

**THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH
TIKTOK ON PURCHASING INTENTION OF SKINCARE PRODUCTS IN
INDONESIA**

(Undergraduate Thesis)

By

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BANDAR LAMPUNG
2023**

ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH TIKTOK ON PURCHASING INTENTION OF SKINCARE PRODUCTS IN INDONESIA

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The ever-expanding internet has brought social media to become a medium by which Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is disseminated, particularly among skincare users. This study aims to assess the impact of eWOM through TikTok on skincare product purchase intention by developing a conceptual model of hypotheses that encompasses a multiplicity of factors that might be associated. The researcher investigates what factors impact eWOM usefulness & eWOM credibility and why consumers may adopt it when making a purchase. To examine our research model, a quantitative approach is employed using a sample of 373 Indonesian respondents via a web-based questionnaire. Structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis with the program SmartPLS was employed to test ten proposed hypotheses. The results indicate that source expertise is the most significant factor that may impact eWOM credibility in addition to perceived persuasiveness, perceived informativeness, and source trustworthiness. Additionally, source trustworthiness is the main predictor of eWOM credibility in addition to perceived persuasiveness and source expertise with regard to TikTok. It was found that eWOM usefulness and credibility together increase the possibility of adopting an eWOM message, and eWOM adoption mediates the influence of credibility and usefulness on customer purchase intention toward skincare products on TikTok. Only few studies have examined TikTok as a medium of eWOM distribution and its influence on skincare product purchase intention, therefore this study provides vital insights to eWOM literature by identifying the new platform. This study helps brands learn what to consider when designing marketing strategy to enhance purchase intentions.

Keywords: electronic word of mouth (eWOM), purchase intention, eWOM adoption, social media

ABSTRAK

PENGARUH *ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH* MELALUI TIKTOK TERHADAP NIAT MEMBELI PRODUK *SKINCARE* DI INDONESIA

By

KHEVIN ANGGA PUTRA

Internet yang terus berkembang membuat media sosial menjadi media penyebaran Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), khususnya di kalangan pengguna *skincare* kulit. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai dampak eWOM melalui TikTok terhadap niat pembelian produk *skincare* dengan mengembangkan model hipotesis konseptual yang mencakup banyak faktor yang mungkin terkait. Peneliti menyelidiki faktor-faktor apa yang memengaruhi kegunaan eWOM & kredibilitas eWOM dan mengapa konsumen dapat mengadopsinya saat melakukan pembelian. Untuk menguji model penelitian kami, pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dengan menggunakan sampel 373 responden Indonesia melalui kuesioner berbasis web. Analisis model persamaan struktural (SEM) dengan program SmartPLS digunakan untuk menguji sepuluh hipotesis yang diajukan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa keahlian sumber adalah faktor paling signifikan yang dapat memengaruhi kredibilitas eWOM selain persuasif yang dirasakan, keinformatifan yang dirasakan, dan kepercayaan sumber. Selain itu, kepercayaan sumber adalah prediktor utama kredibilitas eWOM selain persepsi persuasif dan keahlian sumber terkait TikTok. Ditemukan bahwa kegunaan dan kredibilitas eWOM bersama-sama meningkatkan kemungkinan adopsi pesan eWOM, dan adopsi eWOM memediasi pengaruh kredibilitas dan kegunaan terhadap niat beli pelanggan terhadap produk perawatan kulit di TikTok. Hanya sedikit penelitian yang meneliti TikTok sebagai media distribusi eWOM dan pengaruhnya terhadap niat pembelian produk perawatan kulit, oleh karena itu penelitian ini memberikan wawasan penting untuk literatur eWOM dengan mengidentifikasi platform baru tersebut. Studi ini membantu merek mempelajari apa yang harus dipertimbangkan saat merancang strategi pemasaran untuk meningkatkan niat pembelian.

Kata kunci: electronic word of mouth (eWOM), niat membeli, adopsi eWOM, media sosial

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An Undergraduate Thesis

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
BACHELOR OF MANAGEMENT**

at

**The Department of Management
Faculty of Economics and Business The University of Lampung**



**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF LAMPUNG
BANDAR LAMPUNG
2023**

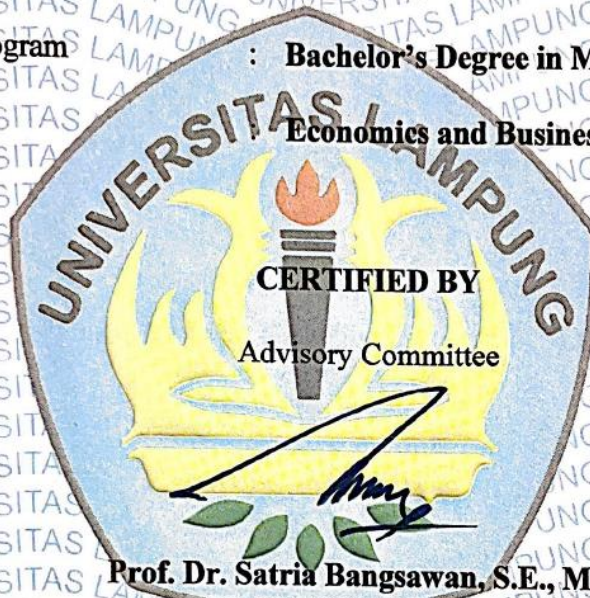
**Undergraduate Thesis Title : THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD
OF MOUTH THROUGH TIKTOK ON
PURCHASING INTENTION OF SKINCARE
PRODUCTS IN INDONESIA**

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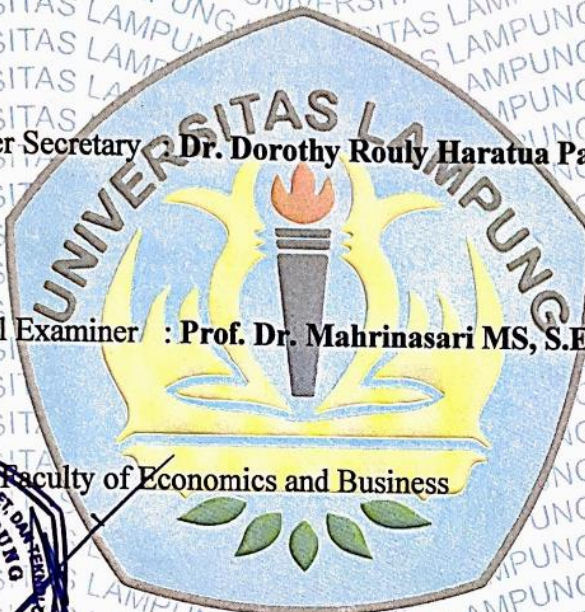
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STATEMENT OF PLAGIARISM-FREE

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Bandar Lampung, 16 January 2022

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BIOGRAPHY

Khevin Angga Putra, the author of an undergraduate thesis entitled "The influence of electronic word of mouth through TikTok on purchasing intention of skincare products in Indonesia," was born on April 19, 2000 in a small village located in South Lampung. The researcher began his primary education at SDN 4 Rejomulyo and graduated in 2012. In middle school, the researcher attended SMP Plus Al-Ismailiyun and graduated in 2015. Afterwards, the researcher continued his education at SMK Negeri 3 Metro in the Software Engineering program and graduated in 2018. Finally, the researcher pursued higher education in the Management program with a concentration in marketing and was a part of the international class program at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Lampung and graduated in 2023.

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researcher created and led a scholarship project called Lead The Future Scholarship (LTFS) which in its first batch successfully invited 100,000 students from all over Indonesia to apply. By the time this thesis was written, the LTFS scholarship had been run for two batches and had helped its awardees become the future leaders of the nation through self-development programs and education allowance. After completing the internship at Pemimpin.id, the researcher was appointed as a Marketing Strategist. Then, in the second Kampus Merdeka batch at the beginning of 2022, the researcher successfully applied to PT Telkom Indonesia Tbk as a Marketing Intern in the Directorate of Digital Business. In 2021, the researcher also worked part-time as a Community Development Consultant at PT Paragon Technology And Innovation. After that, during the completion of researcher's study in 2022, the researcher participated in the Commercial Apprentice program at Philip Morris International as a Commercial Strategist. In this program, the researcher prioritized developing a comprehensive commercial strategy that included building a strong brand and marketing strategy for both consumer goods and commercial brands.

DEDICATION

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of the people who have supported and encouraged me throughout the journey of completing my thesis.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my partner, for your love, support, and encouragement throughout the journey of completing my undergraduate thesis. Your unwavering support and encouragement have motivated me to push myself to new heights and strive for excellence. Thank you for being by my side every step of the way.

I would also like to thank my family for their love and support. Without their encouragement and belief in me, I would not have been able to accomplish this feat. Their encouragement and belief in me have been instrumental in helping me to achieve this accomplishment.

Additionally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my friends who have been a constant source of support and motivation throughout this journey.

Your kindness and encouragement have meant the world to me.

Finally, I would like to thank all of lecturers for their guidance, support, and valuable insights throughout the journey of completing my thesis. Your expertise and knowledge have greatly enhanced my understanding of the topic and have helped me to develop a comprehensive analysis. Your patience and guidance have been invaluable to me and have played a critical role in my academic and personal growth.

To all of these individuals, I am truly grateful for your support and guidance. Thank you for helping me to reach this point and for being a constant source of inspiration and motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to the many individuals who played a vital role in the completion of this thesis and to whom I am greatly indebted. Without their support and contributions, this work may not have been possible. Therefore, the researcher would like to express my gratitude to:

1. Prof. Dr. Nairobi, S.E., M.Si., as Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Lampung
2. Mr. Aripin Ahmad, S.E., M.Si., as head of the Management Department of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Lampung
3. Mr. Dr. Ribhan, S.E., M.Si., as secretary of the Management Department of the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Lampung
4. Prof. Dr. Satria Bangsawan, S.E., M.Si. as my supervisor, for making this work possible. His guidance and advice have been invaluable throughout the entire process of this research.
5. Prof. Dr. Mahrinasari, S.E., M.Sc. as the first examiner who has provided guidance, information, critique, and suggestion.
6. Mrs. Dr. Dorothy Rouly Haratua Pandjaitan, S.E., M.Si. as the second examiner who has provided guidance, information, critique, and suggestion.
7. Mr. Mudji Rachmad Ramelan, S.E., M.B.A. as the third examiner who has provided guidance, information, critique, and suggestion.
8. Mrs. Nuzul Inaz Nabila, S.E., M.S.M. as the fourth examiner who has provided guidance, information, critique, and suggestion.
9. My Katarsis peer group, Adinda, Afa, Cintya, Rizky, who have helped me during my confusions, and my ups & downs.

10. My dearest classmates, Yenny, Haura, Albert, Indra, Ryan, Febrian, and Aziz (ex-classmate but still mate). for being the most prominent people in my in-class story. Thank you for your contribution and for playing such a significant role in my learning experience.
11. My offline friends, Mona and Andre. Thank you for helping me in every confusion I experienced during every step of my undergraduate thesis completion.
12. To my high achiever, prior motivator, emotional consultant, love and hate bestie, my deep talk and nonsense story partner. Cintya is soo patient in hearing all my grumbles and complaints.
13. My beloved partner, Slory, thank you for supporting me in everything, and especially I can't thank you enough for encouraging me throughout this experience. Thank you for staying with me after all the emotional turmoil and all of the bother I caused you.
14. I would like to offer a special thank you to my parents. It is impossible to fully express my gratitude towards my mother and father for all of the sacrifices that you have made on my behalf. Your prayers for me have been a source of strength and sustenance throughout this journey.

Bandar Lampung, 16 Januari 2023

Khevin Angga Putra

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Nowadays modern era is characterized by the rapid development of technology. This has numerous effects on human life. The presence of technology greatly facilitates people's life, especially technological advances in the internet field. The use of the Internet is becoming increasingly necessary. The Internet facilitates access to information, accelerates activities, and provides platform for everyone to meet our daily needs. The global Covid-19 pandemic that occurred in 2020 also accelerated the growth of the internet in Indonesia. Survey conducted by APJII (2022) revealed that internet users in Indonesia increased to 210 million people, which before the pandemic was only 175 million people. This fact is confirmed by data released by DataReportal (2022) which shows an increase in the number of internet users from year to year. Figure 1.1 depicts the number of internet users in 2017 which was initially only 136 million people, at the beginning of 2022 it increased to 205 million people or 73,7% of total population.

The rapid development of technology and the internet also affects humans in business matters. Various business ranging from small medium enterprises (SMEs) to multinational corporations, all compete to take advantage of internet advancements to support their business. One of the reasons for using the internet and social media as promotional media is to reach a wider market share, as social media allows us to reach people regardless of their location or time zone. This is further corroborated by studies conducted by Katadata and Kominfo, which reveals

that 73% of the general audience obtains information from social media (Katadata & Kominfo, 2021). Clearly, this is extremely advantageous for business. Figure 1.1 also explains the increase in the number of social media users is directly proportional to the increase in internet users in Indonesia. The number of social media users in Indonesia continues to increase every year. Based on data from DataReportal (2022), the number of social media users in Indonesia until 2022 will reach 191 million people or 68.9% of the total population.

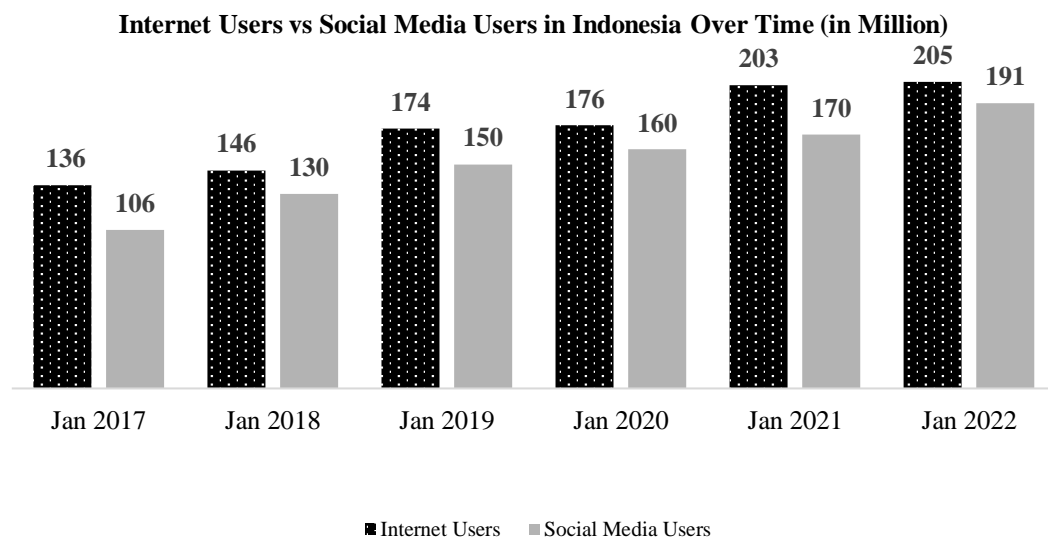


Figure 1. 1 Number of Internet Users vs Social Media Users in Indonesia Over Time
Source: DataReportal, 2022

Social media is an important need in human life today as a place for social interaction and to expand social networks. In the past, numerous business marketers utilized Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. In the last two years, however, Millennials and Gen Z has a brand-new popular social media application for sharing their ideas and creativity: TikTok, which is also used by marketers today. Actually, TikTok has been available since 2016, but its popularity has recently increased since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. ByteDance, as the developer of TikTok application, in 2022 released advertising resources which revealed that TikTok had 99,1 million users aged 18 or older in Indonesia. This makes it the fourth most used social media in Indonesia with a market share of 63.1% (DataReportal, 2022). Even

Indonesia in 2020 holds the second-highest number of monthly active users in the world, behind only USA (Katadata, 2021).

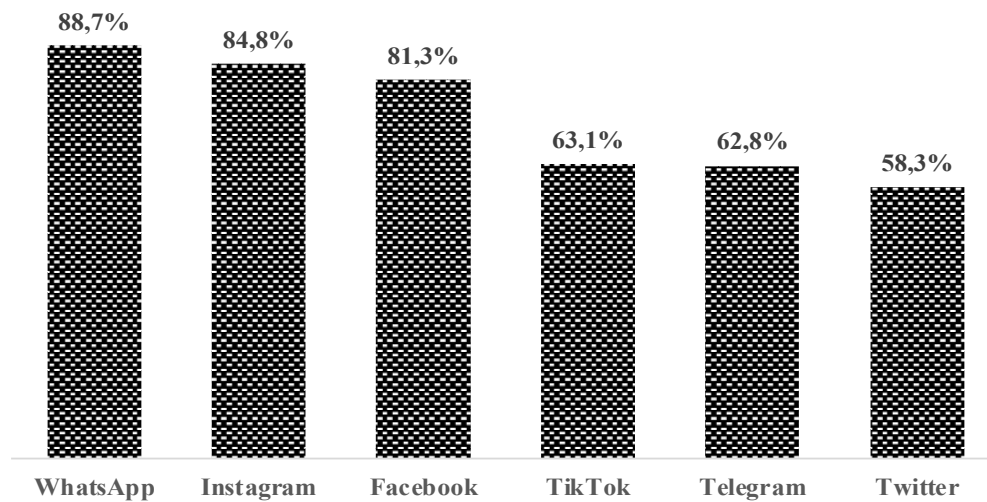


Figure 1. 2 Most-Used Social Media Platform in Indonesia 2022
Source: DataReportal, 2022

After being outlawed by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, TikTok has become a new popular culture in Indonesia. Popular culture is a culture that is loved by a large number of people and is unaffiliated with a particular socioeconomic class. Popular culture is currently having a stronger impact in the digital era because easy access to information has a significant effect on popular culture in a country (Sorrels, 2015). Millennials and Gen Z are very active and intense with new technologies, such as the TikTok application, which is widely utilized by millennials and Gen Z in Indonesia and contributes to the growth of popular culture in the country.

TikTok is one of the fastest growing social media platforms in the world (Oberlo, 2021). The vast number of TikTok users in numerous countries, including Indonesia, providing prospects and financial potential for some entrepreneurs. This is due to TikTok's engaging features and comprehensive database. Moreover, as the TikTok application is gaining popularity, it has the potential to generate business benefits. The business use of TikTok is evolving from a medium for entertainment to a tool for business strategy.

In this TikTok application, users can create videos with a maximum duration of three minutes, interact in the comments or private chat fields by providing unique and interesting special effects, and have extensive music support so they can perform in a variety of styles or dances, and many other things hence promoting its users' ingenuity to become content creators (Susilowati, S. 2018). Other features that are also popular on TikTok are TikTok Live and TikTok Shop. In the TikTok application, users can sell products using the TikTok Shop feature which is integrated into posted videos and on TikTok Live, a live broadcast feature by TikTok.

Skincare products are widely used by Gen Z and millennials because not only they want to have a more attractive appearance, but they can also make facial skin healthy and fresh even without makeup. That's why companies are competing to launch and produce skincare products according to consumers' skin needs. Based on data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in the first quarter of 2020, the growth of the chemical, pharmaceutical and traditional medicine industries including cosmetics grew 5.59% (Katadata, 2021). Furthermore, Kompas also monitored that in early 2021, the beauty care category outperformed sales transactions in e-commerce by 46.8%. In addition, the total value of transactions in the beauty care category in the online market itself has managed to penetrate the Rp40 billion figure (Haasiani, 2021).

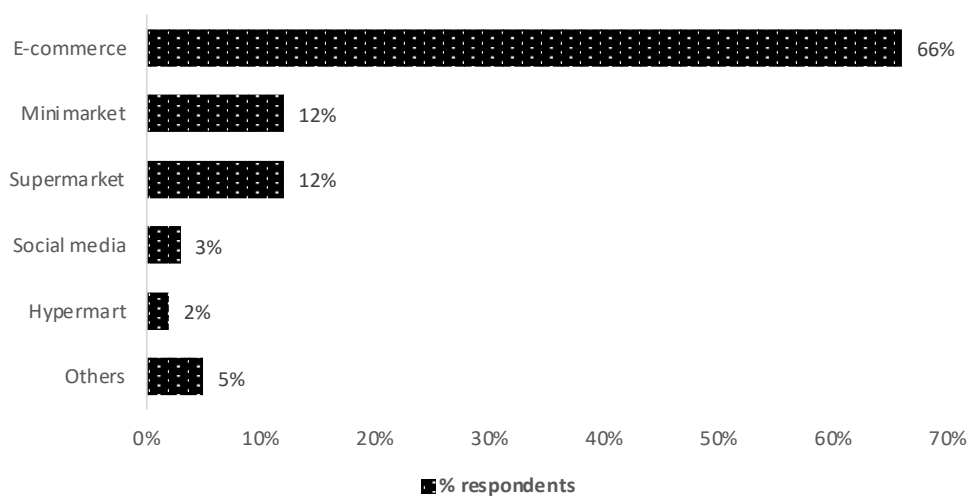


Figure 1. 3 Where to buy cosmetics
Souce: Katadata, 2022

Based on the Katadata (2022), the Populix Survey found 66% of consumers buy cosmetics in e-commerce. This percentage is even greater than purchases at minimarkets, supermarkets, and hypermarkets combined. The survey involving 500 female respondents spread across Indonesia was held on July 4-14, 2022 and found that Shopee was the most popular e-commerce for purchasing cosmetics. As many as 98% of respondents said they bought their cosmetics through Shopee (Katadata. 2022).

Various local and international skincare brands have used TikTok as a means of marketing tools. Videos that use certain brand hashtags on TikTok also get millions of hashtag views. Like the local brand Somethinc topped the rankings with a total hashtag view of 57.3 million on TikTok, this is the highest total views as a local skincare brand (iprice, 2022). Followed by Wardah with a total hastag views of 17.1 million. Both of these local brands already have halal certification (iprice, 2022).



Figure 1. 4 Which skincare products are the most watched on TikTok?

Source: iprice (2022)

Some By Mi, a Korean skincare brand, came up on top with 33 million total hashtag views, followed by the Laneige brand with a total hashtag view of 24.5 million. These two products are in different classes. Some By Mi is classified as a more

wallet-friendly product and Laneige is classified as a premium skincare brand (iprice, 2022). Meanwhile, the Western brand, The Ordinary, was ranked first with a total hashtag view of 611 million, followed by the Garnier brand with a total view of nearly 121 million. In third place is Cetaphil with a total hashtag of 57 million viewers (iprice, 2022).

In an actual transaction, the process of deciding whether or not to buy is the purchasing decision. According to Febriana, M., and Yulianto, E. (2018), the cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors of purchasers have a significant impact on their purchasing intention. Most of these are factors that marketer can control, but must really be taken into account (Swastha and Handoko, 2017). High consumer purchasing intention can lead to high sales volume, resulting in greater profitability for the business. In order for the company to earn high profits, the company must take into account consumer purchasing intention for these goods/services.

If the company can influence consumers to make purchasing intention and be able to analyze consumers in preparing product/service quality, prices, and the influence of advertising/promotions, then in competition the company can be competitively superior and lucrative. In light of the tightening market conditions, there must be a strategy to win the competition by offering products that meet the needs of consumers so that these products can be sold on the market. One of strategies that can be considered is through eWOM.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) refers to positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company that are available on the Internet to a large number of people and institutions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). With eWOM, consumers interact by discussing specific products as an expression of their thoughts, as well as through user-generated content, product reviews, and social media posts (Chu & Kim, 2018). Controlling electronic word of mouth to stay positive is one of the most efficient ways to gain market share and promote products on social media.

Controlling negative eWOM and promoting positive eWOM are the keys to a company's success, particularly for those that sell products or services online. The TikTok's share function enables rapid eWOM dissemination of user-generated content. Consumers use eWOM and User Generated Content (UGC) as a source of information when searching for a product or service. User-generated content refers to the information and materials that Internet users create and post (Lanchester, 2006). The content can be created independently or in collaboration, modified, shared, and consumed (Kaplan Haenlein, 2010). TikTok users as an audience and consumers usually according to a number of studies, rely heavily on eWOM and UGC from testimonial/review content being posted on social media when making purchasing decisions (Riegner, 2007; MacKinnon, 2012).

According to Fadhilah & Saputra (2021), electronic word of mouth on social media TikTok has an influence on consumer purchasing intention of Generation Z. Before making a purchase, Generation Z consumers look for information on video content. Positive reviews also encourage consumers to buy. TikTok users frequently create product reviews/testimonials in video format. The culture of making testimonial reviews, which was previously limited to well-known beauty vloggers, is now being practiced by TikTok users in general, even if they are not beauty vloggers. Before buying a product, Generation Z will look for information in the video's comments section or eWOM as well as user-generated content (UGC). After gathering the necessary data regarding product which they want to purchase, Gen Z consumers make purchases of the products (Fadhilah & Saputra, 2021). The presence of TikTok creates a new platform for eWOM dissemination that can help consumers make their choices in buying products.

TikTok, a recent established yet popular social media platform, has become a critical promotional medium for businesses, particularly in the skincare product category, which has seen a surge in demand lately. With millions of active users in Indonesia, TikTok offers a great opportunity for businesses to introduce and promote their products to a diverse group of users.

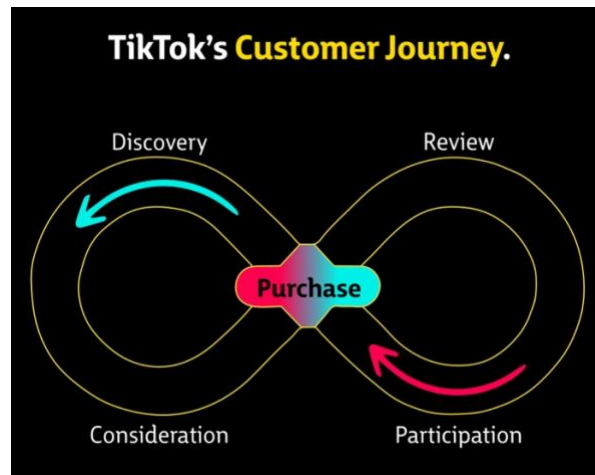


Figure 1. 5 The infinite loop: TikTok's unique retail path to purchase
Source: TikTok for Business (2022)

Recently, TikTok has introduced a unique retail path to purchase that differs from the traditional linear funnel approach. The path to purchase on TikTok is not linear, but rather an infinite loop of discovery, consideration, purchase, review, and participation. This retail path is fueled by user-generated content and leverages the platform's vast community, which engages at every stage of the purchase journey, from discovering new products and brands to making purchases and creating entertaining content that drives post-purchase engagement. By building engaging consumer experiences that align with their interests and leveraging user-generated content, brands can connect and create with their target audience, leading to massive engagement and increased sales (TikTok for Business, 2022).

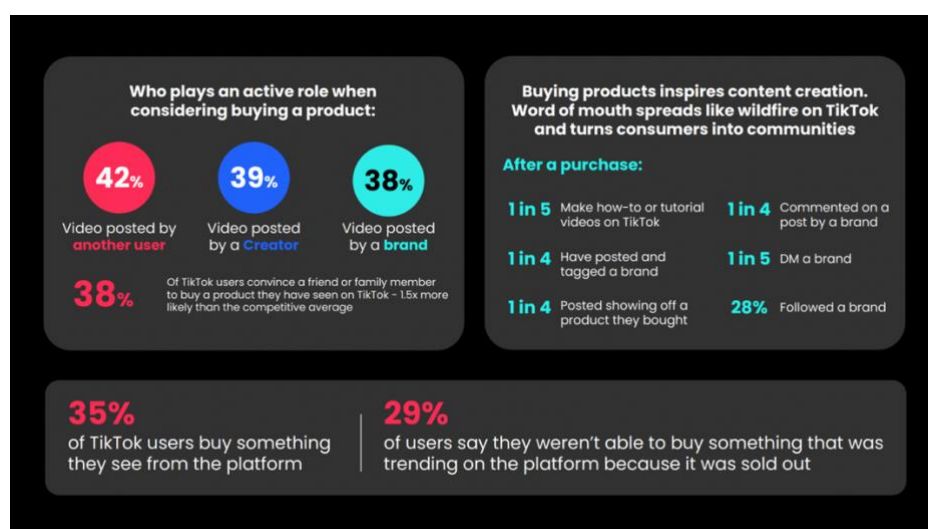


Figure 1. 6 The magic of TikTok continues post-purchase
Source: TikTok for Business (2022)

According to the data provided by TikTok for Business (2022), TikTok plays a significant role in shaping consumers' purchasing behavior, with 35% of users buying something they see on the platform. User-generated content as a form of eWOM is particularly influential for consumer's purchase intention, as 42% of users consider video posted by another user, and 39% of users consider video posted by a creator. Additionally, purchase a product also inspires content creation, as 1 in 5 users make how-to or tutorial videos, and 1 in 4 post to show off a product they bought. Commenting on posts by brands after they purchase a product is also prevalent, with 1 in 4 users engaging in this behavior.

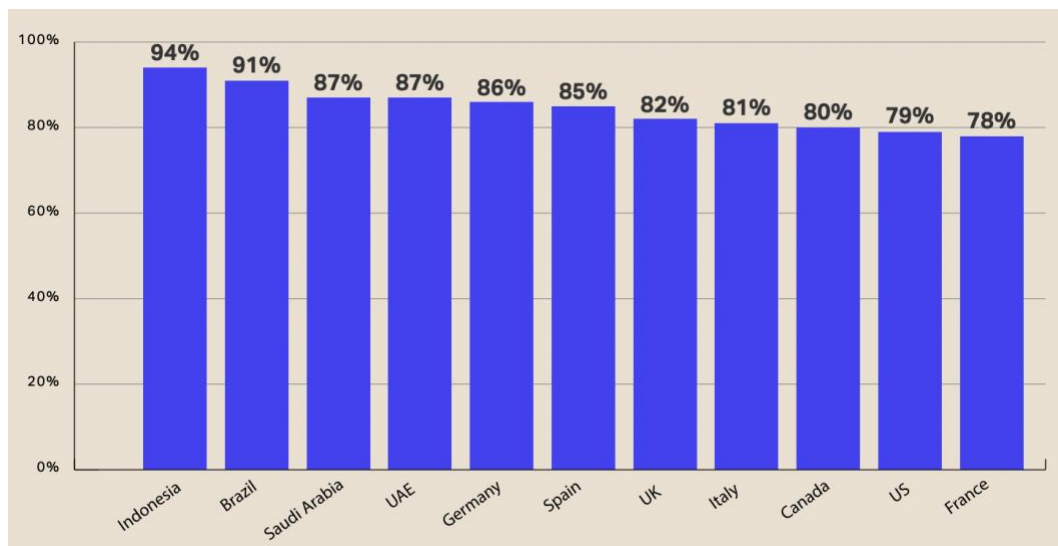


Figure 1. 7 Those who have ever purchased a product or service after seeing it reviewed or advertised on social media including TikTok
Source: WARC (2021)

The positive correlation between eWOM on social media including TikTok also showed from the research conducted by TikTok in collaboration with Publicis Groupe and WARC in 2021. The study found that on average, 85% of people have purchased a product or service after seeing it reviewed or advertised on social media, including TikTok. Furthermore, the study showed that Indonesia has the highest percentage of people, with 94%, who have made a purchase based on review content or advertisements seen on social media (WARC, 2021). The study also discovered that 73% of the respondents were encouraged to purchase the products reviewed by content creators in TikTok content (WARC, 2021).

In 2022 there are over 16 billion (42,4B in 2023) views across TikTok content videos with the hashtag #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt (Shopify, 2022). By browsing through this hashtag, which features videos of people unboxing packages, showing off their shopping hauls, and reviewing products, we can see that many TikTok creators are sharing things they bought after seeing them on the app. This indicates that there is a significant level of interest from TikTok users in watching user-generated content as a form of eWOM to help inform their purchasing decisions (Shopify, 2022).

TikTok social media enables anyone to be a creator. TikTok app users can create any content they like and upload it on their TikTok account. The advantage of the TikTok algorithm is that anyone has the opportunity to enter the FYP (For You Page), as the main homepage that brings up video recommendations according to the algorithm, as long as the content created is relevant to the interests of the audience. This opportunity increases the willingness of many people to participate in creating TikTok content, such as skincare product review content. Content creators who are able to convey detailed product information and provide new information that may not be known to the audience can make viewers think that the information is useful for them (Syarqiyah, 2020). A high level of informativeness can help consumers compare products so that they can make better purchasing decisions, this is directly related to the perception of the usefulness of information by consumers (Ahn, Ryu, and Han, 2004). In this study, perceived informativeness is how much information is available in an online review for consumers to assist them in making purchasing decisions and avoiding uncertainty (Zhang et al., 2014).

Online reviews usually also contain recommendations from reviewers that can help consumers determine which products they should buy. A reviewer's assessment of a product often affects the audience's assessment of the product. Reviews that are presented in an interesting way and packaged in persuasive language can influence consumers' judgments that the review is useful for them (Syarqiyah, 2020). Perceived persuasiveness is defined as the persuasive power of an online review that is perceived by users (Zhang et al., 2014).

If the reviews come from people who have expertise and background in the field, consumers tend to have expectations and judgments that the reviews submitted are useful for them (Syarqiyah, 2020). Source expertise is defined as the extent to which communicators are considered as sources who can make good statements, have knowledge in a field, are experienced, or even have credible titles, such as Ph.D., (Xiao et al., 2018). Source expertise is a strong predictor of eWOM usefulness (Tien et al., 2019). People turn to expert recommendations rather than nonexpert when looking for valid statements to increase knowledge regarding a product (Tien et al., 2019). The level of expertise of the sender of eWOM is proven to have a major influence on consumers' assessment of whether the eWOM is beneficial to them (Cheng and Ho, 2015). Tien et al., (2019) explained that source expertise, perceived informativeness, and perceived persuasiveness affect eWOM usefulness (Tien et al., 2019). eWOM usefulness is a person's level of confidence that an eWOM message is considered useful and can help make better purchasing decisions (Chung and Thadani, 2012)

It is widely recognized that eWOM delivered by people with a high level of expertise is more able to convince consumers, because the message conveyed looks more credible (Lis, 2013; Teng et al., 2014). In addition to sources that are considered experts, people also trust information if the information comes from a source that is trustworthy (Syarqiyah, 2020). Source trustworthiness refers to the integrity of clear sources and trust in sources that they can provide valid and honest statements (Xiao et al., 2018). Trusted reviewers show a high level of objectivity and honesty, making eWOM recipients not suspect the validity of the information submitted (Lis, 2013). In a study conducted by Tien et al., (2019), eWOM credibility is affected by perceived persuasiveness, source expertise, and source trustworthiness. eWOM credibility analyzes how much consumers believe testimonials or recommendations to be factual, true, and trustworthy (Cheung, 2009).

It has been demonstrated that source credibility has a major impact on eWOM credibility, information adoption, and ultimately purchase intention (Daowd, et al., 2020). Moreover, Anh & Hien (2022) on their research, eWOM perceived

usefulness and perceived credibility play an important role in mediating the impact of information quality and source credibility on purchase intention. To address gaps in current literature, this study combined both aspects, eWOM credibility and eWOM usefulness as the mediating variables in this study to mediate eWOM adoption variable and ultimately purchase intention.

An acceptance of information that is considered correct and used in making purchasing decisions is called eWOM adoption (Cheung, 2008). eWOM adoption is a very important variable in explaining buying behavior. The results of research conducted by Tien et al., (2019) show that eWOM adoption has a very strong influence on purchase intention. Therefore, in this study, eWOM adoption is used as a reference in determining the effect of eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility on consumer purchasing intentions. According to Tien., et al., (2019) the role of eWOM adoption in mediating the influence of eWOM credibility and usefulness on consumer purchase intention toward products recommended on social media sites has been demonstrated to be significant. However, in the previous study, social media sites in which a platform where eWOM transfers are limited to Facebook, Line, and Instagram mostly. The products being recommended on social media sites also remains unclear and unspecific. This study thus examines the role of eWOM through social media TikTok and its adoption in mediating the influence of eWOM credibility and usefulness on consumer purchase intentions towards skincare products.

In practice, studies on the relationship between eWOM on social media and purchase intention are still in their infancy, and the number of existing research papers is very limited (Tien et al., 2019). In addition, studies on eWOM and social media are currently limited to older social media such as Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube (Tien et al., 2019), and on a very limited geographical area. The shift in social media trends that occurred with the existence of TikTok as a trend center for social media is currently still few who examine its relation to eWOM and purchase intention. Therefore, more studies are needed to consolidate our understanding of eWOM influence within social media on purchasing intention. Therefore, this study draws on prior researches and provides expanded information regarding eWOM

and purchasing intentions. Moreover, as online reviews and recommendations or eWOM on TikTok proven to have a high influence on consumers, investigating how eWOM on TikTok influence Indonesian consumer's intention to buy skincare products is an intriguing subject of study.

An empirical gap in the current literature also exists regarding the impact of eWOM on TikTok on purchase intention. Hasena & Sakapurnama (2021) conducted a study that found a positive correlation between eWOM on TikTok and purchase intention for skincare products. The data revealed by TikTok for Business (2022) shows that 42% of TikTok users perceived user-generated content or eWOM on TikTok plays an active role in in their purchase intention. Moreover, from the same source, 35% of TikTok users buy something they see from the platform (TikTok for Business, 2022). However, Ratu & Rumokoy (2022) conducted a study that found no significant effect of eWOM on TikTok on purchase intention for skincare products when buying from TikTok shop. Moreover, Bangsawan *et al.* (2017) also eWOM is not significantly related to purchase intentions. This discrepancy in findings highlights the need for further research to investigate and confirm the relationship between eWOM on TikTok and purchase intention for skincare products and the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the relationship.

Other empirical gap in this area is the issue of trustworthiness. While eWOM is thought to be an effective means of providing information about products and services, there are concerns about the accuracy and authenticity of the information being shared. For example, it is possible that some influencers or users on TikTok may receive incentives to promote certain products or services, or that they may not disclose potential biases or conflicts of interest. This lack of transparency may undermine the credibility of the eWOM, reducing its impact on purchase intention. Thus to address this current empirical gap, this study considers source trustworthiness and information credibility factor to measure the influence of eWOM through TikTok on purchase intentions.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a thorough investigation of the relationship between eWOM through TikTok and its influence on purchase intention for skincare products. This will be achieved by gathering data from a

sample of Indonesian TikTok users who have previously received product information from TikTok content and analyzing the impact of eWOM on their purchase intentions. The study also explored the moderating role of eWOM usefulness, eWOM credibility, and eWOM adoption on the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention. By providing a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention for skincare products via relatively new social media platform TikTok, this study will contribute to the existing literature and provide valuable insights for skincare brands, marketers, and researchers in the field.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the aforesaid context, the formulation of the problems in this study are as follows:

- 1) Does the perceived informativeness have positive effects on perceived usefulness?
- 2) Does the perceived persuasiveness have a positive effect on perceived usefulness?
- 3) Does the source expertise have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness?
- 4) Does source trustworthiness have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness?
- 5) Does the perceived persuasiveness have a positive effect on eWOM credibility?
- 6) Does the source expertise have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility?
- 7) Does the source trustworthiness have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility?
- 8) Do higher levels of perceived usefulness create higher levels of eWOM adoption?
- 9) Do higher levels of perceived credibility create higher levels of eWOM adoption?
- 10) Does eWOM adoption mediate the influence of eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility on purchase intention?

1.3 Research Aims & Objectives

Based on the aforementioned context and issues, the following are the objectives of this study:

- 1) To investigate whether or not the perceived informativeness have positive effects on perceived usefulness?
- 2) To investigate whether or not the perceived persuasiveness have a positive effect on perceived usefulness?
- 3) To investigate whether or not the source expertise have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness?
- 4) To investigate whether or not source trustworthiness have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness?
- 5) To investigate whether or not the perceived persuasiveness have a positive effect on eWOM credibility?
- 6) To investigate whether or not the source expertise have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility?
- 7) To investigate whether or not the source trustworthiness have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility?
- 8) To investigate whether or not higher levels of perceived usefulness create higher levels of eWOM adoption?
- 9) To investigate whether or not higher levels of perceived credibility create higher levels of eWOM adoption?
- 10) To investigate whether or not eWOM adoption mediate the influence of eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility on purchase intention?

1.4 Research Benefits

Based on the aforementioned context and issues, the following are benefits:

- 1) For academics, this research is expected to provide a reference for developing marketing management knowledge, especially regarding the relationship between eWOM through TikTok towards skincare products in Indonesia.
- 2) For marketers, this research can contribute to marketers in developing marketing strategies through social media TikTok.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 TikTok Application

Zhang Yiming is the man behind the launch of the music video platform, TikTok. He is a software engineer graduate from Nankai University. Apart from being an alumnus of Nankai University, he also founded a technology company called “ByteDance”. The company was founded in March 2012. The company's debut application was Toutiao, which has since become one of the most popular applications in China. Along with the development of the trend, Zhang Yiming decided to create a more interactive and interesting social media application. This application is known as TikTok today.

In 2020, TikTok experienced rapid development to become popular culture in Indonesia. Actually, the TikTok application is not a new social media in Indonesia, because a few years earlier TikTok had begun to be known in Indonesia. However, at that time TikTok became a video-based digital application that produced stupid output. In fact, TikTok had earned the nickname "dumb application" at the time. The culmination of all of this was when TikTok was blocked by the Ministry of Communication and Information, on the grounds that TikTok produces content that has a negative influence, especially for minors (Sihura, 2022).

According to Sihura (2022), after TikTok was blocked by the Ministry of Communication and Information, TikTok is now a new trend and popular culture in Indonesia. The development of a popular culture today in Indonesia is very large for the millennials and Gen Z, because these generations are very active and intense with new technologies, one of which is TikTok which is widely used by millennials and Gen Z in Indonesia and makes it popular culture in Indonesia.

2.1.2 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Other people's evaluations of a product are considered by the consumer when making a purchase decision. When making a purchase decision, consumers conduct an evaluation of alternatives. Other people's evaluations of a product are provided in the form of reviews and consumption experiences. This is referred to as word of mouth. It is possible to interpret word-of-mouth as the communication of rumors circulating or appearing among consumers and prospective purchasers (Prisgunanto, 2014: 117).

The rapid development of the internet and social media has led to new strategies in word of mouth, resulting in the emergence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Hennig-Thurau et al., (2004:42) states that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is a positive negative statement made by actual, potential or previous consumers who talk about products or companies and this information is available to people and institutions via the internet.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is viewed as an evolution of traditional face-to-face communication, making it more modern with the support of cyberspace, or an electronic medium in computer networks that is widely used for online one-way and reciprocal communication.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has emerged as a crucial forum for consumers' feedback and is regarded as more effective than traditional word of mouth (Priansa, 2017, p. 351). There are numerous distinctions between word-

of-mouth communication and electronic word-of-mouth, as shown in the table below:

Table 2. 1 Electronic Word of Mouth vs Word of Mouth		
No	Differences	
	Electronic Word of Mouth	Word of Mouth
1	Conversations occur in cyberspace or indirectly in person.	Conversations occur directly in person
2	Requires supporting facilities that are able to connect to the internet.	Does not require supporting facilities that are able to connect to the internet.
3	Conversations can be accessed widely with a wide level of information dissemination.	Conversation is limited to certain places and spaces.
4	Many parties are involved so information can sometimes lead to bias.	The information submitted is easier to validate.
5	Messages delivered are text-based and their history can be easily traced	The messages conveyed are oral and historically difficult to trace
6	The credibility of the messenger is sometimes questioned.	The credibility of the sender of the message can be known directly.

Source: Priansa, (2017:352)

Gruen (2006) states that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is a communication medium to share information about a product or service that has been consumed between consumers who do not know each other. The application of electronic word of mouth in social media is considered much more effective because it can be accessed by the wider community. According to Goyette et al., (2010), in measuring the effect of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) using the following dimensions:

1) Intensity

Intensity in electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is the number of opinions or comments by consumers in a social media. Intensity indicators consist of:

- a. Frequency of accessing information from social media.
- b. Frequency of interaction with social media users.
- c. The number of reviews written/shared by social media users.

2) Content

Content, is the information content of social networking sites related to products and services. According to Sugiarto (2018: 72), if the content conveys information such as promotions, news, quotes, greetings and other information that is informative, then the content can use graphic design so that the content is not monotonous. Indicators of content include:

- a. Information about product variations.
- b. Information about product quality.
- c. Information about the prices offered.

3) Valence of Opinion

Valence of Opinion, is consumer opinion, both positive and negative about products/services and brands. Valence of opinion has two characteristics, namely negative and positive. Valence of opinion includes:

- a. Positive comments from users of social networking sites.
- b. Recommendations from users of social networking sites.

2.1.3 Information Adoption Model (IAM)

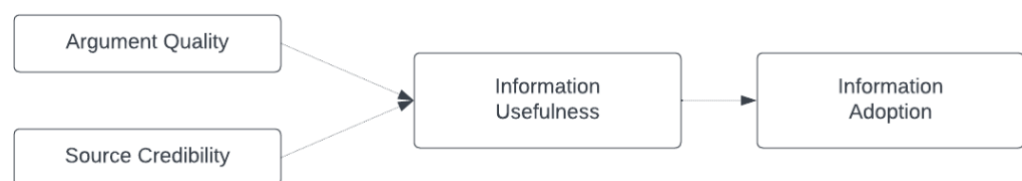


Figure 2. 1 Information Adoption Model (IAM)
Source: Sussman and Siegal (2003)

IAM, which was developed by Sussman and Siegal (2003), has been used in many researches in the field of information systems and marketing to explain how persuasive information is processed. The basic premise of IAM is based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989). IAM has four constituents:

1) Argument quality

According to Larasati & Yasa (2018) is the legitimacy of the information that has been received, as determined by a systematic evaluation process. Argument quality is based on relevant, actual, accurate, and comprehensive aspects (Larasati & Yasa. 2018).

2) Source credibility

The phrase "sources credibility" describes how skilled and credible a communicator is viewed (Larasati & Yasa. 2018). The more knowledgeable and reliable a source is, the more frequently observers believe the source to be reliable (Mowen and Minor, 2002: 402). The message giver's source credibility must be taken into consideration. The message recipient will trust a reliable source (Sangadji and Sopiah, 2013). According to Cheung and Thadani (2012) and Teng et al., (2017), the sources' credibility comprises three primary components: expertise, trustworthiness, and experience as information sources.

3) Information usefulness

The information usefulness is defined as the degree to which readers regard the received information as valuable. It is a significant predictor of information adoption and subsequent purchasing behavior (Cheung et al., 2008, Sussman and Siegal, 2003).

4) Information adoption

Information adoption is the deliberate use of information by individuals. One of the primary activities that users seek to engage in in virtual communities is information adoption behavior (Cheung & Lee. 2008). Users might, for example, scan the opinions and comments posted by others before making a purchasing decision (Pitta and Fowler, 2005).

Thus, according to this model, consumers filter and critique certain pieces of information centrally and peripherally to determine whether to follow the related recommendations, evaluating their usefulness (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the main line, consumers are closely watching the content quality of the task-related suggestions presented on social media. When forming opinions, consumers prefer strong and convincing arguments to weak and unreal arguments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). On the peripheral route, consumers rely on non-content shortcuts, which are best represented by source credibility. As noted above, social media facilitates consumer perceptions of publisher credibility, which is an important factor in the persuasion process.

2.1.4 Perceived informativeness

The perception of informativeness, according to Sullivan in (Tien et al., 2019), is contained in a full message encompassing in-depth and broad information. Messages that offer information that is relevant, timeliness, and completeness improve customer perceptions of informativeness (Ye, 2014). The informativeness of eWOM messages is very important (Ye, 2014).

2.1.5 Perceived persuasiveness

Persuasive perception, as defined by (Ye, 2014), is a common perception of the persuasive power inherent in online reviews. Customers require information messages from online reviews that include someone's perspective or opinions. According to (Gunawan, 2015), customers want convincing messaging on social networking platforms in order to obtain useful information. Meanwhile, according to Bhattacharjee and Sanford in (Ye, 2014), customers will absorb information if it involves external persuasion that adds to lucrative customer decision making.

2.1.6 Source expertise

According to Fang (2014), source expertise refers to the level of trust the reader as the recipient of information has in the source for his knowledge in producing

valid statements. The reader's perception of the capabilities of information sources to produce an assessment of a product is referred to as source expertise. The source's expertise and qualifications inspire the reader to apply the information and modify his views and intentions toward a specific product (Baber, 2016). The amount to which the information supplier has knowledge and experience with a product or service is referred to as sourcing expertise.

2.1.7 Source trustworthiness

Baber (2016) defines trust in sources as "the level of reader acceptance of information based on the characteristics of sources that communicate authentically and sincerely." According to (Baber, 2016), trust in sources is an aspect in which persons who provide information about a product or service can be trusted, honest, reliable, and fair.

2.1.8 eWOM usefulness

Ye (2014) defines perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that utilizing a certain system would improve his or her job performance. It expresses users' expectations of the possible benefits of employing information technology. Numerous studies have repeatedly demonstrated the critical role perceived utility plays in fostering IT acceptability by developing a good attitude toward utilizing the technology, raising users' intentions to use the technology, and, as a result, increasing actual usage of the technology.

2.1.9 eWOM credibility

eWOM credibility analyzes how much consumers believe testimonials or recommendations to be factual, true, and trustworthy (Cheung, 2009). A subjective aspect of information quality is credibility (Tien et.al., 2019). The persuasive strength of the message influences eWOM's credibility (Fang, 2014). The reader, who is the intended recipient of the persuasive message, will

have a positive attitude if the online review or recommendation has one (Ye, 2014).

2.1.10 eWOM adoption

Information adoption is the process through which consumers consciously make use of information (Cheung, 2008). The degree of consumer approval of utilizing eWOM to make purchasing intention has a direct impact on the adoption of eWOM information. When information is transferred from one person to another online or via social media, this is known as eWOM. eWOM was created as a result of the paradigm shift in human life, which saw communication shift from face-to-face to online.

2.1.11 Purchase Intention

A person's behaviour can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Similar to buying interest in a product, consumers tend to be influenced by various types of marketing (advertising), or information that is widely spread. According to Kotler (2012), interest is an effective response or process of feeling or liking a product but has not made a decision to buy. In addition, Assael (2004), said that purchasing interest is the tendency of consumers to buy a brand or take actions related to purchases as measured by the level of possibility of consumers to make a purchase.

Motivation is the driving force from within individuals that compels them to take action (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). The motivation will be used by consumers to find out certain products along with the increasing desire to have the product, and one's perception of the product will affect one's buying interest.

2.2 Previous Research

Several past studies served as references for the author in conducting this study, including:

Table 2. 2 Previous Research

No	Title	Author(s)	Method	Results
1	Examining the influence of customer-to-customer electronic word-of-mouth on purchase intention in social networking sites Elsevier, Asia Pacific Management Review	Duong Hanh Tien, Adriana A. Amaya Rivas, Ying-Kai Liao. (2019)	Quantitative	eWOM adoption has a strong mediating role in the influence of eWOM credibility and usefulness on consumer purchase intention toward products recommended on SNSs
2	Factors Affecting eWOM Credibility, Information Adoption, and Purchase Intention on Generation Y: A Case from Thailand Emerald, Journal of Enterprise Information Management	Daowd, Ahmad, Ruaa Hasan, Tillal Eldabi, Piyya Muhammad Rafi-ul-Shan, Dongmei Cao, and Naphat Kasemsarn (2020)	Quantitative	Source style as a visual attribute information is the most significant factor that may impact eWOM credibility in addition to source credibility, argument quality, and source homophily, respectively.
3	Impact of eWOM on Office Wear Purchase Intention: An Empirical Study of Vietnamese Female Consumers Journal of Positive Psychology, Indexed by Scopus Q1	Nghiem Bao Anh, Vu Thi Minh Hien (2022)	Quantitative	The influence of argument quality, information need, information quantity, tie strength, and source credibility on purchase intention is moderated by eWOM perceived usefulness and perceived credibility.

2.3 Hypothesis Development

2.3.1 Antecedents of perceived usefulness

According to the IAM, the perceived quality of information that consumers get influences their purchasing intention. Higher-quality information is regarded to

be more beneficial (Lin & Lu, 2000). Customers in the social media sphere easily access product-related posts from numerous sources and analyse these using multiple criteria to estimate the worth of the focal product. Such product assessments are only useful if the information they convey fits the needs and criteria of the recipients (Olshavsky, 1985). According to Lee and Kozar (2006), providing useful information is the key to success in the online travel sector. Furthermore, websites must be updated on a regular basis to match consumer expectations of product value (Madu & Madu, 2002). Furthermore, complete messages that contain appropriate depth and breadth of information will attract more users and increase organizations' chances of obtaining and maintaining clients (O'Sullivan, 2000). Consumer perception of informativeness is influenced by the relevancy, timeliness, and comprehensiveness of the information in a message (Zhang et al., 2014). Greater informativeness in e-commerce helps users to compare products, boost shopping enjoyment, and make better purchasing selections, and is thus strongly related to consumer views of usefulness (Ahn, Ryu, & Han, 2004). Furthermore, past eWOM research have found that the major characteristics of eWOM communications that positively effect consumer views of utility are relevance, timeliness, and comprehensiveness (Cheung, 2014; Cheung et al., 2008).

Persuasive arguments have been shown to greatly influence consumer responses (Angst & Agarwal, 2009; Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006). Sen and Lerman (2007) investigated the indirect impacts of persuasive messages on message perceived usefulness and related attitudes, as well as the role of consumers' causal attributions as a moderator. Furthermore, Gunawan and Huarng (2015) discovered that the persuasive power of social media messages is critical for establishing consumer attitudes toward information and its utility. It stands to reason that when a person is persuaded by a message, it is viewed as more valuable and practical. As a result, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

- H1.** The perceived informativeness of eWOM messages on TikTok has positive effects on perceived usefulness.

- H2.** The perceived persuasiveness of eWOM messages on TikTok has a positive effect on perceived usefulness.

According to Wathen and Burkell (2002), consumers use source credibility to assess the reliability of online information. When seeking reliable claims to increase their product knowledge, people typically resort to expert recommenders rather than laypeople (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). According to Martin and Lueg (2013), recipients' use of eWOM is strongly correlated with the information source's credibility. Additionally, it's been demonstrated that consumers' perceptions of reviews on websites with social networking features depend significantly on the skill of the eWOM sender (Cheng & Ho, 2015). Because of the lack of prior interactions and the unfamiliarity of the sender's identity, it is still challenging to evaluate the knowledge and reliability of an information sender in an online situation. Indeed, prior research has shown a weak or insignificant correlation between source credibility and consumer response, such as in regards to the intention to use user-generated content for travel planning (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013) or in regards to the usefulness of suggestions made on an online forum as perceived by the consumer (Cheung et al., 2008). However, social media enables eWOM retrieval from current connections (Chu & Kim, 2011), and the presence of communicator-related cues on social media, such as profile information, can also assist users in determining the validity of information and whether to use it in their decision-making (Park, Xiang, Josiam, & Kim, 2014). Overall, this study proposes that regardless of whether the relationship they have with the poster is real or virtual, if the consumer is aware that a message was posted by a competent person with a high degree of believability, he or she will develop a favorable perception of the information's utility. This study builds on Cheung et al., (2008) but shifts the focus to the domain of social media. As a result, this research suggests the following two hypotheses:

- H3.** Source expertise has a positive effect on eWOM usefulness.
- H4.** Source trustworthiness has a positive effect on eWOM usefulness.

2.3.2 Antecedents of perceived credibility

The literature supports the idea that persuasive arguments have a direct impact on creating favorable consumer perceptions and decision outcomes, particularly in online environments (Angst & Agarwal, 2009). Recipients are more inclined to view an online suggestion favorably if it is thought to contain a strong argument (Zhang et al., 2014). According to studies based on the dual process theory, argument strength is crucial for the prediction of perceived credibility in the context of eWOM communication (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009; Fang, 2014). According to Fang (2014), the most significant aspect determining credibility with customers is the argument's strength. As a result, the following theory is put forth:

H5. The perceived persuasiveness of eWOM messages on TikTok has a positive effect on eWOM credibility.

Numerous earlier research has demonstrated the positive effects of source credibility on overall message credibility (Slater & Rouner, 1996; Wathen & Burkell, 2002). It's generally agreed upon that message senders with high levels of competence are better able to convince other customers since individuals are more likely to believe the information they supply because their messages seem more trustworthy (Lis, 2013; Teng, Khong, Goh, & Chong, 2014). Additionally, Baber et al., (2016) came to the conclusion that customers have a tendency to only believe the most seasoned and informed providers when they are feeling overwhelmed.

In every communication, the sincerity of the communicator is frequently closely correlated with changes in the receivers' attitude (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Because anonymous users can post reviews online, researchers have looked into how source credibility affects eWOM communication (Park & Lee, 2009; Park, Lee, & Han, 2007). Teng et al., (2014) asserted, however, that the existence of salient indications in the social media space has made it possible to finally link the level of source credibility to the message recipients' level of confidence and acceptance of online evaluations. According to Lis (2013),

reliable reviewers exhibit high levels of objectivity and sincerity, which makes recipients less likely to question the veracity of the information provided. Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

- H6.** Source expertise has a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility.
- H7.** Source trustworthiness has a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility.

2.3.3 Antecedents of eWOM adoption

IAM, Sussman, and Siegal (2003) claim that the perceived usefulness of the information predicts the intention of adoption. Information usefulness is substantially correlated with the customer decision to accept information from an online forum, according to Cheung et al., (2008). Through a screening procedure that eliminates irrelevant information and only considers useful information, consumers assign reviews a certain level of usefulness (Purnawirawan, De Pelsmacker, & Dens, 2012). Consumers may now access a ton of C2C eWOM material thanks to social media, learning more helpful tips, and boosting their desire to apply it for their purchasing decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Thus, author propose the following hypothesis:

- H8.** Higher levels of perceived usefulness create higher levels of eWOM adoption.

The credibility of information is assessed early in the process of persuasion by information (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). Credibility in the context of eWOM is indicated in how receivers accept and learn from the derived knowledge. As a result, if recipients establish that an incoming piece of information is credible, their trust in what the informant supports grows (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Petty, Priester, and Brinol (2002) conducted an experiment in which reliable sources were depicted, and the recipients of information did not cast doubt on the linked information and accepted it, for the most part. In contrast, if a review

is judged untrustworthy, readers are inclined to disregard its suggestions due to the possibility of fraud (Filieri, Alguezaoui, & Mcleay, 2015).

H9. Higher levels of perceived credibility create higher levels of eWOM adoption.

2.3.4 The effect of eWOM adoption as a mediator

Given the importance of eWOM adoption in influencing customer intention, this study proposes that eWOM adoption acts as a moderator in the effects of eWOM usefulness and credibility on purchase intention. Adoption of eWOM benefits e-vendors by converting social media recommendations into purchases (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Furthermore, the use of eWOM allows consumers to learn and adjust their attitudes and purchase decisions (Park & Lee, 2009; Wang et al., 2012). Gunawan and Huarng (2015) have confirmed that viral messages with high perceived usefulness can result in strong purchase intentions toward virally marketed products on social media. Adoption of eWOM benefits from increased eWOM credibility as a result of learning from it, which influences their consumption decisions. Previous study in the e-commerce context has demonstrated that trust is a critical factor for online shopping. When a consumer develops trust in an e-vendor, the likelihood of him or her purchasing things from that website improves (Lu, Zhao, & Wang, 2010). Dabholkar and Sheng (2012) confirmed that greater consumer trust in the recommendation agent boosted purchase intentions. See-To and Ho (2014) have proposed that the eWOM shown on a social media fan page has a substantial impact on online purchase intention. Because credibility is a subclass of trust (Simons, 2002), this study suggests that perceived credibility may influence the consumption decisions of TikTok users who view eWOM.

H10. eWOM adoption mediates the influence of eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility on purchase intention.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The schema of the framework of thought in this research are:

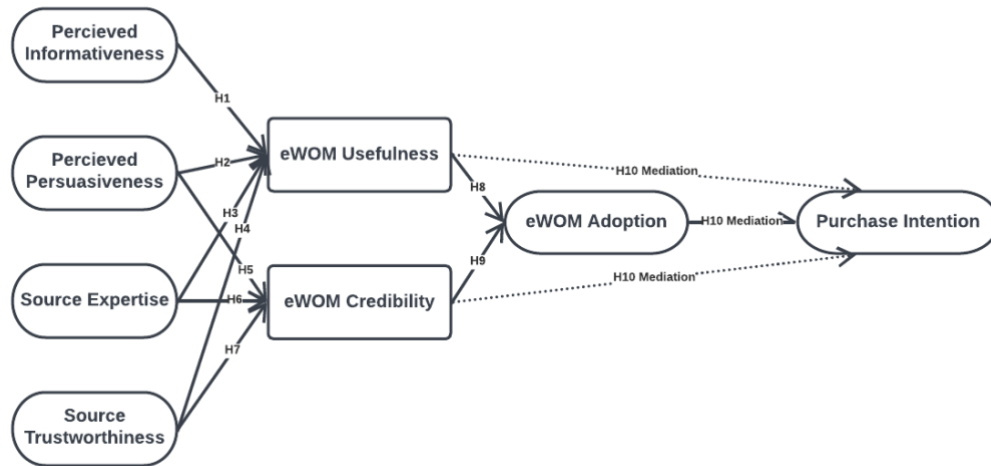


Figure 2. 2 Conceptual Framework

Source: Journal Adoption of Tien, Amaya Rivas and Liao (2019)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Approach and Type of Research

This study employs a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is one of the research methods that does not emphasize the depth of the data, but rather the ability to collect as much data from a large population as feasible. The quantitative method requires numerical data, which will be analyzed in accordance with the research's aims and objectives. Despite the size of the research population, the data can be simply analyzed using statistical formulas or computers.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population

According to (Hair et al.; 2010) the population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then drawn conclusions.

Based on the above definition, the population in this study are TikTok users in Indonesia aged 18 years old or above. According to ByteDance's advertising resources, the number of TikTok users in Indonesia aged 15 years or over is 92.07 million (Datareportal, 2022). Therefore, the population of this study is around 92,070,000 people.

3.2.2 Sample

The sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population to be studied (Hair et al; 2010). Due to limited time and manpower, it is not possible to examine all populations in this study. Thus, it is permissible in this study to sample a portion of the population that has been determined according to predetermined criteria and which must be representative of the entire population being studied.

The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling methods, which is sampling based on certain criteria, include:

- 1) TikTok users in Indonesia who are 15 years old or older.
- 2) Have an active TikTok application installed.
- 3) Open/access TikTok application at least once a week.
- 4) Ever received skincare product information from TikTok content.

Determination of the minimum sample size in this study refers to the statement by Hair et al., (2010) that the number of samples as respondents must be adjusted to the number of question indicators used in the questionnaire, assuming $n \times 5$ observed variables (indicators) up to $n \times 10$ observed variables. (indicator). In this study the number of indicators is 26 question items used to measure 8 variables. Thus, the minimum number of samples used is $26 \times 10 = 260$ samples with criteria abovementioned. In this research, we deployed 373 samples that met the criteria and met the minimum number of samples.

To represent Indonesian TikTok users, the sample is determined proportionally to the total population based on the population density in 3 regions in Indonesia which are Western Indonesia, Central Indonesia, and Eastern Indonesia. The sample in this study was obtained from distributing questionnaires through

social media networks, chat platforms, and online groups on messaging applications.

3.3 Research Variables

A variable in this case is something that can distinguish or bring variations to the value. Values can be different at different times for the same object or at the same time for different objects. In this study, there are four variables, namely dependent, independent, moderator, and control variables (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). A research variable is an attribute or trait that brings value or distinguishes it (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The variables in this study are as follows:

- 1) Independent Variable is a variable that has a positive or negative influence on the dependent variable. In this study the independent variable are *perceived informativeness*, *perceived persuasiveness*, *source expertise*, and *source trustworthiness*.
- 2) Mediating Variable or intervening variable as a variable that theoretically affects the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable into an indirect relationship that cannot be observed or measured (Sugiyono, 2016). The moderating variables of this research are *eWOM usefulness*, *eWOM credibility*, and *eWOM adoption*.
- 3) Dependent Variable is the variable that is the focus of the researchers. The aim of the researchers is to be able to understand and describe the dependent variable. In other words, the dependent variable is a variable that is influenced by several variables. In this study the dependent variable is *purchase intention*.

3.4 Operational Definition

To explain the meaning of the variables being studied, it is necessary to develop operational definitions of each variable that is the object of research. The operational definitions of the variables studied are as follows:

Table 3. 1 Operational Definition Table

Variables	Definition	Indicators	Scale
Perceived informativeness (X1) (Tien et al., 2019)	The perception of informativeness is contained in a full message encompassing in-depth and broad information.	Overall, the product related information is: - Relevant - Complete - Timely	Six-point Likert scales
Perceived persuasiveness (X2) (Tien et al., 2019)	Common perception of the persuasive power inherent in online reviews.	Overall, the positive argument is: - Convincing - Strong - Good	Six-point Likert scales
Source expertise (X3) (Tien et al., 2019)	Level of trust the reader as the recipient of information has in the source for his knowledge in producing valid statements.	The profile creator is: - Knowledgeable in evaluating skincare product - An expert in evaluating the quality of skincare products - Capable of providing product-related information and knowledge in the form of posts and comments compared to others	Six-point Likert scales
Source trustworthiness (X4) (Tien et al., 2019)	The level of reader acceptance of information based on the characteristics of sources that communicate authentically and sincerely.	The profile of creator is: - Honest - Reliable - Sincere - Trustworthy	Six-point Likert scales
Perceived eWOM usefulness (Y1) (Tien et al., 2019)	The degree to which a person believes that utilizing a certain system would improve his or her job performance.	I think the overall information is: - Valuable - Informative - Helpful	Six-point Likert scales
Perceived eWOM credibility (Y2) (Tien et al., 2019)	E-WOM credibility analyzes how much consumers believe testimonials or recommendations to be factual, true, and trustworthy	I think the overall information is: - Factual - Accurate - Credible	Six-point Likert scales
eWOM adoption (Y3) (Tien et al., 2019)	Information adoption is the process through which consumers consciously make use of information	To what extent do you agree with the information? - The post contributed to my knowledge of the product discussed - The post made it easier for me to make my purchase decision - The post enhanced my effectiveness in making a purchase decision - The post motivated me to take purchasing action	Six-point Likert scales

Variables	Definition	Indicators	Scale
Purchase intention (Z1)	Purchase intention is the degree to which customers intend to make conscious purchases of appealing products	- It is very likely that I will buy the product - I will purchase the product next time I need a product - I will definitely try the product	Six-point Likert scales

3.5 Data Collection Technique

3.5.1 Primary Data

The primary data of this research was obtained from a questionnaire distributed to respondents in form of Google Form. The questionnaire is in the form of a series or collection of questions that are systematically arranged in a list of questions and of course the questions are about the title of the problem being studied, then sent to the respondent to be filled in (Bungin, 2013:130).

The questionnaire can be closed or open questions, can be given to respondents directly or sent by post, or the internet (Sugiyono 2013: 199). For alternative answers respondents on the questionnaire used the Likert scale. Likert scale has score gradations from 1-7. The answers are given the following scores:

Table 3. 2 Likert Scale

Choice of Answers	Score
Strongly disagree	1
Disagree	2
Somewhat disagree	3
Somewhat agree	4
Agree	5
Strongly agree	6

3.5.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data in this study is literature review conducted through books, journals, internet and so on. Secondary data is used as data to support research by collecting data related to problems by reading/searching literature related to research.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

This research model uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Tool to process data using SmartPLS (Partial Least Square), with the help of software SmartPLS 3.0. PLS is an analytical technique that can perform measurement model testing as well as structural model testing. The measurement model is used to test the validity and reliability, while the structural model is used to test causality or in other words to test hypotheses in the form of predictions. Ghazali and Latan (2015) reveal that SmartPLS is an analytical method that is soft modeling because it does not require processing data with a certain scale measurement or in other words it can test data with small samples.

3.7 Analysis Stage

Ghazali and Latan (2015) reveal that there are five stages in the analysis using the SEM method that uses PLS as a tool to process the data. After going through these five stages, the data can be evaluated with the outer model and inner model. The stages that must be passed before doing the outer and inner models includes:

1) Model conceptualization

At this stage, the development and measurement of a research construct is carried out. There are several steps that can be used for this stage. Steps that can be taken include construct specifications, choosing items that are used for or can represent a construct, collecting data, testing validity, testing reliability and finally determining the value of the construct.

2) Algorithm analysis

There are several methods that can be used for this stage. SmartPLS 3.0 has several methods including weight estimate, factorial and centroid.

3) Resampling method

Bootstrapping method is the method used in this stage. This method uses the entire original sample for resampling. There are three options that can be found in the bootstrapping method including individual change, no change and construct change.

4) Create a path diagram

The path diagram can be created after the three steps above have been carried out.

5) Evaluation model

The evaluation is done by using the outer model and inner model method. The outer model is to test the validity using convergent validity and discriminant validity. Outer model is done to measure validity and reliability. While the Inner model is used to measure the relationship between variables.

3.7.1 Outer Model

Outer model analysis is used to test the feasibility of the measurement model to be used as a measurement tool (validity and reliability). In this stage, the relationship between indicators and their latent variables will be explained. The analysis used to test the validity of the variables is convergent validity and discriminant validity. Meanwhile, to test the reliability of the variables used Cronbach alpha and composite reliability.

Convergent Validity is done by comparing the value of the outer model (loading factor) with a critical value of 0.5. If the loading factor > 0.5 then the instrument item is declared valid and vice versa if the value is < 0.5 then it is

declared invalid. The next assessment of the fulfillment of convergent validity uses the AVE value shown to be greater than 0.5. Convergent Validity is done by comparing the value of the outer model (loading factor) with a critical value of 0.5. If the loading factor > 0.5 then the instrument item is declared valid and vice versa if the value is < 0.5 then it is declared invalid.

The next stage will be an assessment of the discriminant validity of this construct. The assessment will be carried out by comparing the square of root values of each construct's AVE value with one another. The results at this stage indicate that the model proposed in this study can meet the required discriminant validity criteria.

Furthermore, the study will analyze the value of cross loading between each item, cross loading is an alternative method in assessing discriminant validity other than the Square of root method. The requirement that must be met is that the loading value that forms the intended latent variable must be greater than the loading value of the item to the non-target latent variable.

If testing the validity of all indicators has been carried out in this study, then the next analysis is the reliability test on the research model. The reliability test is carried out in two ways, namely Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) or what is often called Dillon Goldstein's. This research is confirmatory so that if the composite reliability value ranges from 0.6 to 0.7 then it is still acceptable (Ghozali, 2015).

3.7.2 Inner Model

After the accepted model meets convergent validity and discriminant validity, the next step is to test the structural model (Inner Model). Assessing the inner model is to see the relationship between variables by looking at the results of the path parameter coefficients and their level of significance (Ghozali, 2015).

The first step in the inner model is to measure the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The way that can be done is to see R^2 of

the dependent variable. Ghozali (2015) explains that R^2 can explain the number of variants of the construct described by the model.

The hypothesis in this study will also be analyzed with SMARTPLS 3.0 so as to test the significance of loading factors and research coefficients using the bootstrapping technique which makes the sample double (Ghozali., 2015). The minimum criteria that must be met for the hypothesis to be accepted are t-statistic or t-count must be above 1.96 or p-value <0.05 for standard error (alpha) 5% and beta is positive.

Testing the mediating effect in the analysis uses a procedure developed by Baron and Kenny (1998) in (Ghozali and Latan 2015). Testing the mediating effect using the results of the specific indirect effect on the SmartPLS analysis.

V. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENCATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

In general, e-WOM is a potent kind of communication that has the potential to improve the user's overall experience with a product or service in a variety of different ways. This study is an attempt to evaluate the factors that affect purchasing intention of skincare products in an online eWOM environment through the use of the social media platform TikTok. Unquestionably, the eWOM antecedents for source trustworthiness, source expertise, persuasiveness, and informativeness are crucial factors in the eyes of eWOM receivers when the latter are used to evaluate the usefulness of the eWOM messages obtained via C2C interaction on TikTok. This is because the eWOM receivers are the ones who are using the information to make decisions about the usefulness of the eWOM messages. This study ought to encourage eWOM respondents to recognize such cues and communicate with the eWOM senders in order to better evaluate the information that is contained in the eWOM. In point of fact, customers can evaluate the level of expertise that is conveyed by recommenders by looking at the past actions of recommenders or by analyzing eWOM messages.

With a total of 373 valid respondents, this study was conducted on TikTok users in Indonesia. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the respondents in this study were female. Students dominated the respondent pool (79%). In addition, the age range of 15 to 25 years had the highest proportion of participants in this study (85%). On the basis of this study's findings, it can be inferred that:

- 1) Perceived informativeness of eWOM messages on TikTok have positive effects on perceived usefulness. This indicates that when viewers encounter informative content on TikTok, they will find the content useful for them. In other words, people are more likely to find a message useful if they perceive it to be informative. This is likely because informative content is more likely to provide value to the viewer, helping them to achieve their goals or make better decisions.
- 2) Perceived persuasiveness of eWOM messages on TikTok have a positive effect on perceived usefulness. It implies when audience members come across persuasive content containing information that is well-presented, has a solid argument, and sufficiently persuading, they have a tendency to view such content as useful content. This is likely because persuasive content that is well-presented and has a strong argument is more likely to convince the viewer of its value or merit, leading them to find the content useful. For example, if someone is trying to decide between two products and comes across a persuasive message about one of the products that presents a compelling argument for why it is the better choice, they are more likely to find that message useful in helping them make their decision.
- 3) Source expertise have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness. When evaluating the usefulness of information on TikTok, audiences also evaluate the information's source. This has an implication when the material is obtained from a source who is an expert or professional in their field, they will find it useful. In other words, people are more likely to trust and value information from someone who is an expert in their field because they are seen as having more knowledge and experience than someone who is not an expert. For example, if someone is trying to learn about a particular subject and comes across a message from a professional in that field, they are more likely to find that message useful because they trust the expertise of the source.
- 4) Source trustworthiness have a positive effect on eWOM usefulness. This indicates that when people come across information on TikTok, the level of trustworthiness of the source will influence their perception of how useful

that information is. This is because people are more likely to trust and value information from sources that are seen as trustworthy, so they are more likely to find that information useful. For example, if someone is trying to make a decision and comes across a message from a source that they trust, they are more likely to find that message useful in helping them make their decision.

- 5) Perceived persuasiveness of eWOM messages on TikTok have a positive effect on eWOM credibility. This argues that when the content on TikTok is persuasive, well-packaged, contains strong arguments, and is sufficiently convincing, the audience will consider the information as credible. This is likely because persuasive content that is well-presented and has a strong argument is more likely to convince the viewer of its validity or accuracy, leading them to consider it to be credible. For example, if someone is trying to decide whether a particular piece of information is true or not, and they come across a persuasive message that presents a compelling argument for why it is true, they are more likely to consider that message to be credible.
- 6) Source expertise have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility. This shows that when information is delivered from an expert or professional source, the audience will perceive the information as credible when it is brought to their attention. This is likely because experts are seen as having more knowledge and experience in their field than non-experts, so their information is likely to be more accurate and reliable. For example, if someone is trying to learn about a particular subject and comes across a message from a professional in that field, they are more likely to consider that message to be credible because they trust the expertise of the source.
- 7) Source trustworthiness have a positive effect on perceived eWOM credibility. This indicates that while evaluating the credibility of a piece of information, the audience will consider the credibility of the source. When a source feels trustworthy, they will view the information he conveys as credible. This means that when people encounter a source who they perceive to be trustworthy, they are more likely to consider the information provided by that source to be credible. This is because people are more likely to trust

and value information from sources that they consider to be trustworthy, so they are more likely to consider that information to be accurate and reliable. For example, if someone is trying to determine whether a particular piece of information is true or not, and they come across a message from a source that they trust, they are more likely to consider that message to be credible because they trust the source.

- 8) Higher levels of perceived usefulness create higher levels of eWOM adoption. This indicates that the more the perceived usefulness of information acquired by consumers, the greater the likelihood that it will be utilized. This is because people are more likely to use information that they consider to be useful, as it is more likely to provide value or benefit to them in some way. For example, if someone is trying to make a decision and comes across a message that they find to be useful in helping them make that decision, they are more likely to use that information when making their decision.
- 9) Higher levels of perceived credibility create higher levels of eWOM adoption. In other words, consumers are more likely to put into use whatever piece of information they receive if they judge it to be of highly credible value. This is because people are more likely to trust and use information that they consider to be credible, as it is more likely to be accurate and reliable. For example, if someone is trying to make a decision and comes across a message that they consider to be highly credible, they are more likely to use that information when making their decision.
- 10) eWOM adoption mediate the influence of eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility on purchase intention. This suggests that the audience's adoption of information influences the relationship between the perceived usefulness and credibility of a piece of information and purchase intention. For example, if someone is trying to decide whether to buy a particular product and they come across a message that they find to be both useful and credible in helping them make that decision, they are more likely to have a stronger intention to make a purchase.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical

On several levels, this study adds to the existing body of literature. With rising interest in eWOM among researchers and practitioners, this study looked into a new platform for eWOM dissemination, TikTok, a fresh new popular social media platform. More intriguing, this study used representative samples from 26 Indonesian provinces grouped into three geographic categories (Western Indonesia, Central Indonesia, and Eastern Indonesia), giving this study a broad viewpoint of findings and accurately portraying Indonesian respondents.

This study also adds to the existing literature by elucidating differences in consumers' cognitive and affective processes when it comes to eWOM adoption. This study specifically shows that, after such central cues as eWOM usefulness, has a major influence on the consumer's perception of usefulness. Although eWOM credibility has been demonstrated to be a predictor of eWOM adoption, eWOM usefulness is the most critical component for consumer evaluation of overall message adoption. Credibility emphasizes the significance of peripheral influence from source credibility in the context of customer perception in relation to social media, particularly TikTok. This research demonstrates that the quality of the argument has a greater influence than the credibility of the source, which is in line with the recent findings of Tien et al. (2019) and extends the findings of previous earlier studies.

This study establishes a more comprehensive connection between consumer persuasion and decision-making in the realm of social media, particularly TikTok, by stressing the mediating mechanism of information adoption to express the influence of eWOM on purchase intention. This indicates that information adoption should not be neglected when analyzing customer psychology in terms of eWOM information digestion and consumer consumption goals (Tien *et al.* 2019).

5.2.2 Practical

This research demonstrates the power of C2C eWOM information and the impact it can have on purchase decision when shared via social media. Brands in the skincare industry would do well to pay more attention to user-generated content on TikTok. Companies should be aware of this type of eWOM even though they cannot influence its content directly. This might be achieved through social care, in which industries seek out group discussions and comments about their products, reply to consumers' questions, and give help for customers using the many TikTok tools. Through social care, businesses may control the spread of negative word-of-mouth (eWOM) by quickly responding to customer complaints and resolving the underlying issues that cause them.

Even though businesses can't control what their customers post online about their products or services, they may do a number of things, such as engaging key opinion leaders (KOLs), to encourage consumers to create material that is more favorable in tone and more positively associated with the brand (key opinion leaders). Managers can use monitoring tools like Google Alert to keep track on social media and find industry experts. Businesses can also use seeding campaigns, in which they provide incentives (such discounts or freebies) to early adopting consumers in the hopes that word of mouth will spread and more people will sign up (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Importantly, however, such initiatives succeed only when customers have a high level of contentment with the product or service in question (Kumar & Reinartz, 2012).

Marketers can use the findings of this research to gain a deeper understanding of how customers use eWOM information gleaned from social media to inform their purchasing decisions. Companies should be picky about the eWOM senders they choose to work with, as consumers looking for guidance online may opt to locate more reputable sources. Those who excel in communicating are those who present themselves as experts in their field and who consistently receive positive feedback from their followers and friends. The success of such

peer communication, however, will depend on the quality of the information exchanged. Brands in the skincare industry would do well to encourage their customers to provide more detailed information about their products online, including how they work, any new features they may have, how they perform, how they look and feel, how they look when used, how effective they are, and how they affect the user. Recommenders must also keep their information on the product they are promoting up-to-date and respond to comments and messages from other customers on a regular basis.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Practical Recommendations

With regard to the conclusions and implications above, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

1. As this research shows that eWOM adoption has a positive impact on purchase intention on TikTok, it is suggested that skincare brands can consider utilizing the platform TikTok as part of their marketing strategy. With a growing number of users on the platform, TikTok offers a valuable opportunity for businesses to reach and engage their target audience. This research can inform skincare brands' decisions on how to effectively use TikTok as a marketing tool and help them to better understand their target audience. This can ultimately lead to a more successful marketing campaign and an increase in sales for skincare products.
2. In this study's findings, the perceived informativeness variable influences the perceived usefulness variable more than the perceived persuasiveness variable. Therefore, skincare brands in developing content on TikTok and similar social media should focus more on providing material that offers useful information such as educational content e.g., serum layering tutorial, how to apply the correct skincare, and so on. This type of educational content is deemed more valuable to the audience than persuasive content.

3. The source credibility variable has a greater impact on the credibility of eWOM than the source expertise variable. This means that if brands want to propagate credible eWOM, skincare brands can collaborate more with trusted and reputable artists, influencers or KOLs in delivering actual information on social media. In this instance, source expertise does not need to be considered when disseminating information that aims to increase credibility.
4. Returning to the topic of eWOM usefulness, source expertise—rather than perceived persuasiveness, perceived informativeness, or source trustworthiness—is the primary factor that affects eWOM usefulness. This clears the way for skincare companies to work with experts to produce content for social media, particularly TikTok. Collaboration with aesthetic doctors, dermatologists, or skincare professionals in delivering eWOM will boost the perceived usefulness of the information.
5. eWOM usefulness has a greater influence on eWOM acceptance than eWOM credibility. Skincare businesses could put more effort into maintaining eWOM so that it continues to be perceived useful by boosting educational and informative content, followed by compelling calls to action. This will encourage the target audience to adopt the information and use it to make purchase decisions.
6. In increasing consumer purchase intentions through eWOM on TikTok, skincare brands can allocate more resources in creating and distributing content with eWOM usefulness. Even though eWOM credibility still has an effect on consumer purchasing decisions, the effect is not as big as eWOM usefulness. In addition, brands can consider eWOM adoption in mediating both eWOM usefulness and eWOM credibility in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.
7. Skincare brands must always try to provide optimal products and services to consumers, such as friendly and responsive social media admins so that when consumers give their opinions on various social media or the internet, the shared consumer experience is a positive experience. Reviews based on consumer experience regarding a product will be heard more by consumers

who can influence purchase intentions compared to advertisements that seem to bombard consumers with good statements about companies that have not been proven true. This is evidenced by research results which show eWOM on social media TikTok affects customer purchase intentions.

5.3.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

1. Due to the small number of eWOM antecedents, the study's research approach has some limitations. Although IAM provides a solid foundation for explaining changes in consumer attitudes under the impact of eWOM, the effects of eWOM on consumer perceptions of credibility may be better described by incorporating additional dimensions of eWOM from social medias discovered in other studies.
2. The influence of negative online reviews on consumer decision-making is not explored in this study, as the implications of eWOM are emphasized and a clear and logical research framework is achieved. However, more research, particularly experimental research, can expand our knowledge by investigating the valence of eWOM messages on TikTok to determine if the process of persuasion differs between positive and negative reviews.
3. The majority of the sample obtained for this study consisted of low-income students. A more diverse sample of social media and skincare users of varying ages and occupations would aid in generalizing the findings. To represent Indonesian TikTok users, this study contains a small sample size of 373 respondents from 27 provinces in Indonesia divided into three geographical areas: western Indonesia, central Indonesia, and eastern Indonesia. Additionally, the sample is centered on western Indonesian respondents; a more particular geographic area or expanding the sample location could result in more accurate conclusions and prevent biased outcomes. Thus, a larger sample size would be required to produce more precise results related to the study model.
4. While this investigation focused on skin care products, other product types could be the focus of future studies. This would enable us to see if there are any differences in the effects of eWOM across various products and

services. Specifying the skincare brand under study will also provide more specific results.

5. This study focuses on the dissemination of eWOM through the social media platform TikTok. Additional research examining the influence of eWOM on other social media sites/apps would enable us to investigate the possibility of different effects.

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