

E-WOM Factors on Gen Z Purchase Intention for Skintific Products on E-Commerce Using the Information Adoption Model Extension: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

The swift expansion of e-commerce in Indonesia is predominantly propelled by Generation Z, who are engaged online consumers of beauty items, particularly via the Shopee platform. This conceptual paper aims to develop a model that elucidates the eWOM attributes and Generation Z consumer behaviour on the purchase intention of Skintific products within e-commerce platforms. This study employs the Information Acceptance Model, which synthesises the Information Adoption Model and Theory of Reasoned Action to emphasise six principal constructs: information quality, information credibility, needs of information, information usefulness, information adoption, and purchasing intention. This study was subsequently evaluated using a quantitative survey employing a PLS-SEM methodology focused on Skintific consumers, namely Gen Z e-commerce users.

INTRODUCTION

The significant engagement of youth in online purchasing is propelling the swift advancement of the e-commerce sector in Indonesia. Gen Z is a prominent youthful demographic, born during the swiftly advancing digital age and exhibiting robust technological proficiency. Milagsita (2024) defines Gen Z as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 who are characterised by their adaptability, which allows them to conjure many inventive ideas that were unattainable by preceding generations. The Indonesian e-commerce association reports that over 70% of Gen Z engages in online shopping at least once monthly (Simatupang, 2024). A 2023 Populix survey indicates that 76% of Indonesian Gen Z use Shopee as their buying platform (Ginee, 2024). Sociolla's internal research indicates that 54% of Gen Z in Indonesia acquire beauty and personal care items (Salsabilla, 2024). 17% of Gen Z are prepared to expend over Rp300,000 on beauty products, while 35% are inclined to spend between Rp150,000 and Rp300,000, and the other 48% allocate less than Rp150,000 (Salsabilla, 2024).

Skintific's success is one of the outstanding phenomena that has successfully led the Shopee Indonesia beauty market with a share of approximately 7% in the first quarter of 2025, followed by other brands such as MS Glow (6.9%), Glad2Glow (4.9%), Wardah (4.5%), and gloglowing (2.3%) (Compas.co.id, 2025). Companies can leverage various digital platforms, such as electronic shopping sites, social networks, and online shops to sell their products and increase sales (Pradana et al., 2023). Companies may implement one of the following strategies to generate interest and enhance consumer purchase behaviour through eWOM promotions (Utami et al., 2023). Skintific's dominance demonstrates how the right digital marketing strategies, such as using eWOM, can attract Gen Z and increase their purchase intention. eWOM is typically defined as either good or bad comments made by prospective, current, and past consumers about a product or company, which are accessible online to numerous individuals and organisations (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). eWOM provides customers with increased opportunities to acquire and compile trustworthy information regarding products and service from other consumers (Hung & Thinh, 2024). Information seeking can assist customers in determining the criteria they might consider when evaluating options and making their final choice (Saputri, 2023). Evidence suggests that eWOM data influences customers' current purchase decision-making process (Tien et al., 2019). Compared to previous generations, Gen Z tends to conduct in-depth product review searches on the internet and use them as a reference before making a purchase (Marta, 2025). In this context, it is important to analyse the factors in the eWOM information that influence Gen Z's purchase intention for the popular brand Skintific on the Shopee platform.

Previous research conducted by Avifah & Saputri (2024); Indrawati et al., (2023) explored how eWOM characteristics on social media influence consumers' purchase intention using the Sussman & Siegal (2003) research framework, which is linked to the theory of information adoption. Although the Information Adoption Model (IAM) is widely used, the research only examines the characteristics of information and does not look at the impact on specific

generations. To comprehend the impact of eWOM on Gen Z's purchasing intentions, this research employs the Information Acceptance Model (IACM) framework proposed by Erkan & Evans (2016), considered an extension of the IAM by from Sussman & Siegal (2003), alongside the Theory of Reasoned Action. This model not only examines informational characteristics but also considers consumer behaviour related to information (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Based on research by Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024), IACM integrates consumer behaviour, such as information needs into the analysis of eWOM information. The primary variables of interest encompass information quality, information credibility, information needs, information usefulness, information adoption, and purchase intention. These six variables represent essential factors in the consumer's eWOM information acceptance model.

The IAM elucidates that the perceived utility of information is contingent upon the attributes of quality pertaining to Skintific product-related data and the credibility of the originating information source (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Similarly, consumers will increasingly utilise information if the credibility of eWOM is high, meaning the source or content of eWOM related to Skintific is considered trustworthy (Bui et al., 2025; Leong et al., 2021). Factors from the consumer perspective, such as the need for information, also play an important role. Consumers having a significant need for knowledge on Skintific items will enhance the utility of that information (Cuong, 2024; Ngo, Vuong, et al., 2024). When consumers identify eWOM information related to Skintific products as advantageous, they will adopt it and use those reviews or suggestions as a consideration when making purchasing decisions (Leong et al., 2021).

A multitude of empirical data corroborate the importance of this array of elements in shaping purchase intention. Indrawati et al. (2023) assert that the quality and credibility of information impact its usefulness, especially for electronic word-of-mouth on the TikTok platform and its effect on consumer purchasing intentions for certain products. Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive analysis of Gen Z on social media and found that information demand and quality positively and significantly influence information usefulness. A study by Prasetio et al. (2024) on the impact of eWOM on purchase intention in Indonesian e-commerce indicated that the need for knowledge positively and significantly affects information usefulness. These results also support a causal relationship, in which the usefulness of information can lead to its adoption, and the adoption of information can significantly affect purchase intention (Indrawati et al., 2023; Ngo, Vuong, et al., 2024; Prasetio & Aulia Witarsyah, 2024). Overall, this literature review suggests that the combination of eWOM information attributes (quality and credibility) and consumer factors (needs of information) will determine the usefulness of the information and the adoption rate by Gen Z, ultimately influencing their purchase intention. As a result, this conceptual paper will use the IACM framework to test how each of the aforementioned eWOM factors influences Gen Z's intention to purchase Skintific products on the Shopee platform. This paper will establish a theoretical framework for future research and managerial applications in the contemporary digital marketing landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

eWOM is a new way for customers to talk to each other about products and services through electronic media or the internet. eWOM is defined as any good or bad statement provided by potential, present, or past consumers about a product or company that is available to a broad audience over the internet, as articulated by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). In high-involvement product industries, such as skincare, eWOM is crucial for reducing consumers' perceived risk and uncertainty because they lack direct experience with the product in e-commerce (Sayyida et al., 2025). Various methods are available to enhance eWOM information on social media platforms. Users can show their preference for any brand by joining online fan clubs or by intentionally posting about the goods or services offered by a brand on social media (Park, 2020; Rahaman et al., 2022). Therefore, online consumer decisions to purchase a specific item can be influenced by eWOM data (Rahaman et al., 2022).

Information Acceptance Model

The Information Acceptance Model (IACM), formulated by Erkan & Evans (2016) elucidates how consumers perceive and assimilate information within the realm of online reviews (eWOM). The research conducted by Erkan & Evans (2016) formulated the IACM to analyse the impact of eWOM on consumers' purchase intentions, incorporating the IAM from Sussman & Siegal (2003) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), alongside additional variables, including information needs.

Information Quality

Jiang et al. (2021) define information quality as users' subjective evaluation of whether information features fulfil their wants and objectives. Information quality is defined by distinct attributes, including completeness, relevance, detail, factual accuracy, clarity, objectivity, comprehensibility, and high calibre (Indrawati et al., 2023). Because information through eWOM is accessible to users, the quality of information is a primary concern. Information is deemed helpful if it satisfies customer needs (Leong et al., 2021). eWOM indicates that the quality of information has a positive correlation with its usefulness, which subsequently affects purchase intention indirectly (Xue et al., 2018). This study anticipates a favourable association between the intrinsic quality of eWOM information and its use, grounded in IACM. The study by Abedi et al. (2020) also demonstrated that information quality positively affects the usefulness of eWOM information; in this context, the quality of information received by the public from friends and relatives on Telegram and Instagram social networks was found to be high and satisfactory. Recent research indicates that information quality greatly influence the usability of information for Gen Z in comparison to other eWOM components (Ngo, Vuong, et al., 2024). Based on that argument, a hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Information quality has a positive influence on information usefulness.

Information Credibility

Information credibility is defined as the degree to which an individual perceives the presented information as trustworthy (Al Ganideh et al., 2023). In the context of eWOM, credibility often stems from the perception that trustworthy, expert, honest, and unbiased sources provide reviews or recommendations. Information credibility in eWOM communication refers to the perceived trust and confidence in the information source. Through in-depth interviews, Ngarmwongnoi et al. (2020) found that consumer perceptions of the relevance of online information are strongly influenced by the credibility of online reviews. Furthermore, Tien et al. (2019) asserted that credibility plays a crucial role in motivating customers to utilise eWOM information. According to seminal research by Sussman & Siegal (2003) individuals who get or trust genuine electronic word-of-mouth information are more inclined to utilise that information rather than question it. The research conducted by Ben Arbia et al. (2025) demonstrated that the dependability of information enhances its perceived usefulness in influencing consumer perceptions of cosmetic product quality via TikTok influencers. Cuong (2024) research corroborates this assertion, demonstrating that the reliability of the information presented affects its use. As a result, Gen Z buyers are more likely to act on online product information if the source is trustworthy, which in turn makes them more interested in purchasing. Based on this argument, a hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Information credibility has a positive influence on information usefulness.

Needs of Information

Erkan & Evans (2016) have been recognised as researchers who added information needs as a major cognitive antecedent to improve the information acceptance model with the aim of more accurately identifying the factors that motivate individuals to search for information on social media. Sánchez Torres et al. (2018) assert that information needs underpin information reception and serve as the primary motivator for consumers to engage in eWOM. The necessity for knowledge can serve as a motivation to “seek advice” or “solicit opinions” prior to making a purchasing decision (Sánchez Torres et al., 2018). Erkan & Evans (2016) emphasise that the primary source of consumer eWOM activity is the desire to obtain information, where consumers engage in reading or sharing reviews primarily because they need it. According to research by Phung et al. (2020), a needs for information drive customers to engage in online communication and e-commerce. Thus, the likelihood of them finding relevant and useful information can be influenced by the large number of customers seeking information in online communities (Phung et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Silaban et al. (2023), Instagram users found a lot of useful information, indicating that users need information to answer their questions and improve their understanding so they can use the information well. Research by Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024), indicates that information needs substantially affect information usefulness, with Gen Z consumers in Vietnam more inclined to accept information perceived as relevant to their needs or based on prior experience. Based on this argument, a hypothesis is proposed:

H3: The need for information has a positive influence on its usefulness.

Information Usefulness

Indrawati et al. (2023) state that information can be used to assess how helpful and useful eWOM information is for consumers' decision-making processes. In other words, this is consumer perception of the utilitarian value of eWOM, whether the reviews or recommendations they read help them understand the product and make better purchasing decisions. This theory aligns with the definition of perceived usefulness in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which is the belief that consumer decision-making performance or outcomes will be improved by using specific information (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Valuable eWOM information can simplify challenging judgements, since recipients do not have to expend extra cognitive effort to seek more information to bolster their confidence in the details offered about a product or service (Ngo, Bui, et al., 2024). Research conducted by Kohler et al. (2023) confirms that consumers are more likely to adopt information if the eWOM is perceived as more beneficial. Ruangkanjanases et al. (2021), in their study on eWOM and its impact on purchase behaviour compared to Thai and Indonesian millennials, showed that if consumers find eWOM useful or beneficial, they are more likely to adopt that information for further use. Based on this argument, a hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Information usefulness has a positive influence on information adoption.

Information Adoption

Social media has facilitated a surge in the dissemination of information, ideas, and experiences among customers. Consequently, social media has emerged as a readily accessible source of information for individuals who seek and use it when the information aligns with their requirements (Reddy et al., 2022). In the context of eWOM, information adoption denotes the process by which consumer recognise and incorporate online information into their decision-making, using eWOM messages as a basis for action. According to Indrawati et al. (2023), information adoption is the process of internalising or learning new information from external sources. Meanwhile, purchase intention is the final behavioural outcome predicted by the information acceptance model. According to Qi & Yon (2020), purchase intention reflects consumers' tendency to pay for a product or service after undergoing psychological perception, consideration, and evaluation processes. Meanwhile, according to Hussain et al. (2018), the subjective probability that a buyer intends or wants to purchase a specific good or service is called purchase intention. Therefore, purchasing intention indicates actual buying behaviour; the stronger the purchase intention, the greater the likelihood of a real transaction. Information adoption positively influence consumer purchase intention, according to Erkan & Evans (2016) and Kohler et al. (2023). Additionally, study by Ngo, Bui, et al. (2024) demonstrates that information adoption positively influences online purchase intention. This study illustrates that after shoppers acquire and understand the provided knowledge, they are more likely to utilise it in their purchasing decisions

concerning certain goods or services. Based on this argument, a hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Information adoption has a positive influence on purchase intention.

Figure 1 below illustrates the employed research framework.

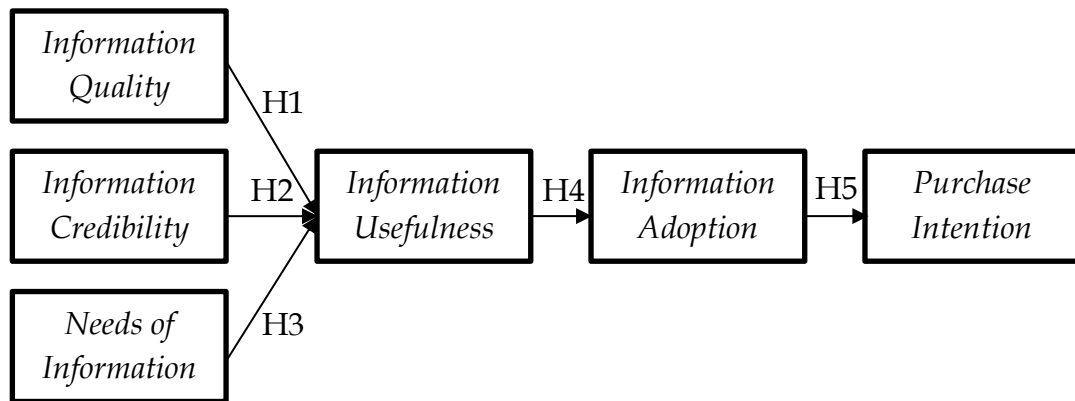


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study investigates the relationship between the variables under investigation using a survey method with a quantitative approach. Creswell (2014) posits that quantitative research is a methodology for assessing objective concepts, focussing on the relationships between variables. These characteristics can subsequently be quantified, typically utilising instruments, so enabling the application of statistical methodologies to the gathered data (Creswell, 2014).

The population in this study involves e-commerce consumers, with the Gen Z group aged 13-28. Then, this study uses a non-probability sampling technique with the purposive sampling type. The non-probability sampling system does not assign a fixed probability to select elements in the population as sample subjects (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). On the other hand, purposive sampling, according to Sekaran & Bougie (2016), is sampling limited to specific individuals who are able to provide the necessary information, either because they exclusively possess that data or because they meet the criteria set by the researcher. Therefore, the criteria for the respondents surveyed in this study are that they have experience purchasing Skintific products through e-commerce platforms and are active users of social media as a source of information. Next, Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) will be used to analyse the survey data using the SmartPLS 4 program. Hair et al. (2021) assert that PLS-SEM provides considerable flexibility in handling diverse measurement model setups. PLS-SEM accommodates reflective and formative research methods, as well as single-item measurements, without imposing additional criteria or limitations (Hair et al., 2021).

RESEARCH RESULT

The conceptual model identifies eWOM information attributes and consumer information needs as key drivers of Gen Z's purchase intention for Skintific products on e-commerce. In this model, information quality is posited

to have a strong positive effect on perceived information usefulness. High-quality eWOM content, characterized by completeness, relevance, accuracy, and clarity is more likely to be judged as useful by Gen Z consumers when making purchase decisions. Thus, Gen Z shoppers presented with high-quality Skintific reviews (e.g. detailed and factual user testimonials) are expected to perceive greater usefulness of that information, enhancing the likelihood that they will rely on it in their decision process.

Similarly, information credibility is predicted to enhance the perceived usefulness of eWOM. When the source or content of an online review is deemed trustworthy, unbiased, and expert, Gen Z consumers will more readily accept the information as useful input for their purchase considerations. Foundational studies indicate that individuals who trust the authenticity of eWOM are far more inclined to use that information rather than question it. In the context of Skintific products, if Gen Z perceives the reviewers as credible (for example, experienced users or influencers with honest feedback), they are likely to find the eWOM more useful and relevant.

Beyond the content attributes, the consumer's need for information plays a crucial role in this framework. A strong need for information (for instance, a Gen Z consumer actively researching Skintific's ingredients or efficacy) means that relevant eWOM content will be especially valuable and useful to them. In other words, when eWOM content aligns with the specific questions or knowledge gaps that Gen Z consumers have, they will perceive that information as highly useful. Thus, our model anticipates that higher information needs lead Gen Z to derive greater usefulness from Skintific-related eWOM, as these consumers are actively seeking such insights before purchasing.

As a consequence of these antecedents, information usefulness is expected to translate into information adoption. Once Gen Z consumers perceive an online review or testimonial as useful and relevant, they are likely to adopt that information. This follows the Information Adoption Model logic that useful information triggers a positive cognitive response, leading individuals to accept and internalize the content. For example, if a Gen Z shopper finds a particular Skintific product review genuinely helpful (useful), they will incorporate the review's message into their beliefs about the product (information adoption), perhaps by trusting the product's touted benefits or the reviewer's recommendation.

Finally, in line with the extended Information Adoption Model, information adoption is predicted to have a direct positive effect on purchase intention. Once Gen Z consumers have adopted or accepted the eWOM information as valid, their intention to purchase the Skintific product is expected to strengthen significantly. In essence, adopting the information (such as believing the positive reviews and using them as a basis for judgment) serves as the immediate precursor to purchase intention. Thus, if a Gen Z consumer fully accepts the recommendations from eWOM (information adoption), they will likely form a firm intention to buy the product.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this conceptual analysis underscore the critical interplay between eWOM factors and Gen Z consumer behavior in shaping purchase intentions. In theoretical terms, the results reinforce the validity of the Information Acceptance Model (IACM) in an e-commerce context, particularly for Gen Z and skincare products. The positive influence of information quality on perceived usefulness confirms what prior studies have long suggested: consumers value high-quality information and use it in decision-making. For instance, research on online reviews has shown that when information is complete, accurate, and relevant, consumers find it more useful and are more likely to rely on it. Our model's outcome aligns with Xue et al. (2018) and Abedi et al. (2020), who observed that better eWOM quality yields higher information usefulness and indirectly affects buying decisions.

Likewise, information credibility emerged as a pivotal factor, echoing core principles of the Elaboration Likelihood Model and trust-based theories in online communication. The result that credible eWOM boosts information usefulness and adoption is in line with earlier findings that trust in the message source increases consumers' willingness to accept and use the information. Theoretical contributions from Sussman & Siegal (2003) and Tien et al. (2019) are reflected here: when consumers perceive eWOM to be credible, they are far more inclined to internalize that information instead of questioning it.

In practice, this means that Gen Z buyers pay close attention to *who* is providing the information and *how* it is presented. If the reviewer or platform is seen as knowledgeable and unbiased, the information is processed via a central route (high elaboration), enhancing its perceived usefulness. Our conceptual findings mirror the work of Ben Arbia et al. (2025) and Cuong (2024), which documented that the dependability and reliability of information significantly elevate its perceived usefulness and influence on consumers. Thus, from a theoretical standpoint, credibility is confirmed as a key antecedent in the information adoption chain. This underscores the need to integrate source credibility concepts (originating from communications theory) into eWOM models for a holistic understanding of consumer behavior.

A notable extension of our model is the inclusion of information needs, which adds a consumer-centric perspective to the classic Information Adoption Model. The discussion reveals that Gen Z's need for information is not just a background trait but an active driver that amplifies how eWOM is received. This supports the argument by Erkan & Evans (2016) that incorporating information needs into the adoption model provides a more accurate picture of what motivates users to seek and accept eWOM. In our context, we found that a higher need for information leads to higher perceived usefulness of eWOM, a result consistent with the findings of Sánchez Torres et al. (2018) and Ngo, Vuong, et al. (2024). These studies indicate that when consumers are actively seeking advice or opinions (high information need), they tend to find relevant information more useful. For Gen Z, the act of seeking information is part of their consumer journey, and our results theoretically validate that meeting those information needs increases the effectiveness of eWOM.

Crucially, the mediating roles of information usefulness and adoption highlight how eWOM influences translate into behavior, which connects back to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) foundation of IACM. In our results, once eWOM is perceived as useful (a favorable cognitive evaluation), it leads to information adoption (analogous to forming an attitude or agreement with the content), which then drives the behavioral intention to purchase. This is a theoretical affirmation that informational influence works through internal acceptance: Gen Z consumers do not simply act on eWOM blindly; they first process the information's utility and then accept it into their mindset before it affects their intent. Prior studies lend support to this chain: Indrawati et al. (2023) and Prasetio et al. (2024) observed that eWOM characteristics alone might not directly spur purchase intent without the consumer first finding the information useful and adopting it.

Moreover, the link between information adoption and purchase intention in our model directly supports the extension by Erkan & Evans (2016). Their extended IAM posited that once information is adopted, it significantly boosts behavioral intentions, which our conceptual result mirrors. By confirming that information adoption is a positive predictor of Gen Z's intention to buy, we add empirical support to the notion that adopting eWOM recommendations is a crucial step toward actual purchase. Theoretically, this finding integrates the eWOM literature with consumer decision-making theory: adopted information can be viewed as forming a shortcut in the consumer's decision process, effectively reducing uncertainty and increasing confidence in the purchase. It aligns with Kohler et al. (2023) and Rahaman et al. (2022) interpretations that accepted social media information can steer consumers toward loyalty or purchasing by transforming online recommendations into personal conviction. In the context of Gen Z and skincare, our discussion suggests that when these young consumers wholeheartedly accept peers' opinions (for example, trusting that a Skintific serum is effective because many reviewers said so), this acceptance manifests as a strong inclination to try or buy the product.

In summary, the theoretical relevance of these results lies in validating and extending the Information Adoption Model for a modern, Gen Z-focused scenario. The inter-construct relationships, from eWOM quality and credibility, through information usefulness and adoption, to purchase intention provide a cohesive explanation of how digital word-of-mouth drives consumer behavior. This conceptual framework is deeply rooted in existing literature and contributes to it by highlighting the role of consumer information needs and confirming the stepwise influence process. It demonstrates that effective eWOM does not operate in isolation; rather, its impact on Gen Z purchase intention is realized through a chain of cognitive evaluations and acceptance. The discussion, therefore, not only corroborates findings from prior research (e.g. the necessity of useful, credible information for influencing decisions) but also underscores the importance of tailoring eWOM strategies to meet consumers' information needs and build trust. By doing so, brands like Skintific can enhance the usefulness and adoption of online information, ultimately strengthening consumers' intent to purchase, which is consistent with the theoretical models guiding this study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This conceptual paper's study highlights the crucial role that eWOM factors and consumer behaviour play in consumer purchasing decisions (Indrawati et al., 2023; Ngo, Vuong, et al., 2024). In the context of e-commerce purchases, brands like Skintific need to strategically leverage eWOM by ensuring the quality and credibility of the information conveyed to consumers, as well as optimising online interactions that meet their information needs. In the context of this study, Gen Z consumers are more likely to purchase a product if they trust eWOM because it has high information quality and credibility, and feel that eWOM meets their needs, making it useful and leading them to adopt it. Additionally, for further research, this study provides opportunities, particularly those related to digital marketing and other components that may influence purchase intention. In the future, companies must become increasingly adaptable to technological developments and consumer behaviour and continuously update their marketing strategies to remain relevant in this highly dynamic market.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every study possesses limits; therefore, you may delineate them here and succinctly offer recommendations for further research. This study possesses multiple limitations that create opportunities for additional investigation. First, the proposed model is developed in the specific context of Indonesian Generation Z consumers who purchase Skintific products via e-commerce platforms, so future studies are encouraged to test its applicability across other generations, brands, and marketplaces. Second, this study employs rigorous quantitative techniques, specifically PLS-SEM. Thus, subsequent research may employ a mixed methods approach, as the integration of quantitative and qualitative procedures can yield a more thorough and nuanced comprehension of the subject than reliance on a singular method.

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