



DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES AND DIGITAL LITERACY AS DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL COMMERCE PURCHASE INTENTION: EVIDENCE FROM HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of the internet has reshaped social media into a key medium for marketing communication and audience engagement. Its growing influence has significantly contributed to the expansion of e-commerce, leading to the emergence of social commerce as a relevant and appealing area of study. However, limited research addresses social commerce purchase intention, particularly from the perspectives of digital marketing and digital literacy in Indonesia. This study therefore investigates how content marketing, viral marketing, and affiliate marketing as prominent digital marketing strategies alongside digital literacy, affect purchase intention in social commerce, with a specific focus on the TikTok Shop platform. Employing a quantitative design, the research targets active students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. A purposive sampling method was applied, producing data from 344 respondents. Analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 3. The findings reveal that content marketing, viral marketing, and affiliate marketing each exert a positive and significant influence on social commerce purchase intention, whereas digital literacy shows no significant effect.

INTRODUCTION

Technological progress and internet expansion have fundamentally altered patterns of human communication and interaction. The internet not only shifts conventional communication toward digital platforms (Saputra & Siddiq, 2020) but also serves as a medium that interconnects consumers within a digital environment. According to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet penetration in Indonesia reached 80.66% in 2025, equivalent to approximately 229.4 million users out of a population of 284 million (APJII, 2025). The expansion of the internet and digital platforms has transformed personal interactions and redefined the notions of distance and time (Leiva, 2025). The evolution of the internet has transformed social media into an effective marketing communication platform to capture consumer attention (Alalwan, 2018; Darmatama & Erdiansyah, 2021). The Digital 2025 Global Statshot Report by We Are Social highlights that Indonesian users spend an average of 6 hours and 42 minutes per week watching short-form videos (such as TikTok or Instagram Reels), compared to 4 hours and 57 minutes spent on long-form video content (We Are Social, 2025).

In response to the rapid growth of e-commerce, social commerce has emerged as an integration of social media and online retail, where platforms function as facilitators of commercial activities and enable users to access product information and form purchase intentions (Fard & Marvi, 2020). The emergence of TikTok Shop demonstrates how social media has evolved beyond content distribution to function as a fully integrated business platform. Growing

interest in social commerce research is driven by its potential to deliver a more interactive shopping environment relative to standard e-commerce models. Therefore, exploring core social commerce elements, including social support, trust, and purchase intention, is important (Rashid et al., 2022). Wang & Xie (2020) add that research in this area provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the psychological changes, technology adoption, and marketing communications mechanisms within the context of social commerce.

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped consumer purchasing patterns through the adoption of digital marketing (Alkharabsheh & Zhen, 2021). Digital marketing provides broad geographic and temporal reach, offering consumers a more convenient and efficient shopping experience (Li et al., 2022). It is considered a relevant and contemporary marketing strategy aligned with current market dynamics (Veleva & Tsvetanova, 2020). Moreover, compared with traditional marketing, digital marketing offers advantages such as measurability and cost efficiency (Saravanan, 2018). In the context of social commerce, digital marketing needs to be understood through strategies that are closest to user experience, namely content marketing, viral marketing, and affiliate marketing. These three strategies are relevant because TikTok Shop brings together content exposure, message dissemination among users, creator recommendations, and direct access to transactions. In addition to digital marketing strategies, digital literacy is also relevant in social commerce because consumers need to access, understand, and evaluate digital information before making purchases (Makdee et al., 2023). In TikTok Shop, this ability becomes important because consumers encounter various forms of information, such as product reviews, promotions, creator recommendations, purchase links, and marketing claims distributed through short-form content.

Although studies on digital marketing and digital literacy have continued to develop, most previous research has still positioned these aspects within the contexts of general e-commerce, business performance, or digital technology adoption (Morais et al., 2021; Suryani et al., 2022). Studies that specifically explain how content marketing, viral marketing, affiliate marketing, and digital literacy simultaneously shape purchase intention in social commerce in Indonesia remain relatively limited (Morais et al., 2021; Nazzal et al., 2022; Algharabat & Rana, 2021). This gap is important because social commerce, particularly TikTok Shop, has characteristics that differ from conventional e-commerce, as it integrates short-form content, social interaction, creator recommendations, product reviews, affiliate links, and transactions within one platform (Fard & Marvi, 2020; Hajli, 2015). Thus, the purchasing process is not only influenced by product information but also by short-form content, social recommendations, viral message dissemination, affiliate links, promotional incentives, and consumers' ability to evaluate digital information.

Students are a relevant group to examine because they are part of a generation of digital consumers who intensively use social media, are accustomed to accessing short-form video content, and are closely connected to platform-based consumption patterns (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). In the context of TikTok Shop, students do not merely act as social media users but also as potential consumers who are continuously exposed to various digital marketing stimuli. Therefore, understanding the factors that shape students' purchase intention on TikTok Shop is important for clarifying how digital marketing strategies and digital literacy operate within the social commerce environment.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the effects of content marketing, viral marketing, affiliate marketing, and digital literacy on social commerce purchase intention among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions by extending the understanding of the determinants of purchase intention in social commerce. It also offers practical implications for business actors in designing digital marketing strategies that are more aligned with the characteristics of young consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Marketing on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

Content marketing is a dynamic and evolving field that plays a crucial role in modern digital marketing strategies (Makkar et al., 2025). Content marketing is a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience, ultimately driving profitable customer action (Achen, 2024). Content marketing is important to study because it involves skills in creating and disseminating relevant content about a brand or product with the aim of increasing consumer interest and purchase decisions. Content marketing can have a significant impact on purchase intention in social commerce. Several studies have investigated the relationship between content marketing and purchase intention. One study found that content marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention (Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022). Another study identified the impact of content marketing on consumer purchase intention, which is an important mission of marketing (Yaqubi & Karaduman, 2019). In addition, other studies aim to understand how to use content marketing to drive conversions by understanding consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards content (Milhinhos, 2015). The results of Purwanto & Sahetapy (2022) research found that the more interesting content marketing is created, it can attract purchase interest and vice versa. Furthermore, Abdurrahim & Sangen (2019) explained that content marketing carried out by Biuti Hotel is able to increase consumer buying interest and the higher the content marketing provided will increase the interest of potential customers. Overall, understanding the impact of content marketing is

crucial in developing effective strategies to engage with consumers and drive sales on social commerce.

Taken together, previous studies suggest that content marketing tends to influence purchase intention through its ability to provide relevant information, generate initial consumer interest, and strengthen consumer engagement with products (Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022; Yaqubi & Karaduman, 2019). In the context of social commerce, particularly TikTok Shop, content marketing does not only function as a medium for delivering product information but also as an initial stimulus that introduces consumers to products through short-form video content (Milhinhos, 2015; Purwanto & Sahetapy, 2022). Therefore, the more relevant, attractive, and understandable the content received by consumers, the greater the likelihood that consumers will develop purchase intention (Abdurrahim & Sangen, 2019; Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022; Alkharabsheh & Zhen, 2021).

Viral Marketing on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

Viral marketing is a marketing strategy that leverages social networks to promote products, services, or ideas through consumer-to-consumer communication. This technique relies on individuals to spread promotional messages within their social circles, often facilitated by the internet and social media platforms (Zhao et al., 2019). The rapid changes in the social environment and the diverse nature of online communication make viral marketing strongly influence purchase intention such as online feedback, competitive messages, peer recommendations, reference groups, and interpretations (Rabidas & Bowen, 2019). Viral marketing requires social interaction and product attention to attract users to virtual networks that have a significant effect on purchase intention. Viral marketing can have an impact on purchase intention in social commerce. One study addressed the research gap regarding the importance of understanding the influence of viral marketing in social networks and media on consumer purchase intention (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015). Another study examined the impact of viral marketing strategies (information level, entertainment level, aggravation level, and source credibility) on purchase intention of eco-labeled products (Choshaly & Mirabolghasemi, 2022). In addition, another study found that viral marketing affects customers' purchase intention magnified under the moderating role of brand image and age (Sawaftah et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand how consumer attitudes towards viral marketing are related to consumer purchase intention (Satrio et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the impact of viral marketing is critical in developing effective strategies to engage consumers and purchase intention in social commerce.

Based on these studies, affiliate marketing can be understood as a digital marketing strategy that is closer to the purchase decision stage than content marketing and viral marketing because it directly connects promotional exposure with purchase access (Duffy, 2005; Ghosal et al., 2020). This is because affiliate marketing does not only provide product information but also connects consumers to purchase access through product links, creator recommendations, promotional incentives, and trust in affiliates (Ghosal et al., 2020; Masoumi et al., 2022). In TikTok Shop, affiliate marketing becomes particularly relevant because consumers can observe product reviews, evaluate the credibility of creators, and access products directly within the same platform (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023; Reswara, 2023). Therefore, affiliate marketing has the potential to become a strong stimulus in shaping social commerce purchase intention (Wang et al., 2022; Algharabat & Rana, 2021; Ghosal et al., 2020).

Affiliate Marketing on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

Affiliate marketing is a performance-based online marketing strategy where affiliates, such as bloggers or YouTubers, promote a merchant's products or services and earn commissions for each sale or action generated through their marketing efforts (Xu et al., 2025). Affiliate marketing has emerged as one of the fastest growing online and e-commerce marketing strategies to increase sales. As more advertisers provide affiliate marketing programs and more affiliates exist, it is likely to become a major mainstream marketing strategy for e-commerce businesses in the future (Duffy, 2005). Affiliates mostly use social media to interact with target audiences to attract their audience's attention to relevant businesses. Affiliate marketing can have an impact on purchase intention in social commerce. One study aimed to evaluate the significant impact of affiliate marketing strategies on millennial attitudes towards online shopping (Ghosal et al., 2020). Another study investigated the relationship between trust and consumer purchase intention in a social commerce environment (Wang et al., 2022). In addition, another study investigated customer loyalty towards travel affiliate marketing websites based on previous research (Abdelhady et al., 2020). Furthermore, a study aimed to build an understanding of social commerce in emerging markets and how it affects online community engagement (Algharabat & Rana, 2021). Overall, understanding the impact of affiliate marketing is crucial in developing effective strategies to engage with consumers and increase sales on social commerce.

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intention (Wang et al., 2022; Algharabat & Rana, 2021; Ghosal et al., 2020).

Digital Literacy on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

Digital literacy is considered a basic life skill in today's interconnected world, essential for education, work, and daily life (Makdee et al., 2023). Digital literacy can improve internet access for timely decision-making for information availability and increase productivity. Digital literacy can have an impact on purchase intention in social commerce. Several studies have investigated the relationship between digital literacy and purchase intention in the context of e-commerce and online shopping. One study found that website quality and digital literacy have a significant influence on individual interest in online shopping (Nazzal et al., 2022). Furthermore, research conducted by Badriatin et al. (2022) found that digital literacy and the technology acceptance model have a significant effect on purchase intention. Another study identified the influence of digital literacy, technology integration, technology acceptance model, and brand image on purchasing decisions at Yamaha dealers in Indonesia (Hakim, 2022). In addition, digital literacy has a good and direct influence on business performance (Suryani et al., 2022).

These findings indicate that digital literacy generally plays a positive role in online shopping contexts because it helps consumers access information, understand platform features, and evaluate transaction risks (Nazzal et al., 2022; Badriatin et al., 2022). However, the role of digital literacy in shaping purchase intention within social commerce remains open to debate because social commerce combines information evaluation with social influence, entertainment, creator recommendations, and platform-driven purchasing stimuli (Hajli, 2015; Rashid et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). In conventional e-commerce, digital literacy may directly support purchase intention because consumers often need to search for, compare, and evaluate product information independently (Nazzal et al., 2021; Nazzal et al., 2022; Hakim, 2022). In contrast, social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop expose consumers to more spontaneous stimuli, including short-form content, creator recommendations, viral product visibility, discounts, and direct transaction features (Hajli, 2015; Fard & Marvi, 2020; Algharabat & Rana, 2021). Therefore, digital literacy may not always operate as a direct driver of purchase intention; rather, it may function as a supporting capability that helps consumers assess information quality and transaction risks before making a purchase (Makdee et al., 2023; Nazzal et al., 2022; Suryani et al., 2022). This indicates the need for further empirical examination of the relationship between digital literacy and purchase intention in social commerce.

Conceptually, the four variables in this study can be understood as interconnected elements in the formation of social commerce purchase intention. Content marketing serves as an initial stimulus by providing information and attracting consumer attention (Achen, 2024; Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022). Viral marketing extends the reach of marketing messages through social interaction, content popularity, and user-to-user dissemination (Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Zhao et al., 2019). Affiliate marketing strengthens purchase intention by combining creator recommendations, trust in affiliates, promotional incentives, and direct access to transactions (Ghosal et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Masoumi et al., 2022). Meanwhile, digital literacy reflects consumers' ability to understand, evaluate, and use digital information before making purchase decisions (Makdee et al., 2023; Nazzal et al., 2022; Ng, 2012). Therefore, purchase intention in social commerce is shaped not only by digital marketing stimuli but also by consumers' ability to assess the information they encounter within the platform environment (Hajli, 2015; Rashid et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).

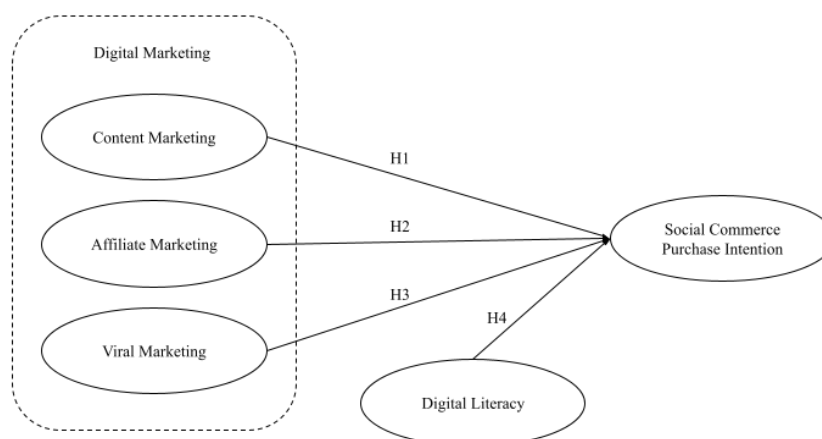


Figure 1 Conceptual Research Model

Source: Author (2025)

H1: Content Marketing has a significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

H2: Viral Marketing has a significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

H3: Affiliate Marketing has a significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

H4: Digital Literacy has a significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative approach, focusing on a specific group and employing statistical analysis to test the proposed hypotheses. Consistent with the research objectives, the study investigates the influence of content marketing, viral marketing, affiliate marketing, and digital literacy on social commerce purchase intention. The population consists of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Surabaya during the 2022/2023 even semester. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, with criteria including: (a) active TikTok users; (b) willingness, interest, and prior experience in purchasing products via TikTok Shop; (c) active enrollment as students in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Surabaya; and (d) successful completion of digital literacy courses with satisfactory grades.

The selection of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Surabaya was based on their relevance to the research context. As students in economics and business-related programs, they are expected to have greater exposure to marketing concepts, digital business practices, consumer behavior, and digital literacy than students from unrelated academic backgrounds. Prior research on students in online business and marketing contexts also shows that business-oriented students are relevant for examining intention-based outcomes in the digital economy, particularly because digital transformation creates new opportunities to develop entrepreneurial and market-related competencies (Sulistiyowati et al., 2024). In addition, the sampling criteria ensured that respondents were not only active TikTok users but also had prior experience or interest in purchasing through TikTok Shop. Therefore, this group was considered appropriate for examining social commerce purchase intention in the context of digital marketing and digital literacy. However, because the study was limited to one faculty and one university, the findings should be generalized with caution and are more representative of students with similar academic and digital consumption characteristics.

The operational indicators were selected based on their conceptual relevance to the social commerce environment and their consistency with prior studies. Each construct was measured using indicators that reflect how consumers receive, evaluate, and respond to digital marketing stimuli on TikTok Shop. Content marketing indicators were used to capture the informational and persuasive role of digital content. Viral marketing indicators were selected to represent message dissemination, entertainment value, irritation, and source credibility in social media-based communication. Affiliate marketing indicators were used to reflect informativeness, incentives, ease of locating products, and trust, which are central to affiliate-based purchasing mechanisms. Digital literacy indicators were selected to capture technical, cognitive, and socio-emotional competencies in evaluating digital information, while social commerce purchase intention indicators reflected consumers' transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory interests.

Content marketing is a digital marketing strategy that aims to attract attention to products or services by creating and sharing interesting and informative video-based content. Indicators of content marketing were adapted from Karr, (2016) and include: (1) reader cognition; (2) sharing motivation; (3) persuasion; (4) decision making; and (5) life factors. Viral marketing is a digital marketing strategy used to promote products or services through marketing messages spread by word of mouth on social media. Indicators of viral marketing were adapted from Zernigah & Sohail, (2012) and include: (1) informativeness; (2) entertainment; (3) irritation; and (4) source credibility. Affiliate marketing is a digital marketing strategy in which an affiliate promotes products by directing consumers to product-related links. Indicators of affiliate marketing were adapted from Ghosal et al. (2020) and include: (1) informativeness; (2) incentive; (3) perceived ease to locate; and (4) trusting beliefs. Digital literacy is a person's ability to access, evaluate, create, communicate, and manage information using digital media platforms. Indicators of digital literacy were adapted from Ng, (2012) and include: (1) technical; (2) cognitive; and (3) socio-emotional competencies. Social commerce purchase intention refers to consumers' possibility or willingness to purchase products or services on a social commerce platform. Indicators of social commerce purchase intention were adapted from Ferdinand, (2014) and include: (1) transactional interest; (2) referential interest; (3) preferential interest; and (4) explorative interest.

In the measurement model evaluation, indicators that did not meet the recommended outer loading threshold were reviewed not only statistically but also conceptually. Item removal was conducted when an indicator showed inadequate loading and was considered less representative of the construct in the specific context of TikTok Shop users. This procedure was applied to maintain both statistical validity and conceptual coherence of the measurement model.

Data were collected through a survey using a questionnaire measured with a Likert scale. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 3 software. PLS-SEM was considered appropriate because this study aimed to examine predictive relationships among multiple latent constructs and to assess both measurement and structural models simultaneously. PLS-SEM, as a multivariate technique, combines aspects of factor analysis and regression to examine relationships among constructs. The analytical procedure consisted of three main stages: evaluation of the outer model (measurement model), evaluation of the inner model (structural model), and hypothesis testing using a bootstrapping procedure (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study was conducted to examine the influence of digital marketing (content marketing, viral marketing, and affiliate marketing) and digital literacy on purchase intention in social commerce. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, resulting in a total of 344 valid responses from students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, who met the predetermined sampling criteria.

The results of the research from the characteristics of the respondents showed that the respondents with the most study program origins in this study were Commerce Education at 22.97%, followed by Management and Economics Education study programs at 14.24%. Then, respondents with the least study program origin in this study were digital business at 3.20% followed by Economics at 6.38%.

Furthermore, the characteristics of respondents based on the batch with the most to least batch in this study are the 2019 batch of 55.23% then the 2021 batch of 23.55% and the least batch of 2020 of 21.22%. Furthermore, the characteristics of respondents with the most purchases are 2-5 times a month with a percentage of 42.44%. then the least purchases with purchases more than 10 times amounted to 9.30%. Furthermore, the characteristics of respondents with the most payment preferences are non-cash payments with a percentage of 61% followed by cash on delivery with a percentage of 39%.

The PLS-SEM method is carried out using measurement model evaluation (outer model) and structural model evaluation (inner model) (Hair et al., 2017).

Outer Model

The evaluation of the outer model shows that all indicators meet the requirements of validity and reliability, as indicated by adequate loading factors, AVE, and satisfactory composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2017).

In this study, the acceptable criteria were set at an outer loading value above 0.70 and an AVE value above 0.50. The initial results showed that the indicators for entertainment (X2.2) and irritation (X2.3) produced outer loading values of 0.693 and 0.547, respectively, which fall below the recommended threshold. Consequently, these two indicators were considered invalid for convergent validity and were removed from the measurement model (Hair et al., 2017). Conceptually, the removal of the entertainment and irritation indicators suggests that, in this study context, viral marketing was more strongly represented by informativeness and source credibility. This indicates that students' responses to viral marketing on TikTok Shop were more closely related to the usefulness and credibility of marketing messages than to entertainment or irritation aspects.

Table 1 Outer Loading Value After Modification

	X1	X2	X3	X4	Y
X1.1	0.726				
X1.2	0.771				
X1.3	0.813				
X1.4	0.850				
X1.5	0.797				
X2.1		0.853			
X2.4		0.855			
X3.1			0.826		
X3.2			0.842		
X3.3			0.833		
X3.4			0.880		
X4.1				0.898	
X4.2				0.880	
X4.3				0.848	
Y1.1					0.854
Y1.2					0.881
Y1.3					0.848
Y1.4					0.807

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 1 shows that all indicators have an outer loading value of more than 0.70 so that each variable has been able to be explained by its indicators.

Table 2 AVE, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
X1	0.628	0.851	0.894
X2	0.73	0.630	0.844

X3	0.715	0.867	0.909
X4	0.766	0.847	0.908
Y	0.719	0.869	0.911

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 2 shows that all indicators obtained an AVE value above 0.50, indicating that each construct is capable of explaining more than half of the variance of its indicators. In addition, both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each variable exceeded 0.60. These results confirm that the data demonstrate good internal consistency, where Cronbach's alpha reflects the lower bound and composite reliability reflects the upper bound, thereby meeting the reliability test criteria (Hair et al., 2017)

Inner Model

The evaluation of the inner model shows that the VIF values indicate no multicollinearity, the R² value reflects moderate explanatory power, the f² values demonstrate varying effect sizes, and the Q² value confirms strong predictive relevance

Table 4 VIF Value

	Y
X1 (Content Marketing)	2.634
X2 (Viral Marketing)	2.857
X3 (Affiliate Marketing)	2.577
X4 (Digital Literacy)	1.544
Y (Social Commerce Purchase Intention)	

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 4 shows that the VIF values of all exogenous variables are below 5.00, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues in this study. Following the VIF assessment, the R-square values were examined to evaluate the explanatory power of the model. According to Hair et al. (2017).

Table 5 R-Square Value

	R-Square	R Square Adjusted
Y	0.589	0.584

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 5 reports an R-square value of 0.589, which reflects a moderate level of explanatory power. This result indicates that the exogenous variables X1, X2, X3, and X4 collectively account for 58.9% of the variance in the endogenous variable Y, while the remaining 41.1% is explained by other factors not included in this study.

Table 6 The f-square value

	Y
X1	0.017
X2	0.037
X3	0.228
X4	0.000

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 6 shows the f-square effect sizes for each exogenous variable. The value for X1 is 0.017, indicating a very small effect on the dependent variable. X2 records a value of 0.037, which falls into the small effect category. X3 obtains a value of 0.228, indicating a medium effect and showing that affiliate marketing provides the largest contribution among the predictors. Meanwhile, X4 has a value of 0.000, suggesting no substantive effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention.

Table 7 Q-square values

	SSO	SSE	Q-Square
X1	1720	1720	
X2	688	688	
X3	1376	1376	
X4	1032	1032	
Y	1376	812.642	0.409

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Table 7 presents a Q-square value of 0.409, indicating that the exogenous constructs possess predictive relevance for the endogenous construct (Y). This result suggests that the model demonstrates strong predictive capability.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing is done by looking at the results of the bootstrapping calculation. The results of testing the research hypothesis can be seen in the following table:

Table 8 Hypothesis Test Results

	<i>Original Sample</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>P Values</i>
X1 → Y	0.134	2.090	0.037
X2 → Y	0.21	3.093	0.002
X3 → Y	0.491	6.113	0.000
X4 → Y	-0.001	0.014	0.989

Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

The results of hypothesis testing are summarized as follows:

1. Content Marketing (X1 → Y): The original sample value is 0.134 with a P-value of 0.037, indicating a positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention.
2. Viral Marketing (X2 → Y): The original sample value is 0.21 with a P-value of 0.002, showing a positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention.
3. Affiliate Marketing (X3 → Y): The original sample value is 0.491 with a P-value of 0.000, confirming a strong positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention.
4. Digital Literacy (X4 → Y): The original sample value is -0.001 with a P-value of 0.989, suggesting no significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention.

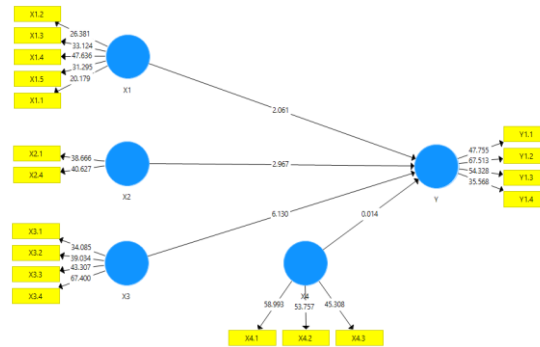


Figure 2 Bootstrapping Test Results
Source: (Output SmartPLS, 2025)

Discussion

The findings show that content marketing has a positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Therefore, H1 is supported. This result indicates that content marketing plays an important role in attracting consumer attention and shaping purchase intention in TikTok Shop. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that content marketing positively influences purchase intention in e-commerce and TikTok-based contexts (Azizah & Huda, 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2023; Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022).

In the context of TikTok Shop, content marketing works through the presentation of short, interactive, and informative video content. Such content can help consumers understand product features, recognize brand identity, and evaluate whether a product is relevant to their needs (Riyadini & Krisnawati, 2022; Yaqubi & Karaduman, 2019). For student consumers, content that is easy to understand, visually engaging, and aligned with their daily interests can increase attention and strengthen their tendency to consider purchasing products (Pratiwi et al., 2023; Azizah & Huda, 2022). Thus, content marketing does not merely function as promotional communication, but also as an initial stimulus that introduces products and supports consumers' purchase consideration process (Alkharabsheh & Zhen, 2021; Milhinhos, 2015).

The results also show that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention. Therefore, H2 is supported. This finding indicates that marketing messages that spread through social networks, peer discussion, and popular product-related content can encourage students' purchase intention on TikTok Shop. This result is in line with previous studies showing that viral marketing significantly influences purchase intention in various digital consumption contexts (Dumatri & Indarwati, 2021; Marchapada & Wijaksana, 2021; Ningrum & Tobing, 2022).

However, the effect of viral marketing in this study should not be understood merely as the result of content popularity. After the removal of the entertainment and irritation indicators in the measurement model, viral marketing in this context was represented mainly by informativeness and source credibility. This suggests that students' purchase intention is more likely to be shaped by viral content that provides useful product information and comes from credible sources (Choshaly & Mirabolghasemi, 2022; Satrio et al., 2020). In other words, viral content may

attract attention, but it becomes more persuasive when consumers perceive the message as informative, trustworthy, and relevant to their purchase needs (Gunawan & Huaning, 2015; Sawaftah et al., 2020).

Affiliate marketing has the strongest positive and significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention, as shown by the highest path coefficient among the independent variables. Therefore, H3 is supported. This finding suggests that affiliate marketing is the most dominant determinant of students' purchase intention in TikTok Shop. The result is consistent with previous studies showing that affiliate marketing can influence purchase intention by strengthening trust, providing product information, and connecting consumers to purchasing channels (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023; Masoumi et al., 2022; Reswara, 2023).

The stronger effect of affiliate marketing can be explained by the nature of TikTok Shop as a social commerce platform that integrates product reviews, creator recommendations, promotional incentives, product links, and direct transaction features. Unlike content marketing, which mainly introduces products, or viral marketing, which increases message diffusion, affiliate marketing is closer to the purchase decision stage because it connects consumers directly to the product through affiliate links or the yellow basket feature (Duffy, 2005; Ghosal et al., 2020). For students, affiliate content can reduce search effort, provide social proof through creator reviews, and offer practical incentives such as discounts or promotions (Marquerette & Hamidah, 2023; Reswara, 2023). Therefore, affiliate marketing becomes a more immediate stimulus for purchase intention because it combines information, trust, convenience, and transaction access within a single platform experience (Masoumi et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022).

In contrast, digital literacy does not have a significant effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention. Therefore, H4 is not supported. This finding differs from several previous studies indicating that digital literacy positively influences online shopping intention and purchasing decisions (Hakim, 2022; Nazzal et al., 2021, 2022). However, the insignificant effect in this study can be explained by the specific context of social commerce and the characteristics of the respondents.

First, the respondents were students who had completed digital literacy courses, which may have created a relatively homogeneous level of digital literacy among them. When most respondents already have adequate digital literacy, the variation in digital literacy may not be strong enough to explain differences in purchase intention. Second, in TikTok Shop, purchase intention may be shaped more directly by platform-based marketing stimuli, such as short-form video content, viral product exposure, affiliate recommendations, discounts, and direct access to transactions (Hajli, 2015; Rashid et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). These stimuli can trigger purchase intention more immediately than digital literacy, which functions more as a supporting capability for evaluating information rather than as a direct purchasing driver (Makdee et al., 2023; Nazzal et al., 2022).

This interpretation is also consistent with the descriptive tendency in the study, where digital literacy showed high self-perceived scores but did not translate into a significant behavioral intention effect. In other words, students may be digitally literate and capable of evaluating online information, but this competence does not automatically make them more likely to purchase products on TikTok Shop. Digital literacy may still play an important indirect role by helping consumers assess information quality, recognize transaction risks, and make more informed decisions (Makdee et al., 2023; Nazzal et al., 2022; Suryani et al., 2022). Therefore, future studies may consider examining digital literacy as a moderating or mediating variable rather than only as a direct predictor of purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of content marketing, viral marketing, affiliate marketing, and digital literacy on Social Commerce Purchase Intention among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Surabaya. The findings show that content marketing, viral marketing, and affiliate marketing have positive and significant effects on Social Commerce Purchase Intention. Content marketing contributes to purchase intention by presenting informative, interactive, and relevant product-related content, while viral marketing supports purchase intention through informativeness and source credibility in marketing messages.

Among the three digital marketing strategies, affiliate marketing provides the strongest effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention. This indicates that affiliate marketing is particularly influential in TikTok Shop because it combines product information, creator recommendations, trust, promotional incentives, and direct access to transactions. Therefore, affiliate marketing can be considered a key strategy for encouraging purchase intention in social commerce, especially among young consumers.

In contrast, digital literacy does not have a significant direct effect on Social Commerce Purchase Intention. This finding suggests that digital literacy may not automatically increase students' intention to purchase products on TikTok Shop, especially when respondents already have relatively adequate digital literacy. Nevertheless, digital literacy remains important as a supporting capability that helps consumers access information, understand digital platforms, evaluate online content, and recognize potential transaction risks.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the understanding of purchase intention in social commerce through the simultaneous examination of content marketing, viral marketing, affiliate marketing, and digital literacy. Practically, the findings suggest that business actors should prioritize affiliate-based strategies supported by credible creators, relevant product information, promotional incentives, and easy transaction access. At the same time, content marketing and viral marketing should be designed to provide useful and trustworthy information rather than merely

attracting attention.

Suggestion

Future research is encouraged to examine other factors that may influence Social Commerce Purchase Intention, such as influencer marketing, social media marketing, perceived trust, perceived risk, customer engagement, and electronic word of mouth. Future studies may also investigate digital literacy as a mediating or moderating variable rather than only as a direct predictor, considering that digital literacy in this study did not significantly affect purchase intention. In addition, future research should involve respondents from different faculties, universities, or consumer groups to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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