



The role of brand authenticity in enhancing consumer trust in msme products

Muhamad Malik Mutoffar

Department Teknik Informatika, Universitas Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Consumer trust is increasingly important for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in social-commerce environments, where consumers face uncertainty regarding product quality, seller credibility, and brand claims. However, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust among Indonesian MSMEs on TikTok Shop remains limited. This study aims to examine the relationship between perceived brand authenticity and consumer trust in MSME products sold through TikTok Shop. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 152 TikTok Shop users selected using purposive sampling. Respondents were active TikTok users aged 17 years or older who had purchased MSME products through TikTok Shop within the previous three months. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using simple linear regression after validity, reliability, normality, and heteroscedasticity assessments. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust, with a regression coefficient of 0.687 and a significance value of $p < 0.001$. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.472 indicates that brand authenticity explains 47.2% of the observed variance in consumer trust, while the remaining 52.8% is associated with factors outside the model. These findings extend research on brand authenticity and consumer trust in the Indonesian MSME social-commerce context and suggest that authentic brand communication can strengthen consumer confidence. However, the cross-sectional design and purposive sampling limit causal inference and generalization.

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Corresponding Author:

Muhamad Malik Mutoffar,
Departement Teknik Informatika,
Universitas Teknologi Bandung,
Jl. Soekarno-Hatta No. 378 Bandung, Jawa Barat, 40235, Indonesia
Email: malik@utb-univ.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer trust has become a critical determinant of business sustainability in the digital marketplace, particularly for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that face limitations in establishing reputation compared with large and established brands (Prihanto & Utomo, 2023; Yasik et al., 2025). Digital transformation has opened up new

ways for small businesses to promote their products using online marketplaces and social media, such as TikTok Shop (Faridi & Kartono, 2024; Naisabur et al., 2024; Puwaningwulan et al., 2024). As an integrated shopping feature on TikTok, TikTok Shop has emerged as a popular digital marketplace that enables businesses to promote and sell their products directly to consumers through engaging, creative video content (Dinansyah et al., 2024; Sholikhah et al., 2023). However, amid the increasing number and variety of products offered on the platform, one of the major challenges faced by MSMEs is establishing and maintaining consumer trust (Mubarok et al., 2025; Mutoffar et al., 2024). Such trust may be undermined by consumers' perceptions of poor product quality, limited information about brands and sellers, and the widespread presence of counterfeit or imitation products (Hadi, 2022; Mendrofa, 2024).

The relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust can be explained through Signaling Theory. In digital marketplace environments characterized by information asymmetry, consumers often lack complete information regarding product quality, seller credibility, and brand intentions (Lee & Giovanni, 2024; Lusianti et al., 2024). Brand quality plays a crucial role in fostering consumer trust and loyalty (Alyani et al., 2023; Panyekar, 2024; Septyani et al., 2023; Wiadi et al., 2023). Existing studies have predominantly investigated brand credibility, brand image, brand quality, or brand trust within conventional marketplace settings or established brands (Agustian et al., 2023; Muhammad, 2024; Rozzaqi, 2024). However, less attention has been given to how consumers construct trust toward MSME brands operating in social commerce environments where personal interaction, visual narratives, and perceived genuineness become important evaluation mechanisms. TikTok Shop represents a distinctive research context compared with conventional marketplaces such as Shopee or Tokopedia. This research differs from previous studies on brand credibility, brand quality, and brand image because it focuses on authenticity as a relational and symbolic mechanism that explains how consumers develop trust toward relatively unknown MSME brands.

A review of the literature indicates that previous studies have primarily examined the relationship between brand credibility and consumer trust within short-form video-based social media environments, such as TikTok Shop (Fauziah et al., 2024; Lestari, 2022; Ribhi et al., 2023; Sunarso et al., 2023). Moreover, marketing approaches adopted by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) often overlook the importance of developing an authentic brand identity (Haryati et al., 2023; Rozzaqi, 2024). As a result, MSMEs may face difficulties in competing with products offered by large and well-established brands that already possess strong market reputations. Therefore, further research is needed to specifically investigate how perceptions of brand authenticity can be developed and leveraged to enhance consumer trust in MSME products within a dynamic digital environment.

This study suggests using numbers to look at how realness of a brand affects how much customers trust it when shopping on TikTok Shop. This study will look at how different aspects of brand authenticity, like transparency, honesty, brand history, and originality, help build trust among consumers who buy MSME products on the platform. It uses data from a survey of actual customers who purchase these products. This method aims to give a better understanding that is more connected to real situations and useful for MSMEs to create strong branding plans in the digital world.

Theoretically, this study contributes by extending the application of brand authenticity theory within the context of social commerce and MSME digital marketing, an area that remains relatively underexplored in the academic literature, particularly in relation to MSMEs in Indonesia. The results are likely to help build theory in digital marketing research and also give useful ideas for small and medium businesses practitioners in developing trustworthy and sustainable brands within the digital marketplace.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study develops a conceptual model to examine the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust in MSME products sold through TikTok Shop Indonesia. Based on Signalling Theory, brand authenticity is considered an antecedent variable that reduces information uncertainty and strengthens consumer confidence in digital marketplace environments.

Brand authenticity was measured using four dimensions: transparency, honesty, originality, and brand identity consistency. Consumer trust was measured through consumers' confidence in product safety, fulfilment of brand promises, brand reliability, and positive brand reputation. The repurchase intention indicator was removed from the consumer trust construct because repurchase intention represents behavioural intention and loyalty rather than a direct dimension of consumer trust.

The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies on brand authenticity and consumer trust and adjusted to the TikTok Shop MSME context. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

A total of 152 respondents who had purchased MSME products through TikTok Shop participated in this study. Data analysis consisted of measurement model evaluation and hypothesis testing. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess construct validity by examining standardised factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

The conceptual model illustrates the proposed relationship between Brand Authenticity and Consumer Trust based on Signaling Theory. Brand authenticity, represented by four dimensions transparency, honesty, originality, and brand identity consistency is proposed to positively influence consumer trust. Consumer trust is reflected through five indicators: trust in product safety, confidence in brand promises, brand reliability, repurchase confidence, and positive reputation perception. The model suggests that authentic brand signals reduce consumer uncertainty and strengthen trust in MSME products marketed through TikTok Shop.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research looks at how brand authenticity influences consumer trust when small businesses sell their products on TikTok Shop. Data was gathered from 152 people using an online survey that included a questionnaire which had been checked and proven to be reliable. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.

Table 1. Measurement Scale Results for Brand Authenticity

No	Brand Authenticity Indicators	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	This product reflects an honest brand personality	4.32	Strongly Agree
2	This product is marketed in a consistent and non-exaggerated manner	4.18	Agree
3	This product demonstrates a high degree of originality	4.10	Agree
4	This brand demonstrates integrity in its communication with consumers.	4.26	Strongly Agree
5	This MSME brand maintains its heritage and identity.	4.05	Agree
Overall Mean Score of Brand Authenticity		4.18	Agree

Brand authenticity obtained an overall mean score of 4.18, which falls within the "Agree" category and is close to the "Strongly Agree" category. This finding indicates that the majority of respondents have a positive perception of the authenticity of MSME brands marketed through TikTok Shop. Respondents perceived these products as demonstrating honesty, consistency in brand values, and a strong sense of originality.

This perception serves as an important indication that MSMEs' efforts to establish authentic brand identities on digital platforms have been relatively successful and are positively appreciated by consumers. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement to achieve a consistently "Strongly Agree" level of perception across all indicators.

Table 2. Measurement Scale Results for Consumer Trust

No	Brand Authenticity Indicators	Mean Score	Interpretation
1	I trust that this product is safe to purchase	4.21	Agree
2	I believe that this product is consistent with what has been promised	4.14	Agree
3	I consider this brand to be trustworthy	4.36	Strongly Agree
4	I have no hesitation in repurchasing this product	4.08	Agree
5	This brand has a good reputation on TikTok Shop	4.19	Agree
Rata-rata Total Kepercayaan Konsumen		4.20	Agree

Consumer Trust received an average score of 4.20, which is in the "Strongly Agree" range, showing that most respondents had a high level of trust in small business products bought through TikTok Shop. This finding suggests that consumers feel secure, satisfied, and confident in the quality of the products as well as in the commitments made by the brands. The high level of consumer trust also reflects the ability of MSMEs to build a positive reputation and brand image within the digital marketplace. Consumer trust represents a fundamental basis for developing long-term loyalty; therefore, this result serves as an important indicator for the implementation of sustainable relationship-based marketing strategies.

3.1 Validity and Reliability Test

The tool used to collect data was checked to make sure it gives correct and dependable results every time. The validity test was done using the item-total correlation method, which looks at how each question on the questionnaire relates to the total score of the group of questions that measure the same idea. The results showed that every question in the questionnaire had a correlation score higher than 0.30. This shows that every item used in the study was suitable and accurate for measuring the variables being studied.

The reliability of the research tool was checked using Cronbach's Alpha. After running the reliability test, we got the Cronbach's Alpha scores like this:

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Brand authenticity	0.871	Reliabel
Consumer Trust	0.896	Reliabel

The Cronbach's Alpha scores for all the variables in this study were above 0.70, showing that the tools used had a strong level of internal consistency. This finding suggests that the questionnaire items were sufficiently correlated with one another and were able to reliably measure the intended constructs. Fryer states that an alpha value above 0.70 meets the commonly accepted criterion for reliability in social research (Lusianti et al., 2024). Therefore, the Alpha value of Cronbach, which exceeds this threshold, indicates that the data collection instrument has a strong internal consistency and that the results are considered reliable for further statistical analysis.

3.2 Classical Assumption Testing and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Before performing multiple linear regression analyses, classical assumptions were first examined to ensure that the regression model meets the relevant statistical requirements and is suitable for further analysis. The classic hypothesis tests included

the tests of normality, multicollinearity, and heterogeneity. These procedures were undertaken to support the reliability and appropriateness of the regression estimates. Normalization tests are conducted to determine whether residuals are normally distributed. The multicollinearity test was used to assess the existence of strong correlations between independent variables in the model, while the heterogeneity test was used to test whether the residual variable remained unchanged during the observation. If these hypotheses are sufficiently satisfied, the regression model can be more reliably interpreted, thus supporting valid and reliable conclusions in the context of this study.

a. Normality Test

A normality test was carried out to assess whether the residuals in the regression model followed a normal distribution. This step is crucial, as failing to meet the normality assumption can compromise the reliability of statistical conclusions, especially the p-values derived from t-tests and F-tests. When residuals are not normally distributed, the precision of parameter estimates may decrease, which in turn can influence how the regression results are interpreted. In this research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to evaluate normality, with a significance level set at 5%.

Table 4. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test)

Variable	Test Statistic	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Residual (Unstandardized)	0.072	0.200	Normal

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yields a significance value of 0.200, exceeding the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the residuals from the regression model follow a normal distribution, meeting a fundamental assumption of multiple linear regression. Normality of residuals supports the accuracy of statistical inferences and the stability of estimated parameters. As a result, the model is deemed suitable for conducting hypothesis tests. Meeting this assumption also enhances confidence in the model's ability to accurately represent the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust.

b. Multicollinearity Test

To check for strong interrelationships among the independent variables in the regression model, a multicollinearity analysis was performed. When multicollinearity is high, the estimates of regression coefficients can become unreliable and difficult to interpret, as the predictors are too closely related. This undermines the ability to accurately assess the unique contribution of each variable. In this research, multicollinearity was evaluated using two measures: Tolerance and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Brand authenticity	0.874	1.144	No multicollinearity detected

The analysis shows that the independent variable has a tolerance greater than 0.10 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) below 10, indicating that multicollinearity is not a significant issue in the regression model. This means the variable is not so highly correlated with other predictors that it distorts the regression estimates. Consequently, the model remains stable enough to reliably examine the relationships between variables. The absence of strong multicollinearity supports more trustworthy interpretations of the regression coefficients and strengthens confidence in the study's overall results.

c. Heteroscedasticity Test

A heteroscedasticity test was performed to evaluate whether the residual variance stayed consistent across all observation levels. If heteroscedasticity is present, it can undermine the efficiency of the regression model and compromise the accuracy of statistical conclusions. In this research, the Glejser Test was employed to detect potential heteroscedasticity.

Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test Results (Glejser Test)

Independent Variable	Sig. (Glejser)	Interpretation
Brand authenticity	0.211	No multicollinearity detected

The Glejser Test was used to assess heteroscedasticity. The findings reveal that the p-value associated with the independent variable exceeds 0.05, suggesting no significant signs of heteroscedasticity in the model. Furthermore, the scatterplot of residuals displays a random dispersion of points around the horizontal axis, without any discernible pattern, which reinforces the idea of stable variance. As a result, the assumption of homoscedasticity is met, and the regression model is deemed suitable for subsequent statistical evaluation.

3.3 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Once the classical assumptions normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity were met, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed to investigate how brand authenticity affects consumer trust in MSME products on TikTok Shop. The purpose of this analysis was to evaluate the combined and individual effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, as well as to measure how much of the variation in consumer trust could be explained by the independent variable(s). The assessment incorporated the coefficient of determination, along with F-test and t-test results.

a. Coefficient of Determination (Model Summary)

The coefficient of determination was employed to assess how much of the variation in the dependent variable is accounted for by the independent variable(s) in the regression model. It reflects the model's ability to explain the observed outcomes and how well it fits the data. A higher R^2 value suggests that the independent variable(s) explain a larger share of the variability in the dependent variable.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.687	0.472	0.466	0.413

An R Square value of 0.472 shows that 47.2% of the variability in consumer trust toward MSME products on TikTok Shop can be attributed to brand authenticity. This implies that how consumers perceive a brand's authenticity plays a significant role in shaping their trust. The remaining 52.8% of the variation is influenced by factors not included in this model, such as shopping experience, product quality, pricing, and social influence. While brand authenticity is clearly an important factor in building consumer trust, these findings also highlight that other external elements contribute meaningfully to trust levels.

b. ANOVA (F-Test)

The F-test was used to evaluate whether the overall regression model was statistically significant. Specifically, it assessed whether the independent variable(s) in

the model, taken together, had a meaningful impact on the dependent variable. A statistically significant outcome from the F-test indicates that the model is suitable for describing the relationship among the variables under study.

Table 8. ANOVA Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	22,640	1	22,640	132,641	0.000
Residual	25,370	150	0,169		
Total	48,010	151			

The ANOVA results yield a significance value of 0.000, well below the conventional 0.05 level, suggesting that the regression model is statistically significant. This implies that brand authenticity the independent variable exerts a significant influence on consumer trust, which is the dependent variable. Overall, the results support the model's suitability for analyzing the relationship between these variables. Therefore, brand authenticity can be considered an important factor in shaping consumer trust in MSME products marketed through TikTok Shop, thereby providing empirical support for the hypothesis proposed in this study.

c. Coefficients (t-Test)

The t-test was employed to assess the individual impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Its purpose is to evaluate whether the independent variable in the regression model exerts a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable when considered separately.

Table 9. Coefficients Test Results (t-Test)

Independent Variable	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Interpretation
Brand authenticity	0.687	0.060	11.516	0.000	Significant positive effect

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to evaluate whether the observed indicators adequately represented the proposed latent constructs. The measurement model consisted of two constructs: brand authenticity and consumer trust. Indicators with factor loadings above 0.50 were considered acceptable, while Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and Average Variance Extracted values above 0.50 indicated satisfactory construct reliability and convergent validity.

The CFA results indicate that all indicators demonstrated acceptable factor loadings on their respective constructs. For brand authenticity, factor loadings ranged from 0.712 to 0.842, indicating that transparency, honesty, originality, and brand identity consistency were valid indicators of brand authenticity. For consumer trust, factor loadings ranged from 0.736 to 0.861, confirming that product safety confidence, fulfillment of brand promises, brand reliability, and brand reputation appropriately represented consumer trust.

Table 10. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	Result
Brand Authenticity	Honest brand personality	0.842	Valid
	Consistent and non-exaggerated communication	0.786	Valid
	Brand originality	0.712	Valid
	Integrity in communication	0.824	Valid
	Brand identity consistency	0.751	Valid
Consumer Trust	Confidence in product safety	0.836	Valid
	Confidence in brand promises	0.779	Valid
	Brand reliability	0.861	Valid
	Positive brand reputation	0.736	Valid

The CFA findings confirm that the measurement model demonstrates adequate reliability and validity. Therefore, the indicators used in this study are appropriate for examining the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer trust among MSME consumers on TikTok Shop Indonesia.

Table 11. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Interpretation
Brand Authenticity	0.874	0.871	0.582	Reliable and valid
Consumer Trust	0.898	0.896	0.641	Reliable and valid

The findings demonstrate that brand authenticity has a positive and significant influence on consumer trust among MSME consumers on TikTok Shop Indonesia. The regression analysis indicates that higher perceptions of transparency, honesty, originality, and brand consistency are associated with stronger consumer confidence toward MSME products.

However, this study does not directly examine consumer loyalty or sustainable business growth. Therefore, statements regarding loyalty and business sustainability are interpreted only as potential managerial implications rather than empirical findings. Future studies should include loyalty, repurchase intention, customer retention, and business performance variables to empirically examine these relationships.

This study seeks to examine how brand authenticity influences consumer trust in MSME products sold via TikTok Shop. The data analysis reveals that perceived brand authenticity has a positive and statistically significant impact on consumer trust. Regression results confirm this relationship, showing a significance level of 0.000 (below the 0.05 threshold) and a regression coefficient of 0.687. This suggests that as consumers perceive a brand as more authentic, their trust in its products tends to increase accordingly.

This finding is consistent with previous research by Eggers, which suggests that brand authenticity can foster emotional connections with consumers and contribute to the development of long-term trust. The study emphasizes that brand authenticity not only enhances positive consumer experiences but also encourages sustained loyalty (Lusianti et al., 2024). In the context of TikTok Shop, which is characterized by visual, interactive, and rapidly consumed content, brand authenticity becomes increasingly important. Short-form videos, together with honest and consistent brand narratives, enable MSMEs to develop a more personal, credible, and trustworthy brand image.

An additional key insight is the R Square value of 0.472, which shows that brand authenticity accounts for 47.2% of the variability in consumer trust. The other 52.8% is influenced by factors outside the scope of this model, including product quality, pricing, user experience, and the impact of influencers. This indicates that while brand authenticity plays a significant role in explaining consumer trust, it is only one of several contributing elements.

The Likert-scale analysis revealed an average score of 4.18 for brand authenticity, placing it in the "Agree" range, while consumer trust scored slightly higher at 4.20, falling into the "Strongly Agree" category. This suggests that most respondents view MSME brands as authentic and express considerable confidence and trust in the products they buy. The relatively high scores further suggest that authentic branding practices implemented through TikTok Shop have been effective in strengthening consumer trust.

Accordingly, this study provides a theoretical contribution by reinforcing the role of brand authenticity in shaping consumer trust, while also offering practical implications for MSME practitioners. MSMEs should place greater emphasis on developing authentic, honest, and consistent brand identities across digital platforms such as TikTok Shop. In an increasingly competitive digital marketplace, where consumers may encounter uncertainty regarding product credibility and authenticity, an

authentic brand identity can serve as an important mechanism for strengthening consumer trust, fostering loyalty, and supporting sustainable business growth.

4 CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that brand authenticity significantly influences consumer trust in MSME products marketed through TikTok Shop Indonesia. The results indicate that authentic brand communication, consistency, and perceived honesty contribute to stronger consumer confidence. Regression results indicate that brand authenticity accounts for 47.2% of the variation in consumer trust, with the remainder attributable to factors not included in the model. This highlights authenticity as a key, though not sole, driver of trust complementary elements like product quality, service, and pricing also play crucial roles. Although consumer trust may potentially contribute to long-term customer relationships, this study does not directly test loyalty or sustainable business growth. Therefore, future research should extend the model by incorporating behavioral intention, loyalty, and business performance variables.

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