparent and credible influencer marketing can be observed in a product review video by GadgetIn, a well-known Indonesian technology content creator. In the video, GadgetIn reviews a UGREEN charger set and explicitly states that the content is not sponsored by the brand. This disclosure demonstrates transparency, as viewers are informed that the review is not influenced by any commercial partnership. Throughout the review, GadgetIn presents both the strengths and limitations of the product in an objective manner. While the overall evaluation is positive due to the charger's performance, build quality, and value for money, the reviewer avoids exaggerated claims and maintains a neutral tone. Such an approach can enhance viewers' perception of authenticity because the recommendation appears to be based on genuine experience rather than promotional obligations. Consequently, transparent and credible reviews like this may contribute to higher levels of trust toward the reviewed brand, making it a relevant example of the relationship between influencer transparency, credibility, and brand trust in digital marketing.

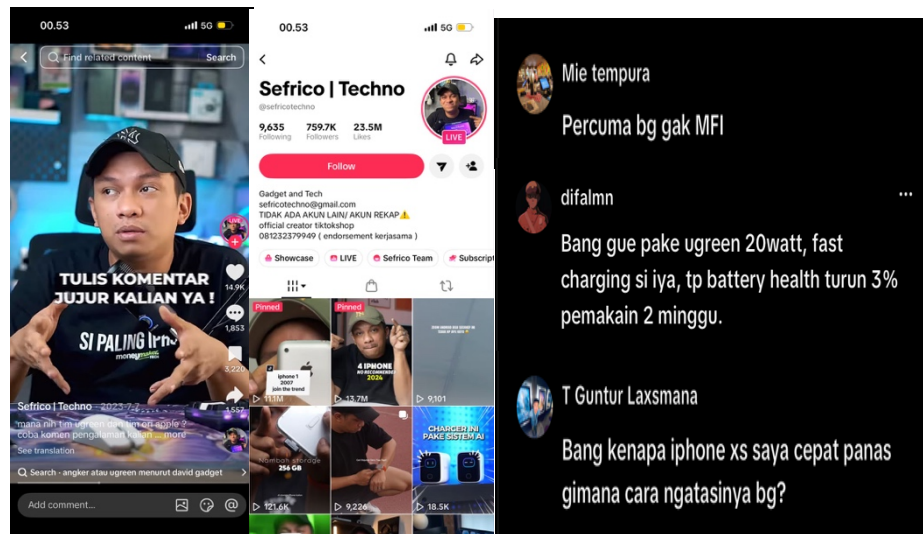


Figure 3 Safrico Techno Profile, Post, and Comments

In contrast, sponsored product reviews may sometimes lead consumers to question the authenticity of the information being presented. For example, in a promotional video by Safrico Techno featuring a UGREEN product, the creator clearly collaborates with the brand as part of a sponsored partnership. Throughout the video, the review primarily highlights the product's advantages, emphasizing its features, performance, and value without providing substantial discussion of potential limitations or drawbacks. Safrico Techno's tendency to omit the negative aspects of products frequently triggers audience backlash, with viewers expressing noticeable scepticism in the comment section. Because his reviews appear overwhelmingly promotional and lack a balanced critique, audiences often question the authenticity of his recommendations. Viewers regularly point out this bias in the comments, viewing his content as paid endorsements rather than objective evaluations, which ultimately diminishes his perceived transparency and damages his overall credibility. As a result, some viewers may perceive the review as less authentic because the commercial relationship between the influencer and the brand could raise concerns about bias. This example illustrates how sponsored content that appears excessively favourable may influence consumers' perceptions of authenticity and, consequently, their level of trust in the promoted brand.

A comparison between GadgetIn and Safrico Techno highlights how different review approaches can influence influencer credibility. GadgetIn may be perceived as more credible because the reviewer openly states that the content is not sponsored and presents the product in a balanced manner, discussing both its strengths and any potential shortcomings. This objectivity can signal expertise, honesty, and independence, which are important dimensions of credibility. In contrast, while Safrico Techno may still be considered knowledgeable about technology products, the sponsored nature of the content and the predominantly positive presentation may lead some viewers to question the neutrality of the review. When audiences perceive that an influencer has a financial relationship with a brand, they may be more sceptical of the recommendations provided, particularly if alternative viewpoints or product limitations are not discussed. Therefore, although both influencers may possess technical knowledge and experience, GadgetIn's more balanced and independent review style is likely to generate higher perceived credibility among consumers compared to the more promotional approach adopted by Safrico Techno.

My selection of GadgetIn as the primary stimulus subject for the survey questionnaires is deliberately driven by the channel's established position as a highly prominent technology reviewer in Indonesia. GadgetIn frequently and transparently reviews utilitarian tech accessories, including specific UGREEN product lines. By utilizing a widely recognized figure who consistently demonstrates high levels of influencer transparency and credibility through objective, balanced evaluations, the questionnaire can accurately capture genuine consumer perceptions. This provides a robust, real-world benchmark to empirically assess how independent digital communication actively cultivates brand trust and drives purchase intention among the target demographic. This research is important theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital marketing literature, particularly regarding influencer marketing, authenticity theory, source credibility theory, and persuasion knowledge model.

Practically, this study provides insights for companies, influencers, and digital marketers regarding effective strategies for maintaining consumer trust in sponsored digital communication. While the impact of influencer marketing has been extensively documented, the majority of existing literature predominantly focuses on hedonic, lifestyle, or aesthetically driven product categories such as fashion, cosmetics, and travel (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In these sectors, an influencer's physical attractiveness and visual storytelling often drive consumer engagement. However, there remains a significant empirical gap regarding how influencer attributes function for utilitarian, high-involvement products like technology accessories. Because products such as UGREEN cables and chargers require functional validation, technical specifications, and a higher degree of performance risk mitigation.

This study addresses this gap by testing the impact of influencer endorsements specifically within the functional consumer electronics sector. Furthermore, while the direct relationship between influencers and purchase intent is well-researched (Audrezet et al., 2020; Stubb & Colliander, 2019), there is a lack of comprehensive models evaluating how transparency and credibility simultaneously interact with Brand Trust as a critical mediating variable. This research fills this theoretical void by measuring how transparent digital endorsement practices specifically cultivate brand trust, which in turn bridges the psychological gap toward the final purchase intention. Based on the explanation above, this study is titled: “The Impact of Influencer Transparency in Sponsored Content and Influencer Credibility Through Brand Trust on Purchase Intention in Tech Accessories Products (A Study on UGREEN Customers in Semarang)”.

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the background above, the research questions proposed in this study are:

1. Does Influencer Transparency in sponsored content have a positive impact on Brand Trust among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
2. Does Influencer Credibility have a positive impact on Brand Trust among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
3. Does Brand Trust have a positive impact on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
4. Does Influencer Transparency in sponsored content have a positive impact on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
5. Does Influencer Credibility have a positive impact on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
6. Does Brand Trust mediate the impact of Influencer Transparency in sponsored content on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang?
7. Does Brand Trust positively mediate the impact of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the positive impact of Influencer Transparency in sponsored content on Brand Trust among UGREEN customers in Semarang.
2. To analyse the positive impact of Influencer Credibility on Brand Trust among UGREEN customers in Semarang.
3. To analyse the positive impact of Brand Trust on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang.
4. To analyse the positive impact of Influencer Transparency in sponsored content on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang.
5. To analyse the positive impact of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang.

6. To examine whether Brand Trust positively mediates the impact of Influencer Transparency in sponsored content on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang.
7. To examine whether Brand Trust positively mediates the impact of Influencer Credibility on Purchase Intention among UGREEN customers in Semarang.

1.4 Benefits of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretical Benefits

This study is expected to contribute to the development of marketing communication and consumer behaviour theories, particularly theories related to influencer marketing, transparency, source credibility, brand trust, and purchase intention in digital environments. This study also contributes to the development of Source Credibility Theory, the Persuasion Knowledge Model, Brand Trust Theory and consumer decision-making frameworks by integrating these concepts into a unified research model within the technology accessory industry.

1.4.2 Practical Benefits

1. For companies, this study provides insights regarding effective influencer marketing strategies capable of improving consumer trust.
2. For influencers, this study explains the importance of maintaining transparency, authenticity, and credibility in sponsored content.
3. For digital marketers, this study offers recommendations regarding ethical and trustworthy influencer collaboration practices.

For academics, this study can become a reference for future research related to influencer marketing and digital consumer behaviour.

1.5 Literature Review

1.5.1 Consumer Behaviour

As a Professor Emeritus of Marketing, Schiffman's academic focus centres on the intersection of psychological and socio-cultural factors in the marketplace, according to him, Consumer Behaviour is analysing how internal cognitive mechanisms such as motivation, perception, and attitude formation are shaped by external environmental stimuli (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019). In the context of contemporary business research, Schiffman's theoretical frameworks are highly valuable because they rigorously map the transition from information processing to behavioural outcomes. This makes his work particularly applicable for examining how modern consumers evaluate external cues like influencer credibility and transparency, process these persuasive elements, and subsequently develop brand trust and purchase intentions. Michael R. Solomon approaches consumer behaviour through a socio-cultural and symbolic lens. He argues that consumers often buy products not just for their functional utility, but for the meaning and identity associated with them (Solomon, 2020).

In the context of modern digital marketing, Solomon's theories are highly relevant for explaining how influencers act as cultural gatekeepers. Influencers transfer their own perceived credibility, lifestyle, and social capital onto brands like UGREEN. Consequently, when consumers process this transferred meaning, it significantly enhances brand trust and creates a strong aspirational drive that leads to purchase intention. Ajzen states that human behaviour is guided by three core considerations which are behavioural beliefs (attitudes toward the brand), normative beliefs (subjective norms, such as peer pressure or influencer recommendations), and control beliefs (perceived behavioural control) (Ajzen, 1991).

1.5.2 The Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory

The SOR paradigm explains how external environmental cues drive human behaviour by altering internal psychological states. Within this specific study, the Stimulus represents the external marketing cues that consumers process, primarily the influencer's transparency and technical credibility Mehrabian and Russell (1974). These cues trigger the Organism, which is the consumer's internal cognitive evaluation that mitigates perceived risks and successfully cultivates Brand Trust toward UGREEN. This internal psychological state dictates the Response, as established trust transitions the consumer into an active buyer forming a definitive Purchase Intention. The theoretical framework justifies why external influencer attributes cannot generate retail transactions without building internal confidence.

1.5.3 Influencer Transparency

Influencer transparency refers to the openness of influencers in disclosing commercial relationships with brands. Transparency usually appears through sponsorship disclosures, hashtags, or verbal statements explaining that the content is part of a paid partnership. Transparency is important because consumers increasingly value ethical communication practices. When influencers clearly disclose sponsorship relationships, consumers may perceive the communication as more honest and trustworthy. According to Boerman et al. (2017), sponsorship disclosure increases persuasion knowledge activation because consumers recognize advertising intent more easily. However, transparency may also increase perceptions of honesty and ethical behaviour.

Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) explained that transparency in influencer marketing positively affects consumer attitudes toward sponsored content when sponsorship disclosures are presented clearly. Consumers tend to appreciate honest communication practices and are less likely to feel deceived when influencers openly acknowledge commercial relationships with brands. Their study suggested that transparency can strengthen trust and improve the effectiveness of influencer endorsements. Audrezet, de Kerviler, and Moulard (2020) argued that influencer

transparency contributes to perceptions of authenticity because audiences value influencers who openly communicate their partnerships and commercial intentions. When influencers balance promotional activities with genuine personal expression, consumers are more likely to perceive the content as credible and trustworthy. Consequently, transparent disclosure practices can enhance audience engagement and long-term trust in both the influencer and the promoted brand.

1.5.4 Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility refers to consumers' perceptions regarding influencer expertise, trustworthiness, reliability, and professionalism. Source Credibility Theory explains that persuasive effectiveness depends heavily on communicator credibility. Consumers tend to trust influencers who possess strong product knowledge and demonstrate honest communication styles. In technology-related industries, expertise becomes particularly important because consumers require detailed and accurate product information. According to Ohanian (1990), credibility consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise refers to consumers' perceptions that influencers possess adequate knowledge and competence regarding promoted products.

Trustworthiness refers to consumers' perceptions that influencers are honest and dependable. Hovland and Weiss (1951) explained that source credibility significantly influences the effectiveness of persuasive communication. Messages delivered by highly credible communicators are more likely to be accepted and trusted by audiences than messages from less credible sources. Their findings suggest that consumers are more receptive to product recommendations when they perceive the communicator as knowledgeable and trustworthy. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) argued that influencer credibility positively affects consumer trust and purchase intentions in social media environments. Influencers who demonstrate expertise and reliability are more capable of building meaningful relationships with followers, which increases the persuasive power of their endorsements. Their study

found that credibility serves as a key factor influencing consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in influencer marketing campaigns.

1.5.5 Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' willingness to rely on a brand based on positive expectations regarding reliability and integrity. Trust is essential because consumers often face uncertainty when purchasing products. According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001), brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand can fulfil promises and provide expected performance. In technology industries, trust becomes especially important because consumers depend heavily on product quality and functionality. Consumers are more likely to purchase technology products from trusted brands because trust reduces perceived risk. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) explained that brand trust is a key determinant of consumer loyalty because trusted brands create confidence and reduce uncertainty during purchasing decisions.

Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to develop long-term relationships, demonstrate repeat purchasing behaviour, and exhibit stronger commitment toward the brand. Their study highlighted that trust contributes significantly to both attitudinal and behavioural loyalty. Morgan and Hunt (1994) argued that trust serves as a fundamental component of successful relationship marketing because it encourages consumers to maintain valuable long-term relationships with organizations and brands. Trust develops when consumers believe that a brand is reliable, honest, and capable of fulfilling its commitments. As a result, higher levels of trust can enhance customer satisfaction, commitment, and willingness to continue purchasing from the brand.

1.5.6 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is widely recognized as the most accurate psychological predictor of actual purchasing decisions. According to Spears and Singh (2004), purchase intention is strictly defined as an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a specific brand. This conscious planning emerges from the evaluation stage of the consumer decision-making process, where, as Kotler and Keller (2016) explain, individuals form definitive preferences among available alternatives and subsequently develop a strong intention to acquire their most preferred brand. Furthermore, Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019) describe this intention as the measurable likelihood that a consumer will complete a transaction, noting that it acts as the direct behavioural outcome of how consumers psychologically process external marketing stimuli, such as influencer endorsements. Ultimately, purchase intention represents the critical transitional phase where cognitive preference evolves into actionable financial commitment.

1.6 Relationship Between Variables

1.6.1 The Relationship between Influencer Transparency and Brand Trust

Drawing on the Persuasion Knowledge Model, modern consumers are highly digitally literate and can easily recognize when they are being targeted by an advertisement or sponsored content. When consumers detect a hidden persuasion attempt, they naturally raise their psychological defences. Conversely, when an influencer is highly transparent such as clearly labelling a video as a paid partnership or honestly discussing both the advantages and limitations of a tech accessory, it significantly lowers consumer scepticism. This transparency signals that the brand values honesty over manipulation and is confident enough in its product to allow objective reviews. Consequently, this open communication strategy directly fosters a deeper sense of corporate integrity and builds the consumer's trust in the brand. This relationship is empirically supported by Stubb, Nyström, and Colliander (2019), whose research on sponsorship disclosures demonstrated that transparent communication from influencers significantly

enhances the audience's perception of message honesty, directly leading to higher levels of trust in the endorsed brand.

1.6.2 The Relationship between Influencer Credibility and Brand Trust

Rooted in Source Credibility Theory, an influencer's perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness play a critical role in shaping brand perception through a psychological "halo effect." In the technology accessory market, products are highly functional, and consumers rely heavily on expert validation. When a tech influencer who possesses deep, demonstrable knowledge about gadget specifications, charging protocols, and material durability endorses a product, their personal credibility effectively transfers to the brand. Consumers begin to view the brand as more reliable and authoritative simply because it is backed and utilized by a credible, knowledgeable source whose opinion they already respect. The transfer of these attributes is validated by Lou and Yuan (2019), who found that an influencer's informative value and perceived expertise are fundamental drivers that positively shape followers' trust in the sponsored brand.

1.6.3 The Relationship between Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

In consumer behaviour, trust acts as a primary psychological mechanism to reduce perceived risk and uncertainty. Purchasing tech accessories inherently involves both financial and functional risks, as a faulty product (like an unreliable charger or a poor-quality cable) could potentially damage expensive devices. When consumers develop a high level of trust in a brand's commitment to safety, reliability, and consistent quality, their perceived risk drops significantly. Trust serves as a cognitive shortcut; rather than re-evaluating the brand with every new product release, confident consumers rely on their established trust, which strongly and directly drives their behavioural intention to complete a purchase. Established in the seminal study by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), which empirically proved that brand trust is a primary, indispensable determinant of consumers' future purchasing intentions and brand commitment.

1.6.4 The Relationship between Influencer Transparency and Purchase Intention

Beyond establishing brand trust, transparent communication has a direct and immediate impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Information asymmetry, where the brand knows more about the product than the consumer which often causes hesitation at the checkout stage. When an influencer clearly and openly discloses product specifications, exact pricing, compatibility limitations, and sponsorship details without misleading the audience, it bridges this information gap. By providing consumers with the exact, unfiltered data they need to set realistic expectations, transparency removes purchasing friction and empowers consumers to make a confident, immediate buying decision. Hwang and Jeong (2016) demonstrated that explicit sponsorship disclosures mitigate consumers' feelings of deception, leading to a more positive affective response and a stronger, more direct intention to purchase the reviewed product.

1.6.5 The Relationship between Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention

Consumers frequently use credible influencers as reference groups or role models to simplify their own decision-making processes. Through consistent, high-quality content, influencers build parasocial relationships with their audiences, making their endorsements feel like recommendations from a trusted friend. If an influencer is perceived as a highly attractive and trustworthy expert in the tech space, consumers are highly likely to bypass extensive, time-consuming personal research. Instead, they form a direct, positive behavioural intention to purchase. This direct effect is reinforced by Schouten, Janssen, and Verspaget (2020), whose empirical analysis concluded that consumers identify more closely with credible, niche influencers than traditional celebrities, resulting in significantly higher product purchase intentions due to perceived authenticity and expertise.

1.6.6 The Mediating Role of Brand Trust

While influencer transparency and credibility are powerful independent drivers of consumer behaviour, they often do not lead to an instant purchase on their own; rather, they trigger a sequential psychological process where brand trust serves as the critical mediating bridge. Transparency acts as the honest, informational input that lowers consumer scepticism, while credibility serves as the expert that grabs attention and validates the product's functional features. Together, these two influencer characteristics converge to cultivate a strong, reliable brand image, generating a deep feeling of safety and goodwill toward the tech accessory brand. Therefore, while transparency and credibility act as the initial catalysts for consumer engagement, the resulting trust is the necessary psychological anchor.

Once this solid foundation of brand trust is established, nurtured by the influencer's open communication and validated by their authoritative endorsement, the consumer feels financially and functionally secure enough to mitigate perceived risks. It is this established trust that ultimately empowers the customer to transition from merely consuming sponsored content to actively forming a definitive behavioural intention to buy. The critical nature of this pathway is confirmed by Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024), whose recent structural equation modelling study verified that brand trust acts as a vital psychological mediator, successfully translating the initial credibility and transparency of social media influencers into concrete consumer purchasing decisions.

1.7 Previous Research

An analysis of prior studies provides a crucial theoretical benchmark for this research, illuminating how digital trust is cultivated and transferred across various product categories and consumer demographics. The following previous empirical literatures establishes the foundation for this study's conceptual framework, justifying the mediating role of Brand Trust and highlighting the specific empirical gaps addressed in the context of UGREEN technology accessories in Semarang.

Table 1 Previous Studies

No	Previous Studies	Author–Year	Theory	Methodology	Result	Limitation & Future Research
1	Influence of Trust and Authenticity on Influencer Marketing	Audrezet Anne, Kerviler Gwarlann, & Moulard Julie (2020)	Authenticity Theory.	Qualitative + conceptual	The study finds that authenticity is constructed through consistent storytelling and alignment with personal values. Influencers who prioritize honest self-expression are perceived as more authentic, which strengthens audience trust because consumers value transparency and sincerity in digital communication.	Limitation: The study is largely conceptual and lacks strong quantitative validation, making it difficult to generalize findings. Future research should use empirical testing to validate authenticity constructs in different contexts.
2	Influencer Marketing's Impact on Credibility and Purchase Intention	Djafarova Elmira & Trofimenko Oksana (2019)	Source Credibility Theory.	Survey with regression Sample size: 393 respondents Sampling technique: online survey of social media users Scale: 5-point Likert scale Data validation: Cronbach's Alpha, Factor analysis	Results show that influencer credibility significantly affects purchase intention because consumers rely on perceived expertise and trustworthiness to reduce uncertainty. This highlights credibility as a key persuasion factor in digital marketing.	Limitation: Focuses on purchase intention rather than long-term brand trust. Future research should examine relational constructs such as trust and loyalty.

No	Previous Studies	Author–Year	Theory	Methodology	Result	Limitation & Future Research
3	Promoting Sustainability on Instagram: How Sponsorship Disclosures Affect Credibility	Boerman Sophie C., van Reijmersdal Eva A., & Neijens Peter C. (2017)	Persuasion Knowledge Model.	Methodology: Experimental design Sample size: 146 participants Sampling technique: Random assignment (experiment) Scale: Likert scale (persuasion knowledge & credibility measures) Data validation: Manipulation check, ANOVA Manipulation check ANOVA	The study finds that sponsorship disclosure activates consumers' persuasion knowledge, making them aware of advertising intent. This affects credibility because consumers may perceive the message as biased, although transparency can also increase perceived honesty.	Limitation: Only focuses on credibility and does not examine authenticity or brand trust. Future research should include mediating variables to explain deeper perception processes.
4	Influencer Credibility and Brand Reputation in Shaping Trust and Purchase Intention	Reinikainen Hanna et al. (2020)	Source Credibility Theory & Brand Trust Theory	Methodology: Survey + SEM model fit indices Sample size: 382 respondents Sampling technique: Not specified (online panel) Scale: 7-point Likert scale Data validation: Cronbach's Alpha Composite Reliability (CR) Average Variance Extracted (AVE).	Results indicate that credibility significantly increases trust because consumers perceive credible influencers as reliable information sources. Trust then influences behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention.	Limitation: Includes brand reputation, which shifts focus away from internal perception variables like authenticity. Future research should isolate perception-based constructs.

No	Previous Studies	Author– Year	Theory	Methodology	Result	Limitation & Future Research
5	Green Branding in the Digital Era: Role of Influencer Credibility and Greenwashing	Grădinaru Cătălina (2022)	Brand Trust Theory.	Methodology: Quantitative (SEM) Sample size: 210 respondents Sampling technique: Not specified Scale: Likert scale Data validation: PLS-SEM (outer & inner model) AVE &	Findings show that credibility enhances authenticity because consumers perceive credible influencers as genuine. Authenticity then increases trust, confirming its mediating role in consumer perception.	Limitation: Context limited to sustainability, reducing generalizability. Future research should test broader industries.
6	When Does Collaborating With Green Influencers Backfire?	De Veirman Marijke et al. (2017)	Authenticity Theory	Methodology: Experimental Sample size: 192 participants Sampling technique: Random assignment Scale: Likert scale Data validation: Manipulation checks ANOVA	Results show that sponsored collaborations may reduce authenticity when perceived as overly commercial. However, authenticity is maintained when influencer-brand fit is strong, indicating the importance of congruence.	Limitation: Does not include trust as an outcome variable. Future research should extend the model to include trust.

No	Previous Studies	Author–Year	Theory	Methodology	Result	Limitation & Future Research
7	Consequences of Influencer-Created Content on Influencers' Authenticity	Audrezet Anne et al. (2020)	Self-Presentation Theory	Methodology: Quantitative (SEM) Sample size: 233 respondents Sampling technique: Not specified Scale: Likert scale Data validation: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) SEM model fit	The study shows that authenticity is driven by consistency and value-driven content, as audiences perceive influencers as authentic when content reflects genuine beliefs rather than commercial intent.	Limitation: Does not include credibility or trust outcomes. Future research should test full causal relationships.
8	Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media	Lou Chen & Shupe Yuan (2019)	Source Credibility Theory	Methodology: Survey (PLS-SEM) Sample size: 292 respondents Sampling technique: Not specified (online survey) Scale: 7-point Likert scale Data validation: Composite Reliability AVE Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker)	Results show that credibility significantly increases consumer trust because consumers evaluate influencer reliability before accepting recommendations. Trust then affects brand outcomes.	Limitation: Uses message value instead of transparency, limiting relevance to disclosure context. Future research should include transparency.

No	Previous Studies	Author– Year	Theory	Methodology	Result	Limitation & Future Research
9	Instagram and YouTube Bloggers Promote It, Why Should I Buy?	Sokolova Karina & Kefi Hajer (2020)	Parasocial Interaction Theory	Methodology: Survey Sample size: 321 respondents Sampling technique: Not specified Scale: Likert scale Data validation: Cronbach's Alpha Regression / SEM testing	Results show that credibility and emotional connection increase purchase intention because consumers feel personally connected to influencers, enhancing persuasion effectiveness.	Limitation: Focuses on emotional connection rather than cognitive variables like authenticity. Future research should integrate both.
10	Authenticity Under Threat: When Social Media Influencers Need to Go Beyond Self-Presentation	Ilicic Jasmina & Webster Cynthia M. (2016)	Authenticity Theory	Methodology: Conceptual	The study explains that authenticity is built through consistent and honest self-presentation, which strengthens audience perception over time.	Limitation: Conceptual only and lacks empirical validation. Future research should test using quantitative methods.
11	Are They Being Authentic? The Effects of Self-Disclosure and Message Sidedness on Sponsored Post Effectiveness	Lee Susanna S. & Johnson Benjamin K. (2021)	Persuasion Knowledge Theory & Authenticity Theory	Methodology: Experimental design Sample size: 300+ participants Sampling technique: Random assignment Scale: Likert scale Data validation: ANOVA, manipulation checks	Results show that sponsorship disclosure/self-disclosure did not significantly improve perceived authenticity or consumer response. Instead, two-sided messaging and balanced opinions had stronger effects on audience perception because consumers valued realistic and less promotional communication over simple disclosure transparency.	Limitation: Focuses mainly on message sidedness and disclosure effects without examining brand trust as the final outcome variable. Future research should investigate how disclosure interacts with credibility and authenticity in influencing long-term trust relationships.

1.7.1 Comparison with Previous Studies

This study distinguishes itself from prior empirical research through several fundamental aspects. First, it simultaneously integrates Influencer Transparency and Influencer Credibility as dual independent variables, whereas previous literature has predominantly examined these endorsement constructs in isolation. Second, rather than treating trust merely as an endpoint, this study positions Brand Trust as the critical mediating variable, explaining the psychological mechanism that connects an influencer's attributes directly to the consumer's final Purchase Intention. Third, the research context shifts away from the frequently studied hedonic categories, such as fashion or cosmetics, to focus specifically on utilitarian, high-involvement technology accessories. Fourth, by focusing on UGREEN consumers within the regional market of Semarang, this research provides localized insights into digital consumer behaviour within an emerging market context, diverging from predominantly Western-centric demographic samples. Fifth, this study employs Structural Equation Modelling utilizing Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to comprehensively analyse both the direct and indirect structural relationships across the seven proposed hypotheses.

1.8 Research Model

This study explains the direct and indirect relationships between influencer transparency, influencer credibility, brand trust, and purchase intention. Influencer transparency and influencer credibility function as the independent variables. Brand trust serves as the mediating variable, and purchase intention operates as the dependent variable. The proposed model explains that transparency and credibility can directly influence purchase intention, while also indirectly influencing purchase intention through the mediating role of brand trust.

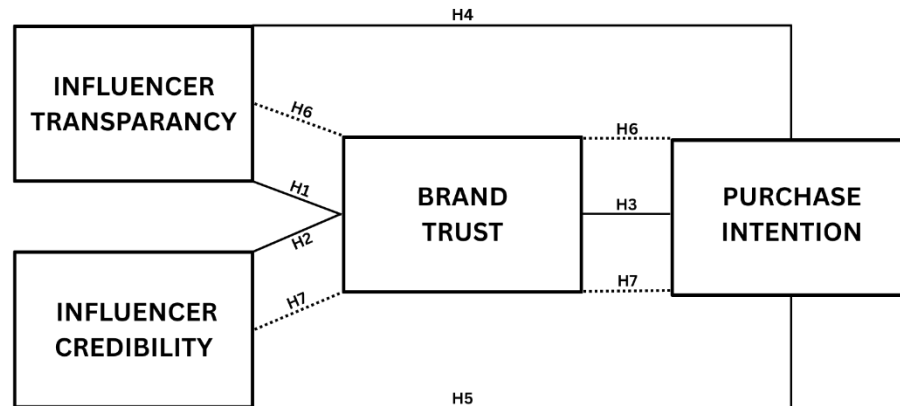


Figure 4 Research Model

1.9 Hypotheses

H1: Influencer Transparency positively affects Brand Trust.

H2: Influencer Credibility positively affects Brand Trust.

H3: Brand Trust positively affects Purchase Intention.

H4: Influencer Transparency positively affects Purchase Intention.

H5: Influencer Credibility positively affects Purchase Intention.

H6: Brand Trust Positively Mediates the relationship between Influencer Transparency and Purchase Intention.

H7: Brand Trust positively mediates the relationship between Influencer Credibility and Purchase Intention.

1.10 Conceptual Definitions

1.10.1 Influencer Transparency

Influencer transparency refers to the openness of influencers in disclosing commercial relationships with brands. Transparency usually appears through sponsorship disclosures, hashtags, or verbal statements explaining that the content is part of a paid partnership. Transparency is important because consumers increasingly value ethical communication practices. When influencers clearly disclose sponsorship relationships, consumers may perceive the communication as more honest and trustworthy. According to Boerman et al. (2017), sponsorship disclosure increases persuasion knowledge activation because consumers recognize

advertising intent more easily. However, transparency may also increase perceptions of honesty and ethical behaviour. Consequently, transparent disclosure practices can enhance audience engagement and long-term trust in both the influencer and the promoted brand.

1.10.2 Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility refers to consumers' perceptions regarding influencer expertise, trustworthiness, reliability, and professionalism. Source Credibility Theory explains that persuasive effectiveness depends heavily on communicator credibility. Consumers tend to trust influencers who possess strong product knowledge and demonstrate honest communication styles. In technology-related industries, expertise becomes particularly important because consumers require detailed and accurate product information. According to Ohanian (1990), credibility consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise refers to consumers' perceptions that influencers possess adequate knowledge and competence regarding promoted products. The study found that credibility serves as a key factor influencing consumer engagement and purchasing decisions in influencer marketing campaigns.

1.10.3 Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' willingness to rely on a brand based on positive expectations regarding reliability and integrity. Trust is essential because consumers often face uncertainty when purchasing products. According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001), brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand can fulfil promises and provide expected performance. In technology industries, trust becomes especially important because consumers depend heavily on product quality and functionality. Consumers are more likely to purchase technology products from trusted brands because trust reduces perceived risk. Trust develops when consumers believe that a brand is reliable, honest, and capable of fulfilling its commitments. As a result, higher levels of trust can enhance

customer satisfaction, commitment, and willingness to continue purchasing from the brand.

1.10.4 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is fundamentally understood as a consumer's deliberate cognitive plan to acquire a specific brand's product. Rather than a fleeting interest, it embodies a profound psychological commitment and motivational readiness formed after thoroughly evaluating market alternatives. Serving as the vital bridge between internal attitude development and observable purchasing behaviour, this intention demonstrates that a consumer has effectively processed marketing stimuli, weighed perceived values against associated risks, and cultivated a strong preference. Ultimately, it signifies the consumer's readiness to translate their internal motivation into a concrete financial transaction to satisfy their needs (Ferdinand, 2014).

1.11 Operational Definitions

1.11.1 Influencer Transparency

Influencer transparency refers to the openness of influencers in disclosing commercial relationships with brands. Transparency usually appears through sponsorship disclosures, hashtags, or verbal statements explaining that the content is part of a paid partnership. Transparency is important because consumers increasingly value ethical communication practices.

When influencers clearly disclose sponsorship relationships, consumers may perceive the communication as more honest and trustworthy. According to Boerman et al. (2017), sponsorship disclosure increases persuasion knowledge activation because consumers recognize advertising intent more easily. However, transparency may also increase perceptions of honesty and ethical behaviour. Indicators of influencer transparency include:

1. Sponsorship disclosure
2. Commercial Openness

3. Ethical Communication Sincerity
4. Balanced Presentation

1.11.2 Influencer Credibility

Influencer credibility refers to consumers' perceptions regarding influencer expertise, trustworthiness, reliability, and professionalism. Source Credibility Theory explains that persuasive effectiveness depends heavily on communicator credibility. Consumers tend to trust influencers who possess strong product knowledge and demonstrate honest communication styles. In technology-related industries, expertise becomes particularly important because consumers require detailed and accurate product information.

According to Ohanian (1990), credibility consists of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise refers to consumers' perceptions that influencers possess adequate knowledge and competence regarding promoted products. Trustworthiness refers to consumers' perceptions that influencers are honest and dependable.

Indicators of influencer credibility include:

1. Expertise
2. Trustworthiness
3. Attractiveness

1.11.3 Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' willingness to rely on a brand based on positive expectations regarding reliability and integrity. Trust is essential because consumers often face uncertainty when purchasing products. According to Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2001), brand trust reflects consumers' confidence that a brand can fulfil promises and provide expected performance. In technology industries, trust becomes especially important because consumers depend heavily on product quality and functionality. Consumers are more likely to

purchase technology products from trusted brands because trust reduces perceived risk. Indicators of brand trust include:

1. Promise Fulfilment
2. Problem Solving
3. Reduced Risk

1.11.4 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is comprehensively defined as a cognitive and mental statement from consumers that reflects a definitive, conscious plan to purchase a specific quantity of products from a particular brand. Beyond a simple passing desire, it represents a strong psychological drive and motivational state that is deeply recorded in a person's mind following the careful evaluation of available alternatives in the market. This intention serves as the critical transitional phase between a consumer's internal attitude formation and their actual overt behaviour. It indicates that the consumer has successfully processed external marketing stimuli, assessed the perceived value against potential risks, and formed a strong enough preference that they are prepared to actualize this internal motivation through the final action of making a financial transaction to fulfil their specific needs (Ferdinand, 2014). The specific indicators used to measure this variable are as follows:

1. Transactional Intention
2. Referential Intention
3. Preferential Intention
4. Explorative Intention

1.12 Research Method

1.12.1 Research Type

This research uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research approach, which is research conducted systematically, planned, and structured, from the planning stage to the development of the research design. Data is processed numerically and analysed using statistical methods. Furthermore, the explanatory approach was chosen because this research aims to explain the causal relationships between the variables studied and test previously formulated hypotheses based on existing theories (Sugiyono, 2022).

1.12.2 Population

A population is a generalized area consisting of objects or subjects that possess certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher as study material from which conclusions can be drawn (Sugiyono, 2022). The population consists of UGREEN consumers in Semarang who have seen Gadgetin's content regarding UGREEN products, the sampling technique uses purposive sampling.

1.12.3 Sample Size

A sample is a portion of a population taken as a data source and considered representative of the entire population, both in terms of number and characteristics (Asrulla et al., 2023). According to Hair et al. (2010), sample size in SEM-PLS research should be approximately 5–10 times the number of indicators. This study uses 14 indicators. Therefore, the minimum sample size is 70 respondents in which this study will accumulate 200 respondents. The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire, which consists of a series of questions with multiple possible answers, enabling participants to select only those options.

1.12.4 Sampling Technique

In this study, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling as part of a non-probability sampling approach, a technique in which not every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a sample (Sugiyono, 2022). Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher subjectively determined the sample based on the consideration that the required information could only be obtained from specific target groups who met the criteria and were able to provide relevant data according to the research needs (Asrulla et al., 2023).

This technique was also chosen because the data collection process was conducted online through the distribution of questionnaires via social media and the researcher's personal network, allowing any individual who met the criteria and was willing to complete the questionnaire to be included in the sample.

Criteria:

1. Respondents are at least 17 years old.
2. Respondents live in Semarang.
3. Respondents have purchased or used UGREEN products.
4. Respondents have seen Gadgetin's reviews or review content regarding UGREEN.
5. Respondents are willing to complete questionnaires honestly.

1.12.5 Data Type

The data used in this study is quantitative, that is, data in numerical form, analysed using statistical methods (Sugiyono, 2019). The data was collected systematically through a questionnaire using Google Forms with the aim of testing the research hypotheses in a measurable manner, so that the results can be calculated, compared, and interpreted numerically.

1.12.6 Data Sources

In quantitative research, the data sources used are grouped into two main categories which are primary data and secondary data with the following details:

A. Primary Data

Primary data is original data collected directly by the researcher from primary sources, namely those that directly provide the data to the data collector (Sugiyono, 2019). This data is obtained through methods such as interviews, direct observation, experiments, or questionnaires, making it more specific, up-to-date, and appropriate to the research needs. In this study, primary data was obtained from distributing questionnaires to users of UGREEN products in Semarang City.

B. Secondary Data

Secondary data is data not obtained directly by the researcher, but through intermediaries or documents previously collected and published by other parties (Sugiyono, 2019). Although not derived from direct field data collection, secondary data still has important value as a source of supporting information, especially in initial studies and literature reviews. In this study, secondary data was obtained from various sources such as books, journals, the internet, and previous research relevant to the research topic.

1.12.7 Measurement Scale

A measurement scale is a reference used to determine the length of intervals in a measuring instrument, thereby producing measurable quantitative data (Sugiyono, 2017). Each question on the test used a Likert scale with terms like "among others" that ranged from extremely positive to extremely negative (Sugiyono, 2019). The Questions are aimed at the community in Semarang City who are research respondents according to the previously determined sample criteria. Answers to the questionnaire are collected by giving a set of written questions to respondents to answer. The questions reflect attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about the research variables, each respondent's choice of response is given a score or weight, arranged in a tiered manner using a Likert scale.

There are five possible answers on the Likert scale:

No	Response Scale	Code	Value
1	Strongly Agree	SS	5
2	Agree	S	4
3	Neutral	N	3
4	Disagree	TS	2
5	Strongly Disagree	STS	1

Table 2 Likert Scale

1.12.8 Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques are a crucial step in research to obtain accurate and relevant information. The data collection techniques used in this study are as follows:

A. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection technique that involves providing respondents with a set of written questions or statements to answer. This technique is considered efficient when the researcher clearly understands the variables to be measured and what to expect from the respondents (Sugiyono, 2019). In this study, the questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms to respondents who met the established criteria.

B. Literature Review

A literature review is the process of searching for, reading, understanding, and analysing various literature and previous research results related to the research topic. This technique plays a crucial role as a theoretical foundation that helps researchers solve research problems more comprehensively (Amruddin et al., 2022). In this study, a literature review was conducted through a review of various sources, such as books, scientific journals, and previous research relevant to the variables being studied.

1.12.9 Data Processing Technique

Data processing is a series of processes carried out to prepare data from each research variable for analysis (Jailani et al., 2024). The data processing stages in this study include:

A. Data Editing

Editing is the process of checking and correcting the data collected from all questionnaires (Jailani et al., 2024). This stage is carried out to address deficiencies, correct errors, and ensure that the raw data obtained meets the requirements and meets the analysis needs. Data that does not meet the requirements will be removed to avoid disrupting the subsequent analysis process.

B. Data Coding

Coding is the process of assigning a code in the form of a letter or number symbol to each piece of data to identify and categorize similar types of data, thereby facilitating systematic data processing and grouping (Jailani et al., 2024).

C. Scoring

Assessment is the stage of converting data from qualitative to quantitative form, where respondents' subjective assessments are converted into numerical values that can be processed and analysed statistically (Jailani et al., 2024).

D. Data Tabulation

Tabulation is the process of organizing data into tables tailored to the needs of the analysis (Jailani et al., 2024). The tables created are expected to summarize all data concisely and in a structured manner, thus facilitating the interpretation of research results.

1.12.10 Data Analysis Technique

The two primary phases of data analysis for this study are software-based structural model evaluation and descriptive statistical analysis. The software used is 4.1.1.8 SmartPLS. Structural Equation Modelling with Partial Least Squares is the primary data analysis method used in this quantitative study. PLS-SEM is chosen because it is an explanatory and predictive analysis with a complex model with mediating variables and latent constructs with reflective indicators. When the goal of the study is to forecast and investigate relationships between variables with a moderate sample size, PLS-SEM is a good fit (Hair et al., 2017). Additionally, SmartPLS can test the relationship between variables and is useful for complex models with numerous independent and dependent variables.

1.12.11 Outer Model Evaluation

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is useful for assessing the validity and reliability of the model. The outer model, with reflective indicators, will be evaluated through the convergent and discriminant validity of the indicators forming the latent construct, the composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha for the indicator blocks.

A. Convergent Validity Test

The goal of convergent validity is to ascertain the extent to which specific indicators positively correlate with other alternative measures of the same latent construct. In PLS-SEM, convergent validity is evaluated by examining the outer loadings of each individual indicator alongside the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the overall construct. According to Hair et al. (2017), a construct demonstrates satisfactory convergent validity when the outer loading of each indicator is greater than 0.70, and the construct's AVE value is 0.50 or higher. The measurement model can be deemed to have good convergent validity if both requirements are satisfied, indicating that the latent variable successfully explains more than half of the variance of its associated indicators.

B. Discriminant Validity Test

Determining whether a construct in the research model is truly different from other constructs is the aim of discriminant validity. Discriminant validity can be evaluated using cross loading values and the Fornell-Larcker criteria. In Fornell-Larcker, the square root of the AVE value for each construct must be greater than the correlation with any other construct. Hair et al. (2017) state that the cross-loading test's discriminant validity score needs to have a higher loading value on the construct it measures relative to other constructs. If both conditions are met, the construct can be considered to have good discriminant validity.

C. Reliability Test

The goal of the reliability test is to evaluate the internal consistency of a measurement instrument, ensuring that the specific indicators consistently and accurately measure their intended latent construct without random error. In PLS-SEM, internal consistency reliability is primarily assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (ρ_a and ρ_c) values. According to Hair et al. (2017), a construct is considered to have satisfactory reliability when both its Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability scores exceed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70. The measurement model can be deemed highly reliable if these requirements are satisfied, indicating that the respondents' answers are stable and consistent across the given items.

1.12.12 Inner Model Evaluation

The inner model (inner relation, structural model, and substantive theory) is a description of the relationships between variables based on substantive theory. The structural model is evaluated using the R-Square for the dependent construct and the t-test to determine the significance of the structural path parameter coefficients.

A. R-Square

The ability of an exogenous variable is measured using the R-Square value. in order to clarify the research model's endogenous variable. The greater the R-Square score, the more accurate the model is at predicting the endogenous variable (Hair and colleagues, 2014). Strong, moderate, and weak predictive power in PLS-SEM are indicated by R-Square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2020).

B. F-Square

being used to measure the magnitude of the effect of exogenous variable on an endogenous variable in a structural model. The F-square score shows the contribution of each predictor variable towards the endogenous variable in research model. The F-square score of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 indicates a moderate effect, and 0.35 indicates a large effect on endogenous construct (Cohen, 1988).

1.12.13 Hypothesis Testing

To assess the significance of the influence between variables, a bootstrapping procedure must be performed. The bootstrapping procedure uses the entire original sample for resampling. Therefore, acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis is based on the following criteria:

- A. The hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the variables is accepted if the t-statistic is >1.96 and the p-value is <0.05 .
- B. The hypothesis is rejected if the t-statistic is <1.96 and the p-value is >0.05 , indicating no significant relationship between the variables.

1.12.14 Mediation Testing

The mediation effect test describes a situation where the relationship between two constructs is not constant but depends on the value of a third variable, known as the mediating variable. To determine whether Z variable acts as a mediating variable between the independent variable and Y variable, a mediation test was carried out. The test was carried out by looking at the indirect effect value using the bootstrapping process in SmartPLS. At a 5% significance level, the mediating effect was deemed significant if the p-value was less than 0.05 or the t-statistic was greater than 1.96 (Hair et al., 2017).