

Research Article

Social Media Marketing, e-WOM, and Purchase Decisions: The Mediating Role of Brand Trust

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Abstract: The rapid growth of digital technology and e-commerce has transformed consumer behavior, particularly in the skincare industry. This study investigates the influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) and electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on online purchase decisions, with Brand Trust as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 205 Shopee consumers of the skincare brand Skin1004 using an online questionnaire. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using SmartPLS 4 to assess the measurement model, structural model, and mediation effects. The results reveal that both SMM and e-WOM significantly enhance Brand Trust and Purchase Decisions. Additionally, Brand Trust partially mediates the relationships between SMM and Purchase Decisions and between e-WOM and Purchase Decisions. These findings underscore the pivotal role of Brand Trust in optimizing social media marketing and e-WOM strategies to influence consumer purchasing behavior in e-commerce settings.

Keywords: Brand Trust; e-WOM; Online Buying Behavior; Skincare Consumers; Social Media Marketing

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior and marketing strategies, particularly in the context of e-commerce platforms. Social media marketing has become a crucial tool for firms to engage with consumers, build brand awareness, and influence purchase decisions in digital marketplaces (Kotler et al., 2022; Tuten & Solomon, 2018). Through interactive content, influencer endorsements, and targeted advertisements, companies can effectively shape consumer perceptions and purchasing Decisions in online environments.

In addition to firm-generated marketing content, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) plays a vital role in shaping consumer decision-making processes. e-WOM refers to informal communication among consumers through digital platforms, including reviews, comments, and social media discussions, which often influence consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions more strongly than traditional advertising (Litvin et al., 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Previous studies have shown that e-WOM can reduce perceived risk and increase consumer confidence in online transactions.

Brand trust is another critical factor in online consumer behavior. Brand trust reflects consumers' willingness to rely on a brand's ability to deliver its promised value and performance (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust is particularly important in online shopping contexts, where consumers face higher uncertainty and information asymmetry. Prior research indicates that brand trust can act as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between marketing stimuli and purchase decisions, especially in digital and social media environments (Hanaysha, 2022).

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Despite the growing body of literature on social media marketing, e-WOM, and brand trust, empirical findings regarding their combined effects on purchase decisions remain inconsistent. Some studies have reported a direct influence of social media marketing and e-WOM on purchase decisions, while others emphasize the mediating role of brand trust (Hanaysha, 2018). Furthermore, research focusing on the skincare and cosmetic industry in emerging markets, particularly in Southeast Asia, remains limited, highlighting the need for further investigation.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing and electronic word of mouth on consumer purchase decisions, with brand trust as a mediating variable in the context of online skincare products. By integrating digital marketing variables with trust theory, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which digital marketing strategies affect consumer purchase behavior in e-commerce platforms.

2. Literature Review

Consumer Behavior and Online Purchase Decision

Consumer behavior refers to the processes by which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences (Hoyer et al., 2024). It involves dynamic interactions among cognitive, affective, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence exchange processes in individuals' lives (Peter & Olson, 2010). Engel et al. (1995) further define consumer behavior as activities directly involved in acquiring, consuming, and disposing of products, including decision-making processes before and after these actions.

With the advancement of digital technology and electronic commerce, consumer behavior has expanded into online contexts, where decision-making processes are influenced by digital environments, platform features, and online interactions (Turban et al., 2017). Online consumer behavior involves interactions between consumer characteristics, environmental factors, merchants, product attributes, and e-commerce systems that collectively shape purchase decisions.

Purchase decision represents the stage in the buying decision process where consumers execute their purchase Decisions after evaluating available alternatives (Kotler et al., 2022). Consumers also make sub-decisions regarding brand, distribution channel, quantity, timing, and payment method (Kotler et al., 2022). In online contexts, purchase decisions are shaped by the complex interaction of consumer characteristics, environmental factors, sellers, products, and e-commerce systems (Turban et al., 2017).

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is a marketing strategy that uses social media platforms to enhance brand awareness, engagement, and interaction with consumers (Gunelius, 2011). Kotler et al. (2022) emphasize that social media enables consumers to share content and participate in online communities, strengthening brand-consumer relationships. Tuten and Solomon (2018) describe SMM as the use of social media technologies to create and exchange value among stakeholders through interactive communication.

Prior studies have identified key dimensions of SMM such as entertainment, interaction, customization, and trendiness, which influence consumer perceptions and behaviors (Hasan & Sohail, 2021; Mohamed Sadom et al., 2024). These dimensions reflect how engaging content, interactive features, personalized information, and trendy content contribute to consumer engagement and purchase behavior.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) refers to informal communication among consumers through digital platforms regarding products, services, brands, or companies (Litvin et al., 2008; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). It occurs across various online platforms such as social networks, forums, blogs, and review sites (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). e-WOM is considered more credible and persuasive than traditional advertising because it originates from other consumers' experiences (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

This study focuses on e-WOM exposure, which refers to consumers' awareness and exposure to online reviews and recommendations, either through active searching or passive

exposure (Rosario et al., 2020). e-WOM exposure plays a crucial role in reducing perceived risk and shaping consumer attitudes and purchase decisions.

Brand Trust

Brand trust refers to consumers' confidence in a brand's ability to fulfill its promises and deliver expected performance (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Lau and Lee (1999) argue that brand trust is formed through perceptions of credibility, integrity, and benevolence, which foster consumer confidence and reduce perceived risk. In modern marketing contexts, brand trust reflects a brand's ability to consistently deliver value and reliability (Wardhana, 2024).

Brand trust is typically measured through dimensions such as trust, reliability, honesty, and safety, which represent consumers' belief in the brand's credibility and integrity (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Relationship Among Variables and Hypothesis Development

Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision

Social media marketing (SMM) has become a dominant marketing communication tool that enables firms to interact with consumers, disseminate product information, and influence consumer decision-making processes (Gunelius, 2011; Tuten & Solomon, 2018). Through engaging content, influencer endorsements, and interactive brand communication, SMM enhances consumer awareness and attitudes toward products.

Prior empirical studies have demonstrated that SMM significantly influences purchase decisions in digital marketplaces by increasing consumer engagement and persuasion effectiveness (Hima et al., 2025; Arwani et al., 2025). Accordingly, SMM is expected to positively affect consumer purchase decisions.

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Decision

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) refers to consumers' online reviews, recommendations, and shared experiences that influence other consumers' perceptions and purchasing behavior (Litvin et al., 2008). Due to its perceived credibility and peer-generated nature, e-WOM plays a crucial role in reducing information asymmetry and shaping consumer evaluations (Ismagilova et al., 2017).

Previous studies confirm that e-WOM significantly influences purchase decisions in online shopping environments (Asnawati et al., 2022; Yulindasari & Fikriyah, 2022). Therefore, e-WOM is expected to positively influence purchase decisions.

H2: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

Social Media Marketing and Brand Trust

Brand trust reflects consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and integrity. Social media marketing can enhance brand trust by providing transparent information, facilitating two-way communication, and fostering brand communities (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). Interactive social media content also strengthens perceived brand credibility and relational bonds with consumers.

Empirical evidence suggests that SMM significantly enhances brand trust and influences consumer behavioral outcomes (Sohaib & Han, 2023; Haudi et al., 2022). Thus, SMM is expected to positively affect brand trust.

H3: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Trust

Consumers often rely on online reviews and peer recommendations to evaluate brand credibility, which significantly influences brand trust formation (Sari & Nugroho, 2022). Positive e-WOM signals product quality and brand reliability, thereby strengthening consumer trust.

Previous research has shown that e-WOM significantly influences brand trust in digital commerce contexts (Savitri et al., 2021; Falah & Isa, 2025). Therefore, e-WOM is expected to positively affect brand trust.

H4: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

Brand Trust and Purchase Decision

Brand trust is a key determinant of consumer purchase behavior, as it reduces perceived risk and uncertainty associated with purchasing decisions (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to engage in repeat purchases and exhibit stronger purchase Decisions.

Prior studies confirm that brand trust significantly influences purchase decisions across various product categories (Hanaysha, 2022; Fahmi & Maulidya, 2022; Vidyanata, 2022). Thus, brand trust is expected to positively affect purchase decisions.

H5: Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

Brand Trust as a Mediator between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Decision

Brand trust serves as a psychological mechanism through which marketing activities translate into consumer behavioral outcomes. Social media marketing activities provide interactive engagement and transparent information, which reduce perceived risk and strengthen consumer confidence in the brand, thereby influencing purchase decisions.

Previous research has identified brand trust as a mediating variable between marketing communication and consumer behavioral outcomes (Hasan & Sohail, 2021; Sohaib & Han, 2023). Hence, brand trust is expected to mediate the relationship between SMM and purchase decisions.

H6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions.

Brand Trust as a Mediator between Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Decision

Electronic word of mouth influences consumer behavior by shaping perceptions of brand credibility and reliability. Positive peer-generated information enhances brand trust, which subsequently reduces uncertainty and facilitates purchase decisions.

Empirical studies suggest that trust mechanisms explain how e-WOM influences consumer purchase behavior (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2024). Therefore, brand trust is expected to mediate the relationship between e-WOM and purchase decisions.

H7: Brand trust mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchase decisions.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, causal-comparative research design to investigate the effects of social media marketing (X1) and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM, X2) on purchase Decision (Y), with brand trust (Z) serving as a mediating variable. A causal-comparative approach was chosen to empirically test the hypothesized cause-effect relationships among the constructs, reflecting consumer behavior in purchasing Skin1004 products on the Shopee platform. The conceptual framework of the study is illustrated in Figure 1.

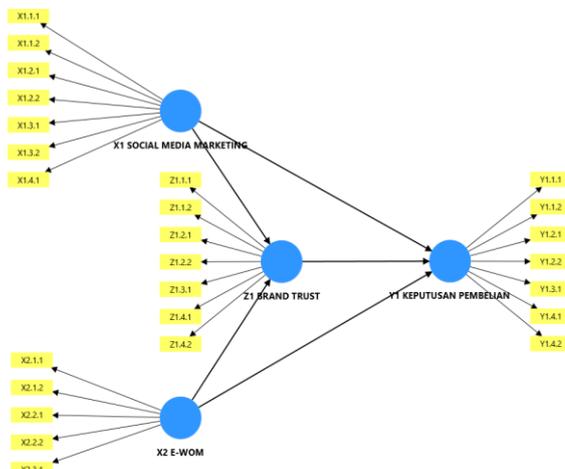


Figure 1. Proposed Research Design.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised consumers who had purchased Skin1004 products through Shopee. Respondents were selected using judgmental sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, based on specific inclusion criteria to ensure representativeness. Eligible participants were at least 17 years old, had purchased Skin1004 products at least once, had been exposed to Skin1004 promotional content on Instagram or TikTok, and had experienced e-WOM related to the brand. A total of 205 respondents participated in the study, meeting the minimum sample size recommended for problem-solving marketing research (Malhotra, 2016).

Data Collection

Data were collected using an online survey administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed across multiple social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok, allowing respondents to complete the survey at their convenience. The survey instrument was developed based on previously validated scales and adapted to the context of Skin1004 products.

Measures

The study measured four constructs: social media marketing, e-WOM, brand trust, and purchase Decision. Social media marketing was operationalized with indicators of entertainment, interaction, customization, and trendiness, while e-WOM was assessed based on opinion seeking, message quality, and message credibility. Brand trust was evaluated through trust, reliability, honesty, and safety dimensions. Purchase Decision was operationalized through brand selection, product selection, distribution channel, and satisfaction. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to assess complex cause-and-effect relationships, handle non-normally distributed data, and evaluate mediation effects (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis began with the assessment of the measurement model (outer model) to examine indicator reliability, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). This was followed by the evaluation of the structural model (inner model), which included testing for collinearity, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), model fit using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the significance of path coefficients through bootstrapping (Hu et al., 1999; Henseler et al., 2016). The mediating role of brand trust was assessed by examining the magnitude of the indirect effect, with the criteria proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) used as a reference to determine whether brand trust functions as a full or partial mediator in the relationship between social media marketing, e-WOM, and purchase decisions.

4. Results and Discussion

Result

Respondent Characteristics

The study collected data from 205 respondents who had purchased Skin1004 products through Shopee and were exposed to social media promotions on Instagram and TikTok. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents, including age, gender, education, and occupation. This information provides insight into the population under study and ensures that the sample is representative of the target consumer group.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	17–19 years	18	8.78
	20–22 years	157	76.59
	23–25 years	18	8.78
	26–30 years	8	3.90
	> 30 years	4	1.95
Gender	Female	187	91.22
	Male	18	8.78
Education	Junior High School	2	0.98
	Senior High School / Vocational	144	70.24
	Diploma	5	2.44
	Bachelor's Degree	53	25.85
	Master's Degree	1	0.49
Occupation	Student / University Student	163	79.51
	Private Employee	23	11.22
	Government Employee	1	0.49
	Entrepreneur	3	1.46
	Unemployed	7	3.41
	Others	8	3.90
	Monthly Income (IDR)	< 1,000,000	60
	1,000,000–2,500,000	106	51.71
	2,500,000–4,000,000	18	8.78
	4,000,000–6,000,000	17	8.29
	> 6,000,000	4	1.95

Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. The outer loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the HTMT ratio were analyzed to ensure that all indicators accurately represent their respective latent variables (Hair et. al., 2019).

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment.

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Social Media Marketing (X1)	X1.1.1	0.705	0.862	0.894	0.548
	X1.1.2	0.748			
	X1.2.1	0.706			
	X1.2.2	0.786			
	X1.3.1	0.728			
	X1.3.2	0.784			
	X1.4.1	0.719			
E-WOM (X2)	X2.1.1	0.752	0.830	0.878	0.591
	X2.1.2	0.818			
	X2.2.1	0.748			
	X2.2.2	0.740			
	X2.3.1	0.784			
Purchase Intention (Y1)	Y1.1.1	0.713	0.876	0.904	0.574
	Y1.1.2	0.796			
	Y1.2.1	0.739			
	Y1.2.2	0.727			
	Y1.3.1	0.731			
	Y1.4.1	0.814			
	Y1.4.2	0.778			
Brand Trust (Z1)	Z1.1.1	0.825	0.925	0.940	0.690
	Z1.1.2	0.849			
	Z1.2.1	0.834			
	Z1.2.2	0.841			
	Z1.3.1	0.859			
	Z1.4.1	0.819			
	Z1.4.2	0.786			

All indicators showed outer loadings ≥ 0.70 , composite reliability (CR) values were between 0.878–0.940, and AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming that the constructs are reliable and demonstrate convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. HTMT Assesment.

	HTMT
(X2) <-> (Z1)	0,458
(Y1) <-> (Z1)	0,858
(Y1) <-> (X2)	0,588
(X1) <-> (Z1)	0,729
(X1) <-> (X2)	0,536
(X1) <-> (Y1)	0,74

All HTMT values were below 0.90, indicating adequate discriminant validity among the constructs (Hair et al., 2019).

Structural Model (Inner Model) Evaluation

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships. Path coefficients (β), t-values, and p-values were assessed using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. Path Coefficients and Significance.

Path	Original Sample (β)	Sample Mean	t-statistics	p-value	Interpretation
X1 → Y1	0.178	0.181	2.342	0.019	Significant
X1 → Z1	0.587	0.590	9.989	0.000	Significant
X2 → Y1	0.185	0.184	3.561	0.000	Significant
X2 → Z1	0.146	0.150	2.154	0.031	Significant
Z1 → Y1	0.587	0.585	9.829	0.000	Significant

Social media marketing (X1) and e-WOM (X2) significantly influence both purchase decision (Y1) and brand trust (Z1). Brand trust also significantly predicts purchase decision, supporting the mediation analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect sizes (f^2) were assessed to evaluate the explanatory power of the model and the impact of each predictor on the endogenous variables.

Table 5. R^2 and Effect Sizes (f^2).

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Path	f^2	Effect Size
Purchase Decision (Y1)	0.669	X1 → Y1	0.051	Small
		X2 → Y1	0.079	Small
		Z1 → Y1	0.578	Large
Brand Trust (Z1)	0.446	X1 → Z1	0.489	Large
		X2 → Z1	0.030	Small

The R^2 values indicate that 66.9% of the variance in purchase decision and 44.6% in brand trust are explained by the predictors, showing moderate to substantial explanatory power. The f^2 values suggest that brand trust has a large effect on purchase decision, while social media marketing has a large effect on brand trust.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of Brand Trust (Z1) as a mediator in the relationships between Social Media Marketing (X1) and e-WOM (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y1). The indirect effects, along with t-values and p-values, were assessed using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples (Hair et al., 2019).

The type of mediation, partial or full, was determined based on the significance of the direct and indirect effects. Following the guidelines by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Hair et al. (2019), mediation is considered partial if both direct and indirect effects are significant, and full if the direct effect becomes non-significant when the mediator is included.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis of Brand Trust.

Mediation Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean	t-statistics	p-values	Significance	Type of Mediation
X1 → Z1 → Y1	0.345	0.345	2.136	0.033	Significant	Partial
X2 → Z1 → Y1	0.086	0.088	6.916	0.000	Significant	Partial

Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of Brand Trust (Z1) as a mediator in the relationships between Social Media Marketing (X1) and e-WOM (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y1). Based on the results in Table 4.5, the indirect effect of Social Media Marketing through Brand Trust on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.345$, $p = 0.033$) and the indirect effect of e-WOM through Brand Trust on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.000$) are significant, while the direct effects of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.019$) and e-WOM on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.185$, $p = 0.000$) remain significant.

These results indicate that Brand Trust functions as a partial mediator in both relationships. Partial mediation occurs when the mediator explains only part of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while a significant direct effect still exists (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hair et al., 2019). In other words, Social Media Marketing and e-WOM influence Purchase Decision both directly and indirectly through Brand Trust.

Model Fit

The model fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). A value below 0.10 indicates a good fit, confirming the suitability of the proposed model for the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 7. Model Fit Assessment

Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Threshold	Interpretation
SRMR	0.070	0.070	<0.10	Good fit

The SRMR value of 0.070 indicates that the model has a good fit with the empirical data, confirming the suitability of the proposed structural model

Discussion

Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Decision

The findings indicate that Social Media Marketing (SMM) significantly influences purchase Decision among Skin1004 consumers on Shopee. This result aligns with prior studies (Hasan & Sohail, 2020; Angelica & Tj, 2025), which suggest that interactive, entertaining, and trend-aware social media content strengthens consumer engagement and drives purchasing behavior.

The study confirms that marketing efforts on platforms like Instagram and TikTok are not only promotional but also build awareness and foster consumer-brand relationships. The high path coefficient for SMM on Purchase Decision suggests that well-structured social media campaigns can effectively stimulate purchase decisions in e-commerce contexts.

Effect of e-WOM on Purchase Decision

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) exposure also shows a significant positive impact on purchase Decision. Consistent with Wang et al. (2016) and Kudeshia & Kumar (2017), the results indicate that consumers rely heavily on online reviews and peer opinions when making purchasing decisions.

Consumers perceive e-WOM as credible and relevant, especially when accompanied by supportive evidence such as photos, videos, or detailed experiences. The study confirms that online peer recommendations can amplify brand message reach, complementing traditional SMM efforts, and guiding potential buyers toward informed decisions.

Mediating Role of Brand Trust

The analysis demonstrates that Brand Trust partially mediates the relationship between SMM/e-WOM and purchase Decision. This supports the notion that while SMM and e-

WOM have direct effects, their impact is strengthened when consumers develop trust in the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Hasan & Sohail, 2020).

Partial mediation suggests that even though consumers may respond directly to social media content or peer reviews, their decision-making is significantly enhanced when they perceive the brand as credible, reliable, honest, and safe. Brand trust thus serves as a psychological mechanism that reinforces the persuasive effect of digital marketing communications.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, these findings provide practical recommendations for Skin1004 to enhance marketing effectiveness. First, the brand should maintain and enhance social media content quality, ensuring that it is informative, relevant, and aligned with consumer needs. Educational content regarding product benefits, ingredient information, and usage guidance should be strengthened to support informed purchase decisions. Second, positive e-WOM should be encouraged, particularly reviews accompanied by visual evidence such as photos or videos. Strategies such as reposting authentic consumer reviews, sharing experiential testimonials, and collaborating with active users can amplify consumer confidence. Third, consistent and transparent management of social media is necessary to build and maintain consumer trust. Providing honest, educational, and easily understandable information about product safety and claims can strengthen perceptions of brand credibility. Ultimately, prioritizing brand trust within marketing strategies ensures that consumer confidence translates into sustained purchase decisions.

5. Limitations and Future Research

This study, while conducted following established research procedures, has several limitations that should be considered. Firstly, respondents were required to have made at least one purchase of Skin1004 products, without specifying the purchase period, which may not fully reflect current consumer behavior. Secondly, data were collected over a two-month period (November–December) with 205 respondents, which may have introduced seasonal trends and might not capture overall consumer behavior. Thirdly, the study focused exclusively on the Shopee platform, limiting the generalizability of findings to other e-commerce platforms or offline purchases. Additionally, social media marketing was examined only on Instagram and TikTok, despite the potential influence of other platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Finally, questionnaire distribution relied on the researcher's personal network and social media channels, potentially resulting in a relatively homogeneous respondent pool and an uneven gender distribution, which may affect the representativeness of the results.

Future research should address several limitations identified in this study. Researchers are encouraged to consider the timing of purchases (e.g., within the past three to six months) to obtain more relevant consumer behavior data. Expanding the data collection period or conducting studies at multiple intervals could yield more stable and representative findings. Investigating other e-commerce platforms, such as Tokopedia and Lazada, as well as offline purchases, would enhance the generalizability of results. Including additional social media platforms could provide a broader understanding of social media marketing effects. Moreover, using a more controlled distribution method or involving third parties could diversify respondent composition and reduce bias. Finally, focusing on female consumers as the primary respondent segment may improve the relevance of findings in relation to the brand's main target market.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence of the significant impact of social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on purchase decisions, mediated by brand trust, in the context of Skin1004 skincare products on the Shopee platform. Specifically, social media marketing and e-WOM were found to positively and significantly influence both purchase decisions and brand trust. Additionally, brand trust significantly affected purchase decisions and served as a mediating factor between social media marketing, e-WOM, and purchase decisions. These results underscore the crucial role of brand trust in enhancing the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in shaping consumer behavior.

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