

The Influence of TikTok Influencers' Korean Visual Style on University Students' Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the Korean Wave and the increasing popularity of TikTok have significantly transformed the digital marketing landscape. This study aims to examine the influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers on university students' purchase intention. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method, with data collected through an online questionnaire distributed to active university students who use TikTok and have been exposed to Korean-style aesthetic content. The collected data were analyzed using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and simple linear regression analysis. The findings indicate that Korean-style visual aesthetics have a positive and significant influence on students' purchase intention. The visual elements presented by TikTok influencers were found to attract attention, create positive perceptions, and encourage stronger intentions to purchase promoted products. These results suggest that Korean-inspired visual aesthetics serve as an effective marketing stimulus in shaping consumer responses within digital platforms. The study concludes that the use of Korean-style visual aesthetics by TikTok influencers can enhance purchase intention among university students and provides insights for marketers seeking to leverage visual-based promotional strategies in social media marketing.

Keywords: Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics; TikTok Influencers; Purchase Intention; Generation Z; Digital Marketing



Received: 07 June, 2026

Accepted: 01 August, 2026

Available online: 04 August, 2026

DOI: 10.61242/ijabo.26.788

JEL Classifications: M31, M37

see the [JEL Codes Guide](#)



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed marketing activities worldwide. Businesses increasingly utilize digital marketing strategies to communicate with consumers through interactive and personalized channels. Social media platforms have become important marketing tools because they enable users to create, share, and engage with content. Among various social media platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the fastest-growing platforms due to its short-video format, advanced recommendation algorithm, and high user engagement. As a result, TikTok has become an effective medium for businesses to increase brand awareness, consumer engagement, and purchasing behavior (Cruz & Castro, 2024)

One of the most widely used marketing approaches on TikTok is influencer marketing. Influencers are individuals who can shape consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors through the content they create and distribute on social media. Compared with traditional celebrities, influencers are often perceived as more authentic and relatable, which increases their persuasive power. Previous studies found that influencer credibility and message value significantly influence consumer trust and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Similarly, Lady et al. (2025) and Sutrantiyas et al. (2025) reported that influencer characteristics play an important role in influencing Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions.

Generation Z is recognized as one of the most active social media user groups and spends a considerable amount of time consuming digital content. This generation frequently relies on social media platforms to obtain information, seek recommendations, and evaluate products before making purchasing decisions. University students, who predominantly belong to Generation Z, represent an important market segment because of their high exposure to social media marketing activities. According to Priporas et al. (2017), Generation Z consumers prefer technology-based interactions and are highly responsive to digital experiences, making them particularly susceptible to social media marketing influences.

Alongside the growth of social media, the Korean Wave (Hallyu) has become a global cultural phenomenon that influences consumer preferences and lifestyles. The popularity of Korean dramas, K-pop music, fashion, beauty products, and lifestyle trends has encouraged consumers worldwide to adopt Korean-inspired cultural values and aesthetic preferences. In Indonesia, Korean culture has gained substantial popularity among young consumers. Previous studies have shown that positive perceptions of Korean culture significantly influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward Korean-related products (Hye-ri et al., 2022). Likewise, Supendi and Winarko, (2023) found that K-pop digital marketing strategies positively affect purchase intention among Indonesian Generation Z consumers.

The influence of the Korean Wave has also contributed to the emergence of Korean-style visual aesthetics in social media content. Korean-style visual aesthetics are generally characterized by soft pastel colors, natural lighting, minimalist compositions, clean backgrounds, and visually pleasing editing techniques. These visual elements are often associated with simplicity, elegance, modernity, and sophistication. Consequently, many TikTok influencers intentionally incorporate Korean-inspired visual styles into their content to increase attractiveness and audience engagement.

Visual aesthetics play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and behavioral responses. Attractive visual content can capture attention, create positive emotions, enhance perceived product quality, and encourage favorable evaluations of products and brands. Marwan et al. (2024) found that visual marketing significantly influences purchasing behavior in digital environments. Furthermore, Bui et al. (2025)

reported that visual forms of electronic word-of-mouth positively influence online purchase intention through consumers' cognitive and emotional responses. These findings indicate that visual presentation has become an important determinant of consumer decision-making in social media contexts.

Previous studies have examined various factors influencing purchase intention in social media environments. Influencer credibility, trustworthiness, and content quality have been identified as significant determinants of purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Lady et al., 2025; Sutrantiyas et al., 2025). Other studies emphasized the importance of social media content and electronic word-of-mouth in shaping consumer behavior (Sugito et al., 2025; Bui et al., 2025). Research on the Korean Wave also demonstrated its influence on consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior (Hye-ri et al., 2022; Supendi & Winarko, 2023). Additionally, studies by Cruz & Castro, (2024), Marwan et al. (2024), and He (2026) highlighted the importance of digital content, visual presentation, and consumer immersion in influencing purchase intention. Despite these findings, limited studies have specifically examined Korean-style visual aesthetics as an independent determinant of purchase intention. Existing research tends to focus on influencer characteristics, content quality, or Korean cultural influence rather than on Korean-inspired visual elements displayed by TikTok influencers. This gap is particularly important because TikTok is a highly visual platform where aesthetic presentation serves as a key factor influencing audience engagement and content effectiveness.

Therefore, this study offers novelty by investigating Korean-style visual aesthetics as the primary explanatory variable influencing purchase intention among university students. Unlike previous studies that focused on influencer credibility, content quality, or the broader impact of the Korean Wave, this study specifically examines the influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers on purchase intention. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on digital marketing, influencer marketing, visual communication, and consumer behavior. Practically, the results may provide useful insights for marketers, brands, and content creators in designing effective TikTok marketing strategies targeting Generation Z consumers. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers on university students' purchase intentions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics

Visual aesthetics have become one of the most important elements in contemporary digital marketing because consumers increasingly rely on visual information when evaluating products and content on social media platforms. In highly competitive digital environments, visually appealing content can attract audience attention, increase engagement, and influence consumers' perceptions of products and brands. As a result, marketers and influencers continuously develop visual strategies to create distinctive and memorable content experiences.

One visual trend that has gained significant popularity in recent years is the Korean-style aesthetic, which is closely associated with the global spread of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). Korean-style visual aesthetics generally emphasize soft pastel colors, natural lighting, minimalist backgrounds, clean compositions, fashionable appearances, and aesthetically pleasing editing techniques. These visual characteristics are commonly perceived as elegant, modern, and visually attractive, particularly among younger consumers. According to Malahaban et al. (2023), exposure to Korean cultural elements significantly influences consumers' purchasing intentions and consumption behavior.

Similarly, Hye-ri et al. (2022) found that positive perceptions of Korean culture contribute to favorable attitudes toward Korean-related products and increase consumers' purchase intentions.

The increasing popularity of Korean culture has encouraged many TikTok influencers to incorporate Korean-style visual elements into their content. These visual elements are frequently used to enhance audience engagement and create positive emotional responses among viewers. Through visually attractive content, influencers can strengthen consumers' perceptions of promoted products and increase the effectiveness of marketing communication. Therefore, Korean-style visual aesthetics may function as an important marketing stimulus capable of influencing consumer behavior in digital environments.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness and likelihood to purchase a product after being exposed to marketing stimuli and evaluating available information. It reflects the probability that consumers will engage in future purchasing behavior and is widely regarded as one of the strongest predictors of actual purchase decisions.

In the context of social media marketing, purchase intention can be influenced by various factors, including influencer credibility, content quality, emotional engagement, brand perception, and visual presentation. Consumers are more likely to develop favorable purchase intentions when they perceive marketing content as trustworthy, attractive, and relevant to their needs. As social media platforms continue to dominate consumer information-seeking behavior, understanding the determinants of purchase intention has become increasingly important for marketers and researchers.

Previous studies have demonstrated that influencer-related factors significantly affect purchase intention. Lady et al. (2025) found that TikTok influencer characteristics positively influence Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions through stronger audience engagement and parasocial relationships. Likewise, Chaoqun (2026) reported that attachment to social media influencers positively affects trust, content immersion, and consumers' willingness to purchase recommended products. These findings indicate that consumers' purchase intentions are strongly influenced by both the characteristics of influencers and the way promotional content is presented.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory

This study adopts the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework as its theoretical foundation. The S-O-R model explains how external stimuli influence individuals' internal psychological processes and subsequently generate behavioral responses. In digital marketing contexts, consumers do not respond directly to external stimuli; rather, stimuli first affect their cognitive and emotional states before influencing behavioral outcomes. Within this framework, Korean-style visual aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers represent the stimulus (S). These visual elements include color combinations, lighting, visual composition, editing style, fashion presentation, and overall aesthetic appearance. Exposure to these stimuli may generate emotional and cognitive reactions among viewers, such as attraction, enjoyment, admiration, and positive perceptions toward the promoted products. These internal reactions constitute the organism (O) component of the model.

The final stage of the framework is the response (R), which refers to consumers' behavioral outcomes. In this study, purchase intention serves as the response variable. Recent studies have shown that visually attractive content significantly influences

consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions on social media platforms. Therefore, the S-O-R framework provides a suitable theoretical explanation for understanding how Korean-style visual aesthetics may influence students' purchase intentions through psychological evaluation processes.

Hypothesis Development

The growing influence of Korean popular culture has contributed to the increasing adoption of Korean-style visual aesthetics among TikTok influencers. Such visual elements are designed to attract audience attention, create positive emotional responses, and strengthen favorable perceptions toward promoted products. Previous studies have demonstrated that exposure to Korean cultural content positively influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Malabanan et al., 2023; Hye-ri et al., 2022)

Moreover, research on influencer marketing consistently indicates that influencer-related characteristics significantly affect consumers' purchase decisions (Lady et al., 2025). Since Korean-style visual aesthetics represent one of the most prominent characteristics of contemporary TikTok content, it is reasonable to expect that such visual elements may positively influence university students' willingness to purchase promoted products.

Based on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings presented above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Korean-style visual aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers have a positive and significant effect on university students' purchase intention.

Conceptual Framework

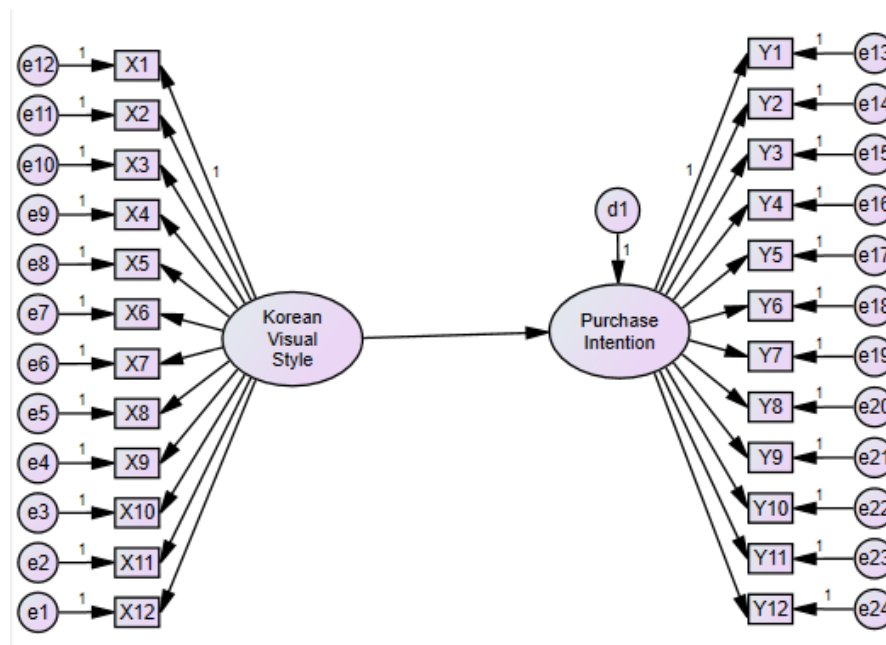


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Framework
 Source: Own Compilation (2026)

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study. Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics serves the independent variable and is represented by six dimensions: color and aesthetics, visual background and atmosphere, makeup and appearance, fashion and

trends, visual techniques, and visual quality. These dimensions reflect the visual characteristics commonly found in Korean-inspired digital content and visual marketing practices that influence consumers' perceptions and engagement (Marwan et al., 2024; Cruz & Castro, 2024). Purchase intention serves as the dependent variable and is represented by six dimensions: purchase desire, visual attraction, recommendation intention, information-seeking behavior, future purchase intention, and brand preference, which reflect consumers' behavioral tendencies toward products promoted through social media (2019; L. Bui et al., 2025). The proposed framework suggests that Korean-style visual aesthetics positively influence Purchase Intention. Previous studies have shown that visually appealing content and influencer-generated messages can shape consumer attitudes, increase engagement, and encourage purchasing behavior (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Marwan et al., 2024; Bui et al., 2025). Furthermore, Korean-inspired visual presentations have been found to positively affect consumers' preferences and purchase intentions toward promoted products (Hye-ri et al., 2022; Supendi & Winarko, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted at Politeknik Negeri Bandung, Indonesia, targeting active university students who use TikTok and have been exposed to Korean-style aesthetic content created by influencers. Data collection was carried out from January to June 2026 through the distribution of an online questionnaire using a digital survey form. This study employed a linear associative quantitative research design to examine the hypothesis regarding the influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics (X) on students' purchase intention (Y). The target population consisted of active university students in Indonesia who use the TikTok application. Since the exact population size could not be determined, the sample size was determined based on the considerations for an unknown population size (Hair et al., 2019). Consequently, a combination of non-probability sampling techniques, namely purposive sampling and convenience sampling, was employed (Sugiyono, 2022). The sample selection criteria were strictly defined as active university students, regular TikTok users, and individuals who had been exposed to promotional content created by influencers utilizing Korean-style visual aesthetics.

The minimum sample size was determined based on Hair et al. (2019) The multivariate analysis guideline, which recommends a sample size ranging from five to ten times the total number of questionnaire indicators. The research instrument consisted of 24 indicators, including 12 indicators measuring the Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics variable (X) and 12 indicators measuring the Purchase Intention variable (Y). (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Cruz & Castro, 2024; Marwan et al., 2024; Bui et al., 2025). Accordingly, the minimum required sample size ranged from 120 respondents (24×5) to 240 respondents (24×10). Through the distribution of a land online questionnaire using a digital survey form, complete responses were obtained from 124 Generation Z university students who met the predetermined criteria. Therefore, the sample size was considered adequate and representative for further statistical analysis.

The primary data collected were measured using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed through several statistical procedures. Instrument testing included validity testing using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Furthermore, classical assumption tests were conducted, including the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality and the ANOVA test for linearity. Finally, a simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the effect of Korean-style visual aesthetics on students' purchase intention.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variabel	Indikator
Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics (X)	Color Land Aesthetics
	Visual Background Land
	Atmosphere
	Makeup and Appearance
	Fashion Land Trends
Purchase Intention (Y)	Visual Techniques (Camera Angles and Editing)
	Visual Quality
	Purchase IDesire
	Visual IAttraction
	Recommendation IIntention
	Information-Seeking Behavior
	Future Purchase Intention
	Brand Preference

Source: Adapted from Lou & Yuan (2019); Supendi & Winarko (2023); Marwan et al. (2024); Cruz & Castro (2024); Bui et al. (2025)

RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the empirical findings, including respondents' demographic characteristics and the results of statistical analyses conducted using SPSS version 26. The overall structural model illustrating the relationships among the research variables, along with the loading factor values of each indicator, is presented in the following path diagram.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic characteristic	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	83	66.94%
Male	41	33.06%
Age		
< 18 years old	5	4.03%
18 - 21 years old	88	70.97%
22 - 25 years old	28	22.58%
> 25 years old	3	2.42%
Academic Level (Semester)		
Semester 1 - 2	22	17.74%
Semester 3 - 4	45	36.29%
Semester 5 - 6	38	30.65%
Semester 7 and above	19	15.32%
Average Monthly Pocket Money/Income		
< Rp 1,000,000	34	27.42%
Rp 1,000,000 - Rp 2,500,000	62	50.00%
Rp 2,500,000 - Rp 5,000,000	23	18.55%
> Rp 5,000,000	5	4.03%
Daily TikTok Usage Duration		
< 1 Hour	12	9.68%
1 - 3 Hours	31	25.00%
4 - 6 Hours	58	46.77%
> 6 Hours	23	18.55%
Total	124	100.00%

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

A total of 124 active university students participated in this quantitative study. All respondents belonged to Generation Z, defined as individuals born after 1995 (Priporas et al., 2017) The demographic group is widely recognized for its high level of engagement and dependency on social media platforms, particularly TikTok. Prior to testing the regression model, an instrument test was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement scales.

The results of the construct validity test using the Pearson product-moment correlation indicated that all 12 items measuring the Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics variable (X) and all 12 items measuring the Purchase Intention variable (Y) obtained correlation coefficients exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.30. Therefore, all questionnaire items were considered valid and suitable for further analysis.

Furthermore, reliability testing was performed to assess the internal consistency of the research instrument. The results demonstrated that all variables achieved satisfactory reliability levels, indicating that the questionnaire consistently measured the intended constructs. Detailed results of the reliability analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Indicators	Number of terms	Validity Range (r-value)	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics (X)	1. Color and Aesthetics	12	0.702 – 0.826	0.955	Valid l& Reliable
	2. Visual Background & Atmosphere				
	3. Makeup and Appearance				
	4. Fashion and Trends				
	5. Visual Techniques				
	6. Visual Quality				
Purchase Intention (Y)	1. Purchase Desire	12	0.738 – 0.877	0.939	Valid l& Reliable
	2. Visual Attraction				
	3. Recommendation Intention				
	4. Information-Seeking Behavior				
	5. Future Purchase Intention				
	6. Brand Preference				

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

As presented in Table 2, the Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics variable (X) achieved a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.955, while Table 3 shows that the Purchase Intention variable (Y) obtained a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.939. Both values substantially exceed the minimum reliability threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the measurement instrument is highly reliable for assessing the constructs under investigation.

Following the validity and reliability assessments, classical assumption testing was conducted prior to regression analysis. The classical assumption tests consisted of a normality test of the regression residuals and a linearity test to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test

	Unstandardized Residual
N	124
Normal Parameters a,b Mean	.0000000
Std. Deviation	4.13773719
Most Extreme Differences Absolute	.059
Positive	.032
Negative	-.059
Test Statistic	.059
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200 c,d

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Referring to the statistical results presented in Table 4, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) The value obtained from the one-sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was 0.200. Since this probability value exceeds the significance level of 0.05, the residuals can be considered normally distributed. This finding indicates that the normality assumption required for regression analysis has been satisfied.

Subsequently, a linearity test was conducted to examine whether the relationship between Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics (X) and Purchase Intention (Y) was linear. The linearity assessment was performed using the ANOVA Table approach, and the results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of the ANOVA Linearity Test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total_Y* Total_X Between Groups (Combined)	11873.974	36	329.833	19.511	.000
Linearity	11238.802	1	11238.802	664.839	.000
Deviation from Linearity	635.172	35	18.148	1.074	.385
Within Groups	1470.695	87	16.905		
Total	13344.669	123			

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Table 6. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test (Model Summary)

Model	R	R-squared	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the estimate	R-squared Change	F	df1	df2
1	.918a	.842	.841	4.15466	.842	651.102	1	122

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Table 6 presents a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.918 and the determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.842, indicating a very strong positive relationship between Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics and Purchase Intention. The R^2 value suggests that 84.2% of the variance in students' purchase intention can be explained by the Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics variable, while the remaining 15.8% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. Furthermore, the overall suitability and significance of the regression model were evaluated using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the F-test; the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of the Simultaneous Significance Test (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squared	F	Sig.
1 Regression	11238.802	1	11238.802	651.102	.000b
Residual	2105.867	122	17.261		
Total	13344.669	123			

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

Based on Table 7, the calculated F-value reached 651.102 with a significance probability of 0.000, which is well below the established significance level of 0.05. These results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant and demonstrates a good model fit. Therefore, Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics significantly contributes to explaining variations in students' Purchase Intention, confirming the suitability of the proposed regression model for hypothesis testing.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing and Regression Analysis Results

Model	B (Unstandardized)	Std. Error	Beta (Standardized)	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	-1.250	1.692		-.739	.461
Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics (X)	1.036	.041	.918	25.517	.000

Source: Primary Data Processed (2026)

According to the results presented in Table 8, the regression analysis produced a constant value (a) of -1.250 and a regression coefficient (b) for the Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics variable of 1.036. These values indicate that for every one-unit increase in Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics, Purchase Intention is predicted to increase by 1.036 units. Furthermore, the partial LT-test revealed an LT-value of 25.517 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance value is lower than 0.05, the effect of Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics on Purchase Intention is statistically significant, indicating that the proposed hypothesis is supported.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics significantly influence university students' purchase intention. Based on the simple linear regression analysis, the resulting regression equation is $Y = -1.250 + 1.036X$. The positive regression coefficient indicates that every one-unit increase in Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics is associated with an increase of 1.036 units in students' Purchase Intention. Conversely, the negative constant value suggests that in the absence of Korean-style visual stimuli, students' purchase intention would be considerably lower. These findings demonstrate that Korean-inspired visual presentation plays an important role in stimulating consumers' interest in products promoted through TikTok content.

The significance of this relationship is further supported by the results of the partial t-test. The calculated t-value of 25.517 was substantially higher than the critical t-value, while the significance level of 0.000 was well below the accepted threshold of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' Purchase Intention. This finding indicates that the influence of visual presentation is not incidental but represents a meaningful determinant of consumer behavior within social media marketing environments.

The findings can be comprehensively explained through the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework. According to this theory, external environmental stimuli affect individuals' internal psychological states, which subsequently generate behavioral responses. In the context of this study, Korean-style visual elements displayed by TikTok influencers serve as the stimulus (S). These stimuli include soft pastel color schemes, aesthetically pleasing visual compositions, minimalist backgrounds, high-quality editing techniques, fashionable appearances, and Korean-inspired styling. When Generation Z students are exposed to such content, they process the visual information cognitively and emotionally, creating favorable impressions and positive psychological reactions. These

internal evaluations represent the organism (O) component of the model. Ultimately, these psychological responses lead to the response (R), which is reflected in stronger purchase intentions toward the products featured in the content.

The present findings support previous applications of the S-O-R framework in digital marketing contexts. Bui et al. (2025) argued that visual stimuli embedded in short-video platforms significantly influence consumers' emotional and cognitive evaluations before affecting their purchase-related behaviors. Similarly, Ramos Cruz & Castro (2024) found that visual presentation within social commerce environments plays an important role in generating positive emotional responses that subsequently encourage purchasing intentions. Therefore, the results of the current study provide additional empirical support for the effectiveness of the S-O-R framework in explaining consumer behavior within TikTok-based marketing environments.

Another important finding is reflected in the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.842$). This value indicates that 84.2% of the variation in students' Purchase Intention can be explained by Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics. Such a high explanatory power suggests that visual presentation represents a dominant factor influencing consumer behavior among Generation Z TikTok users. The finding highlights that visual aesthetics should no longer be regarded merely as complementary elements of promotional content, but rather as strategic marketing instruments capable of shaping consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions. The remaining 15.8% of variation may be explained by other factors beyond the scope of this study, including purchasing power, product price, perceived product quality, brand image, trust, and electronic word-of-mouth.

The findings are also consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of visual appeal in social media marketing. Sutrantiyas et al. (2025) concluded that the visual characteristics of influencer-generated content play a significant role in capturing audience attention and influencing consumers' purchase intentions. Likewise, Sugito et al. (2025) It was reported that TikTok marketing strategies are highly effective in stimulating purchase intention through visually appealing content. Furthermore, El Mehdi and Marwan et al. (2024) I found that positive perceptions of visual attractiveness significantly enhance consumers' willingness to purchase products promoted through digital platforms. The consistency between the present findings and previous studies strengthens the argument that visual aesthetics function as a key mechanism through which social media marketing influences consumer behavior.

The findings may also be interpreted through the broader perspective of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). Over the past decade, Korean popular culture has become a global phenomenon that has significantly influenced fashion, beauty standards, entertainment preferences, and consumer lifestyles across many countries, including Indonesia. Continuous exposure to Korean dramas, K-pop music, Korean fashion, and Korean beauty trends has contributed to the formation of positive perceptions toward Korean-related visual characteristics. According Supendi & Winarko (2023) The Korean Wave has successfully disseminated Korean cultural values worldwide through digital media and social networking platforms, shaping the aesthetic preferences of younger generations. As a result, Korean-inspired visual elements are frequently perceived as modern, fashionable, sophisticated, and desirable by Generation Z audiences.

The influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics may be further explained through the psychological mechanism known as the Halo Effect. This phenomenon occurs when consumers form an overall positive evaluation based on an attractive initial impression. In the context of TikTok content, students who perceive an influencer's visual presentation as aesthetically pleasing, fashionable, and visually appealing may unconsciously transfer these positive impressions to the products being promoted.

Consequently, consumers may assume that products featured within highly aesthetic content possess superior quality, greater value, or higher desirability. This cognitive bias strengthens consumer trust and increases their intention to purchase the advertised products. Therefore, the effectiveness of Korean-style visual aesthetics may stem not only from visual attractiveness itself but also from positive psychological associations generated by the Halo Effect.

The findings also contribute to the growing literature on influencer marketing. Previous studies have demonstrated that influencer-related factors such as credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and audience engagement significantly affect purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; He, 2026; Lady et al., 2025). The present study extends this body of knowledge by demonstrating that the visual aesthetic style employed by influencers represents another important determinant of consumer behavior. This suggests that marketing effectiveness depends not only on who communicates the promotional message but also on how the message is visually presented to the audience.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide important implications for marketers, local businesses, and digital marketing agencies. Given the strong influence of Korean-style visual aesthetics on Purchase Intention, organizations targeting Generation Z consumers should consider incorporating Korean-inspired visual elements into their TikTok marketing strategies. The use of aesthetically pleasing visual compositions, soft color palettes, Korean-inspired fashion styling, attractive backgrounds, and professional editing techniques may increase audience engagement and strengthen consumers' purchase intentions. In increasingly competitive digital environments, the ability to create visually attractive and culturally relevant content may serve as a valuable competitive advantage for brands seeking to capture the attention of young consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to examine the influence of Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics displayed by TikTok influencers on university students' purchase intention. The findings confirm that Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among Generation Z university students, as evidenced by a regression coefficient of 1.036 and a t-value of 25.517 with a significance level of 0.000. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.842$) indicates that 84.2% of the variation in students' purchase intention can be explained by Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics, demonstrating that visual presentation constitutes a dominant factor in shaping consumer behavioral intentions within TikTok marketing environments. From a theoretical perspective, these findings support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, confirming that Korean-inspired visual elements — such as soft color palettes, minimalist backgrounds, natural makeup, fashionable styling, and high-quality editing — function as external stimuli that trigger positive cognitive and emotional responses, ultimately manifesting as stronger purchase intentions. The presence of the Halo Effect is also evident, whereby consumers tend to transfer positive impressions of aesthetically pleasing visual content onto the perceived quality and desirability of promoted products. From a practical standpoint, the findings provide actionable recommendations for marketers, local businesses, and digital content creators targeting Generation Z consumers; specifically, the strategic incorporation of Korean-style visual elements into TikTok promotional content may enhance audience engagement and strengthen purchase intentions. Nevertheless, this study is subject to several limitations, as it was conducted exclusively among university students at Politeknik Negeri Bandung,

and the scope of analysis is limited to a single independent variable, namely Korean-Style Visual Aesthetics, without accounting for potential mediating or moderating variables. Future research is therefore encouraged to expand the respondent population to include broader demographic groups across different universities or regions, and to incorporate additional variables such as influencer credibility, brand image, consumer trust, product price, or electronic word-of-mouth, in order to provide a more comprehensive and generalizable understanding of consumer behavior in digital marketing environments.

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