The influence of unique selling proposition and value proposition through social media digital marketing on consumer preferences between local and international fashion brands: A study on generation Z in Medan City

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[1*]Pricillya Veronica, [2]Feriani Astuti Tarigan, [3]Rusdiana Br Simamora

[1,2,3] *Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen Bisnis Multi Sarana Manajemen Administrasi dan Rekayasa Teknologi - Indonesia*

e-mail:
[1*]prcllvrnca@gmail.com *(corresponding author)*
[2]ferianiastutitime@gmail.com
[3]rusdianasimamora@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of unique selling proposition (USP) and value proposition (VP) on consumer preferences among Generation Z, with social media digital marketing as a mediating variable. The research employed a quantitative approach, collecting data from 100 Generation Z respondents in Medan City and analyzing them using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that the unique selling proposition and value proposition do not have a significant direct effect on consumer preference. However, social media digital marketing significantly mediates the relationship between both independent variables and consumer preference. The model explains 29.5% of the variance in consumer preferences for local brands and 18.9% for international brands, highlighting the strategic role of digital communication in shaping purchasing behavior. The study offers theoretical insight into mediated customer behavior and provides managerial implications for digital brand strategy development.

Keywords: *Unique Selling Proposition; Value Proposition; Social Media Digital Marketing; Consumer Preference; Generation Z*

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INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry in Indonesia has experienced increasingly intense competition, particularly between local and international brands (Heriyati et al., 2024). The expansion of globalization, rapid technological advancement, and the widespread use of digital platforms have significantly transformed consumer behavior (Fandrejewska et al., 2022). In this context, Generation Z has become a highly strategic market segment due to its status as a digital native, strong adaptability to technology, and active use of social media as a primary source of information and a reference for consumption. This generation considers not only the functional aspects of products but also symbolic value, emotional value, and brand image in shaping their consumption preferences (Solomon, 2022).

Consumer preference refers to an individual's tendency to select one brand over an alternative based on overall evaluation, perceived value, and accumulated experiences (Hoyer et al., 2023). In the fashion sector, consumer preference among Generation Z is often influenced by perceptions of brand prestige, trend alignment, and social recognition. International brands are frequently perceived as more prestigious and trend-oriented, while local brands face the challenge of strengthening their competitiveness through effective differentiation and value communication.

One strategic approach to enhancing competitiveness is to formulate a clear and compelling unique selling proposition (USP) (Caldieraro & Cunha, 2022). A unique selling proposition represents the distinctive advantage that differentiates a product from its competitors and provides a specific reason for consumers to choose a particular brand (Hermanni & Joachim, 2023). In addition to product uniqueness, value proposition is another crucial factor. A strong value proposition (VP) is essential in conveying the functional, emotional, and social benefits offered to consumers (Osterwalder et al., 2021). When properly communicated, both USP and VP can shape positive brand perceptions and influence consumer decision-making.

A value proposition describes the core promise and key benefits offered by a company to meet customer needs and solve their problems (Rosario & Raimundo, 2021). These values may include functional, emotional, and social benefits that shape positive brand perceptions. Muzhaffar et al., (2023) found that value proposition significantly influences purchase intention in fashion products, particularly through symbolic value, which aligns closely with the characteristics of Generation Z consumers. In the digital era, the effectiveness of a unique selling proposition and value proposition largely depends on how they are communicated through digital social media marketing.

Social media functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a strategic digital channel that enhances engagement and influences business performance, as evidenced by Victor et al., (2024), who found that digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on business income. For Generation Z, platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serve as primary sources of fashion information, making digital content strategically important in shaping brand preferences. Previous studies have demonstrated that social media content positively affects Generation Z's consumer preferences (Wardiati, 2023). Furthermore, Collins et al., (2023) explain that Generation Z's fashion consumption behavior is strongly influenced by exposure to visual content, digital interaction, and authentic brand narratives on social media. These findings indicate that digital social media marketing may act as a mediating variable, strengthening the influence of the unique selling proposition and value proposition on consumer preference.

Although previous studies have examined the effects of unique selling propositions, value propositions, and digital marketing separately, there remains a research gap in integrating these three variables simultaneously, particularly in

comparing preferences for local and international fashion brands among Generation Z consumers. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of unique selling proposition and value proposition on consumer preference, both directly and indirectly through social media digital marketing as a mediating variable, among Generation Z in Medan City.

This study aims to contribute theoretically to the development of marketing management literature, especially regarding differentiation strategies and value communication in the digital era, as well as provide practical implications for local brands in designing more effective marketing strategies to improve Generation Z consumer preferences.

LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH FRAMEWORK, AND HYPOTHESES

Unique Selling Proposition

A unique selling proposition (USP) functions as a strategic differentiation mechanism that enables a brand to stand out within a competitive market environment (Majka, 2024). Rather than merely highlighting product uniqueness, a USP must articulate advantages that are perceived as relevant, credible, and meaningful by the target market. In the fashion industry, where competition is highly saturated (Rizaldy & Supiansyah, 2023), differentiation becomes a key factor in influencing brand positioning. When consumers clearly recognize and internalize a brand's distinct attributes, the likelihood of forming favorable preferences increases.

Value Proposition

Value Proposition (VP) represents the bundle of benefits and value offered by a company to meet customer needs and solve their problems (Osterwalder et al., 2021). It includes functional value, emotional value, and social value (Kotler & Keller, 2024). In the fashion industry, a value proposition encompasses not only product quality and price but also brand image, emotional attachment, and social recognition. A well-communicated value proposition can strengthen consumer perception and enhance consumers' evaluation of a brand (Zhang et al., 2024).

Social Media Digital Marketing

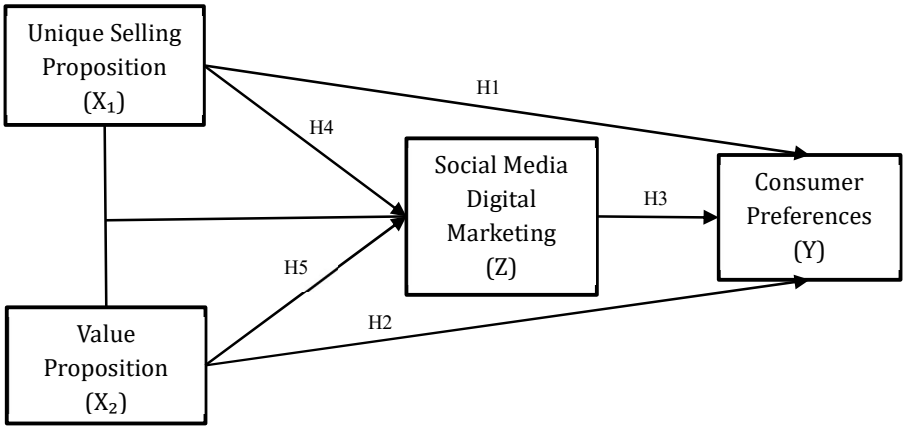
Social media digital marketing encompasses structured marketing activities conducted through interactive online platforms to promote brands and foster consumer engagement (Tuten & Solomon, 2021). Unlike traditional communication channels, social media enables dynamic interaction, visual storytelling, and continuous relationship building. For Generation Z, whose consumption journey is strongly embedded in digital ecosystems, effective social media strategies significantly shape brand awareness, consumer engagement, and brand preference (Kusuma et al., 2024; Laksamana et al., 2025)

Consumer Preference

Consumer preference represents an evaluative inclination toward a particular brand compared to available alternatives (Kotler & Keller, 2024). Preferences are shaped by experience, exposure to information, and marketing communication. In the digital era, online content and brand interactions significantly shape preference formation, especially among Generation Z (Le & My, 2024).

Research Framework

This study proposes that the unique selling proposition and value proposition influence consumer preference both directly and indirectly through social media digital marketing. Digital social media marketing acts as a mediating variable, strengthening the communication of brand uniqueness and value to Generation Z consumers. The proposed relationships among these variables and the corresponding hypotheses are illustrated in Figure 1.



Source: Processed by the Author, 2026

Figure 1
Research Framework

Hypotheses

Based on the proposed structural relationships, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- *H_1: Unique selling proposition positively affects consumer preference for local and international fashion brands among Generation Z consumers in Medan City.*
- *H_2: Value proposition positively affects consumer preference for local and international fashion brands among Generation Z consumers in Medan City.*
- *H_3: Social media digital marketing positively affects consumer preference for local and international fashion brands among Generation Z consumers in Medan City.*
- *H_4: Unique selling proposition has a significant indirect effect on consumer preference through social media digital marketing among Generation Z consumers in Medan City.*
- *H_5: Value proposition has a significant indirect effect on consumer preference through social media digital marketing among Generation Z consumers in Medan City.*

METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach to examine the structural relationships among unique selling proposition, value proposition, digital social media marketing, and consumer preference. A quantitative approach was employed to empirically examine the relationships among the variables and assess direct and indirect effects using PLS-SEM (Guenther et al., 2023).

This research is explanatory in nature, seeking to explain the causal relationships among the independent variables (unique selling proposition and value proposition), the

mediating variable (social media digital marketing), and the dependent variable (consumer preference).

The study focuses on Generation Z consumers in Medan City who actively use social media and have experience purchasing fashion products from both local and international brands. The study specifically analyzes consumer preferences toward fashion brands in the context of digital marketing exposure.

The target population consists of Generation Z individuals residing in Medan City. Given the absence of precise data regarding the total number of eligible respondents who meet the study criteria, the population is treated as infinite.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents satisfied predetermined criteria (Memon et al., 2024): individuals aged 17–25 years, active users of social media, and consumers with purchasing experience in fashion products from either local or international brands. A total of 100 valid responses were collected and included in the analysis.

The determination of the required sample size followed the guideline proposed by Hair et al., (2021) for the application of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The recommendation suggests that the minimum number of observations should be proportional to the total indicators employed in the measurement model, generally ranging between five and ten respondents per indicator. This proportional approach ensures sufficient statistical power for estimating both the measurement and structural models.

Primary data were obtained through an online questionnaire distributed to eligible respondents. Measurement items were structured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Likert scale is widely applied in social research to capture perceptions and evaluative responses Sugiyono (2023), The instrument items were adapted from established literature and adjusted to align with the research context.

Assessment of the outer model was conducted to evaluate construct validity and reliability. Convergent validity was examined through outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where loading values of 0.70 or higher and AVE values above 0.50 indicate adequate representation of the latent constructs (Hair et al., 2021).

Discriminant validity was verified using cross-loading analysis and the Fornell–Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct demonstrates conceptual distinctiveness. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, with threshold values of 0.70 considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2021).

Hypothesis testing was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), which indicates the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by the predictor constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The significance of the hypothesized paths was assessed using bootstrapping procedures. Path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values were examined to determine the statistical significance of the proposed relationships (Guenther et al., 2023).

Prior to conducting group comparisons, measurement invariance was assessed using the Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) procedure. The evaluation included testing for configural invariance, compositional invariance through permutation procedures ($p > 0.05$), and equality of composite means and variances based on confidence interval assessment. Establishing partial invariance is considered sufficient for subsequent multi-group comparisons (Liengaard, 2024).

Multi-Group Analysis was applied to examine potential differences in structural relationships between local and international fashion brand groups. After confirming measurement invariance, MGA was performed to compare path coefficients across groups and identify statistically significant variations (Cheah et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Testing

Validity Test Results

Convergent validity was evaluated by examining the outer loading values of each indicator, reflecting the extent to which observed items represent their respective latent constructs.

The outer loading values for each indicator are presented in Table 1 to assess the convergent validity of the measurement model.

Table 1
Convergent Validity Prior to Elimination

Variable	Item	Outer Loading
Unique Selling Proposition	USP.1	0.774
	USP.2	0.810
	USP.3	0.850
	USP.4	0.789
	USP.5	0.838
	USP.6	0.787
	USP.7	0.702
Value Proposition	VP.1	0.779
	VP.2	0.773
	VP.3	0.724
	VP.4	0.837
	VP.5	0.823
	VP.6	0.835
Social Media Digital Marketing	SMDM.1	0.610
	SMDM.2	0.670
	SMDM.3	0.734
	SMDM.4	0.729
	SMDM.5	0.770
	SMDM.6	0.650
Consumer Preferences	CP.1	0.705
	CP.2	0.809
	CP.3	0.764
	CP.4	0.822
	CP.5	0.753
	CP.6	0.865
	CP.7	0.812

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

An examination of Table 1 indicates that most indicators meet the recommended loading threshold. However, three items display loading values below 0.70, suggesting insufficient contribution to construct representation. These indicators were therefore excluded to improve measurement quality.

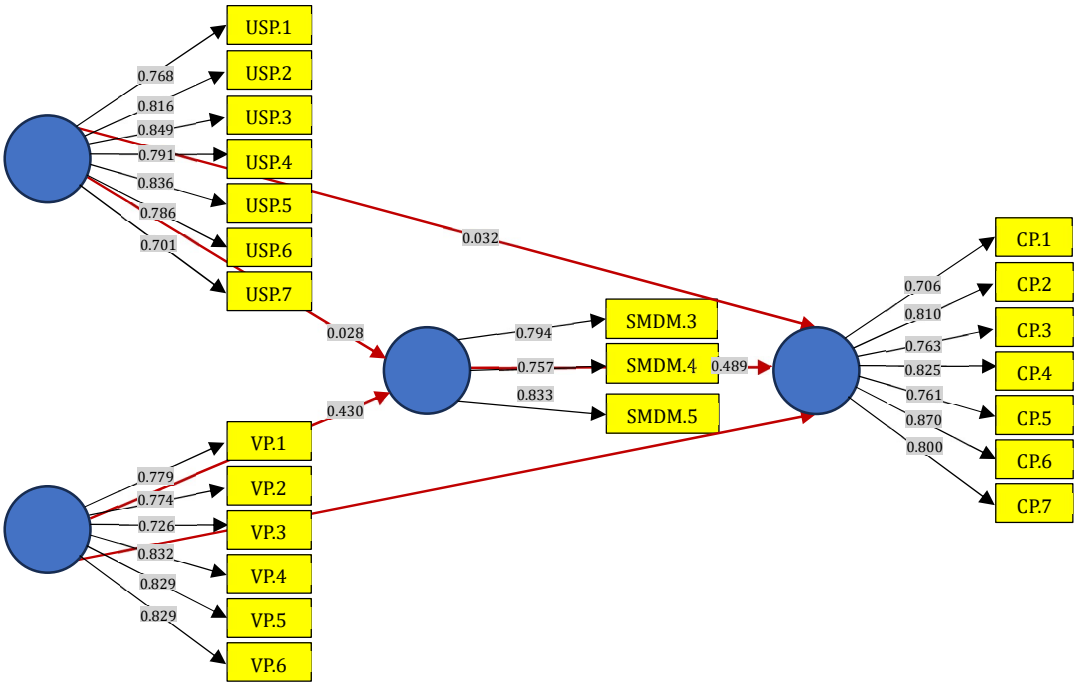
The revised outer loading values after the removal of these indicators are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Convergent Validity After Removal

Variable	Item	Outer Loading
Unique Selling Proposition	USP.1	0.768
	USP.2	0.816
	USP.3	0.849
	USP.4	0.791
	USP.5	0.836
	USP.6	0.786
	USP.7	0.701
Value Proposition	VP.1	0.779
	VP.2	0.774
	VP.3	0.726
	VP.4	0.832
	VP.5	0.829
	VP.6	0.829
Social Media Digital Marketing	SMDM.3	0.794
	SMDM.4	0.757
	SMDM.5	0.833
Consumer Preferences	CP.1	0.706
	CP.2	0.810
	CP.3	0.763
	CP.4	0.825
	CP.5	0.761
	CP.6	0.870
	CP.7	0.800

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

The measurement model results are illustrated in Figure 2.



Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Figure 2
Outer Loading

According to Table 2 and Figure 2, after removing indicators with loading factors below 0.70, all remaining items have loading factors above 0.70 and are thus deemed valid. The convergent validity results based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE
Social Media Digital Marketing	0.633
Consumer Preferences	0.628
Unique Selling Proposition	0.630
Value Proposition	0.633

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

The table's results indicate that all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.50, demonstrating that the constructs satisfy the necessary criteria. The subsequent step involves comparing the square root of the AVE with the correlations among the constructs in the model.

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, with the results provided in Table 4.

Table 4
Correlation Between Constructs and the Square Root of AVE

Unique Selling Proposition	Value Proposition	Consumer Preferences	Social Media Digital Marketing
0.794			
0.340	0.796		
0.264	0.274	0.792	
0.475	0.542	0.503	0.796

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

According to Table 4, the correlation values between the square root of AVE for each construct exceed their correlations with other constructs, demonstrating that discriminant validity is established.

Reliability Test Results

Model evaluation involves reviewing the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha of the latent variables. A construct is considered reliable if both these metrics exceed 0.70. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5
Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Unique Selling Proposition	0.922	0.903
Value Proposition	0.912	0.888
Consumer Preferences	0.922	0.901
Social Media Digital Marketing	0.838	0.717

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

According to Table 5, all constructs exhibit strong reliability, with both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.70. If the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50, the construct meets the required criterion. The AVE test results are provided in Table 3.

Hypothesis Testing

The process of hypothesis testing is outlined in Table 6:

Table 6
Coefficient of Determination (R^2) – Local Brand and International Brand

Variable	R^2 Local Brand	R^2 International Brand
Social Media Digital Marketing	0.385	0.509
Consumer Preferences	0.295	0.189

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

For the local brand model, the R^2 value social media digital marketing indicates that a substantial proportion of its variance is explained by the exogenous constructs. However, consumer preference demonstrates relatively limited explanatory power, suggesting that additional variables beyond the current model may influence preference formation. In the international brand model, the R^2 value for social media digital marketing is 0.509, indicating it explains 50.9% of the variance and has moderate explanatory power. In contrast, the R^2 for consumer preference is 0.189, showing it accounts for only 18.9% of the variance and has relatively weak explanatory power for this variable.

The direct effects of the hypothesized relationships for local and international brands are presented in Tables 7 and 8, respectively.

Table 7
Path Coefficients Output (Direct Effect) - Local Brand

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
(H_1) X1 → Y	0.049	0.251	0.801	Rejected
(H_2) X2 → Y	0.079	0.450	0.653	Rejected
(H_3) Z → Y	0.472	2.926	0.003	Accepted

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Table 8
Path Coefficients Output (Direct Effect) - International Brand

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
(H_1) X1 → Y	0.047	0.240	0.810	Rejected
(H_2) X2 → Y	-0.069	0.365	0.715	Rejected
(H_3) Z → Y	0.457	2.681	0.007	Accepted

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Direct Effects Analysis

Unique Selling Proposition on Consumer Preference

The statistical results indicate that the direct relationship between unique selling proposition and consumer preference is not significant in both local and international brand groups ($T < 1.96$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H_1 is not supported. This finding diverges from Majka, 2024 and Arianty et al., 2025, who reported a positive association between

differentiation strategies and purchase decisions. The discrepancy suggests that, for Generation Z, perceived uniqueness alone does not automatically translate into preference. Uniqueness may exist at a conceptual level but fails to influence evaluation unless effectively communicated and contextualized. This implies that differentiation without amplification lacks persuasive impact in digitally saturated markets.

Value Proposition on Consumer Preference

The direct path from value proposition to consumer preference is also statistically insignificant for both brand categories ($T < 1.96$; $p > 0.05$), leading to the rejection of H_2.

Although value propositions theoretically encompass functional, emotional, and symbolic benefits Muzhaffar et al., (2023), these dimensions do not directly shape preference in this sample. This suggests that value is not self-evident to Generation Z consumers. Instead, value requires translation into narratives, experiences, or social validation before influencing attitudes.

In other words, value articulation without mediated exposure does not sufficiently drive preference formation.

Social Media Digital Marketing on Consumer Preference

In contrast, social media digital marketing demonstrates a positive and statistically significant effect on consumer preference for both local and international brands ($T > 1.96$; $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, H_3 is supported.

This result reinforces prior findings Muzhaffar et al., (2023), highlighting the centrality of digital platforms in shaping Generation Z consumption patterns. For local brands, digital engagement enhances visibility and relational closeness. For international brands, it reinforces brand positioning and global identity consistency.

The implication is clear: digital channels function not merely as communication tools but as primary environments where brand meaning is constructed and validated.

The indirect effects of the hypothesized relationships through social media digital marketing for local and international brands are reported in Tables 9 and 10, respectively.

Table 9
Path Coefficients Output (Indirect Effect) - Local Brand

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
(H_4) X1→Z→Y	0.184	2.142	0.032	Accepted
(H_5) X2→Z→ Y	0.173	1.640	0.101	Rejected

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Table 10
Path Coefficients Output (Indirect Effect) - International Brand

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
(H_4) X1→Z→Y	0.106	1.560	0.119	Rejected
(H_5) X2→Z→Y	0.275	2.314	0.021	Accepted

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)

The Mediating Role of Social Media Digital Marketing in the Relationship between Unique Selling Proposition and Consumer Preference

For local brands, the indirect path from unique selling proposition to consumer preference through social media digital marketing is statistically significant ($T > 1.96$, $p <$

0.05), supporting H_4. This indicates that brand uniqueness becomes influential when mediated through digital communication.

For international brands, this indirect relationship is not significant. The absence of mediation suggests that international brands may already possess established symbolic capital, reducing reliance on digital platforms to legitimize uniqueness.

This contrast highlights that local brands depend more heavily on digital amplification to transform differentiation into preference.

The Mediating Role of Social Media Digital Marketing in the Relationship between Value Proposition and Consumer Preference

For international brands, the indirect effect of value proposition on consumer preference through social media digital marketing is statistically significant ($T > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_5. This indicates that digital platforms effectively translate perceived value into consumer evaluation for global brands.

For local brands, the mediation effect is not significant. This may imply that value communication strategies for local brands lack persuasive strength or consistency within digital ecosystems.

Thus, while international brands successfully convert value into preference through digital channels, local brands may require stronger narrative framing or engagement strategies.

MICOM (Measurement Invariance of Composite Models)

The MICOM test was performed to verify measurement equivalence between local and international brand groups, enabling valid comparisons. The assessment of compositional invariance in MICOM Step 2 is presented in Table 11.

Table 11
MICOM Step 2 (Compositional Invariance)

Variable	Original Correlation	Correlation Permutation Mean	5.0%	Permutation P-Value
Social Media Digital Marketing	0.992	0.992	0.977	0.373
Consumer Preferences	0.998	0.987	0.965	0.918
Unique Selling Proposition	0.998	0.989	0.976	0.972
Value Proposition	0.992	0.992	0.978	0.326

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Based on Table 11, MICOM Step 2 (compositional invariance) shows that all constructs have original correlations close to the permutation mean and p-values > 0.05, indicating no compositional differences between local and international brands, and that invariance is met, allowing valid group comparisons.The subsequent MICOM assessment of composite mean and variance equality is summarized in Table 12.

Table 12
MICOM Step 3a (Mean Invariance)

	Original Difference	Permutation Mean Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation P-Value
Social Media Digital Marketing	0.111	0.008	-0.378	0.415	0.615
Consumer Preferences	-0.019	0.002	-0.384	0.382	0.923
Unique Selling Proposition	-0.036	-0.007	-0.416	0.404	0.859
Value Proposition	0.065	0.005	-0.392	0.408	0.752

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Table 12 shows that MICOM Step 3a (mean invariance) results indicate that all constructs have permutation p-values > 0.05 and original differences within the 2.5%–97.5% confidence interval, indicating no significant mean differences between local and international brands and thus meeting the criterion for mean invariance.

The assessment of variance invariance in MICOM Step 3b is summarized in Table 13.

Table 13
MICOM Step 3b (Variance Invariance)

	Original Difference	Permutation Mean Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation P-Value
Social Media Digital Marketing	-0.260	0.017	-0.643	0.673	0.443
Consumer Preferences	-0.020	0.033	-0.672	0.737	0.960
Unique Selling Proposition	-0.216	0.022	-0.476	0.548	0.421
Value Proposition	0.030	0.013	-0.537	0.579	0.922

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

Table 13 shows that MICOM Step 3b (variance invariance) results indicate that all constructs have permutation p-values > 0.05, indicating no significant variance differences between local and international brands and thus fulfilling variance invariance.

Based on the MICOM test results, the research constructs meet the criteria for adequate measurement invariance, so Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) can be conducted and interpreted validly.

Multi-Group Analysis (MGA)

A Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) was conducted to explore potential differences in the effects of variables between local and international fashion brand groups. The MGA, performed using bootstrapping, revealed that all p-values for the relationships between variables exceeded 0.05, indicating no significant differences between the groups.

The MGA results for the relationships between the variables are summarized in Table 14.

Table 14
Multi-Group Analysis (MGA)

Indicator	Original (LOCAL)	Original (INTERNATIONAL)	Difference (INTERNATIONAL - LOCAL)	1-tailed (INTERNATIONAL vs LOCAL) p value	2-tailed (INTERNATIONAL vs LOCAL) p value
X1→Y	0.049	0.057	0.008	0.477	0.955
X1→Z	0.390	0.226	-0.164	0.855	0.289
X2→Y	0.079	-0.070	-0.149	0.729	0.541
X2→Z	0.366	0.604	0.238	0.062	0.124
Z→Y	0.472	0.454	-0.017	0.521	0.958

Source: Analyzed by the author using SmartPLS 4, 2026

According to the MGA results, all p-values exceeded 0.05, indicating there are no significant differences in how the unique selling proposition, value proposition, and social media digital marketing influence consumer preference between local and international fashion brands. Although some paths showed slightly higher effects for either local or international brands, the differences were not statistically significant. Overall, the findings suggest that brand origin does not substantially differentiate Generation Z

consumer preferences. Instead, consumers respond primarily to the clarity of the unique selling proposition, the strength of the value proposition, and the effectiveness of social media digital marketing. This indicates that local brands have equal opportunities to build consumer preference if they can effectively communicate their brand value and uniqueness through digital channels.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on empirical analysis, Unique Selling Proposition and Value Proposition do not exert a significant direct effect on Consumer Preference for either local or international fashion brands among Generation Z in Medan. However, both variables significantly influence social media digital marketing, which in turn has a significant effect on Consumer Preference.

These findings indicate that brand differentiation and perceived value alone are insufficient to directly shape consumer preference in a digitally driven market. Instead, their impact becomes meaningful when effectively communicated through social media platforms. Furthermore, the Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) reveals no significant differences in structural relationships between local and international brands, suggesting that Generation Z responds similarly to digital marketing dynamics regardless of brand origin.

Given these findings, brands should prioritize strengthening their social media digital marketing strategies to effectively communicate their unique selling proposition and value proposition. Digital engagement, interactive content, and consistent online presence are critical in influencing Generation Z consumer preferences.

Future research is encouraged to incorporate additional variables, such as brand image, brand trust, price perception, and customer loyalty, to enhance the model's explanatory power. Expanding the research scope to larger samples or different regions would also improve generalizability and provide deeper insight into consumer behavior across diverse market contexts.

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