

The Role of Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Social Media Engagement, and Brand Image in Shaping Consumer Purchase Decisions: Evidence from Indonesia's Skincare Industry

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the skincare industry in Indonesia has intensified competition among brands, making it essential to understand the factors that influence consumer purchase decisions in digital environments. This study aims to examine the effects of Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on consumers' Purchase Decisions toward Kojic Plankton skincare products. A quantitative research approach was employed using a survey method. Data were collected from 134 consumers who had purchased and used Kojic Plankton products. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS software. The results indicate that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM each have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision. Among the three variables, e-WOM emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.438$), followed by Social Media Engagement ($\beta = 0.276$) and Brand Image ($\beta = 0.217$). Furthermore, the simultaneous test revealed that the three variables collectively explain 70.8% of the variance in Purchase Decision ($R^2 = 0.708$). The findings suggest that consumer-generated information plays a more influential role than firm-generated communication in shaping purchasing decisions within the Indonesian skincare market. This study contributes to the literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior by highlighting the increasing importance of online consumer interactions and social influence mechanisms in social commerce environments. The results also provide practical insights for skincare companies seeking to enhance consumer engagement and strengthen purchase decisions through effective digital marketing strategies.

Keywords:

Brand Image; Social Media Engagement; Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Purchase Decision; Skincare Industry; Digital Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed consumer purchasing behavior across industries. The emergence of social media platforms, e-commerce ecosystems, and digital communication technologies has shifted consumers from passive recipients of marketing messages to active participants in information creation, dissemination, and evaluation. In contemporary digital markets, consumers increasingly rely on online interactions, social media content, and peer-generated reviews when evaluating products and making purchasing decisions (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022; Bogdan et al., 2025; Siregar et al., 2026). Consequently, traditional marketing communication has evolved into a more interactive and consumer-driven process in which digital engagement significantly influences purchasing behavior.

This transformation is particularly evident in the beauty and skincare industry. The global skincare market has experienced substantial growth over the last decade, driven by increasing consumer awareness of personal appearance, wellness, and self-care. Indonesia represents one of the most dynamic skincare markets in Southeast Asia, supported by rapid internet penetration, widespread smartphone adoption, and the increasing

popularity of social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop, Instagram Shopping, and Shopee Live. As a result, skincare brands are no longer competing solely through product quality and pricing strategies but also through their ability to establish strong digital relationships with consumers and cultivate favorable brand perceptions within online communities (Lubis & Hayu, 2025; Luna et al., 2026; Sukarnadi et al., 2026).

The digitalization of consumer behavior has significantly altered the decision-making process. Consumers increasingly search for information through social media platforms before making purchases, particularly for products characterized by high perceived risk and experiential attributes, such as skincare products. Unlike conventional consumer goods, skincare products require consumers to evaluate effectiveness, safety, compatibility, and product credibility before purchase. Consequently, digital information sources have become crucial determinants of consumer confidence and purchase decisions (Alzate et al., 2022).

Among the various digital marketing factors influencing consumer behavior, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as one of the most powerful determinants of purchasing decisions. Electronic word-of-mouth refers to consumer-generated opinions, recommendations, reviews, and experiences shared through digital platforms. Compared to traditional advertising, consumers often perceive e-WOM as more authentic, trustworthy, and credible because it originates from individuals who have directly experienced the product or service (Bogdan et al., 2025; Dandis & Shehadah, 2026; Jovanov et al., 2026). Recent studies indicate that positive e-WOM can significantly reduce perceived risk, increase product trustworthiness, strengthen purchase intentions, and ultimately influence actual purchasing decisions (Anastasiei et al., 2024; Saphira & Widiyanesti, 2024).

The importance of e-WOM is particularly evident in the skincare sector, where consumers frequently seek product reviews, testimonials, and before-and-after experiences before making purchasing decisions. Through platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and online marketplaces, consumers can easily access thousands of reviews from other users, allowing them to evaluate product effectiveness and credibility. Consequently, e-WOM has evolved from a supplementary information source into a central component of the digital consumer decision-making process (Rahmawati et al., 2026).

In addition to e-WOM, social media engagement has become an increasingly important factor shaping consumer purchasing behavior. Social media engagement refers to consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral interactions with brand-related content through activities such as liking, commenting, sharing, viewing, and participating in online discussions. As social media platforms continue to evolve into social commerce environments, engagement has become a critical mechanism through which consumers interact with brands and co-create value. Previous studies have demonstrated that higher levels of social media engagement contribute to stronger consumer-brand relationships, increased brand awareness, enhanced trust, and improved purchase decisions (I Gusti Agung Ayu Mas Suariedewi, & I Gusti Ayu Athina Wulandari, 2023; Elsya Ardianti Saputri, et al., 2026).

Furthermore, social media engagement enables consumers to actively participate in online communities where information exchange, recommendations, and product discussions occur continuously. Such interactions not only strengthen consumers' emotional attachment to brands but also facilitate the dissemination of brand-related information among wider audiences, amplifying the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts (Octavia & Cahyadi, 2026). Therefore, social media engagement has become an essential strategic tool for skincare brands seeking to influence consumer behavior in highly competitive digital markets.

Another critical factor influencing consumer purchasing behavior is brand image. Brand image represents the set of perceptions, associations, beliefs, and impressions that consumers hold regarding a particular brand. In highly competitive markets characterized by product proliferation and information overload, a strong brand image serves as an important signal of quality, reliability, and credibility. Consumers often rely on brand image as a heuristic cue when evaluating product alternatives, particularly when direct product experience is limited (Keller, 2023; Alhouti et al., 2026). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that positive brand image enhances consumer trust, increases perceived value, reduces uncertainty, and positively affects purchasing decisions (Efendioğlu et al., 2022; Utami & Mubarak, 2025).

Within the skincare industry, brand image plays an even more significant role because consumers frequently associate skincare products with personal identity, self-confidence, and long-term well-being. Consequently, brands that successfully establish positive perceptions through effective digital communication, consistent product quality, and favorable consumer experiences are more likely to achieve superior market performance and stronger consumer loyalty (Alzate et al., 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature on digital marketing and consumer behavior, several important research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly examined electronic word-of-mouth, social media marketing, and brand image independently, while relatively few studies have investigated their simultaneous influence on consumer purchase decisions within the skincare industry. Second, many existing studies focus primarily on purchase intention rather than actual purchase decisions, despite evidence suggesting that intention does not always translate into purchasing behavior. Third, the rapid evolution of social commerce platforms has fundamentally changed the digital purchasing environment, creating a need to reassess the relative importance of e-WOM, social media engagement, and brand image in influencing consumer decisions, particularly in emerging markets such as Indonesia (Lubis & Hayu, 2025; Rahmawati et al., 2026).

Moreover, empirical findings regarding the relative influence of these variables remain inconclusive. While several studies identify e-WOM as the strongest predictor of consumer behavior, others emphasize the dominant role of brand image or social media engagement. These inconsistencies suggest that the effectiveness of digital marketing factors may vary across industries, products, and consumer contexts, highlighting the need for further investigation within the rapidly growing Indonesian skincare market (Bogdan et al., 2025; Efendioğlu et al., 2022).

Addressing these gaps, this study investigates the role of electronic word-of-mouth, social media engagement, and brand image in shaping consumer purchase decisions in the Indonesian skincare market. Specifically, the study aims to examine both the individual and collective effects of these variables on consumer purchasing behavior and to identify the most influential determinant of purchase decisions. By focusing on Indonesia's rapidly expanding skincare sector, this study contributes to the digital marketing and consumer behavior literature while providing practical insights for marketers seeking to develop effective digital marketing strategies in increasingly competitive and consumer-driven online environments.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), social media engagement, and brand image on consumer purchase decisions in the Indonesian skincare market. Quantitative methods are particularly appropriate for investigating causal relationships among variables and testing hypotheses through statistical analysis (Hair et al., 2022). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, which enables researchers to collect data from respondents at a single point in time and analyze relationships among variables efficiently and systematically.

The target population consisted of consumers who had purchased and used Kojic Plankton skincare products in Indonesia. Given the absence of an accessible sampling frame containing all consumers of the product, this study utilized a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because respondents were selected based on predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2023). To be eligible for participation, respondents were required to have purchased Kojic Plankton skincare products at least once and possess sufficient experience with the product to evaluate their purchasing decisions and perceptions regarding the studied variables.

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via digital platforms, including social media and messaging applications. The use of online surveys has become increasingly common in consumer behavior research because it enables broader geographical coverage, cost efficiency, and greater accessibility for respondents (Evans & Mathur, 2023). Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility of the measurement items.

The research instrument consisted of four constructs: electronic word-of-mouth, social media engagement, brand image, and purchase decision. All measurement items were adapted from previous studies and modified to fit the context of skincare consumers. Electronic word-of-mouth was measured through indicators related to online reviews, recommendations, information quality, and consumer experiences shared on digital platforms. Social media engagement was assessed through consumers' interactions with brand-related content, including liking, commenting, sharing, and participating in online discussions. Brand image was measured through indicators reflecting consumers' perceptions of brand credibility, reputation, uniqueness, and overall attractiveness. Purchase decision was evaluated through indicators associated with consumers' actual purchasing behavior and decision-making processes. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), which is widely recommended for behavioral and marketing research due to its reliability and ease of interpretation (Joshi et al., 2025).

Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument's validity and reliability were assessed to ensure measurement accuracy and consistency. Construct validity was evaluated using item-total correlation analysis, while reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Hair et al. (2022), a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.70 indicates satisfactory internal consistency. Furthermore, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, to verify the suitability of the data for regression analysis.

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistical analysis was initially performed to describe respondent characteristics and summarize the distribution of responses across variables. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the simultaneous and partial effects of electronic word-of-mouth, social media engagement, and brand image on purchase decisions. Multiple regression remains one of the most widely used analytical techniques in consumer behavior research because it enables the assessment of the relative contribution of multiple independent variables to a dependent variable (Hair et al., 2022). Hypothesis testing was conducted using t-tests to evaluate the individual effects of each predictor and an F-test to assess their collective influence. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was also calculated to determine the proportion of variance in purchase decisions explained by the proposed model.

By applying a quantitative survey design and rigorous statistical procedures, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the relative importance of electronic word-of-mouth, social media engagement, and brand image in shaping consumer purchase decisions within Indonesia's rapidly growing skincare market.

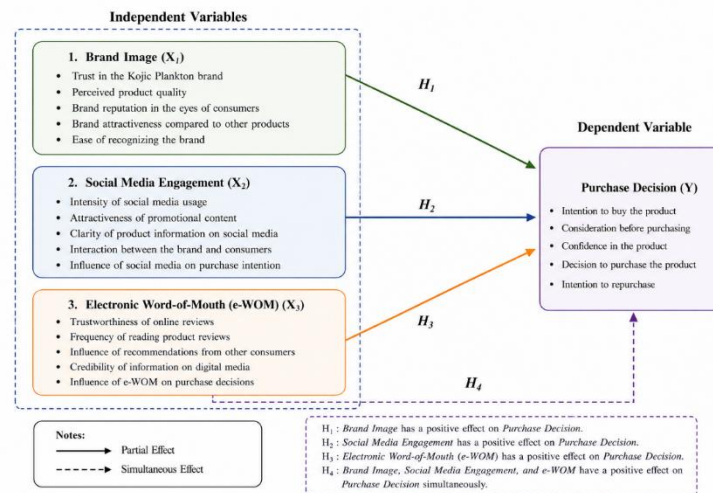


Figure 1. Research framework

Based on Figure 1, the proposed research framework illustrates the relationships between Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) as independent variables and Purchase Decision as the dependent variable. The framework is developed based on consumer behavior and digital marketing theories, which suggest that consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by both firm-generated and consumer-generated information in digital environments. Brand Image is expected to shape consumers' perceptions of product quality, credibility, and attractiveness, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. Social Media Engagement reflects the extent to which consumers interact with brand-related content and communications on social media platforms, which may enhance product awareness and consumer confidence. Meanwhile, e-WOM represents the influence of online reviews, recommendations, and shared consumer experiences that provide valuable information and reduce perceived purchase risk. The framework proposes that each of these variables has a direct positive effect on Purchase Decision (H_1 – H_3), while Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM simultaneously contribute to consumers' purchasing decisions (H_4). Therefore, this framework serves as the foundation for examining the relative importance of digital marketing factors in shaping consumer purchase behavior within the Indonesian skincare market.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 134 consumers of Kojic Plankton skincare products from various regions in Indonesia. The respondent profile indicates that the majority were students (42%), followed by private-sector employees (18%) and housewives (16%), suggesting that the sample was dominated by digitally active consumers who are highly exposed to social media content and online product reviews.

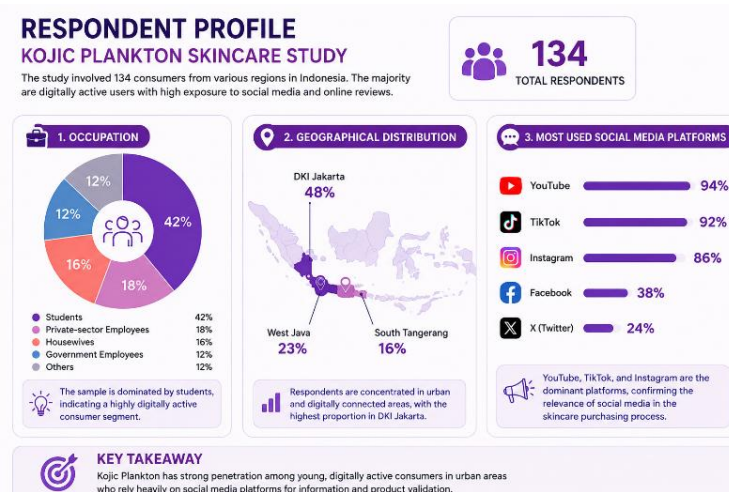


Figure 2. Respondent Profile

In terms of geographical distribution, most respondents were located in DKI Jakarta (48%), followed by West Java (23%) and South Tangerang (16%), indicating that the product has gained considerable market penetration within urban and digitally connected areas. Furthermore, the most frequently used social media platforms among respondents were YouTube (94%), TikTok (92%), and Instagram (86%), confirming the relevance of digital marketing and social media engagement in the skincare purchasing process. The profile indicates that the sample is highly relevant for examining digital marketing variables because younger consumers and digital natives are generally more exposed to social media marketing, online reviews, and user-generated content. Recent studies suggest that Generation Z consumers rely heavily on digital information and social validation when evaluating skincare products (Utami & Astuti, 2024).

Prior to hypothesis testing, validity and reliability assessments were conducted to ensure the quality of the measurement instrument.

Table 1. Validity Test Result

Variable	Number of Items	r-count Range	r-table	Result
Brand Image	8	0.567–0.821	0.169	Valid
Social Media Engagement	8	0.582–0.844	0.169	Valid
e-WOM	8	0.604–0.873	0.169	Valid
Purchase Decision	8	0.551–0.838	0.169	Valid

All measurement items exceeded the minimum correlation threshold, indicating satisfactory construct validity.

Table 2. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Brand Image	0.872	Reliable
Social Media Engagement	0.887	Reliable
e-WOM	0.914	Reliable
Purchase Decision	0.891	Reliable

According to Hair et al. (2022), Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 indicate acceptable internal consistency. Therefore, all constructs demonstrated strong reliability.

3.1. Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the effects of Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on Purchase Decision, multiple linear regression analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.841	0.708	0.701	1.856

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the regression model achieved an R^2 value of 0.708, suggesting that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM collectively explain 70.8% of the variance in Purchase Decision. The remaining 29.2% may be attributed to other factors not included in the model. According to Hair et al. (2022), an R^2 value exceeding 0.50 indicates substantial explanatory power in behavioral research, suggesting that the proposed model adequately explains consumer purchasing behavior in the Indonesian skincare market.

Table 4. ANOVA Result

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	1085.732	3	361.911	105.030
Residual	447.291	130	3.440	
Total	1533.023	133		

Table 4 presents the results of the ANOVA test used to evaluate the overall significance of the regression model. The analysis produced an F-value of 105.030 with a significance level of 0.000, which is substantially lower than the accepted threshold of 0.05. These results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) jointly have a significant effect on Purchase Decision. Therefore, H4 is supported, confirming that the three independent variables collectively contribute to explaining variations in consumers' purchasing decisions. The high F-value further suggests that the proposed model has strong explanatory power and is appropriate for analyzing consumer behavior in the Indonesian skincare market.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Beta	Sig.
Brand Image	0.176	0.217	0.008
Social Media Engagement	0.339	0.276	0.001
e-WOM	0.301	0.438	0.000

Table 5 presents the results of the multiple regression coefficient analysis, showing the individual contribution of each independent variable to Purchase Decision. The findings indicate that all three variables have a positive and statistically significant effect on Purchase Decision, as evidenced by significance values below 0.05. Among the predictors, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) exhibits the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that online reviews, recommendations, and consumer-generated content play the most important role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions. Social Media Engagement ranks second ($\beta = 0.276$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that active interaction with brand-related content on social media platforms significantly encourages purchase behavior. Meanwhile, Brand Image also has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.217$, $p = 0.008$), demonstrating that favorable perceptions of the brand contribute to consumers' willingness to purchase skincare products. Overall, the results reveal that while all variables are important determinants of Purchase Decision, consumer-generated information through e-WOM exerts the greatest influence in the Indonesian skincare market.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing Analysis

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	Sig.	Decision
H ₁	Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.217	0.008	Supported
H ₂	Social Media Engagement → Purchase Decision	0.276	0.001	Supported
H ₃	e-WOM → Purchase Decision	0.438	0.000	Supported
H ₄	Simultaneous Effect	F = 105.030	0.000	Supported

Table 6 presents the results of hypothesis testing for the proposed research model. The findings indicate that all hypotheses were supported, as evidenced by significance values below the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, Brand Image positively and significantly influenced Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.217$, $p = 0.008$), suggesting that consumers are more likely to purchase skincare products when they perceive the brand as credible and trustworthy. Social Media Engagement also demonstrated a significant positive effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.276$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that consumers who actively interact with brand-related content on social media are more inclined to make purchasing decisions. Among the independent variables, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) exhibited the strongest influence ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the critical role of online reviews, recommendations, and consumer experiences in shaping purchase decisions. Furthermore, the simultaneous test revealed that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM collectively have a significant effect on Purchase Decision ($F = 105.030$, $p < 0.001$). These results suggest that while all three factors contribute to consumer purchasing behavior, e-WOM serves as the most influential determinant in the Indonesian skincare market.

The findings provide compelling evidence that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) are significant determinants of consumer purchase decisions in the Indonesian skincare market. More importantly, the results reveal a changing pattern of consumer decision-making in which digital interactions and peer-generated information increasingly outweigh traditional branding efforts. This shift reflects the growing influence of social commerce environments, where consumers actively seek, evaluate, and validate information before making purchasing decisions.

The first hypothesis proposed that Brand Image positively influences Purchase Decision. The findings support this hypothesis, indicating that consumers who perceive Kojic Plankton as a credible, trustworthy, and high-quality skincare brand are more likely to purchase its products. This result is consistent with Brand Equity Theory, which argues that favorable brand associations reduce uncertainty and increase consumer confidence during the evaluation stage of the buying process (Keller, 2023). In the skincare industry, where consumers are highly concerned about product safety, effectiveness, and compatibility with their skin conditions, a strong brand image serves as an important quality cue that facilitates decision-making.

However, despite its significant influence, Brand Image demonstrated the lowest standardized coefficient among the independent variables. This finding suggests that although consumers still consider brand reputation important, brand image alone is no longer sufficient to drive purchase decisions. The contemporary digital marketplace has fundamentally changed how trust is formed. Rather than relying solely on firm-generated communication, consumers increasingly seek confirmation from multiple external sources, including online reviews, influencer recommendations, and peer experiences. Consequently, brand image functions primarily as an initial trust-building mechanism, while the final purchase decision is often shaped by information obtained through digital interactions. This finding extends previous studies by Alzate et al. (2022) and Utami and Mubarak (2025), suggesting that the relative importance of brand image may be declining in highly

digitalized consumer markets where information transparency is high and alternative information sources are readily available.

The second hypothesis examined the effect of Social Media Engagement on Purchase Decision. The findings reveal that Social Media Engagement significantly influences consumers' purchasing decisions, indicating that active interaction with brand-related content enhances consumers' likelihood of purchasing skincare products. This result reflects the transformation of social media from a communication platform into a social commerce ecosystem that integrates product discovery, information search, consumer interaction, and purchasing activities. Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media enables consumers to actively participate in discussions, interact with brands, and observe the experiences of other users. Such interactions increase consumer involvement and strengthen emotional attachment toward products and brands.

The significance of Social Media Engagement can also be explained by the characteristics of the skincare industry itself. Skincare products are highly experiential, meaning that consumers often require substantial information before making a purchase. Social media platforms provide visual demonstrations, tutorials, before-and-after comparisons, and real-time consumer feedback, which help consumers evaluate product performance more effectively than conventional advertising. Furthermore, the dominance of TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube among respondents indicates that social media has become a primary source of information and inspiration for skincare purchases. This finding supports Consumer Engagement Theory and is consistent with recent studies by Dwivedi et al. (2023), I Gusti Agung Ayu Mas Suariedewi, & I Gusti Ayu Athina Wulandari (2023), and Lubis and Hayu (2025), which found that consumer engagement strengthens brand relationships and positively affects purchase behavior. Nevertheless, the lower coefficient relative to e-WOM suggests that while social media successfully attracts consumer attention and stimulates interest, consumers still require additional validation before making a final purchasing decision.

Among all variables examined, Electronic Word-of-Mouth emerged as the strongest predictor of Purchase Decision. The standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.438$) indicates that e-WOM exerts a substantially greater influence than both Brand Image and Social Media Engagement. This finding highlights the increasing dominance of consumer-generated information in shaping purchasing behavior. In contrast to traditional advertising, which is often perceived as persuasive and commercially motivated, e-WOM is generally viewed as authentic, unbiased, and based on actual user experiences. Consequently, consumers perceive online reviews, ratings, testimonials, and recommendations as more credible sources of information.

The dominant role of e-WOM is particularly relevant within the skincare sector because skincare products involve a relatively high level of perceived risk. Consumers are concerned not only about product quality but also about potential adverse effects, compatibility with individual skin conditions, and long-term effectiveness. As a result, they actively seek information from individuals who have previously used the product before making purchasing decisions. Positive reviews provide social proof that validates product claims, reduces uncertainty, and strengthens consumer confidence. This finding strongly supports Information Adoption Theory, which suggests that individuals are more likely to adopt information that they perceive as useful and credible when making decisions. The results are consistent with Bogdan et al. (2025), Anastasiei et al. (2024), and Erkan and Evans (2022), who reported that e-WOM significantly influences trust formation, attitude development, and purchase intention. However, the present study contributes new evidence by demonstrating that within Indonesia's skincare market, e-WOM not only influences purchase decisions but also surpasses traditional branding factors in terms of explanatory power.

The simultaneous effect of Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM further supports the proposed conceptual framework. The model explains 70.8% of the variance in Purchase Decision, indicating that these variables collectively provide substantial explanatory power for understanding consumer behavior in the skincare industry. More importantly, the hierarchy of influence identified in this study—e-WOM ($\beta = 0.438$), Social Media Engagement ($\beta = 0.276$), and Brand Image ($\beta = 0.217$)—offers valuable insights into the evolving structure of consumer decision-making. The findings suggest that consumers follow a sequential validation process. Brand Image establishes initial awareness and trust, Social Media Engagement facilitates information exposure and consumer interaction, while e-WOM serves as the final and most influential validation mechanism prior to purchase. This pattern reflects a broader shift from firm-dominated communication toward consumer-driven decision-making, where peer recommendations and collective experiences increasingly shape market outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the growing body of digital marketing literature by demonstrating that consumer-generated communication has become more influential than firm-generated communication in shaping purchase decisions within social commerce environments. The findings strengthen the explanatory power of Information Adoption Theory, Social Influence Theory, and Consumer Engagement Theory by showing how these mechanisms operate simultaneously in the skincare industry. Specifically, the study provides empirical evidence that trust is increasingly transferred from brands to online communities, suggesting that social validation has become a critical determinant of consumer behavior in digital markets.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that skincare brands should reconsider the allocation of marketing resources. While investments in brand-building activities remain important, greater emphasis should be placed on strategies that stimulate positive consumer conversations and encourage user-generated content. Companies should actively manage online reviews, collaborate with credible influencers, facilitate

community engagement, and create platforms where consumers can share their experiences. In highly competitive skincare markets, the ability to generate positive e-WOM may provide a stronger competitive advantage than traditional advertising alone. Consequently, successful digital marketing strategies should integrate brand management, social media engagement, and online reputation management into a cohesive ecosystem that continuously reinforces consumer trust and purchase intentions.

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on consumer Purchase Decisions in the Indonesian skincare industry, specifically among consumers of Kojic Plankton products. The findings demonstrate that all three independent variables significantly affect Purchase Decision, both individually and collectively.

Brand Image was found to have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, indicating that favorable consumer perceptions regarding brand credibility, quality, and trustworthiness contribute to purchasing behavior. Social Media Engagement also significantly influenced Purchase Decision, suggesting that consumers who actively interact with skincare-related content on social media platforms are more likely to develop positive attitudes and make purchasing decisions.

Among the variables examined, Electronic Word-of-Mouth emerged as the strongest predictor of Purchase Decision. This finding highlights the critical role of online reviews, ratings, recommendations, and user-generated content in reducing uncertainty and increasing consumer confidence when purchasing skincare products. The results further revealed that Brand Image, Social Media Engagement, and e-WOM jointly explain 70.8% of the variation in Purchase Decision, indicating strong explanatory power of the proposed model.

Theoretically, this study extends the digital marketing and consumer behavior literature by demonstrating that consumer-generated communication exerts a stronger influence than firm-generated communication in the context of the Indonesian skincare market. Practically, the findings suggest that skincare companies should prioritize strategies that encourage positive e-WOM, foster social media engagement, and maintain a strong brand image to enhance consumer purchase decisions and sustain competitive advantage.

Future studies are encouraged to incorporate additional variables such as trust, influencer credibility, customer satisfaction, perceived value, or purchase intention, as well as employ broader samples and different product categories to improve the generalizability of the findings.

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