

Demystifying Digital Influence: TikTok and E-WOM in Shaping Purchase Intention via Brand Equity

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Abstract: In the present paper, we aim to identify and analyze the influence of social media and e-WOM on purchase intention via brand equity, with a focus on the skincare brand Skintific in Indonesia. There has been conflicting evidence from studies that have looked at how social media and e-WOM influence customer behaviour, even if TikTok's marketing importance is on the rise. By suggesting brand equity as a mediating component, this study fills this gap. Data gathered from 411 TikTok users who follow material about beauty was analyzed quantitatively. The analysis was conducted using SEM-PLS. According to the results, using social media and e-WOM both increase brand equity. In addition to having a favourable effect on intent to buy, brand equity also acts as a mediator between the two sets of factors. This study adds to the body of knowledge on digital marketing by elucidating the mechanisms via which brand equity influences customer intentions within the personal care industry. It also offers practical insights for marketers seeking to optimize brand value and purchasing behavior through social media engagement.

Introduction

Particularly in the face of global economic uncertainties, Indonesia's manufacturing sector is crucial to the country's economic expansion (Maulana et al., 2023). The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector has become one of the most prominent within this business. (Tanudiharjo et al., 2021). According to Kompas.co.id (2024), the beauty and care category accounted for 49% of total FMCG sales on Indonesian marketplaces, positioning it as the top-performing segment. Among the leading brands is Skintific, a Canadian skincare brand that ranked first in Indonesia's beauty product sales in early 2024 (Kompas.co.id, 2024). Despite this achievement, Skintific experienced a 9.6% decrease in sales during the first half of 2024, indicating challenges in maintaining consumer purchase intention in an increasingly competitive market (Kompas.co.id, 2024).

According to earlier studies, Indonesian consumers are becoming more interested in beauty and personal care items. (Fitriana, Afifah, and Mustaruddin, 2024). This statement is supported by research from Statista (2024) which shows that sales of the beauty and care category in Indonesia are expected to continue to increase until 2029. Meanwhile, differences in consumer skin needs make the business world more competitive, so purchase intention is a crucial aspect to study, because it can help marketers predict what products suit consumers' desires (Li, Romainoor, and Sun, 2023; Choi, et al., 2020).

With the advancement of digitalization and the growing dominance of younger generations on social platforms, companies must leverage IT-based platforms such as social media to survive in a competitive world (Majeed, Ansah, & Ashmond, 2021). Previous studies have also mentioned that social media has enhanced the efficiency of companies in identifying the right segments (Ali & Naushad, 2023). With an average monthly usage duration of 38 hours and 25 minutes, TikTok has emerged as Indonesia's most popular social media network (Meltwater, 2024). According to studies done by Khan et al. (2023) and Hu and Zhu (2022), social media use significantly influences customers' opinions of brands and their intentions to purchase. Some shoppers use social media to find products they would like, said Khan et al. (2023). However, social media enables customers to make purchases online (Putri, Syahputra, and Pradana, 2024). Some companies have found great success using social media to reach customers, educate them about their products, and create lasting impressions of their brand. (Samuroh et al., 2022; Seo, Park, & Choi, 2020). Put differently, social media highly impacts brand equity of the consumers (Hafiz, 2022), and also improves the trustworthiness of the brand itself (Prameswari and Giri, 2022).

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which includes online reviews, also has a significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions (Khan et al., 2023; Siddiqui et al., 2021; Albayrak & Ceylan, 2021; Kunja & Gvrk, 2020). Previous research has shown that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) positively affects both purchase intention and brand equity (Khan et al., 2023; Masa'deh et al., 2021; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). On the other hand, e-WOM is not always a strong predictor of future purchases, according to some studies (Tj. et al., 2022). This disparity highlights a need for additional research into the role of brand

equity as a mediating variable influencing purchase intention (Khan et al., 2023; Minh et al., 2022).

The symbolic worth that customers attach to a brand according to their impressions is known as brand equity (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Khan et al., 2023). Digital activities that impact customers' purchasing intentions include e-WOM and social media usage (Yoo et al., 2000; Aji, Nadhila, & Sanny, 2020). Customers who have strong brand equity are able to distinguish a product from its rivals and are prepared to pay more for the brand's perceived worth (Farzin et al., 2022).

Despite Skintific's first place sales in Indonesia, this research is crucial. This is due to the decline in sales in the first semester of 2024 and the inconsistency of previous findings regarding the variables studied. A study by Tj. et al. (2022) contradicted earlier studies that claim e-WOM significantly affects purchase intention (Zhang, Zheng, & Wang, 2020; Baker et al., 2016). Conversely, brand equity has no discernible effect on intent to buy, according to Putra and Tasya (2023). This lack of consensus highlights an information gap about the effects of social media, e-WOM, and brand equity on intent to buy, particularly as it pertains to TikTok.

This study uses Skintific as a case study to analyse how social media usage and electronic word-of-mouth affect purchase intention. One component that mediates this relationship is brand equity. The findings should lead to more advanced digital marketing techniques for the cosmetics business, both theoretically and practically speaking. Additionally, the following research topics are the focus of this TikTok-focused study:

RQ1: "How do social media usage, e-WOM, brand equity, and purchase intention manifest among Skintific consumers in Indonesia?"

RQ2: "How does social media usage on TikTok influence brand equity for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ3: "How does e-WOM on TikTok affect brand equity for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ4: "How does social media usage on TikTok influence purchase intention for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ5: "How does e-WOM on TikTok affect purchase intention for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ6: "How does brand equity influence purchase intention for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ7: "How does social media usage on TikTok influence purchase intention through brand equity for Skintific in Indonesia?"

RQ8: "How does e-WOM on TikTok affect purchase intention through brand equity for Skintific in Indonesia?"

Social Media Usage and Brand Equity

Social media is a powerful tool for managers who want to improve their brand's image in the eyes of consumers (Hu and Zhu, 2022). Maskuroh et al. (2022) and Nobar et al. (2020) found that businesses and marketers may use social media to engage with customers, collaborate on content, and increase the value of their brands. The growing use of social media marketing also seems to affect consumers' perceptions of brand equity (Hafez, 2022).

Positive brand perceptions can be influenced by social media marketing strategies that are truly effective (Lim et al., 2020; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Kim and Ko, 2012).

H1: “Social media usage has a positive and significant effect on brand equity”

E-WOM and Brand Equity

Electronic Word of Mouth emerged with the proliferation of online information sharing, according to Khan et al. (2023), who cited previous study. Positive and negative evaluations written by customers online can have an impact on brand equity; this phenomenon is known as electronic word-of-mouth (Masa'deh et al., 2021; Brzozowska-Wos and Schivinski, 2019). Past studies have also shown that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) significantly affects brand equity (Perera et al., 2021; Sagynbekova et al., 2021).

H2: “Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on brand equity.”

Social Media Usage and Purchase Intention

Purchase behavior has been impacted by social media users' replies and purchasing experiences (Albayrak and Ceylan, 2021). Social media use is a driving force behind consumers' online wine purchases when they are searching for information (Pucci et al., 2019). According to Nekmahmud et al. (2022) and Pop et al. (2020), social media use has a substantial impact on customers' purchase decisions. Social media and online buying habits impact consumers' final purchases (Ramany et al., 2022; Hutter et al., 2013; Rajput et al., 2022). The findings of the study by Khan et al. in (2023) provide more evidence that social media usage has a substantial impact on the propensity to purchase. Products sold through social media are considered more effective in attracting customers' attention (Syahputra, et. al., 2022).

H3: “Social media usage has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.”

E-WOM and Purchase Intention

Reviews of products posted online, whether favourable or negative, are known as electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) (Albayrak and Ceylan, 2021). Recent research has shown that e-WOM can positively influence consumers' intent to buy (Khan et al., 2023; Siddiqui et al., 2021; Kunja and Gvrk, 2020). When deciding what to buy, consumers often look to internet reviews (Khan et al., 2023). At the same time, studies conducted on the smartphone market have shown that e-WOM positively affects customers' propensity to purchases (Kumar, 2017). Video reviews of products have proved to have a significant influence in previous studies (Shahab et al., 2021; Zhai et al., 2022). According to Khan et al. (2023), E-WOM has a direct and substantial impact on consumers' propensity to make a purchase.

H4: “Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.”

Brand Equity and Purchase Intention

For decades, people have worked to build their brands' equity, since it is a key component in consumers' decision to buy (Khan et al., 2023). Brand equity and social value may impact consumers' propensity to buy (Minh et al., 2022; Verma, 2021; Goyal and Verma, 2022; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). Customers' impressions of a well-known brand or product can affect their intention to buy by making them believe that the brand produces high-quality goods (Chi et al., 2009). According to Moreira et al. (2017), purchase intention is also immediately and favorably impacted by positive brand equity and positive experiences.

H5: "Brand equity has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention."

The Mediating Role of Brand Equity

Successful social media marketing initiatives can aid in building good brand equity, according to research (Lim et al., 2020; Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Kim and Ko, 2012). Majeed et al. (2021) found that there is a substantial association between brand equity, social media, and intention to buy in the fashion business. Many studies have shown that social media can increase positive perceptions of brands, customer loyalty, and engagement with those brands (Hafes, 2020; Lim et al., 2020; Koay et al., 2020; Minh et al., 2022).

When social media is involved, consumers can give feedback regarding the purchase experience which influences other consumers' purchasing behavior (Albayrak and Ceylan, 2021). Customers are more likely to believe internet reviews while making a purchase (Khan et al., 2023). Additionally, the effect of online recommendations on consumers' propensity to purchase is moderated by their perceptions of the brand's equity (Farzin et al., 2022). Research by Khan et al. (2023) indicated that E-WOM and social media use significantly impact consumers' propensity to make a purchase.

H6: "Social media usage has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention mediated by brand equity."

H7: "Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention mediated by brand equity."

Research Method

In the literature review and theoretical framework that has been previously discussed, there are two independent variables, one mediating variable, and one dependent variable that explain whether Social Media Usage and E-WOM, mediated by Brand Equity, can influence Purchase Intention. The following is the conceptual framework of the research:

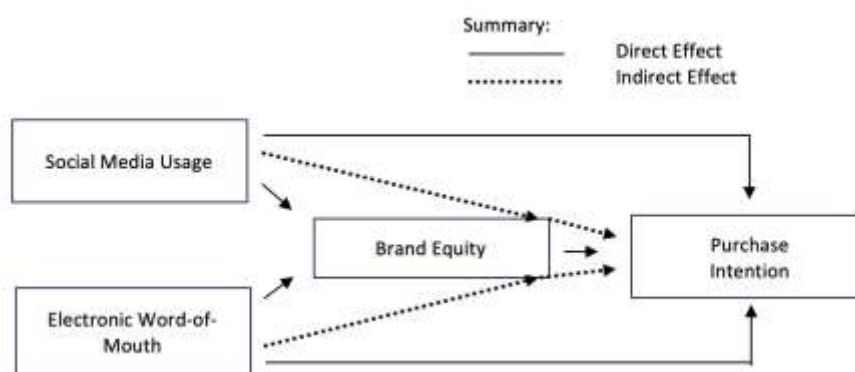


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

A quantitative technique was utilised by the researchers in this investigation. Brand equity mediates the effect on the Indonesian Skintific brand, and this study uses a quantitative approach to show how social media use and E-WOM on TikTok impact purchase intentions. The people who have participated in the study are social media users from Indonesia who have used TikTok and have watched Skintific videos.

According to the background information provided, the study's population consists of Indonesian Tiktok social network users who have viewed Skintific content. With 157.6 million users, Indonesia is the nation with the most Tiktok users, according to goodstats.id (2024). With a 5% margin of error, the Slovin method can therefore be used to calculate the maximum number of samples that can be taken, resulting in a minimum sample size of 400.

Researchers employed simple random sampling in this study, which involves picking elements at random without taking anything else into account; in other words, everyone has an equal chance of being chosen (Trisliatanto, 2020). The methodology employed to gather data for this study consists of two components. In the first place, we have the major data source, which consists of 18-question online surveys distributed using Google Forms. Following its distribution on Instagram, LINE, and WhatsApp, 411 people filled out the surveys. This is the phase when secondary data is gathered from a plethora of previous studies found in books and journals.

According to Trisliatanto (2020), researchers in this study used basic random sampling, which means selecting elements at random without considering other factors. Thus, each element had an equal probability of being chosen. There are two parts to the methodology that was used to collect data for this study. One important source of information is a set of 18-question online questionnaires that were disseminated through Google Forms. The poll was completed by 411 individuals after it was shared on Instagram, LINE, and WhatsApp. This is the phase when secondary data is gathered from a plethora of previous studies found in books and journals.

Three categories of research variables are employed in this study: independent factors, such as E-WOM and Social Media Usage (X1), dependent variables, such as Purchase Intention (Y), and brand equity (Z), which serves as the mediating variable. A Likert scale, which may gauge how people or groups feel about a particular issue, will be used to measure

all of the variables under study (Trisliatanto, 2020). Each variable will be assigned a number between 1 and 5, where 1 denotes significant disagreement and 5 denotes strong agreement.

The research team in this work used SmartPLS 4.0 to implement PLS-SEM, which stands for Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling. The validity and reliability were evaluated using the measurement model (outer model), while the associations between latent variables were studied using the structural model (inner model), as stated by Hair et al. (2022), Musyafi et al. (2022), and Maola (2024).

Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping, assessing both t-statistics and p-values with a 5% significance level and 95% confidence interval (Hair et al., 2022; Sholihin & Ratmono, 2020). By examining the significance between independent, mediating, and dependent variables, mediation effects were investigated using the methodology put forward by Baron and Kenny (1986) (Sugiyono, 2019; Edwards & Lambert, 2007).

Result and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

The purpose of this case study was to analyze how e-women's interactions on TikTok and other social media platforms affect their propensity to buy Skintific products in Indonesia by way of brand equity. Primary data was derived from a valid questionnaire that was distributed to 411 participants. Of the 411 respondents, it can be seen that 255 respondents or 62% of respondents have female gender and 156 respondents or 38% of respondents are male. This shows that the majority of Tiktok users in Indonesia who have seen Skintific content are women. However, based on research conducted by Dewi, Murshid, and Mohaidin (2025), the difference in the male and female population can lead marketers to develop different sales strategies.

The gender breakdown of the respondents reveals the following: 2 (or 0.5%) were under the age of 18, 153 (or 37.2%) were between the ages of 19 and 24, 139 (or 33.8%) were between the ages of 25 and 30, and 117 (or 28.5%) were older than 30. One hundred forty-percent of those who took the survey are now working.

With 273 respondents (or 66.4% of the total), the last degree of education reported by the respondents was S1. Of the 411 respondents, 187 respondents or 45.5% of respondents had a monthly expenditure of 2,500,001-5,000,000 rupiah. Marketing professionals can use the study's demographic data to better understand their target audience's wants and needs (see Table 1 for the respondent profile):

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Gender	Total	Frequency
Female	255	62%
Male	156	38%
	411	100%
Age		
> 18 years old	2	0,5%
19-24 years old	153	37,2%
25-30 years old	139	33,8%
> 30 years old	117	28,5%
	411	100%
Latest Education		
Senior High School	133	32,4%
S1	273	66,4%
S2	3	0,7%
S3	2	0,5%
	411	100%
Occupation		
Student	105	25,5%
Employee	133	32,4%
Entrepreneur	102	24,8%
Other	71	17,3%
	411	100%
Domicile		
Java Island	234	56,9%
Sumatera Island	153	37,2%
Sulawesi Island	6	1,5%
Kalimantan Island	5	1,2%
Bali and Nusa Tenggara Island	8	1,9%
Papua Island	5	1,2%
	411	100%
Income (IDR)		
< 2.500.000	176	42,8%
2.500.001-5.000.000	187	45,5%
5.000.001-10.000.000	32	7,8%
>10.000.000	16	3,9%
	411	100%

Source: Respondent survey

Assessment of the Measurement Model

Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite dependability, or Cronbach's Alpha are ways to measure composite dependability. According to Sugiyono (2019), a reliability test is designed to determine how accurate and consistent the indicators are. If the composite reliability value is over 0.7, Cronbach's alpha is bigger than 0.7, and the average variance

extracted (AVE) value is greater than 0.5, then an indicator is deemed reliable (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Reliability Values

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Remarks
Brand Equity	0.870	0.880	0.721	Reliable
E-WOM	0.853	0.903	0.685	Reliable
Purchase Intention	0.920	0.922	0.715	Reliable
Social Media Usage	0.740	0.739	0.562	Reliable

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.9

According to Maola (2024), convergent validity occurs when indicators or instruments have a significant association with their variables. When the convergent validity test yields an outer loading value greater than 0.7 and an AVE value greater than 0.5, the indicators are deemed valid. Table 3 shows that all indications satisfy the requirements with an AVE larger than 0.5 and an outer loading value greater than 0.7. The results of this investigation indicate that it is safe to use.

Table 3. Outer Loading Values

Indicator	Brand Equity	E-WOM	Purchase Intention	Social Media Usage
B1	0.799			
B2	0.826			
B3	0.844			
B4	0.923			
E1		0.749		
E2		0.912		
E3		0.815		
E4		0.826		
P1			0.850	
P2			0.783	
P3			0.816	
P4			0.863	
P5			0.843	
P6			0.913	
S1				0.770
S2				0.784
S3				0.735
S4				0.708

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.9

Structural Model Testing

The results are in: a positive correlation between social media engagement and brand equity ($p = 0.016$, $t = 4.868$, and path coefficient = 0.200), as seen in Table 4. H1 is acceptable because the t-value is greater than 1.64 and the p-value is lower than 0.05. The statistical data

($t = 8.344$; $p = 0.000$) demonstrate a path coefficient of 0.697, further supporting the idea that E-WOM has a highly positive effect on brand equity. Since H2 is said to fulfill the significance criteria, it is also approved. A favourable and statistically significant correlation between social media engagement and purchase intention (t -value = 4.868, $p = 0.000$) supports the acceptance of H3. The value of the path coefficient is 0.468.

Nevertheless, a path coefficient value of -0.157 indicates a negative direction when considering the impact of E-WOM on purchase intention. There is a statistical significance (t -value = 1.483, $p = 0.069$). In our statistical test, we cannot accept H4 because its t -value is less than 1.64 and its p -value is greater than 0.05, which are the significance thresholds.

At last, we can accept H5 since brand equity has a significant and positive effect on purchase intention ($t = 5.927$, $p = 0.000$, and path = 0.573). However, brand equity had a substantial and favourable effect on purchase intention, as it attenuated the connection between social media engagement and purchase intention. A positive direction was discovered, with a path coefficient value of 0.399, a t -value of 6.080, and a p -value of 0.000. We accept H6 as the null hypothesis because the t -value is bigger than 1.64 and the p -value is smaller than 0.05. This demonstrates that, via the mediation of brand equity, social media engagement positively and significantly affects purchase intention.

With a path coefficient of 0.115, a t -value of 1.770, and a p -value of 0.038, E-WOM significantly and positively influences purchase intention via brand equity. Similarly, the results are significant enough to accept H7. There is a large and positive relationship between E-WOM and purchase intention when brand equity acts as a mediator. Consequently, most of the research's hypotheses are confirmed and show a statistically significant correlation in the expected direction.

Table 4. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient	t-statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	SMU → BE	0.200	4.868	0.016	Supported
H2	E-WOM → BE	0.697	8.344	0.000	Supported
H3	SMU → PI	0.468	4.868	0.000	Supported
H4	EWOM → PI	-0.157	1.483	0.069	Not supported
H5	BE → PI	0.573	5.927	0.000	Supported
H6	SMU → BE → PI	0.399	6.080	0.000	Supported
H7	E-WOM → BE → PI	0.115	1.770	0.038	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 4.1.0.9

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to examine how brand equity acts as a go-between in the feedback loop between social media engagement, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and the intention to buy cosmetics and personal care items. The only hypothesis that was not supported was the one about the link between e-WOM and intent to buy.

First things first, there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between social media activity and brand equity. This is in line with the findings of Khan et al. in 2023. Ads for products and services are becoming common on social media, and studies have shown that this has an effect on consumers' perceptions of the brands' worth (Hafez, 2022). Businesses and marketers may interact with customers, create and share content, and boost brand value via social media, according to Nobar et al. (2020) and Maskuroh et al. (2022). According to Nekmahmud et al. (2022), Pop et al. (2020), and Pucci et al. (2019), customers also utilise social media to gather more information about a product or service before making a purchase. Because it reaches so many different types of consumers, social media can sway their decision to buy, says this research (Ali and Naushad, 2023).

Electronic Word of Mouth was born out of people sharing information on the internet, according to Khan et al. (2023). According to Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011), negative online reviews of products usually lower the value of the brand, which is detrimental to businesses. Many studies have demonstrated that e-WOM has a substantial impact on brand equity (e.g., Perera et al., 2021; Sagynbekova et al., 2021). This study found that brand equity is significantly and positively impacted by E-WOM. Meanwhile, the results show that Tiktok E-WOM has a small and negative effect on skintific buying intents among Indonesian consumers. This demonstrates that while there are some positive ratings for Skintific products on TikTok, there are also many negative evaluations, which can discourage consumers from making a purchase (Zhang, Zheng, and Wang, 2020; Wang et al., 2018; Baker et al., 2016). Research by Majid and Sumadi (2022) supports this idea, showing that E-WOM has a little negative effect on consumers' propensity to make a purchase.

Last but not least, this research shows that Brand Equity has a very beneficial effect on Purchase Intention. A successful brand's equity now acts as a mediator between word-of-mouth marketing's effect on consumers' propensity to make a purchase and their engagement with brands on social media. Research conducted in the fashion industry has shown a strong correlation between purchase intention and social media due to brand equity (Majeed et al., 2021). Customers can publish online evaluations on social media, which influences their decision to buy (Khan et al., 2023; Albayrak and Ceylan, 2021). Online reviews, meanwhile, have the ability to improve brand equity (Mahrinasari et al., 2017). Consumers study internet evaluations before making a purchase, building consumer-based brand equity, according to studies on restaurants (Brzozowska-Wos and Schivinski, 2019).

Electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) has a positive and statistically significant influence on brand equity, but a negative and statistically insignificant influence on purchase intention. So, a lot of negative feedback about Skintific on TikTok makes people less interested in buying it. The connection between E-WOM and Purchase Intention becomes positive and significant when Brand Equity mediates. So, even though Skintific still has both excellent and bad ratings on TikTok in Indonesia, consumers will still think about purchasing the brand's items if it has a solid reputation and branding approach. According to Majid and Sumadi (2022), for marketers to generate positive E-WOM, they need to establish strong relationships with consumers on social media. Khan et al. (2023) found that social media usage and

electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) mediated by brand equity can affect purchase intention, thus this makes sense.

In conclusion, the study's results show that Brand Equity is a mediator between E-WOM, social media usage, and purchase intention. With respondents living in Indonesia, this study focuses on the beauty and self-care sector, particularly on Titok, one of the social media platforms. According to this study, marketers should produce original, trustworthy, and educational material to boost their customers' propensity to buy. Additionally, positive brand equity can be developed through quality reviews and content.

Theoretical Contribution

Regarding theoretical contributions, this study explains how consumers behave in relation to digital marketing, particularly on TikTok social media. Prior research has provided a wealth of explanation regarding the impact of social media and E-WOM on consumers' intent to buy (Khan et al., 2023; Siddiqui et al., 2021). Still, this study uses brand equity as a mediator variable to look at how it affects the beauty and self-care industry. This report, meanwhile, also focuses on Tiktok social media short-duration content, which marketers should employ more creatively and educationally to impact consumer buying decisions. Thus, the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is further illuminated by this study. This survey concludes that the beauty and self-care sector of the internet market is dominated by generation Z.

Managerial Contribution

In terms of managerial contributions, this research is the latest information for marketers, that TikTok not only plays a role as exposure, but also increases the trust and positive value of the brand itself. Especially in the beauty and care industry, marketers can package content that is creative, consistent, informative and relevant to current skin issues. Secondly, positive e-WOM can also be encouraged through good content. This allows consumers to take the initiative to share their positive experiences with the product, without the marketer having to pay for it like working with influencers. Lastly, marketers should always consider the messages they convey on social media regarding products. The reason behind this is that in a highly competitive business environment, the value of a brand has a significant impact on how consumers perceive it before making a purchase.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate how brand equity mediates the relationship between social media usage and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) and purchase intention. The research focuses on TikTok as the social media platform, with six out of seven hypotheses being accepted. The findings indicate that marketers need to better minimize negative E-WOM related to their products. In other words, these results emphasize the importance of an integrated content strategy combined with consumer review management

in strengthening brand image and encouraging purchase decisions, especially among active social media users like those on TikTok in Indonesia.

These insights hold valuable implications for marketers aiming to strengthen brand positioning in highly competitive digital environments. Brands are encouraged to invest not only in high-quality, visually appealing content, but also in fostering consumer dialogue and managing online feedback to enhance perceived brand value. The findings also suggest the need for continuous brand-building initiatives, particularly in markets driven by Gen-Z digital natives. Although this study provides important contributions, future research may consider expanding the context beyond TikTok or the skincare industry, as well as adopting longitudinal methods to examine how brand consumer relationships evolve over time. Additionally, exploring different consumer segments or combining behavioral tracking data may offer richer, real-time insights into digital purchase decision-making processes.

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Appendix

Measurement

Social Media Usage	• I establish a relationship with Skintific Indonesia on TikTok • use TikTok to search for information about Skintific products • The content about Skintific products on TikTok is reliable • The content about Skintific products on TikTok is convincing
E-WOM	• I often read reviews on TikTok to ensure that purchasing Skintific products is the right choice • I often read reviews on TikTok to find out which Skintific product is considered the best • I often read reviews on TikTok to gather information about Skintific products • I often read reviews on TikTok to gain confidence in choosing Skintific product
Brand Equity	• I can easily recognize Skintific products compared to other cosmetics • I trust Skintific products • Skintific products are always my first choice • Compared to alternative brands, Skintific's quality is the best
Purchase Intention	• I will purchase Skintific products • I will purchase Skintific products over other available products or brands • I intend to buy Skintific brand products in the future • No matter the situation, I will always buy Skintific products • Skintific products quickly catch my attention • Skintific is the first brand that comes to mind when I want to buy cosmetic and care products