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The Influence of Food Blogger Credibility and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on Purchasing Decisions of Mak Jutek Consumers in Medan City

Gladys Sophie Ivana Hulu[1], Hommy Dorthy Ellyany Sinaga[2], Cartin Selly Kwok[3], Jesslyn Natthasya Wijaya[4]
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Eka Prasetya
Jl. Merapi No.8, Pusat Ps., Kec. Medan Kota, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara, 20212, Indonesia [1.2,3,4]

Email: gladyssophieivanahulu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Food Blogger Credibility and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on purchase decisions among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City. The topic is especially relevant as local culinary MSMEs increasingly rely on food blogger promotion, where any gap between promotional content and actual consumer experience may affect how consumers perceive food bloggers and the role of social pressure in purchase decisions, underscoring the need to study both factors together for viral culinary MSMEs like Mak Jutek. Using a quantitative survey method, primary data were gathered via a Likert-scale questionnaire from purposively selected respondents in Medan City who had purchased and consumed Mak Jutek products, then analyzed through multiple linear regression preceded by validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests. Both food blogger credibility and FOMO were positively and significantly associated with purchase decision scores. These findings suggest that Mak Jutek could consider credible food blogger communication and relevant trend-based promotion when developing its marketing activities.

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out, Food Blogger Credibility, Purchase Decisions, Mak Jutek, Medan.

INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has changed how people shop, including for food. Consumers now rely more on reviews from fellow social media users or influencers than on conventional advertising, making platforms such as TikTok and Instagram the main space for brand-consumer interaction and for generating instant popularity for culinary products. The October 2025 Digital Report from We Are Social & Meltwater shows that Indonesia has 180 million social media users (62.9% of the population), with Instagram (82.4%) and TikTok (78.4%) the most accessed platforms, so viral culinary reviews increasingly drive impulsive and emotional purchasing decisions (We Are Social, 2025). This trend is also evident in Medan, a major Indonesian metropolitan city, marked by viral culinary bazaars such as Ladies World Vol. III (Medan Review, 2023), Jakarta Fest (TribunMedan.com, 2023), Vinkoo Jakarta Fest (Ubaidillah M, 2025), and the Cap Go Meh celebration at Delipark Mall (Sari, 2024), showing that transacting has become part of Medan's urban lifestyle and social identity.

The local culinary business "Mak Jutek" illustrates this well, using Instagram to generate tens of thousands of review impressions from Merlynflo (2026) and Silvith._ (2025). Although social media is now the main source of culinary information, high exposure does not always translate into purchase decisions based on accurate information. For Mak Jutek in Medan City, differences appear to exist between the expectations formed

by digital content and some consumers' post-purchase experience. This is a preliminary observation of a possible mismatch that requires empirical investigation; it may relate to how food blogger credibility is perceived and to the role of social pressure alongside rational evaluation in purchase decisions. This aligns with the theory of purchasing decisions Kotler & Armstrong (2021) which states that the massive use of social media shifts the orientation of purchasing decisions to be more emotional and impulsive, supported by the findings (Febrianty et al., 2026; Nazalah & Kadariah, 2023; Rahmaini & Salqaura, 2024; Samudra & Prasetya, 2025).

Expressive reviews from food bloggers with attractive visuals may attract consumers' attention and interest. A preliminary observation of Mak Jutek's online reviews suggests a possible difference between platforms: Instagram reviews appear to be relatively uniform and dominated by positive sentiment, while GrabFood's "Ratings and Reviews" feature shows more critical assessments, including complaints such as tough cireng texture and charred piscok. These review differences may indicate a mismatch between digital content and operational reality that requires investigation. They are illustrative only and do not establish how strongly any such mismatch affects consumers' trust in food bloggers.

This can be explained through Source Credibility Theory Hovland et al. (1953), which holds that persuasive message effectiveness depends on how positively the recipient perceives the communicator, especially on expertise and trustworthiness. This is reinforced by the Social Media Influencer Value (SMIV) Model Lou & Yuan (2019), which shows that a message's informative value and a content creator's personal credibility anchor audience trust in commercial recommendations.

Several prior studies reinforce this relationship. Hansvirgo et al. (2023) shows that reviews from digital creators strongly shape urban consumers' purchase decisions; Safitri et al. (2023) found that a food blogger's personal characteristics and in-depth reviews spark audience interest and drive purchase decisions, while Fakhira et al. (2022) found that Instagram influencers and brand image positively and significantly affect purchase decisions. Similarly, Prasetio & Gultom (2025) found that influencer marketing and product differentiation positively affect skincare purchase decisions among Generation Z on Instagram in Medan City, confirming that digital creator credibility and attractiveness consistently drive young urban consumers' purchase decisions, including in the culinary context. Together, these findings suggest that food blogger credibility is generally associated with purchase decisions, and it is possible that questions about credibility arising from inconsistent product quality could reduce consumer trust.

Among some young people in Medan, informal social pressure may encourage them to upload photos or videos of Mak Jutek products to their Instagram Stories, not only out of interest in the product but also as social validation for following the latest trends. This suggests that a socially driven impulse may play a role in purchase decisions; this possibility requires empirical testing, and no claim is made here about its importance relative to rational evaluation.

This aligns with the concept of Fear of Missing Out Przybylski et al. (2013), which defines FOMO as anxiety over missing a valuable experience others are enjoying, anxiety that can override rational judgment and accelerate the decision to buy a viral product. Several prior studies support this finding. Wachyuni et al. (2023) on viral restaurants and Ningsih & A (2025) on the Mie Gacoan phenomenon show that fear of lagging behind trends is a main driver of spending intensity. Samudra & Prasetya (2025); Zharifah et al. (2025) confirm the link between FOMO, social media marketing, and impulse buying in the culinary sector. Similarly, Hisbullah et al. (2023) in Palembang and Triswati & Huda (2025) in Jepara found that FOMO combined with viral content accelerates purchase decisions, even leading consumers to disregard budget to stay socially engaged with

trending products. These findings show that FOMO consistently increases impulse buying, though most studies involve products of relatively stable quality, so FOMO has become common behavior among digital culinary consumers rather than a purely individual trait.

Previous studies have generally tested Food Blogger Credibility or FOMO separately. This study examines food blogger credibility and FOMO together among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan, adding empirical evidence from a local culinary MSME. The observed differences in online reviews are treated as background context only.

This is important to study because more culinary MSMEs are using food blogger and social media promotion, yet the strategy's success depends heavily on the credibility of the information consumers receive and the FOMO that arises during decision-making. This study's findings are expected to benefit MSME actors and the development of digital consumer behavior research. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of Food Blogger Credibility and Fear of Missing Out on purchase decisions among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Decision

Purchasing decisions are a core consumer-behavior construct describing the final stage of the evaluation process before consumers choose. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2021) views it not as a single transaction but a process of evaluating needs, seeking information, considering alternatives, choosing, and evaluating post-purchase outcomes. Beyond digital factors and review credibility, Gustina & Lazuardi (2022) note that purchasing decisions are also shaped by marketing-strategy factors such as segmentation and targeting, not digital content alone. Febrianty et al. (2026) view purchase decisions on viral food products as resulting from social buzz, FOMO, customer curiosity, and hedonic motivation. Nazalah & Kadariah (2023) view purchase decisions for a viral Medan culinary business as a response to influencer-based marketing. Rahmaini & Salqaura (2024) view purchase decisions as potentially spontaneous when driven by viral marketing. Internationally, Guo et al. (2024) in China's Douyin context show that culinary purchase decisions start from the desire to taste and intent to visit food-blogger-reviewed destinations. Meanwhile, Aszahra & Ariescy (2026) in Surabaya view culinary purchase decisions as resulting from consumers' trust in food vlogger reviews and e-WOM, whose influence can vary.

Based on these findings, a purchase decision is the consumer's final choice to buy a product after evaluating available information. In this study, Purchase Decision is operationally defined as the consumer's decision to purchase Mak Jutek products following social media evaluation, measured through 10 operational questionnaire items. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2021), purchase decisions can be understood through five main indicators reflecting the stages of the consumer decision-making process: 1) recognition of needs, measured as consumer awareness of the desire to try viral culinary products; 2) information search, defined as the process of consumers seeking reviews and references before deciding to buy; 3) alternative evaluation, operationalized as consumer consideration of other viral culinary product choices before making a decision; 4) decision stability and confidence, evaluated through the speed and confidence of consumers in deciding to buy; and 5) post-purchase behavior, measured as consumer evaluation of the product after consumption, including the potential for repurchase.

Food Blogger Credibility

Communicator credibility is a major determinant of marketing communication effectiveness, especially in digital content-based marketing. Hovland et al. (1953) through Source Credibility Theory explains that the effectiveness of a persuasive message is largely determined by the extent to which the recipient of the message perceives the positive characteristics of the communicator, which is reflected through the dimensions of expertise and trustworthiness. Hansvirgo et al. (2023) views the credibility of an Instagram vlogger as the ability of a digital communicator to direct food branding and purchase decisions of urban consumers. Safitri et al. (2023) stating that the credibility of a food vlogger is reflected in the personal characteristics and depth of reviews he conveys to the audience. Fakhira et al. (2022) defines an influencer's credibility on Instagram as a combination of the audience's perceived attractiveness, expertise, and trust in him/her. In an international context, Lou & Yuan (2019) through the Social Media Influencer Value (SMIV) Model explains that the credibility of a content carrier is formed from the informative value of the message conveyed and his personal credibility in the eyes of the audience. Furthermore, Munnukka et al. (2016) in Finland find peer endorsers relatively more trusted than professional endorsers. Similarly, Maryati M et al. (2023) in Indonesia's fashion industry find influencer credibility most reflected through trustworthiness and expertise, with attractiveness playing a smaller role, and emphasize the importance of cultural relevance in shaping digital creator credibility for Indonesian consumers.

Based on these findings, Food Blogger Credibility is the consumer's perception of a food blogger's competence and integrity in delivering culinary reviews, formed through objective product assessment and honesty in reviews, as well as the personal appeal of the blogger that increases audience engagement. In this study, Food Blogger Credibility is measured through 7 operational questionnaire items adapted from Ohanian's (1990) source credibility scale. According to Ohanian (1990), food blogger credibility as a form of source credibility in the digital context can be understood through three main dimensions: 1) expertise, the extent to which bloggers are perceived to have relevant knowledge and competence to objectively assess taste, portion, and quality; 2) trustworthiness, which is the extent to which the audience perceives honesty and objectivity in reviews (noting that commercial disclosures or paid collaborations do not automatically erode trustworthiness if the blogger maintains perceived honesty); and 3) attractiveness, namely the personal appeal, charisma, and presentation style of the blogger that increases audience interest and engagement.

Fear of Missing Out

Fear of Missing Out is a psychological construct that is increasingly relevant in explaining consumer behavior in the social media era. Przybylski et al. (2013) defines FOMO as an anxiety condition that arises when a person feels anxious about missing out on the opportunity to experience a valuable experience that another person is enjoying, an anxiety that can override the rational judgment of the individual. Wachyuni et al. (2023) in the context of viral restaurants as well as Ningsih & A (2025) on the Mie Gacoan phenomenon views FOMO as anxiety about lagging behind trends that drive people's shopping intensity. This finding is reinforced by Samudra & Prasetya (2025); Zharifah et al. (2025) which interprets FOMO as a psychological condition that drives impulse buying tendencies in the culinary sector, in line with conceptualization (Hisbullah et al., 2023; Triswati & Huda, 2025).

Based on these various definitions, Fear of Missing Out is social anxiety that consumers feel when they see other people on social media who have tried and uploaded their experiences of a product, so the higher the anxiety felt, the greater the motivation of consumers to immediately make purchasing decisions so as not to be left behind by ongoing trends. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), which is strengthened by various further empirical studies, FOMO in this study is measured through 9 operational questionnaire items structured as a study-specific adaptation. These items can be

understood through four main adapted dimensions that describe its influence on consumer purchasing behavior: 1) social anxiety about falling behind the trend, which is the feeling of worrying about missing out on valuable experiences that others are enjoying; 2) the need to stay connected to other people's activities, namely the urge to stay informed about what others are doing or experiencing on social media; 3) behavioral monitoring of social media activities, representing the routine checking and digital habit of regularly monitoring platforms so as not to miss the latest information or trends (explicitly distinguished from emotional anxiety); and 4) the fear of missing out on valuable moments or experiences, namely feelings of emotional anxiety if they do not participate in experiences that are currently popular in the social environment.

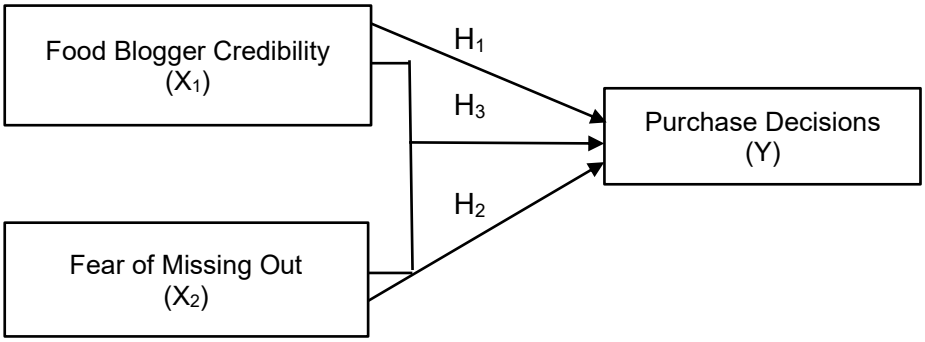


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, the hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:
H_1: Food Blogger Credibility affects Purchase Decisions for Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.
H_2: Fear of Missing Out affects Purchase Decisions for Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.
H_3: Food Blogger Credibility and Fear of Missing Out simultaneously affect Purchase Decisions for Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative survey method to evaluate the effects of Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) and Fear of Missing Out (X_2) on Purchase Decisions (Y) among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan. A sample size of 120 respondents (N = 120) was selected via purposive sampling, determined in accordance with the multivariate sample-sizing guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2019). To address screening requirements, eligible participants were confirmed as Medan residents who had purchased Mak Jutek products and viewed related food blogger content on social media. Respondents evaluated food blogger credibility in general rather than rating a specific influencer. Primary data were gathered via Google Forms between July and August 2026 using a 5-point Likert scale (1–5). The research instrument consists of a total of 26 operational questionnaire items: 7 items for Food Blogger Credibility (X_1), 9 items for Fear of Missing Out (X_2), and 10 items for Purchase Decisions (Y). Each regression variable was constructed using the mean score of its respective questionnaire items, resulting in a possible score range of 1.00 to 5.00. Prior to main testing, a pilot study (N = 30) verified instrument validity ($r_{count} > 0.361$) and reliability. Multiple linear regression (N = 120), F-test, t-test, and R^2 were utilized for hypothesis testing following classical assumption verifications.

RESULTS

Table 1.
Respondent Profile

Identity			
	Categories	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
Age	<18 Years	3	2.5%
	18-25 Years	106	88.33%
	26-35 Years	9	7.5%
	> 35 Years	2	1.67%
Gender	Female	109	90.83%
	Male	11	9.17%

Based on the respondent profile in table 1, there are 120 respondents who are Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City. The characteristics of respondents based on age consist of 3 respondents under 18 years old (2.5%), respondents aged 18-25 years (88.33%), respondents aged 26-35 years (7.5%), and respondents over 35 years old as many as 2 people (1.67%). Respondent characteristics by gender consist of 109 female respondents (90.83%) and 11 male respondents (9.17%).

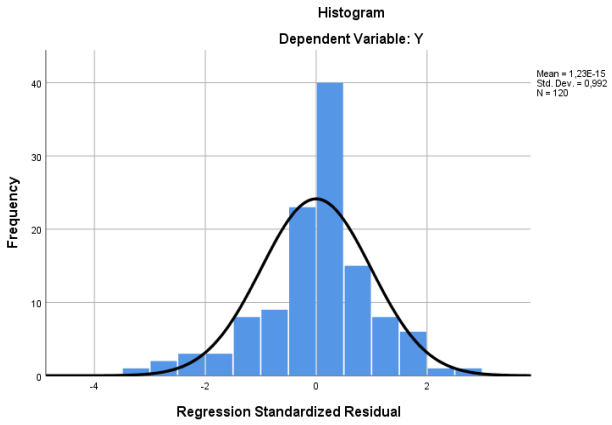
Validity and Reliability Tests

Prior to primary data collection, instrument validity was evaluated through a pilot study involving 30 respondents outside the main sample (N = 30). Based on this validity test, all statement items for the variables Purchase Decision (Y), Food Blogger Credibility (X_1), and Fear of Missing Out (X_2) yielded calculated r-values (r_{count}) greater than the critical two-tailed Pearson table threshold of 0.361 (r_{table} = 0.361), thereby establishing all items as valid.

The results of the reliability test showed that all variables had a Cronbach's Alpha value well above the standard threshold of 0.60, specifically 0.966 for Purchase Decision (Y), 0.944 for Food Blogger Credibility (X_1), and 0.921 for Fear of Missing Out (X_2). As a result, all research instruments were confirmed to be reliable and suitable for further testing.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test of regression residuals produced a p-value of 0.117. At α = 0.05, the test did not provide sufficient evidence to reject residual normality. The histogram and Normal P-P Plot show a roughly symmetrical pattern and data points close to the diagonal line, which are consistent with this result.



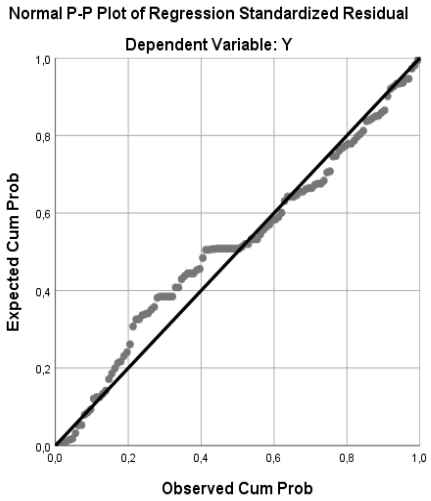


Figure 2. Histogram and Normal P-P Plot

Heteroskedasticity Test

The scatterplot above shows that the data points are distributed randomly and do not form any specific pattern around the zero line on the Regression Studentized Residual (Y) axis, indicating the absence of heteroskedasticity in this regression model.

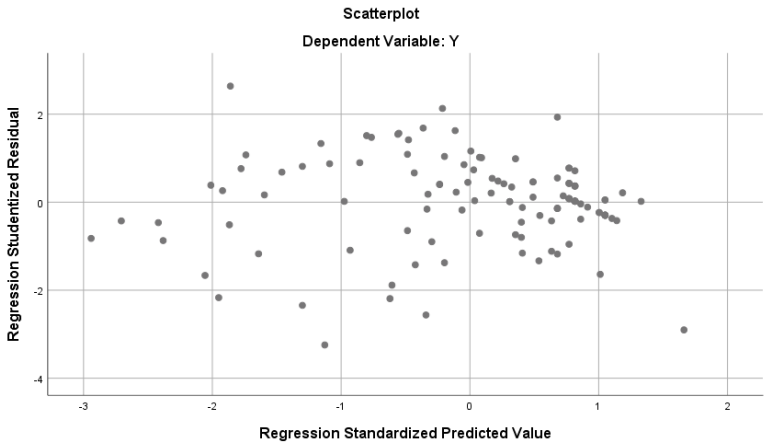


Figure 3. Scatterplot

Table 2.
Multicollinearity Test, Multiple Linear Regression Test, & t Test

Models		Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
		B			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	3.840	1.403	.163		
	X1	1.092	10.421	.000	.790	1.266
	X2	.177	4.335	.000	.790	1.266

As shown in table 2, the tolerance value 0.790 > 0.10 and VIF value 1.266 < 10 for Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) and Fear of Missing Out (X_2) both fall within acceptable limits, indicating that the regression model is free from multicollinearity.

Table 2's regression results produce a constant of 3.840, representing the predicted Purchase Decision (Y) when both independent variables equal zero. For every one-point

increase, Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) raises Purchase Decision by 1.092 points and Fear of Missing Out (X_2) raises it by 0.177 points, with the other variable held constant in each case. Both coefficients are positive.

Table 2's partial test results show that both variables significantly influence Purchase Decisions individually:

1. Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) yields a t-calculated value of 10.421 > t-table 1.98045, Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, confirming its positive and significant partial effect on Purchase Decisions among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.
2. Fear of Missing Out (X2) yields a t-calculated value of 4.335 > t-table 1.98045, Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, confirming its positive and significant partial effect on Purchase Decisions among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.

Test F

The results of the F-test show a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05 and an F-calculated value of 106.909 > F-table 3.07, leading to the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a. This confirms that Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) and Fear of Missing Out (X_2) simultaneously and significantly affect Purchase Decisions (Y) among Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City.

Coefficient of Determination

The R^2 value of 0.646 demonstrates that 64.6% of the variance in Purchase Decision (Y) can be attributed to Food Blogger Credibility (X_1) and Fear of Missing Out (X_2), while the remaining 35.4% is not explained by the variables included in the model.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Food Blogger Credibility on Purchase Decisions

The t-calculated value for the Food Blogger Credibility variable (X_1) is 10.421, which is greater than the critical value of the t-table (1.98045), with a significance level (Sig. = 0.000) less than alpha = 0.05. This shows that Food Blogger Credibility has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions for Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City. This finding indicates that the higher the credibility of food bloggers perceived by consumers, the greater the tendency of consumers to decide to purchase Mak Jutek products. This happens because consumers tend to be more confident and feel confident to buy when the reviews they see are submitted by sources that are considered competent and trustworthy. These findings are in line with research Hansvirgo et al. (2023) and Safitri et al. (2023), which proves that reviews from food bloggers or food vloggers play a big role in directing culinary consumer purchase decisions. This indicates that the credibility of food bloggers, especially through the elements of competence and integrity in submitting reviews, is an important factor that encourages Mak Jutek consumers to decide to buy.

The Effect of Fear of Missing Out on Purchase Decisions

The t-calculated value for the Fear of Missing Out (X_2) variable is 4.335, greater than the critical value of the t-table (1.98045), with a significance level of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, Fear of Missing Out has a positive and partially significant effect on Purchase Decisions of Mak Jutek consumers in Medan City. This finding indicates that the higher the level of anxiety consumers will be left behind from the viral culinary trend (FOMO), the greater their tendency to immediately make purchases on Mak Jutek products. This happens because consumers who feel anxious about missing out on trends tend to be emotionally driven to act immediately so as not to lose moments or experiences that are being talked about on social media. These findings are consistent with research Wachyuni et al. (2023) in the context of the viral restaurant Karen's Diner and Ningsih & A (2025) on the Mie Gacoan phenomenon, which shows that anxiety about lagging behind trends also drives consumer purchase decisions. This indicates that social pressure not to be left

behind from viral culinary trends is also a driver of purchase decisions for Mak Jutek consumers.

The Influence of Food Blogger Credibility and Fear of Missing Out on Purchase Decisions

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 117) = 106.909$, $p < .001$. The individual coefficients for food blogger credibility and FOMO were both positive and statistically significant in the t-tests. The R^2 value of 0.646 indicates that 64.6% of the variation in Purchase Decisions can be associated with these two variables, while the remaining 35.4% is not explained by the model. These survey findings reflect statistical associations and can be understood through the proposed psychological mechanisms, aligning with research by Febrianty et al. (2026), which found that several factors, including social buzz and FOMO, play an important role in shaping purchase decisions for viral food products.

Taken together, these findings suggest that purchase dcision scores among Mak Jutek consumers are associated with both perceived food blogger credibility and FOMO. Consequently, credible food blogger reviews and trend-based promotion with FOMO elements represent relevant considerations for local culinary businesses such as Mak Jutek when developing their marketing activities.

CONCLUSION

This study found that both Food Blogger Credibility (H_1) and Fear of Missing Out (H_2) are positively and significantly associated with Purchase Decisions. In addition, the two variables simultaneously and significantly affect Purchase Decisions (H_3). Together, the two variables explain 64.6% of the variation in purchase decision scores. These findings indicate that higher perceived food blogger credibility and higher FOMO are associated with higher purchase decision scores among the respondents. Therefore, Mak Jutek business actors may consider improving the quality and authenticity of cooperation with food bloggers, as well as using relevant trend-based promotion that draws on FOMO elements, when developing marketing activities. This study examined purchase decisions only; consumer trust and long-term business sustainability were not measured, and future research could investigate them. Because respondents evaluated food bloggers generally rather than a specific blogger or review, the findings reflect perceived food blogger credibility in general.

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