The influence of social media and e-WOM on skincare purchasing decisions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how Indonesian consumers' decisions to buy skincare products are influenced by the relationship between social media influencers and e-WOM. The study's population is infinite. In order to explain the link between variables, the research strategy employed in this study takes a quantitative approach. A sample of 100 respondents was obtained for the study using the Lemeshow equation as the sampling technique. The statistical technique used in this study is the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method. Purchase decisions for skincare products are significantly influenced by social media and e-WOM, according to the research. The findings indicate that interactions and information received through social media as well as positive reviews from other users can influence consumers' level of trust and increase their propensity to make purchases. The implication is that companies in the skincare industry should utilize social media and e-WOM strategies as part of their marketing efforts to attract more consumers.

Keywords: social media, electronic word of mouth, purchasing decisions.

Introduction

The internet has permeated every aspect of our life in the current digital era, altering how we interact, communicate, and make decisions. People all around the world are connected via a computer network called the internet. Furthermore, the natural network or the wide network are other names for the internet (Afifah & Setyantoro, 2021). Both consumers and producers can access various sources of information, services, and conveniences available on the internet (Supriadi et al., 2024) . The findings of an investigation carried out by datareportal (2024), found that there were 185.3 million internet users in Indonesia as of January 2024. Between January 2023 and January 2024, Indonesia's internet user base grew by 1.5 million (+0.8%), accounting for 66.5 percent of the country's total population at the start of 2024, according to Kepios Analysis. For perspective, these user figures reveal that 93.40 million people in Indonesia did not use the internet at the start of 2024, suggesting that 33.5 percent of the population remained offline at the beginning of the year (Kemp, 2024). However, emerging issues on the internet include intensifying competition, shifting consumer tastes and habits, and risks to privacy and data security (Bandara et al., 2020). One of the major influences of the internet is the emergence of social media.

Social media is crucial for information exchange, communication, and interaction. Social networking is now a vital component of daily living, helping with anything from finding new people worldwide to staying in touch with friends and family. Has changed how we communicate, work together, and engage with each other (Adeyeye et al., 2023). Social

media is a tool or method used by companies to communicate with customers in the form of text, photos, audio, and video. Social media is now a new segment and has developed into a platform that can be accessed by anyone familiar with the internet (Salmiah et al., 2024). Companies and government agencies can use social media to disseminate text, photos, audio and video to the public. Conversely, certain online communities may use social media as a tool to communicate. Marketers need new types of "business-to-consumer" and "consumer-to-consumer" interactions on these social media networks (Yuliastuti et al., 2020). Some indicators of social media, according to Loanit, are: 1. Strong credibility. When an influencer is credible, his followers are more likely to trust him. 2. A lot of activity. An influencer who actively participates in social media activities and uploads frequently. 3. Huge fan base. A social media influencer with a substantial following (Devi, 2018; Andreani et al., 2021). An influencer who has a large following on social media (Herviani et al., 2020). Social media influencers, who provide product recommendations and reviews to their customers are one of the rapidly growing phenomena in today's digital environment. Social media influencers are selected individuals or personalities who have an impact on their followers' behavior. They can be used as marketing targets or to promote brands (Ningtyas & Hidayat 2024). Influencers influence customers to make purchasing decisions, draw their attention to the goods they represent, and enhance brand image and awareness (Permana & Agus Maolana Hidayat 2024). The rise of social media influencers, people who have significant influence on websites such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Consumers, especially the younger generation, are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of choosing skincare products. Influencers with a wide reach and strong influence, become an important factor in making decisions about what to buy for skincare products. A report released by the Indonesian Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM) shows a significant annual increase in cosmetics sales in Indonesia. We obtained this report from the country's official government website. According to go.id, the number of skincare businesses increased from 819 in 2021 to 1,010 by mid-2023. As the quantity increases, the "Love Indonesian Products" trend also shows an increase in quality, allowing local products to compete with international products. The national skincare business entered the export market with a value of USD 770.8 million from January to November 2023. Within five years, it is likely that the market will increase to 467,919 products, or more than 10 times. Meanwhile, sales data of cosmetics from Indonesia to the global market is expected to increase by an average of 5% per year to reach USD 473.21 billion by 2028. This encourages customers to try new local products and gives them more choices. The skincare industry in Indonesia is growing and has huge growth potential. It is one of the industries that is heavily influenced by this phenomenon. Consumers are increasingly relying on information obtained from influencers and online reviews in choosing skincare products that suit their needs.

The evolution of the modern online world has led to a new paradigm in word-of-mouth communication. Although word-of-mouth was traditionally done in person, the internet has greatly facilitated consumer contacts in recent years, resulting in the development of e-WOM, a new form of electronic word-of-mouth communication (Schiffman et al., 2010; Amiroh et al., 2023). This e-WOM news is often referred to as "viral marketing" and spreads like a virus with a single "like" encouraging customers to talk about the company's goods and services in various online formats (Prahiawan et al., 2021). e-WOM significantly influences consumer behavior and purchasing decisions, especially in the business sector

due to technological advances and information overload. With the internet, businesses can interact directly with a wider audience and interact directly with potential customers. Therefore, electronic word of mouth is essential in modern marketing strategies to influence consumer preferences and decisions (Amin & Yanti 2021; Putry et al., 2024). e-WOM is a type of communication in which positive and negative statements about a product are sent over the internet from one customer to another (Yulindasari, 2022; Rosyid et al., 2023). Consumer decision-making is significantly influenced by e-WOM. To enhance corporate performance and strategic decision making, companies need to know what encourages customers to spread the word about the goods they purchase. Businesses trying to enhance their performance and strategy must comprehend why consumers willingly spread good news about the goods they purchase. Electronic word-of-mouth is the quick and significant informal information sharing between buyers and suppliers (Andri Asoka Sidantara Rosadi & Rizki Tedja Sukma, 2023). Three dimensions are used to measure e-WOM, and each has four indicators, such as: 1. Intensity using metrics, Engaging with users on social media, length of time spent running ads on social media, The quantity of advertisements on social media and the quantity of user-generated reviews on social media platforms. 2. Opinion valence with indicators, positive feedback from social networking site users, The quantity of product opinions, the interest of social media users in the product, and the suggestions made by social networking site users. 3. Content with indicators, Details on the manufacturing facility, Information about the product's pricing is obvious, Information about the quality is obvious, Details of the payment method (Rosadi & Sukma, 2023). The decision to purchase goods has an impact on e-WOM references, Customers interact with each other by discussing specific products and sharing their opinions through social media posts, user-generated content, and reviews (Chu & Kim 2018; Yano et al., 2023). Due to the influence of e-WOM, sales of beauty and skincare products are increasing in this context. Consumers can obtain more accurate information about products through e-WOM which impacts their trust in the quality and usefulness of the products. Skincare products sold through social media and influencers, rely heavily on customer reviews and recommendations to improve brand image and increase sales. e-WOM is at the core of the marketing revolution because it is a useful tool for increasing brand loyalty, increasing market buzz, and increasing consumer awareness (Arif, 2019; Samosir et al., 2023). is growing faster and more, and influencing the purchasing decision-making process. This is supported by research showing that customers decisions to purchase things are greatly and favorably influenced by promotions.

Previous studies have demonstrated that sales promotions positively impact consumers' decisions to buy. Making decisions about purchases involves integrating information to assess multiple options and select one (Sangadji & Sopiah 2013). In order to identify the most profitable option, the purchase decision-making process entails assessing and choosing from a variety of options based on certain preferences (Assael in Muanas, 2014; Yudisha et al., 2023). When choosing skincare products, people consider a number of things. When consumers are looking for information about a product, they will compare it to other products and conduct an evaluation before making a purchasing choice. A number of factors can affect the decisions that consumers make about what to buy, and they will seek out information that will help them make those selections. Kusuma lists six markers of decision-making, which are as follows: 1. Purpose 2. Gathering information 3. Interest 4. Choice of

the best alternative 5. Satisfaction (Milla & Febriola 2022). Purchasing decisions are attitudes, activities, and actions that consumers can use to collect decisions from various sources to buy goods or services offered with the intention of satisfying their needs and desires.

There are several indicators in purchasing decisions as follows 1. Product stability, a purchase decision can also be made by consumers by searching for relevant information. 2. Buying habits, obtaining supplier recommendations which are important information, stating that one of the indicators of a purchase decision is quite impressive. 3. Recommendations from others: If a consumer finds a product useful, they should suggest it to others. 4. Repeat purchase. Devi and Fadli (2023) Because repeat purchases are so important in your business, there is a reason why consumers then also make repeat purchases of certain products. Social media is a tool in conveying information from a person to a person or group of people, to achieve individual goals or group goals (Hutapea & Noprizal, 2023). Currently, social media that is widely used by Indonesian people is Instagram, therefore I use Instagram social media. Marketing through social media provides opportunities for marketers to interact, cooperate, influence, and utilize the insights of individuals involved in marketing activities to attract audience attention and encourage them to share information through various social media platforms. While social media marketing is a challenge for marketing managers, it can be a powerful tool to give customers a positive response, ultimately influencing their purchase Intentions, behaviors and even decisions. Nowadays, various social media platforms are very popular among people. These platforms allow users to share statuses in visual form such as images or videos, complete with short descriptions, making them an effective medium for digital promotion of products or services.

H1: Social Media Influence Positively Purchasing Decisions

Ilhamalimy and Ali (2021) reveal that consumers form trust and perceptions of products or services through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). In line with that state that consumers are more likely to read product reviews first before making a purchase decision, rather than relying solely on advertisements. Choi (2020) also emphasizes that comments and ratings from other users are important elements that influence purchasing decisions. This statement is reinforced by Prasad's findings, which show that e-WOM has a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions (Romadhoni et al., 2023).

H2: Electronic Word Of Mouth Influence Positively Purchasing Decisions

Previous research has highlighted the important role of social media, e-WOM and purchase decisions in the context of skincare products. While many studies have explored the influence of e-WOM, influencers, and social media on purchase decisions. New research, however, emerges when we consider the specific combination of e-WOM and social media influencer mechanisms that influence Indonesian consumers' decision to purchase skincare products. Most of the current research focuses more on one aspect, such as social media influencers. Previous research states that social media has a positive influence on purchasing decisions (Hadi & Mukhsin, 2024). Previous research on e-WOM indicates that it has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, but it does not explore the complex relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decisions. With the internet,

businesses can reach a wider audience and interact directly with potential customers, making social media and e-WOM an important element in modern marketing strategies to influence consumer preferences and decisions (Putry et al., 2024). From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the positive influence of previous research is our interest in taking the title of research on the influence of social media and e-WOM on purchasing decisions. This study aims to explore how the interaction between social media influencers and e-WOM can influence purchasing decisions for skincare products in Indonesia.

Research Methods

A quantitative technique was used in this study, which was carried out in 2025, to explain the link between the factors. The data collected by the survey is primary data. The questionnaire for social media has three statements (Cahyono, 2016; Herviani et al., 2020). The e-WOM questionnaire has twelve statements (Rosadi & Sukma, 2023) and the purchase decision questionnaire has four statements (Devi & Fadli, 2023). The study's population consists of skincare product users who have read or seen reviews of skincare products on social media, watched reviews of social media influencers, and bought and utilized these items. As a result, the study's population is not restricted. The sample in this study was measured using the chance test technique or Lemeshow's sample equation, due to the unlimited number of populations (Unawekkly et al., 2023; Daina et al., 2024). Based on Lemeshow's formula, the n obtained is 96.4 or vice versa with the assumption that it is collected to 100 so that the sample to be used in this study is 100 individuals. Using a self administered Google Form and a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), data was gathered online. The data used in this investigation was gathered using SEM-PLS software. SEM-PLS is used in this study since the model under test is an advancement of the earlier research model (Asbari et al., 2021; Prahiawan et al., 2021).
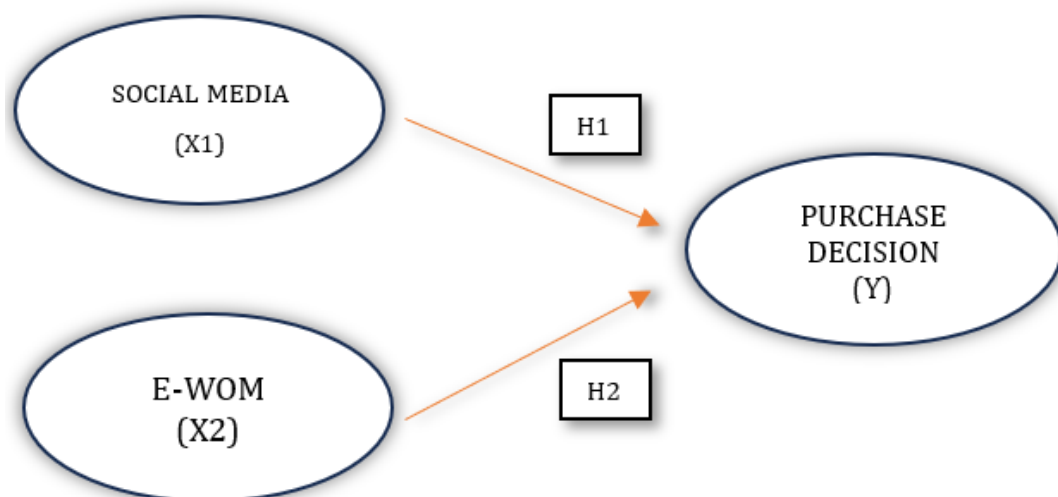

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Table 1. Item Measurement

Variables	Indicator	Item
Social Media	Strong Credibility	A well-known influencer in the kecantikan industry has a very positive reputation.
	A lot of Activity	Influencer high content activity proves effective in increasing Skincare popularity
	Huge fan base	An Indonesian beauty influencer with a huge following is known as one of the most popular in the country.
e-WOM	Enganging with users on social media	Skincare accounts actively engage with customers through reply comments on social media
	Length of time spent running ads on social media	The duration of skincare advertisements on social media makes me interested in the product
	The quantity of advertisements on social media	Through intensive advertising, skincare has managed to reach a wider audience
	The quantity of user-generated reviews on social media platforms.	I trust Skincare more because of the numerous user reviews on social media platforms.
	Positive feedback from social networking site users	The many positive reviews from other users made me confident that skincare was the right choice for me.
	The quantity of product opinions	The number of opinions about Skincare that I encounter can influence my decision to buy it
	The interest of social media users in the product	After seeing many people discussing Skincare, I became interested in buying it
	The suggestions made by social networking site users	Suggestions from social media users influence me to buy Skincare
	Details on the manufacturing facility	I tend to avoid products that come from countries with less stringent safety regulations
	Information about the product's pricing is obvious	Clear information about the price makes me interested in buying it
	Information about the quality is obvious	I am more interested in trying Skincare because of 's information about the quality of the products that are clear on social media.
	Details of the payment method	Information about clear payment methods makes it easier for me to buy Skincare
Purchase Decision	Namely Product stability	I feel safe because this product is always produced consistently.
	Buying habits	I regularly buy this skincare product.
	Recommendations from others	Recommendations from others greatly influence my decision to buy skincare products.
	Repeat purchases	I regularly repurchase this skincare product.

Results and Discussions

With the use of SmartPLS 3 software, structural equation modeling - partial least squares, or SEM-PLS, is used for data analysis in this research model. At this stage, validity is tested using the outer loading value for each indicator in the measurement model. Outer loading shows the extent to which indicators relate to the constructs they measure, which is an important step in assessing construct validity in this research model. Based on the analysis, most indicators show an outer loading value that meets the threshold, where indicators are considered valid if they have a correlation above 0.70, but for the development research stage, a loading value between 0.50 to 0.70 is still acceptable (Ghozali I, 2014; Herviani et al., 2020).

Table 2. Outer Loadings

No.	Indicator	Outer Loading	Status
1	X1.1	0.913	Valid
2	X1.2	0.933	Valid
3	X1.3	0.910	Valid
4	X2.1	0.774	Valid
5	X2.2	0.746	Valid
6	X2.3	0.787	Valid
7	X2.4	0.760	Valid
8	X2.5	0.855	Valid
9	X2.6	0.738	Valid
10	X2.7	0.788	Valid
11	X2.8	0.783	Valid
12	X2.9	0.810	Valid
13	X2.10	0.832	Valid
14	X2.11	0.808	Valid
15	X2.12	0.796	Valid
16	Y.1	0.888	Valid
17	Y.2	0.948	Valid
18	Y.3	0.939	Valid
19	Y.4	0.851	Valid

This table presents the validation status of indicators after the indicators in the outer loading test. In this case, the X1-Y5 indicator is declared valid because the value with the outer loading criterion >0.6 (Hair et al., 2011; Michella & Meilani 2023). Which indicates that each of these indicators has a significant contribution to the measured construct. The majority of the indicators in this study model exhibit sufficient outer loading values overall, indicating that they have effectively captured the targeted constructs.

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media (X1)	0.908
Electronic Word of Mouth (X2)	0.945
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.931

After validation using outer loading, the next step is to use Cronbach's Alpha to assess the reliability of a construct in PLS-SEM in the SmartPLS application. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient determined in this study indicates the optimal internal consistency threshold for

the constructed data. The SmartPLS tool's reliability analysis reveals that all composite reliability values >0.7, indicating that all variables are able to be examined and satisfy the reliability requirements. Additionally, all Cronbach's Alpha values >0.6, according to the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which suggests that the variables' degree of dependability has also satisfied the requirements (Prahiawan et al., 2021).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Testing Based on HTMT Criteria

	Social Media	e-WOM	Purchase Decision
Social Media			
e-WOM	0.520		
Purchase Decision	0.693	0.635	

The HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) values obtained in this study were used to evaluate construct validity. Generally, HTMT, which has a computed value of less than 0.09, is employed to assess discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2021; Michella & Meilani 2023) . In this case, all HTMT values below the 0.90 range indicate that the constructs in this model have good discriminate validity, so it can be concluded that the constructs are resolved in a satisfactory manner and that there is no significant difference between one construct and another.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Variable	VIF
Social Media	1.315
e-WOM	1.315

Dependent: Purchase Decision   Dependent: Purchase Decision

To determine the quality of the research model and the significance of the relationship between latent variables in the research model, an inner model evaluation is carried out or known as a structural model. This evaluation aims to identify multicollinearity problems using the variance inflation factor (VIF), with a VIF value of <5. Based on Table 5, the VIF value obtained by calculating the number below 5 indicates that there is no collinearity problem.

Table 6. R-square test

Construct	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Category
Purchase Decision	0.522	0,512	Moderate

The next step is to look at the R-square test, whose R-Square value requirements allow them to be classified, namely where the R-Square value> 0.75 represents a strong model, the R-Square value> 0.50 indicates a moderate model, while if the R-Squares result only reaches or is less than 0.25 the model can be said to be weak (Amiruddien et al., 2021). Table 6 displays the results of this study's R-squared test evaluation, indicating that the R-squared value for purchasing decisions is 0.522 and the Adjusted R-square number for purchasing decisions is 0.512. can be said that social media and e-WOM account for 52.2% of the purchase decision, placing it in the moderate range.
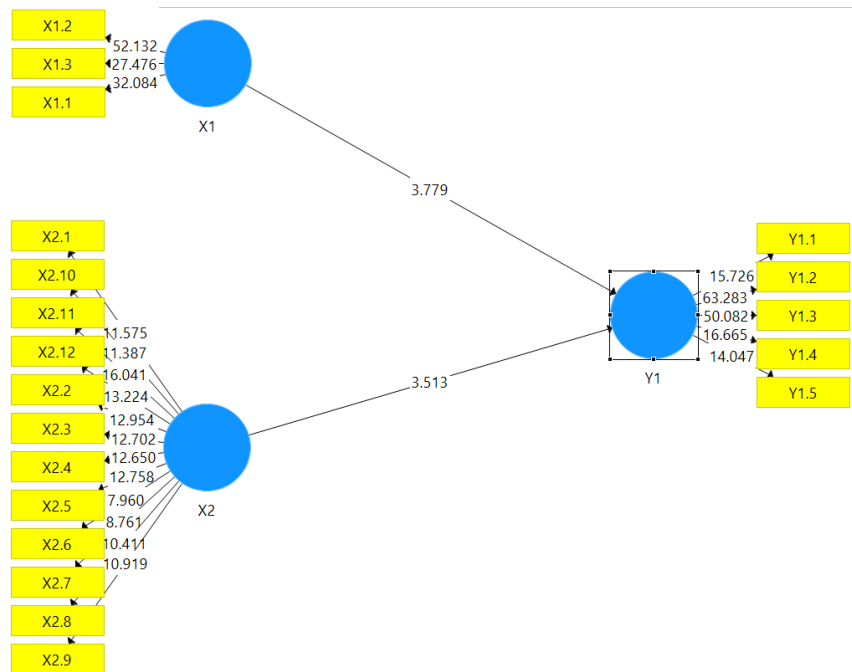
Figure 2. Bootstrapping Output View

Table 7. F-square test

Variables	Purchase Decision
Social Media	0.330
e-WOM	0.229

Table 7 shows the F value's output. Influence is considered weak if the value is 0.02 moderate influence is 0.15 and high influence is 0.35 (Hair et al., 2017; Mardiah & Rahmi 2023). Kita dapat menarik kesimpulan bahwa media sosial memiliki dampak besar terhadap keputusan orang untuk membeli. In contrast, e-WOM related to purchasing sentiment is in the medium category. Thus it can be concluded that both variables have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for skin care products, although not dominant.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Summary of Path Analysis Result

Path	T statistics	P values
Social Media -> Purchase Decision	3.779	0.000
e-WOM -> Purchase Decision	3.513	0.000

Summary of path analysis results presented in this table shows that most of the relationships between the variables in this research model are proven to be significant and have a direction of relationship that is consistent with the proposed hypothesis. Each variable with a highly significant t-statistic and p-value of 0.000, indicating strong support for the hypothesized relationship in the model. In particular, the path from social media to purchase decision shows a t-statistic, 3.779 and the path from e-WOM to purchase decision shows a t-statistic, 3.513. Highlighting how social media and e-WOM have a significant impact on skincare purchase decisions. The model suggested in this study is valid, having distinct and consistent correlations between variables, according to the path analysis results.

Conclusion

All of the research indicates that social media and e-WOM together affect consumers' decision to purchase kulit products. Both of these factors independently affect consumers' willingness to purchase kulit products, according to an analysis conducted using the SEM-PLS method. The results of this study provide important implications for consumers and businesses that sell skincare products. e-WOM and social media marketing techniques can be a powerful tool for raising customer awareness and influencing their decisions to buy. In the context of social media, businesses should use influencers and relevant content to attract customers and build stronger relationships with brand audiences. Additionally, since e-WOM has been shown to boost trust and draw in new customers, businesses can encourage customers to share their positive experiences by posting reviews or recommendations on social media.

Overall, this study demonstrates that e-WOM and social media significantly influence Indonesian consumers' decisions to buy skincare goods. The proposed model for the study was effective and helped researchers better understand how these two factors interact in the context of digital marketing. As such, marketing strategies that incorporate these two elements can be more effective in increasing brand awareness and consumer loyalty in the skincare industry. The development of the skincare sector in Indonesia, which is expanding quickly in tandem with the rise in internet users and consumers' propensity to rely more and more on information shared via social media and online reviews, will be further aided by the success of marketing strategies that leverage the influence of social media and e-WOM. It is advised that future studies investigate additional elements that can also affect decisions to buy, such as brand loyalty, price, and product quality, and broaden the study's sample size to include more customers.

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