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Nano Influencers And Social Factors As Drivers Of Hedonic Consumption Among Generation Z In Indonesia's Social Commerce

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Abstract

Purpose: This study seeks to shed light on the often-overlooked role of nano influencers in shaping hedonic consumption among Generation Z (Gen-Z) in Indonesia's rapidly evolving social commerce landscape. While much attention has been given to macro influencers, our research suggests that smaller, more trusted voices may hold the key to authentic consumer engagement.

Method: A cross-sectional survey of 200 Gen-Z consumers was conducted, utilizing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Smart PLS to analyze the influence of nano influencers, reference groups, and communities on hedonic consumption. The research framework focuses on the social dynamics of peer validation over family influence.

Result: The findings indicate that nano influencers significantly enhance the influence of peer groups on Gen-Z's hedonic consumption, while family influence appears less relevant. This result points to a shift in consumer behavior, where peer-driven validation is dominant. Marketers are encouraged to reconsider their strategies, placing greater emphasis on nano influencers for more genuine connections in the social commerce era.

INTRODUCTION

Social commerce is not just a fleeting trend but is fundamentally reshaping how consumers shop, interact, and engage with brands in today's digital era. In Indonesia, where social media penetration ranks among the highest globally, social commerce has emerged as a dominant force that seamlessly integrates entertainment and e-commerce (Huwaida et al.,2024). Unlike traditional online shopping, social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop, Shopee, and Instagram Shopping have evolved into dynamic ecosystems where transactions, interactions, and social experiences converge. Can shopping be entertaining? Can influence feel authentic? For Generation Z (Gen-Z), the answer is unequivocal. Shopping is no longer just about acquiring products; it has become an avenue for joy, connection, and validation (Kembau & Lendo, 2025).

The growth of Indonesia's e-commerce market underscores this transformation. Total transaction values reached IDR 573 trillion (USD 37.6 billion) in 2023, reflecting an 18.3% increase from the previous year. Projections for 2024 indicate continued growth, with transaction values expected to hit IDR 661.9 trillion (USD 43.4 billion) (GlobalData, 2024). However, beneath these impressive figures lies an even more profound revolution: the rise of social commerce. By integrating features such as live streaming, in-app chat, and gamified shopping experiences, social commerce has made shopping more convenient and redefined its emotional and social dimensions. These innovations have created a powerful pull, especially for Gen-Z, a demographic prioritizing interactive, personalized, and socially engaging experiences. Generation Z, who constitute 27.94% of Indonesia's population (BPS, 2020), are digital natives who have grown up in an environment shaped by technology and social media. Unlike previous generations, Gen-Z does not merely consume; they seek experiences. Hedonic consumption—the pursuit of emotional gratification, enjoyment, and pleasure through shopping—has become a hallmark of their behavior. For Gen-Z, shopping is more about expressing identity and building connections than acquiring goods (Firellsya et al., 2024; Christiarini et al.,2024). Social commerce platforms have tapped into these preferences by introducing community-driven features that turn mundane transactions into moments of joy, transforming shopping into social entertainment.

However, who drives these moments of joy? While macro influencers have traditionally been seen as the primary drivers of consumer behavior, nano-influencers' rise presents a compelling alternative. Nano-influencers, defined as individuals with followings between 1,000 and 10,000, may lack the broad reach of their macro counterparts, but they excel in authenticity, relatability, and trust (Soto-Vásquez & Jimenez, 2022; Ahmed & Rathore, 2024). Gen-Z, who value genuine and unpolished interactions over scripted endorsements, often find nano-influencers more compelling than large-scale influencers. By fostering deep, personal connections with their audiences, nano-influencers are uniquely positioned to drive hedonic consumption in ways that macro influencers cannot. After all, is it not trust or reach that drives influence? Despite their growing prominence, nano-influencers' role in shaping consumer behavior within social commerce remains underexplored. Existing studies have mainly focused on the impact of macro influencers or general social media marketing strategies, leaving a significant research gap regarding the nuanced influence of nano-influencers. This study argues that nano-influencers are not just an alternative to macro influencers—they are a key piece of the puzzle in understanding Gen-Z's hedonic consumption patterns. Operating in the shadows of their more famous counterparts, nano-influencers quietly redefine how brands connect with their audiences, challenging marketers to rethink traditional strategies.

Beyond influencers, this research also addresses the intricate interplay between social factors—reference groups, family, and communities—and their influence on hedonic consumption. Traditionally, family has been seen as a central force shaping consumer behavior and values. However, in the digital age, where peer validation and community influence dominate, is family influence losing relevance? Previous research (Rahman et al., 2020; Handarkho, 2021) has explored the broader effects of social media on consumer behavior but has paid limited attention to how nano-influencers mediate these social dynamics. Are reference groups and digital communities now more influential than family in shaping Gen-Z's purchasing decisions? If so, how do nano-influencers tip the scales in favor of peer-driven validation over traditional family influence? This study aims to fill these research gaps by examining how social factors—reference groups, family, and communities—shape hedonic consumption among Gen-Z in Indonesia's social commerce landscape, with nano-influencers as a moderating variable. Using a cross-sectional survey of 200 Gen-Z consumers and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Smart PLS, this research explores the evolving dynamics of social influence in Indonesia's booming social commerce sector. The findings are expected to demonstrate the unique and transformative role of nano-influencers in amplifying the influence of peer and community dynamics, while highlighting the diminishing impact of family in the digital age. Ultimately, this study challenges marketers, researchers, and policymakers to rethink their digital marketing and social commerce approach. Nano-influencers may not have the largest followings, but they hold unparalleled power in cultivating trust and authenticity, qualities that Gen-Z values above all. In a world where influence is no longer defined by size but by depth, the rise of nano-influencers signals a paradigm shift in how brands build connections and drive consumer behavior. The question is no longer whether nano-influencers matter—they do—but how brands can harness their power to shape the future of social commerce.

Hedonic Consumption

Hedonic consumption refers to purchasing behavior driven by the desire for emotional satisfaction, pleasure, and enjoyment (Liao, 2021). It emphasizes the experiential and sensory aspects of products or services, focusing on immediate gratification rather than practical utility (Bennett et al., 2020). This type of consumption often involves impulsive decisions, where consumers seek to fulfill psychological needs for fun, fantasy, and sensory stimulation. In social commerce, where purchases are visible to one's social circle, the drive for social validation and the fear of missing out (FOMO) significantly amplify hedonic desires (We Are Social, 2024). For Generation Z (Gen-Z), whose consumption behaviors are primarily influenced by experiences and social connections, hedonic consumption becomes not only a means of self-expression but also a tool for identity formation (Vaz, 2021; Christiarini et al.,2024). Moreover, the increasing role of social media platforms like Shopee, TikTok Shop, and Instagram Shopping magnifies the desire for emotional satisfaction, as peer validation and social interaction often influence purchases. This condition creates a space where Gen-Z's decisions are strongly shaped by hedonic consumption, further propelled by nano influencers whose authenticity and relatability influence these behaviors (Himelboim & Golan, 2023).

Nano Influencers

Nano influencers, individuals with between 1,000 and 10,000 followers, have emerged as influential in social media marketing. Despite having a smaller following than macro influencers or celebrities, nano influencers are perceived as more authentic and relatable, fostering deeper engagement with their audiences (Himelboim & Golan, 2023). Their content tends to feel more personal, establishing trust and credibility with followers. This condition is particularly impactful in lifestyle products, fashion, and other hedonic experiences, where Gen-Z consumers are more likely to make impulsive purchases based on authentic recommendations. Nano influencers, often engaging with niche communities, create parasocial relationships—one-sided connections where followers feel a personal bond with the influencer (Soto-Vásquez & Jimenez, 2022). For Gen-Z, who prioritize authenticity (Kembau et al.,2024), the relationship with nano influencers is compelling in driving consumption behaviors, especially in social commerce environments where peer recommendations and social validation are key drivers. As such, nano influencers add a complex layer to the decision-making process, particularly in hedonic consumption, where the desire for emotional satisfaction intersects with the need for social approval.

Social Factors

Human behavior is inherently social, which is crucial in shaping consumer decisions. As individuals, we seek validation and recognition from our social groups, and in many cases, our choices are influenced by social interactions and peer behavior (Essiz & Mandrik, 2022; Chen et al.,2021; Subarkah et al.,2023). Social validation is integral to Gen-Z's purchasing decisions, particularly in social commerce. Social influence often operates subconsciously, driven by the need to fit into group norms and gain approval from others (Huwaida et al.,2024). This dynamic is amplified in digital platforms where peer validation and social influence are even more pronounced, making social commerce a prime example of how social factors significantly shape purchasing behaviors, especially in hedonic consumption contexts. The increasing visibility of consumer choices on platforms like Instagram and TikTok intensifies these social dynamics. This condition leads to an environment where the desire to "keep up" with peers and trends can drive impulsive and emotionally driven purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2023).

Given this, social factors like reference groups, family, and communities play crucial roles in hedonic consumption. They influence Gen-Z's decisions to purchase not only based on product features but also based on emotional and social value. This paper proposes that reference groups, family, and communities simultaneously affect Gen-Z's hedonic consumption in social commerce settings. Given this background, this research proposes the following hypothesis.
H1: Reference groups, family, and communities simultaneously have a positive effect on hedonic consumption among Gen-Z on social commerce.

Reference Groups

Reference groups serve as direct or indirect points of comparison that shape consumer attitudes and behaviors (Melnyk et al.,2022). These groups introduce new lifestyles, influence self-concept, and pressure conformity, affecting product and brand choices. For Gen-Z, the influence of reference groups is profound, especially as they seek validation through social media and peer interactions (Huwaida et al.,2024). Social media platforms amplify this influence by constantly exposing users to new trends and peer choices, centralizing reference groups in shaping purchasing behaviors (Wilska et al., 2023). Gen-Z consumers, in particular, often look to their reference groups—friends, celebrities, or even influencers—for cues about what is popular or desirable. The presence of nano influencers within these reference groups adds another layer of influence, as these influencers are viewed as more authentic and relatable than traditional celebrities, fostering a more profound sense of trust among their followers. This increased trust, combined with the peer-driven social environment of social commerce, leads to greater reliance on the recommendations of nano influencers within reference groups. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed.
H2: Reference groups, moderated by nano influencers, positively affect hedonic consumption among Gen-Z on social commerce.

Family as a Social Factor

While reference groups exert significant influence, family remains a foundational social unit in shaping consumer behaviors. Family traditions, cultural norms, and values can deeply impact consumption patterns, particularly in collectivist societies like Indonesia (Gupta et al., 2022). Special occasions such as holidays or family gatherings often involve specific consumption rituals driven by these shared values, reinforcing familial influence in purchasing decisions. However, in the context of digital consumption, nano influencers are altering traditional familial influences. Nano influencers offer personalized, authentic content that may resonate with or challenge family values, providing Gen-Z consumers with alternative forms of social validation. This shift suggests that while family remains an important factor, the influence of nano influencers—through their relatability and authenticity—can moderate the traditional role of family in shaping consumption behavior. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis.
H3: Family, moderated by nano influencers, positively affects hedonic consumption among Gen-Z on social commerce.

Communities as Social Factors

Physical and virtual communities play a significant role in consumer behavior, particularly in social commerce. As social beings, individuals are highly influenced by the advice, validation, and shared experiences within their communities (Müller-Pérez et al., 2023). In many cases, these communities are centered around shared interests, such as fashion, gaming, or sports, and serve as critical spaces for product recommendations. The sense of belonging within these communities strengthens brand loyalty, and peer recommendations become pivotal in shaping consumer decisions (Cao et al., 2021). In Indonesia, where collective identity holds cultural importance, the role of communities in shaping consumption behavior is particularly pronounced (Wannewitz & Garschagen, 2024). Nano influencers often engage with these niche communities, and their authentic, personalized content resonates with the values and interests of these groups, making them influential figures in shaping consumer preferences. The role of nano influencers within these communities is critical, especially in hedonic consumption, where personal pleasure and social belonging are paramount. Therefore, the final hypothesis is proposed.
H4: Communities, moderated by nano influencers, positively affect hedonic consumption among Gen-Z on social commerce.

These hypotheses aim to explore the intricate interplay between social factors and the role of nano influencers in shaping hedonic consumption in the rapidly evolving landscape of social commerce, particularly in Indonesia (Figure 1).

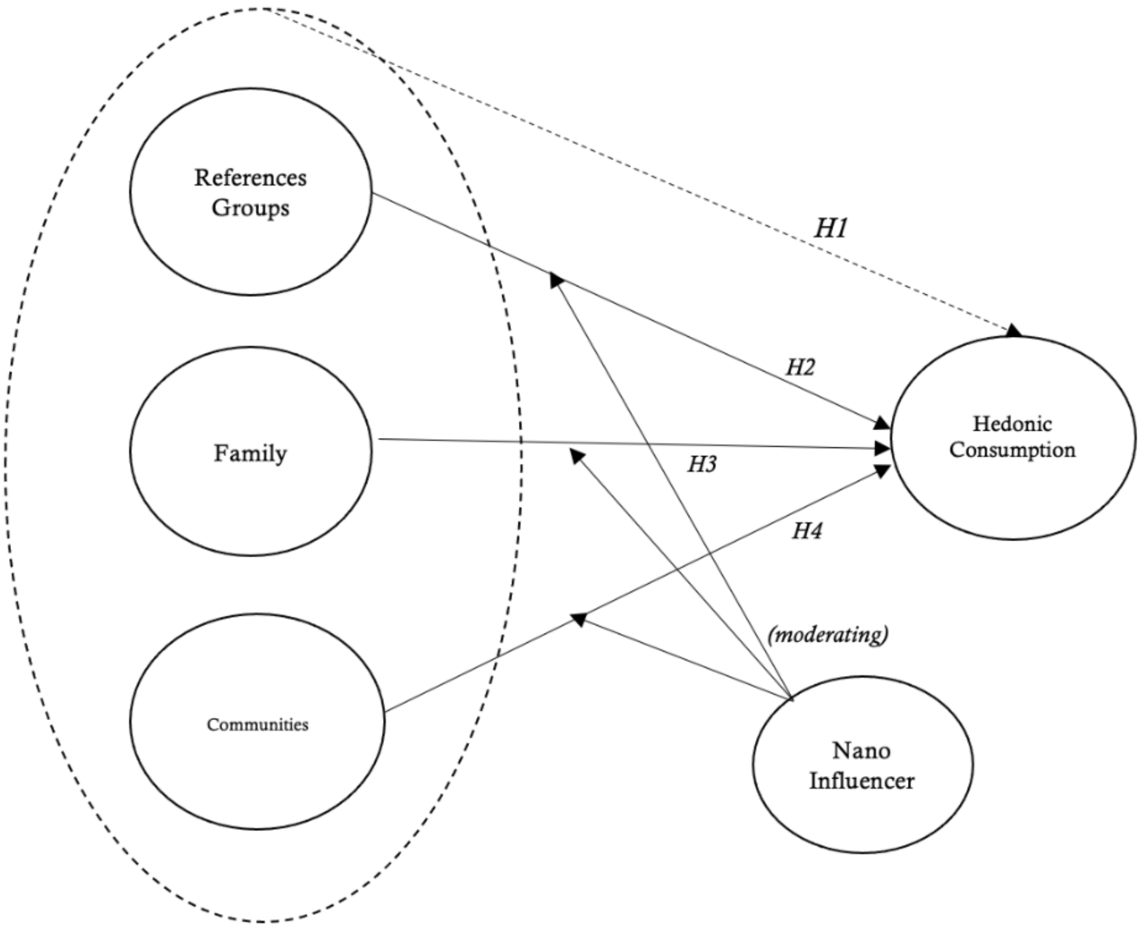

Figure 1.
Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a cross-sectional approach, meaning that data collection is conducted simultaneously to understand the ongoing phenomenon. The population for this research consists of Generation Z consumers, born between 1997 and 2012, as defined by BPS (2020). This demographic was chosen because they have grown up alongside digital technology and are likely to have significant experience using social commerce platforms.

The target sample size for this study is 200 respondents, following the recommendation by Sekaran and Bougie (2022), who suggest a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 500 for quantitative research. The sample includes individuals who have made purchases on social commerce platforms within the past 6 to 12 months, with a minimum purchase frequency of 3 to 4 times. These criteria are based on the assumption that respondents with such purchasing experiences will be better equipped to reflect on their consumption behaviors, particularly those driven by hedonic motivations. Furthermore, given that this study examines the influence of nano influencers, respondents must be highly active on social media. According to WeAreSocial (2024), the average Gen-Z individual spends over 3 hours daily on social media. However, this study focuses on respondents who spend at least 2.5 hours per day, as this duration is deemed sufficient to expose them to various nano influencers within their social networks.

Table 1.
Matrix Operational Definition

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicator	Scale
Reference Groups	Groups that serve as a reference for individuals in shaping their hedonic consumption behavior, where individuals try to emulate the lifestyle or image of the group to gain social validation (Bennett et al., 2020).	▪ Aspirational influence ▪ Desire to follow group trends ▪ Influence on consumption decisions ▪ Social validation	Likert 1-5
Family	The influence of family in shaping hedonic consumption behavior through values, habits, or preferences passed on by parents or other family members.	▪ Recommendations from family members ▪ Parental influence on consumption ▪ Family involvement in consumption activities ▪ Family values on consumption	Likert 1-5
Communities	Communities in which individuals interact that promote hedonic consumption behavior through social activities, such as festivals or social gatherings centered on enjoyment.	▪ Participation in community activities ▪ Community influence on consumption decisions ▪ Common interests within the community ▪ Consumption encouraged by community events	Likert 1-5
Nano Influencer (Moderation)	Individuals with a small but highly engaged following in their social circles, who moderate the influence of reference groups, family, and communities in driving hedonic consumption behavior.	▪ Trust in nano influencers ▪ Influence on purchase decisions ▪ Interaction with nano influencers on social media ▪ Exposure to nano influencer content	Likert 1-5
Hedonic Consumption	Consumption behavior driven by pleasure, enjoyment, or emotional satisfaction obtained from purchasing products or services (Bennett et al., 2020).	▪ Purchases for personal pleasure ▪ Consumption of luxury or exclusive goods ▪ Impulsive buying tendencies ▪ Emotional satisfaction from consumption	Likert 1-5

The sampling location is DKI Jakarta, where data collection will be conducted. Data will be gathered through online questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale, designed to measure respondents' levels of agreement with the statements provided (Sekaran & Bougie, 2022). The Likert scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), assessing the intensity of respondents' perceptions of the measured phenomena. To ensure that each measured variable has a clear and measurable definition, a matrix of operational definitions has been prepared as the basis for developing the research instruments (Table 1).

Before data analysis, validity and reliability tests will be performed to ensure that the measurement instruments provide consistent and accurate results. Subsequently, hypothesis testing will be conducted using Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares), effectively handling smaller sample sizes and complex models. The study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the relationships between variables. SEM is chosen for its ability to minimize measurement errors and conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the proposed model (Hair et al., 2014). SEM also allows for the simultaneous analysis of relationships between latent variables and their indicators and between independent and dependent variables, providing a comprehensive understanding of the proposed model. Through this method, the research aims to provide strong and valid findings regarding the factors that influence hedonic consumption behavior among Gen-Z on social commerce platforms and the role of nano influencers in moderating these relationships.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The respondent characteristics summarized in Table 2 provide a clear picture of the demographic profile of the 200 participants in this study. Most respondents belong to Generation Z, with the most significant proportion (40%) in the 18-22 age range, followed by 35% in the 23-27 years group, and 25% in the 12-17 years group. This distribution reflects the core target demographic of social commerce platforms. Notably, all respondents are active social commerce users, highlighting their intense engagement with online shopping platforms such as Shopee, TikTok Shop, and Instagram Shopping. Regarding purchase frequency, half of the respondents (50%) made 3-4 purchases in the past 6-12 months, indicating a high engagement level with social commerce.

Table 2.
Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency (n = 200)	Percentage (%)
Age (Generasi Z)		
12 - 17 years	50	25%
18 - 22 years	80	40%
23 - 27 years	70	35%
Active on Social Commerce		
Yes	200	100%
No	0	0%
Social Commerce Purchase Frequency		
3 - 4 times	100	50%
5 - 7 times	60	30%
8 times or more	40	20%
Location (Jakarta)		
North Jakarta	40	20%
South Jakarta	60	30%
East Jakarta	30	15%
West Jakarta	30	15%
Central Jakarta	40	20%

Regarding social media usage, 60% of respondents reported spending 2.5-3 hours daily on social platforms. This amount of time spent online indicates a significant exposure to digital content, including nano influencers who are integral to social commerce. The remaining 25% spend 3-4 hours daily, and 15% report spending more than 4 hours per day on social media. This high engagement with social platforms aligns with existing literature, which shows that Gen-Z is digitally native and highly engaged in online spaces (Chang & Chang, 2023). The substantial time spent on these platforms creates a fertile environment for social influence, particularly through nano influencers who provide authentic and relatable content. Figure 2, presented in the analysis, reveals the significant time respondents spend on social media, with 60% of Gen-Z participants engaging with digital content for 2.5-3 hours daily. This exposure to social platforms places them in frequent contact with nano influencers, who provide more authentic, relatable, and personalized content despite having smaller followings than macro influencers or celebrities.

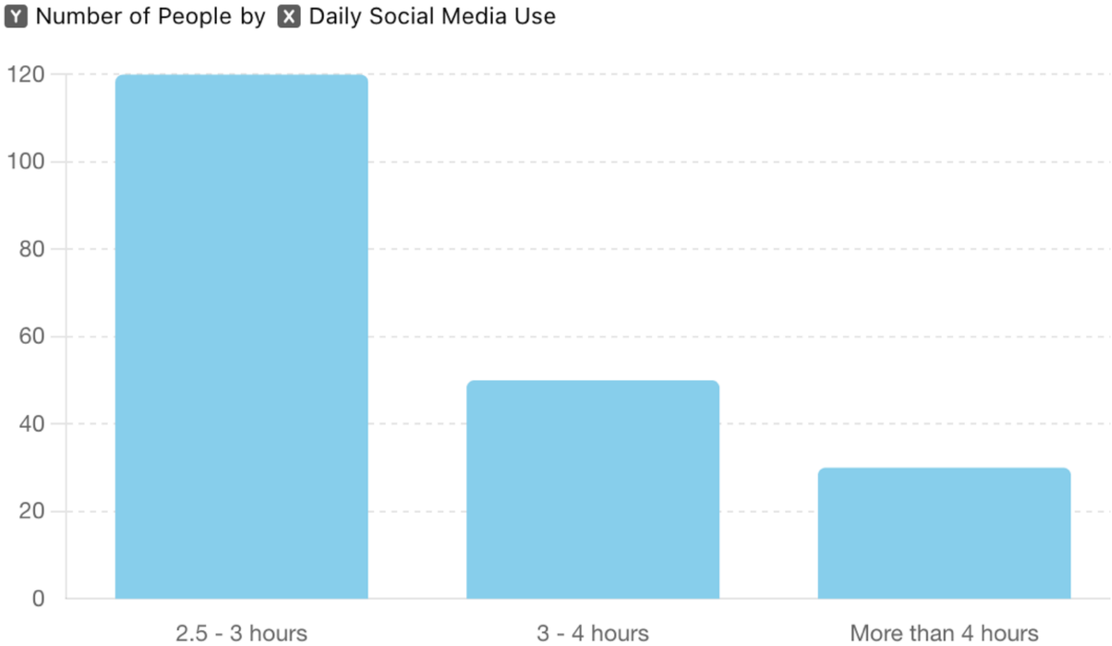

Figure 2.
Exposure To Nano Influencers Based on Daily Social Media

Nano influencers engage deeply with their followers, fostering trust and building strong parasocial relationships that resonate with Gen-Z's preference for authenticity and emotional connection in their purchasing decisions (Himelboim & Golan, 2023). This substantial daily engagement underscores the influence of nano influencers on purchasing decisions, especially within social commerce environments where peer validation and social approval are central to consumer behavior (Akram et al., 2021; She et al.,2021). As digital natives, Gen-Z is highly influenced by these social interactions, making them more likely to align their consumption with the recommendations of nano influencers, whose content feels more personal and credible.

Moreover, 25% of respondents spend 3-4 hours daily, and 15% spend more than 4 hours on social media, indicating a high level of immersion in the digital ecosystem. This significant exposure further reinforces the likelihood of nano influencers shaping Gen-Z's hedonic consumption behaviors, particularly within niche communities where tailored, value-driven content is more influential than traditional advertising methods (Soto-Vásquez & Jimenez, 2022). Given that Gen-Z thrives on emotional satisfaction and self-expression, the role of nano influencers in driving consumption in social commerce environments becomes even more pronounced. The findings align with existing research highlighting Gen-Z's digital engagement and the power of social validation in shaping their consumption behaviors (Chang & Chang, 2023). As such, marketers must recognize the increasing importance of nano influencers in reaching this influential demographic, capitalizing on their ability to generate authentic connections that traditional influencers may not achieve.

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity and reliability tests, presented in Table 3, indicate strong factor loadings for all variables, with values above 0.7, confirming the convergent validity of the measurement instruments. Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.7 across all constructs, affirming internal reliability. Notably, nano influencers exhibit high reliability ($\alpha = 0.86$), suggesting they are perceived as credible sources of influence among Gen-Z, reinforcing their role in moderating social influences (Wannewitz & Garschagen, 2024). The strong validity and reliability of the instruments underscore the robustness of the data collected for examining the relationships between social factors and hedonic consumption.

Table 3.
Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Indicator	Code	Factor Loading	Validity (≥ 0.5)	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability (≥ 0.7)
Reference Groups	Aspirational Influence	RG1	0.78	Valid		
	Trend Following	RG2	0.82	Valid		
	Consumption Decisions Influence	RG3	0.76	Valid		
	Social Validation	RG4	0.80	Valid	0.84	Reliable
Family	Family Recommendations	F1	0.75	Valid		
	Parental Influence on Consumption	F2	0.79	Valid		
	Family Involvement in Consumption	F3	0.81	Valid		
	Family Values on Consumption	F4	0.77	Valid	0.83	Reliable
Communities	Participation in Community Events	C1	0.74	Valid		
	Community Influence on Consumption	C2	0.80	Valid		
	Common Interests within Community	C3	0.78	Valid		
	Community Consumption Encouragement	C4	0.83	Valid	0.85	Reliable
Nano Influencer	Trust in Nano Influencers	NI1	0.81	Valid		
	Influence on Purchase Decisions	NI2	0.84	Valid		
	Social Media Interaction	NI3	0.77	Valid		
	Exposure to Nano Influencers' Content	NI4	0.82	Valid	0.86	Reliable
Hedonic Consumption	Purchase for Personal Pleasure	HC1	0.80	Valid		
	Luxury/Exclusive Goods Consumption	HC2	0.83	Valid		
	Impulsive Buying	HC3	0.78	Valid		
	Emotional Satisfaction from Consumption	HC4	0.81	Valid	0.84	Reliable

Table 4 presents the model fit indicators, demonstrating excellent fit values, with SRMR values below 0.05 for both the saturated and estimated models, indicating good model fit. The NFI values of 0.92 (Saturated Model) and 0.91 (Estimated Model) suggest the model is well-fitted to the data. The R^2 for Hedonic Consumption is 0.72, meaning that the social factors and nano influencer moderation explain 72% of the variance in hedonic consumption. Additionally, the predictive relevance value ($Q^2 = 0.57$) demonstrates the model has substantial predictive accuracy. These metrics indicate that the model is highly robust and provides significant insights into the role of social and influencer dynamics in shaping hedonic consumption behaviors among Gen-Z.

Table 4.
Model Fit Summary

Measure	Value
SRMR (Saturated Model)	0.045
SRMR (Estimated Model)	0.047
NFI (Saturated Model)	0.92
NFI (Estimated Model)	0.91
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	
R^2 (Hedonic Consumption)	0.72
Predictive Relevance (Q^2)	
Q^2 (Hedonic Consumption)	0.57

Table 5 presents the results of the hypothesis testing. Hypothesis H1, which asserts that reference groups, family, and communities positively influence hedonic consumption, is accepted ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the established role of social factors in consumer decision-making (Essiz & Mandrik, 2022). H2, indicating the moderating role of nano influencers on reference groups, is also accepted ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the growing relevance of nano influencers in guiding consumer preferences. Interestingly, H3, suggesting family influence moderated by nano influencers, is rejected ($\beta = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$), possibly indicating that the family's traditional role is less responsive to influencer interventions. Finally, H4, which posits that communities moderated by nano influencers positively influence hedonic consumption, is accepted ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of niche communities and peer interaction in shaping Gen-Z's consumption patterns (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2021).

Table 5.
Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (β)	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H1: Reference Groups, Family, and Communities positively influence Hedonic Consumption in Gen-Z on social commerce	0.42	7.23	0.000	Accepted
H2: Reference Groups moderated by Nano Influencers positively influence Hedonic Consumption in Gen-Z on social commerce	0.35	5.67	0.000	Accepted
H3: Family moderated by Nano Influencers positively influences Hedonic Consumption in Gen-Z on social commerce	0.09	1.45	0.151	Rejected
H4: Communities moderated by Nano Influencers positively influence Hedonic Consumption in Gen-Z on social commerce	0.39	6.01	0.000	Accepted

In summary, the study's results strongly support the idea that social factors, particularly reference groups and communities, significantly influence hedonic consumption among Gen-Z in social commerce. Nano influencers effectively moderate these relationships, particularly in peer-driven contexts, while family influence appears less sensitive to influencer moderation. These findings align with prior research on consumer behavior and the rising impact of digital influencers on purchasing patterns (Soto-Vásquez & Jimenez, 2022; Rahman et al., 2020), offering valuable insights for marketers seeking to engage with Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia. Below is a detailed discussion of the hypothesis testing results about the theoretical frameworks, prior research, and the characteristics of the respondents.

Influence of Social Factors on Hedonic Consumption

The first hypothesis (H1), posited that reference groups, family, and communities simultaneously positively affect hedonic consumption among Gen-Z in social commerce, was supported. This finding aligns with recent research emphasizing the significant role of social influence in consumer behavior (Essiz & Mandrik, 2022). Social commerce platforms like Instagram and TikTok create an environment where users are continuously exposed to their peers' consumption behaviors and lifestyles, intensifying social influence. In particular, reference groups hold substantial sway over Gen-Z, as they seek validation and identity through social conformity (Chen et al., 2021). This argument is especially valid in collectivist cultures like Indonesia, where the need for group approval further amplifies the impact of reference groups on hedonic consumption (Wilska et al., 2023). Family influence remains pivotal as well, shaped by cultural traditions and values. For instance, family plays a crucial role in holiday consumption rituals, such as gift-giving, which fosters emotional satisfaction and drives hedonic purchases (Gupta et al., 2022). This study's respondents, who come from familial backgrounds emphasizing strong social bonds, reflect the significant role of family in shaping consumption choices, particularly in the context of emotional fulfillment (Huwaida et al., 2024).

Additionally, physical or virtual communities emerged as powerful forces influencing consumer decisions. These communities, centered around shared interests such as fashion or technology, facilitate recommendation exchange and foster a sense of belonging (Müller-Pérez et al., 2023). In social commerce, these communities often congregate around product trends, encouraging members to engage in hedonic consumption based on group influence. The respondents, who are active users of social commerce and spend substantial time on social media (an average of 2.5 hours per day), are inherently exposed to these community-driven consumption patterns, further reinforcing the importance of social factors in shaping hedonic consumption behaviors (Huwaida et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). This exposure increases their susceptibility to impulsive and emotionally driven purchases, particularly when influenced by nano influencers within their reference groups and communities.

Moderating Role of Nano Influencers on Reference Groups

The second hypothesis (H2) suggested that reference groups moderated by nano influencers positively influence hedonic consumption, and this hypothesis was also accepted. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the growing influence of nano influencers due to their authenticity and deep engagement with followers (Soto-Vásquez & Jimenez, 2022). This study found that nano influencers act as trusted sources of social validation, particularly within reference groups.

For Gen-Z, who highly value authenticity and personal connections, nano influencers bridge the gap between aspirational reference groups and individual consumer behavior (Balaji et al.,2021). Nano influencers are seen as relatable figures who share similar values and lifestyles with their followers, which increases their influence on hedonic purchases. The trust that nano influencers build through consistent, genuine interactions on social platforms reinforces the group norms and encourages followers to emulate their consumption patterns. This finding is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where influencer culture is burgeoning and Gen-Z is increasingly drawn to online figures who reflect their aspirations.

Moderating Role of Nano Influencers on Family

Interestingly, the third hypothesis (H3), posited that family moderated by nano influencers positively influences hedonic consumption, was rejected. This result may reflect a shift in how Gen-Z perceives family influence compared to peer or influencer influence. Prior studies have highlighted the enduring impact of family on consumption (Gupta et al., 2022; Jaud et al.,2023), but the rejection of this hypothesis suggests that nano influencers are less effective in moderating family influence. One possible explanation is that while family remains an important source of values and traditions, Gen-Z may prioritize peer and influencer validation over family guidance regarding hedonic consumption. This trend is consistent with research suggesting that younger generations, particularly in more digital and socially connected environments, increasingly look to peers and online communities for social validation (Fülöp et al., 2023). Nano influencers, who thrive on niche audiences, may not resonate as strongly when family influences are involved, given that family values are often more deeply ingrained and tied to tradition, rather than the trend-driven nature of social commerce.

Moderating Role of Nano Influencers on Communities

The fourth hypothesis (H4) was accepted, which stated that communities moderated by nano influencers positively influence hedonic consumption. This finding is supported by the literature on the role of communities in consumption decisions (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2021). In particular, nano influencers often serve as opinion leaders within niche communities, providing product recommendations that align with the interests and values of their community members (Himelboim & Golan, 2023). In the context of this study, respondents who are part of active online communities related to fashion, food, or other lifestyle trends are likely to be influenced by nano influencers who specialize in these areas. These influencers often create content that resonates deeply with the community, encouraging hedonic purchases that fulfill emotional or social desires. In the Indonesian context, where community belonging is culturally significant, nano influencers who foster strong community engagement are particularly effective in driving hedonic consumption.

The findings of this study carry substantial implications for marketers, brands, and businesses seeking to effectively engage Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia's dynamic social commerce environment. With reference groups and communities moderated by nano influencers, emerging as key drivers of hedonic consumption, businesses must strategically harness these social dynamics to enhance their marketing impact. Nano influencers, known for their authenticity and relatable personas, hold the power to create deep, meaningful connections with Gen-Z, a generation that values genuine social validation over conventional advertising. Are marketers underestimating the influence of smaller, trusted voices? These influencers can be pivotal in targeting niche communities, fostering trust, and amplifying brand messages that resonate emotionally with younger consumers (Himelboim & Golan, 2023). To unlock the full potential of these findings, brands should prioritize community-driven marketing strategies. Campaigns that create a sense of belonging—such as loyalty programs, exclusive online groups, and interactive events—can strengthen emotional ties and drive engagement (Christanti & Kembau, 2024; Yang et al.,2024; Sandi & Atmaja, 2022). Social commerce platforms offer unique opportunities, such as live streaming, group promotions, or community challenges, to make consumers active participants in the brand experience (Attar et al.,2022). When combined with the credibility of nano influencers, these efforts can elevate emotional connections, fostering engagement and long-term loyalty among Gen-Z. This approach is not merely an option for hedonic product categories like fashion, beauty, and lifestyle—it is necessary in today's competitive marketplace.

CONCLUSIONS

This research concludes that social factors—particularly reference groups and communities—play a significant role in driving hedonic consumption among Gen-Z in Indonesia's social commerce landscape. The moderating role of nano influencers amplifies these social factors by delivering authenticity and social validation that deeply resonate with this digitally native generation. However, the diminishing influence of family in this context marks a paradigm shift. Has the time come when familial guidance is overshadowed by peer and influencer validation? For Gen-Z, it seems clear: purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by the emotional and social connections fostered by communities and trusted influencers rather than traditional familial authority. These findings urge marketers and brands to rethink their strategies. Leveraging nano influencers who align with specific reference groups or communities offers a pathway to connect with Gen-Z on a deeper, more personal level. By integrating nano influencers into campaigns that foster participation and peer validation, brands can tap into the hedonic desires of this generation and establish enduring emotional bonds.

However, this study is not without its limitations. Its focus on Gen-Z respondents in Jakarta may not fully capture the diverse cultural and economic nuances across Indonesia's vast archipelago. Would the dynamics uncovered here hold true for other regions, or do rural and smaller urban centers follow different patterns of influence? Future research should expand geographically to paint a more comprehensive picture of Indonesia's Gen-Z. Furthermore, while this study highlights nano influencers, the roles of other influencer types—such as micro and macro influencers—remain critical for exploration. Could these influencers play complementary roles in shaping different aspects of consumer behavior? Finally, as Gen-Z matures and their consumption patterns evolve, future studies should examine the long-term effects of social commerce on brand loyalty and consumer relationships. Will the trust built through nano influencers today continue to hold value as this demographic grows older and gains purchasing power?

Ultimately, this research invites marketers and scholars to embrace the potential of nano influencers not merely as alternatives but as essential players in the evolving world of social commerce. The future of influence is not solely about reach but about depth, connection, and trust. As this study demonstrates, the quiet power of nano influencers is shaping the future of digital consumption, offering brands a blueprint for navigating the complex and rapidly shifting preferences of Gen-Z.

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