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The Influence of Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, and Lifestyle on iPhone Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z

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Abstract: This study analyzes the influence of brand trust, word-of-mouth (WOM) communication, and lifestyle on iPhone purchase decisions among Generation Z. The objective is to determine the extent to which brand trust, word-of-mouth recommendations, and lifestyle factors influence the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers. This study employs a quantitative method using a survey approach. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 150 Generation Z respondents in the Jabodetabek area who had used or purchased an iPhone within the last year. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that brand trust has a positive effect on purchase decisions, word of mouth communication also demonstrates a positive effect on purchase decisions; and lifestyle factors show a positive influence on purchase decisions.

Keywords: Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, Lifestyle, Purchase Decision, Generation Z

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z is a consumer group that has grown up alongside the evolution of the internet, social media, and communication technologies. These developments have shaped consumption patterns wherein the smartphone serves not merely as a communication tool but also as an integral part of lifestyle and social identity. Within the Indonesian smartphone industry, competition among brands is intensifying, particularly in the premium segment. The iPhone holds strong appeal due to its associations with quality, security, design, and an integrated technology ecosystem. This phenomenon makes the study of iPhone purchasing decisions among Generation Z highly relevant. Research data indicates that the iPhone's market share in Indonesia rose from 6% in 2020 to 12.5% in 2025. During this same period, Samsung, Oppo, Vivo, and Xiaomi experienced fluctuations in their respective market shares. This growth reflects the evolving market position of the iPhone in Indonesia, especially within the premium segment. Furthermore, the iPhone's "top-of-mind" awareness reached 84% by 2025. These conditions provide the context for this study on Generation Z's purchasing behavior.

Purchasing decisions extend beyond mere functional needs. This study identifies brand trust, word-of-mouth communication, and lifestyle as three factors hypothesized to influence purchasing decisions. Brand trust relates to consumer confidence in a brand's integrity, honesty, and security. Word-of-mouth communication involves consumer interactions characterized by discussing, recommending, and influencing others. Meanwhile, lifestyle reflects patterns of living defined by activities, interests, and opinions. These foundational indicators serve as the basis for the research instruments.

The research problem arises because iPhone purchasing decisions among Generation Z are not solely driven by brand trust. Many consumers also consider trends, social prestige, peer influence, and lifestyle. Additionally, the credibility of social media information is increasingly scrutinized due to the prevalence of promotional content and paid reviews. Consequently, the relationships between brand trust, word-of-mouth communication, lifestyle, and purchasing decisions require empirical examination. This study aims to determine the influence of brand trust, word-of-mouth, and lifestyle on iPhone purchasing decisions among Generation Z. Based on these objectives, the hypotheses tested are H1, brand trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions; H2, word of mouth has a positive effect on purchasing decisions and H3, lifestyle has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The study population consists of Generation Z individuals who use iPhones. Non-probability sampling specifically purposive sampling was used to select the sample. Respondent criteria included being aged 17–29, residing or conducting activities in Jakarta and its surrounding areas, and having purchased and used an iPhone for at least one year. A sample size of 150 respondents was established, exceeding the minimum requirement of 96 respondents calculated using the Lemeshow formula.

Primary data were collected via a closed-ended questionnaire utilizing a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The research instrument was developed based on the indicators for each variable. Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4, involving evaluations of both the outer and inner models. The outer model assessment covered convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability, while the inner model assessment included R-square analysis as well as the testing of path coefficients and significance levels via bootstrapping.

Table 1

Variabel	Key Indicator	Final code
Brand Trust (X1)	Reliability, honesty, safety	X1.1, X1.2, X1.4, X1.5, X1.6
Word of Mouth (X2)	Talking, recommendation, encouraging/selling	X2.1–X2.6
Lifestyle (X3)	Activities, interests, opinions	X3.1, X3.2, X3.5, X3.6
Purchase Decision (Y)	Beliefs, brand preferences, needs, and wants	Y1.1–Y1.6

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

The evaluation criteria for the outer model in the research utilize outer loadings ≥ 0.70, AVE ≥ 0.50, and Composite Reliability ≥ 0.70, alongside assessments of discriminant validity via cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and HTMT. For hypothesis testing, relationships are considered significant if t-statistics > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05 at a 5% significance level.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 150 respondents. Based on the research data, the respondents were predominantly from the 20-29 age group, accounting for 140 individuals or 94%. All respondents were iPhone users, and 149 respondents (99.3%) reported having used an iPhone for at least one year. Geographically, 138 respondents (92%) resided in Jakarta. These characteristics indicate that the research data primarily reflects Generation Z iPhone users in an urban setting.

Table 2

Characteristics	category	Count Percentage	Persentase
Age	17 year	3	2%
Age	20–29 year	140	94%
Age	30–39 year	6	4%
Age	40 year	1	0,7%
Iphone Users	Yes	150	100%
Use for ≥ 1 year	Yes	149	99,3%
Place of residence	The City Of Jakarta	138	92%

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Descriptively, Brand Trust has a mean value of 4.165 with a standard deviation of 0.823. Word of Mouth has a mean of 3.781 with a standard deviation of 1.015. Lifestyle has a mean of 3.830 with a standard deviation of 1.059, following the exclusion of indicators that did not meet the final model criteria. Purchase Decision has a mean of 4.142 with a standard deviation of 0.907. These values indicate a positive tendency in respondent ratings, with Brand Trust and Purchase Decision falling within the high range.

Table 3

Variabel	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Brand Trust	4,165	0,823	High
Word of Mouth	3,781	1,015	Quite positive
Lifestyle	3,830	1,059	Tends to be high
Purchase Decision	4,142	0,907	High

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The outer loading test results indicate that the majority of indicators have loadings above 0.70. Several indicators fall within the moderate range: X1.4 (0.611), X2.1 (0.684), and X3.1 (0.646). Indicators X3.3 and X3.4 were eliminated from the final model because their respective loadings were below 0.70. Despite the presence of indicators with moderate loadings, the AVE and construct reliability values in the final model meet the established criteria, confirming the constructs' suitability for use.

Table 4

Construk	Indicator	Outer Loading
Brand Trust	X1.1	0,703
Brand Trust	X1.2	0,788
Brand Trust	X1.4	0,611
Brand Trust	X1.5	0,801

Brand Trust	X1.6	0,798
Word of Mouth	X2.1–X2.6	0,684–0,784
Lifestyle	X3.1, X3.2, X3.5, X3.6	0,646–0,768
Purchase Decision	Y1.1–Y1.6	0,709–0,800

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

Discriminant validity was also established. The highest HTMT value was observed for the relationship between Lifestyle and Purchase Decision (0.882), while the values for other construct pairs remained below 0.90. Thus, the constructs of Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, Lifestyle, and Purchase Decision can be empirically distinguished. The AVE values for Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, Lifestyle, and Purchase Decision were 0.553, 0.536, 0.544, and 0.591, respectively, all exceeding the 0.50 threshold. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability values for all constructs were above 0.70, indicating that the instrument is reliable.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The R-square value for Purchase Decision is 0.667, and the adjusted R-square is 0.661. This indicates that Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, and Lifestyle collectively explain 66.7% of the variation in Purchase Decision, while the remaining 33.3% is explained by other factors not included in the research model. These values demonstrate strong explanatory power for the model.

Table 5

Endogenous Variable	R-square	R-square Adjusted	Interpretation
Purchase Decision	0,667	0,661	Strong

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

Hypothesis Testing

The test results indicate that all three independent variables have a positive influence on Purchase Decision. Lifestyle makes the largest contribution with a path coefficient of 0.438, followed by Brand Trust at 0.373, while Word of Mouth has the smallest coefficient at 0.144. All three relationships meet the significance criteria, as the t-statistics exceed 1.96 and the p-values are below 0.05.

Table 6

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T-statistics	P-values	Decison
H1 Brand Trust →Purchase Decision	0,373	6,011	0,000	Accepted
H2 Word of Mouth → Purchase Decision	0,144	1,977	0,048	Accepted
H3 Lifestyle → Purchase Decision	0,438	6,304	0,000	Accepted

Source: Primary data, processed 2026.

Conceptual Framework

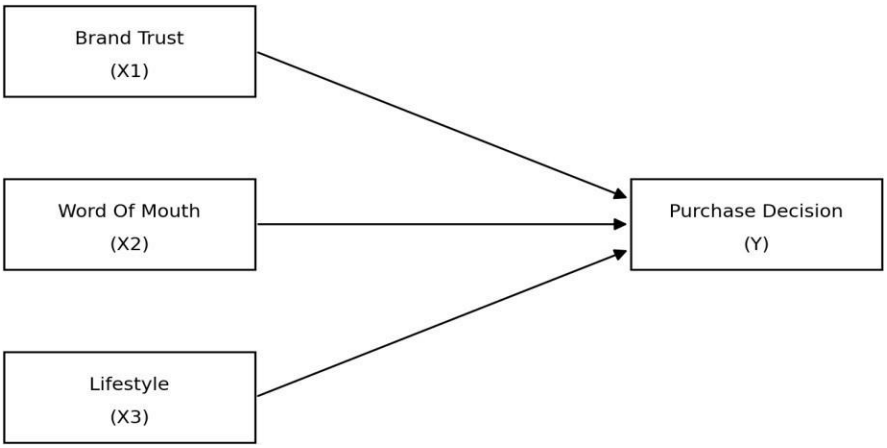

Figure 1.3 Conceptual Framework
Source: Adapted from the research model, 2026

Trust has a positive and significant effect on iPhone purchase decisions. A path coefficient of 0.373 indicates a direct relationship: the higher the consumer trust in the brand, the greater the likelihood of a purchase decision. Descriptively, the security aspect garnered the strongest perception, particularly regarding the sense of safety when using the iPhone and storing personal data. These findings reinforce the argument that reliability, honesty, and security are crucial components in building brand trust. These results align with prior research cited in the study regarding the positive impact of brand trust on iPhone purchase decisions.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions. Word of Mouth was found to have a positive and significant effect, yet it was the variable with the lowest contribution. A path coefficient of 0.144 and a p-value of 0.048 indicate that recommendations, conversations, and efforts to persuade others play a role in the purchasing process, though they are not the dominant factor. Descriptive results show that recommendations made to others based on confidence in iPhone quality are relatively strong, whereas the activity of sharing opinions in online forums tends to be lower. These findings indicate that personal communication and recommendations remain relevant; however, the Generation Z consumers in this study are more strongly influenced by internal factors, brand perception, and lifestyle.

The Influence of Lifestyle on Purchase Decisions. Lifestyle is the variable with the greatest influence on purchase decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.438 and a p-value of 0.000. These results demonstrate that activities, interests, opinions, trends, and self-identity associated with lifestyle can drive Generation Z to choose an iPhone. These findings are consistent with relevant research cited in the document, which shows the positive impact of lifestyle on iPhone purchase decisions. Overall, the research results indicate that Lifestyle and Brand Trust are more dominant factors than Word of Mouth. The research model explains 66.7% of the variation in purchase decisions. Consequently, marketing strategies linking the iPhone to a modern lifestyle should be implemented alongside efforts to maintain consumer trust, while Word of Mouth can be strengthened as a supporting factor through positive user experiences and recommendations

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Brand Trust, Word of Mouth, and Lifestyle have a positive and significant influence on iPhone purchase decisions among Generation Z. Lifestyle emerged

as the strongest influencing factor, followed by Brand Trust, while Word of Mouth had the weakest though still statistically significan influence. The R-square value of 0.667 indicates that these three variables collectively explain 66.7% of the variation in purchase decisions. These results confirm that iPhone purchase decisions among the respondents are not merely linked to consumer-to-consumer communication but are more strongly influenced by the product's alignment with lifestyle and the level of trust in the brand.

The study implies that companies need to develop marketing communications that resonate with the lifestyle and identity of Generation Z, maintain product quality and safety, and ensure information transparency. Word of Mouth should continue to be strengthened through positive user experiences and the generation of favorable recommendations. Future research could consider other variables such as price, product quality, brand image, or digital marketing and expand the geographical scope and sample size to allow for broader generalizability of the findings.

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