The Influence of Influencer Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions Through Brand Trust as a Mediating Variable for Facetology Sunscreen Products in Pekanbaru

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ARTICLE INFO :	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to analyze the influence of influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on purchase decisions through brand trust as a mediating variable on Facetology Sunscreen products in Pekanbaru. This research used a quantitative method with purposive sampling, totaling 98 respondents aged 13-28 years who had purchased or used Facetology sunscreen products. Data analysis used SEM-PLS with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results showed that influencer marketing and E-WOM positively and significantly influence brand trust and purchase decisions, both directly and indirectly. Brand trust mediates the influence of influencer marketing and E-WOM on purchase decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the skincare industry in Indonesia is driven by increased public awareness regarding skin care and protection, especially from the dangers of sun exposure. Sunscreen is one of the skincare products that are increasingly used by the public. Generation Z, as active social media users, tends to rely on digital marketing strategies such as influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth in making purchasing decisions. In the context of marketing strategies, influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) are effective promotional strategies. Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes public figures or influencers to promote products or services through social media platforms. Meanwhile, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) refers to product-related information exchanged among consumers through digital platforms. One of the determining factors in consumer purchasing decisions is brand trust. Brand trust is the consumer's perception of a brand's ability to fulfill its promises consistently and reliably. Thus, building brand trust is a strategic step to ensure that marketing strategies implemented through influencers and E-WOM have a significant impact on purchasing decisions.

LITERATURE RESEARCH

A. Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is described by Kotler and Keller (2016) as a marketing approach that utilizes individuals who have a strong influence on social media to promote products or services. The purpose of

this strategy is to build brand awareness, develop positive perceptions, and encourage purchasing actions through the credibility and influence of the selected individual.

B. Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) is a form of marketing communication that utilizes the internet to disseminate information through digital platforms. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), E-WOM is a type of advertising that uses the online environment to spread messages privately to support business and marketing objectives. It allows consumers to share information about products or services using various online platforms such as social media, discussion forums, and review pages.
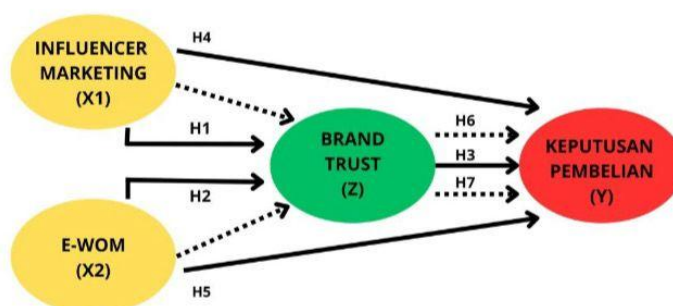
C. Brand Trust

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) explain that brand trust refers to the consumer's belief in the consistency and reliability of a brand in fulfilling its promises. When consumers perceive a brand as trustworthy, they are more likely to make repeat purchases and remain loyal to that brand.

D. Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is the final phase in the consumer decision-making process, where the consumer chooses to buy a particular product after evaluating available alternatives. Kotler and Armstrong (2014) state that various factors, such as marketing efforts and brand trust, significantly influence this decision stage.

E. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source : Research Data (2024)

This conceptual framework describes the relationship between influencer marketing (X1), electronic word of mouth (X2), and purchase decision (Y), with brand trust (Z) as a mediating variable.

METHOD

A. Population and Sampling Method

This study employed a quantitative research method. The population in this study were consumers of Facetology sunscreen products located in Pekanbaru. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with a total sample of 98 respondents who met specific criteria as Facetology consumers. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The data analysis technique used in this study was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach, using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The research model was evaluated through outer model testing (validity and reliability) and inner model testing (path analysis, R-square, and hypothesis testing).

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Convergent Validity Test

This test evaluates the validity of indicators based on outer loading values. All indicators are declared valid because they meet the minimum outer loading value > 0.70.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Results

Indikator	Nilai *Outer Loading*	*Average Variance Extracted* (AVE)	Keterangan
Influencer Marketing			
X1.1	0.858		Valid
X1.2	0.854		Valid
X1.3	0.825		Valid
X1.4	0.821	0.714	Valid
X1.5	0.861		Valid
X1.6	0.867		Valid
X1.7	0.827		Valid
X1.8	0.847		Valid
E-WOM			
X2.1	0.869		Valid
X2.2	0.837		Valid
X2.3	0.825		Valid
X2.4	0.808	0.679	Valid
X2.5	0.825		Valid
X2.6	0.794		Valid
X2.7	0.797		Valid
X2.8	0.832		Valid
Keputusan Pembelian			
Y1	0.867		Valid
Y2	0.871		Valid
Y3	0.861		Valid
Y4	0.847	0.740	Valid
Y5	0.865		Valid
Y6	0.859		Valid
Y7	0.856		Valid
Y8	0.855		Valid
Brand Trust			
Z1	0.868		Valid
Z2	0.841		Valid
Z3	0.788	0.707	Valid
Z4	0.843		Valid
Z5	0.867		Valid
Z6	0.838		Valid

(Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.0)

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2. Composite Reliability Test

This test ensures that all constructs meet reliability standards. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values in this study exceed 0.70, indicating that the data is reliable.

Table 2. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Results

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
X1.*Influencer Marketing*	0.943	0.944	0.952
X2.*E-WOM*	0.932	0.935	0.944
Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.950	0.950	0.958
Z.*Brand Trust*	0.917	0.919	0.935

(Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.0)

all constructs have Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, confirming that all constructs are reliable.

3. R-Square Test

This test measures the contribution of independent variables to the dependent variables.

Table 3. R-Square Results

Variabel	R-square
Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.747
Z.Brand Trust	0.745

(Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.0)

Table 3 shows that Brand Trust has an R-Square value of 0.745, and Purchase Decision has an R-Square value of 0.747, indicating that the model has a strong explanatory power

4. Path Coefficient Test (Direct Effect)

This test examines the direct influence between variables using t-statistics and p-values.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Test (Direct Effect) Results

Variabel	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV|)	P values
X1.*Influencer Marketing* -> Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.382	0.096	3.979	0.000
X1.*Influencer Marketing* -> Z.Brand Trust	0.402	0.081	4.959	0.000
X2.*E-WOM* ->Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.282	0.085	3.323	0.001
X2.*E-WOM* ->Z.Brand Trust	0.516	0.069	7.508	0.000
Z.*Brand Trust* ->Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.266	0.108	2.448	0.014

(Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.0)

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As shown in Table 4, all direct paths are significant, with t-statistics greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05.

5. Indirect Effect Test (Mediation Effect)

This test evaluates the mediating role of Brand Trust between influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth, and purchase decisions.

Table 5. Indirect Effect Results

Variabel	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV|)	P values
X1.Influencer Marketing -> Z.Brand Trust -> Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.107	0.046	2.335	0.020
X2.E-WOM ->Z.Brand Trust ->Y.Keputusan Pembelian	0.137	0.062	2.207	0.027

Table 5 shows that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth, and purchase decisions.

CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth positively and significantly influence brand trust. Brand trust also positively influences purchase decisions. Furthermore, brand trust mediates the relationship between influencer marketing and electronic word of mouth toward purchase decisions. Facetology and similar brands are recommended to strengthen their influencer-based marketing strategies and encourage customer reviews as a form of electronic word of mouth to increase brand trust and purchase decisions.

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