



# The influence of E-WOM, brand image, and brand trust on purchasing decisions of skintific skincare products in Batam city

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Brand Image, and Brand Trust on purchasing decisions for Skintific skincare products in Batam City. The research employed a quantitative approach using questionnaire data collected from 150 respondents who had purchased and used Skintific products. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26, including validity, reliability, classical assumption, multiple linear regression, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing. The findings revealed that E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust each had a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Simultaneously, these variables also significantly influenced purchasing decisions, with the coefficient of determination indicating that 85.6% of purchasing decision variation could be explained by the three independent variables. The results demonstrate that positive digital reviews, strong brand perception, and consumer trust play essential roles in encouraging consumer purchasing behavior toward Skintific skincare products. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining product quality, strengthening brand reputation, and optimizing digital consumer engagement to improve purchasing decisions in the competitive skincare industry.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesia's skincare industry has experienced substantial growth, driven by increasing public awareness of self-care, healthy lifestyles, and the influence of social media. Skincare products, particularly sunscreen, have become essential among Millennials and Generation Z because of their role in protecting the skin from ultraviolet exposure that may cause premature aging, hyperpigmentation, and skin cancer (Witardjo & Saktiana, 2025). The rapid expansion of both local and international skincare brands in Indonesia has intensified market competition and encouraged consumers to actively seek product information, compare alternatives, and share reviews across digital platforms. Among the brands that have successfully established a strong consumer base is Skintific, which is recognized for its scientific and innovative product approach (Irawan et al., 2025). The brand employs advanced UV filter technology that provides broad-spectrum protection against UVA, UVB, and blue light exposure, making it suitable for

tropical climates such as Indonesia. In addition, the incorporation of active ingredients including hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, and ceramide not only protects the skin from sun exposure but also maintains hydration, prevents premature aging, and improves skin condition (Brar et al., 2025).

Skintific officially entered the Indonesian market in 2021 and is distributed by PT May Sun Yvan. The brand slogan, "We Repair Your Skin Barrier," reflects its emphasis on strengthening and restoring the skin barrier. Skintific aims to provide high-performance skincare products through intelligent formulations, pure active ingredients, and advanced technology at affordable prices (Irfana, 2025). Its primary target market consists of urban Millennials and Generation Z consumers aged 18 to 35 years who experience skin concerns such as acne and dullness and who actively search for product information before making purchasing decisions. Within this context, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) plays a crucial role as a form of consumer-to-consumer communication through digital media containing reviews, opinions, and recommendations that are widely accessible to the public. Such information may be either positive or negative and can significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Yulindasari & Fikriyah, 2022). One of Skintific's most widely used products is its sunscreen, which is considered effective in protecting the skin from ultraviolet exposure. Nevertheless, consumer reviews also indicate several weaknesses, including oily skin sensations, white cast effects, and sticky texture, demonstrating that variations in E-WOM may influence consumer purchasing behaviour (Fauzi & Nurhayati, 2025).

E-WOM has become a dominant factor shaping consumer attitudes and behavior in the digital era through online shopping reviews, social media content, YouTube reviews, and online discussion forums. In addition, Brand Image represents consumers' perceptions based on experiences, information, and expectations regarding a brand. Brand image reflects the values attached to a brand and influences consumer trust and loyalty (N. Nabila et al., 2024). Skintific is widely associated with the concept of "science meets beauty," emphasizing scientifically formulated products that contain safe and effective active ingredients (Fatya et al., 2024). This image is strengthened through modern packaging, educational campaigns, and the involvement of brand ambassadors aligned with its target market.

In an increasingly competitive market, establishing long-term relationships with consumers has become essential for business sustainability. One important factor supporting such relationships is Brand Trust, which serves as a fundamental basis for fostering customer loyalty and increasing repurchase intentions (Jeharus & Nuvriasari, 2024). However, consumer-generated content on Shopee reveals several negative evaluations regarding Skintific sunscreen products. Some consumers expressed disappointment because the products did not match the claimed benefits, particularly regarding oil control and the absence of white cast effects. Other complaints involved inconsistencies in product formulation and ingredient composition. Additional customer reviews indicated dissatisfaction due to damaged products, discoloration, incomplete orders, and unresponsive customer service. One consumer specifically reported receiving a brownish-colored product and claimed that Skintific failed to respond adequately to the complaint. These issues suggest that Brand Trust toward Skintific has begun to decline among certain consumers, particularly regarding product reliability and after-sales service. Since Brand Trust is a critical element in maintaining long-term customer relationships, declining trust may reduce repurchase intentions, whereas strong trust encourages loyalty and positive recommendations to others (Haykal et al., 2026).

Previous studies have generally examined E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust separately in influencing purchasing decisions, while limited research has integrated these three variables simultaneously within the context of digital skincare marketing in Indonesia, particularly for sunscreen products targeting Millennials and Generation Z consumers in Batam City. In addition, inconsistencies between positive online popularity and emerging negative consumer reviews regarding Skintific products indicate a research gap concerning how digital consumer perceptions collectively shape purchasing decisions.

Data from Good News from Indonesia (2025) regarding the best-selling local sunscreen products during the January to September 2025 period indicate that Wardah, Azarine, and Facetology dominated the market with sales values exceeding 6%, while Skintific ranked fourth

with a sales value of 5.2%. Although Skintific possesses a strong brand image among Millennials and Generation Z consumers, several factors contribute to its lower market ranking compared with competitors (A. Nabila, 2025). Major brands such as Wardah, Azarine, and Facetology offer more competitive prices, wider product variations, and broader distribution networks, making their products more accessible to consumers (Irawati, 2025). Despite Skintific's superior formulation containing ingredients such as Allantoin, Trehalose, and Tremella, which provide hydration and soothing effects, the brand still faces challenges related to relatively higher price perceptions and uneven product education across regions. Skintific sunscreen products are particularly targeted at Millennials and Generation Z consumers who prioritize self-care and skin health awareness. The brand image associated with ingredients such as Allantoin, Trehalose, and Tremella further strengthens perceptions of hydration and skin-calming benefits. Brand Trust itself reflects consumers' willingness to rely on a brand despite potential risks because of expectations regarding positive outcomes promised by the brand (C. N. Putri & Fauzi, 2023).

Purchasing decisions refer to the process through which consumers decide to purchase products after considering multiple factors. Such decisions are influenced by information obtained through social media, online reviews, recommendations, product quality assessments, and evaluations of personal needs (Manurung & Sisilia, 2024). Previous studies explain that consumers are frequently encouraged to purchase products after viewing information or reviews on social media and subsequently assessing product quality, necessity, and recommendations from trusted individuals. Therefore, purchasing decisions represent the outcome of consumer evaluations regarding information, quality, personal needs, and social influences before conducting a purchase transaction. Purchasing preferred brands constitutes part of the consumer decision-making process because such products align with consumer preferences and expectations (Lestari et al., 2015). Purchase intention and final purchase decisions are therefore critical factors influencing consumer behavior. Consequently, companies are required to provide high-quality products that deliver added value, reliability, and strong memorability among consumers. This study specifically focuses on Skintific sunscreen products.

Based on the foregoing background, this study is entitled "The Influence of E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust on Purchasing Decisions of Skintific Skincare Products in Batam City." The study identifies several research problems, including negative online statements regarding Skintific sunscreen products that may reduce consumer purchase intention, incompatibility of Skintific SPF 50 sunscreen with oily and sensitive skin types because it may cause dryness and white cast effects, challenges to the brand image resulting from complaints regarding product quality and service, the influence of customer experiences and service interactions on Brand Trust, and intense competition within the skincare industry that encourages consumers to become more selective in evaluating brand trust and brand image before making purchasing decisions.

This study contributes to the development of digital engagement-based skincare marketing strategies by providing empirical evidence regarding the combined role of E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust in influencing purchasing decisions. The findings are expected to assist skincare companies in optimizing digital communication, strengthening consumer trust, and improving brand positioning through more effective online engagement strategies.

The scope of this research is limited to consumers who have purchased and used Skintific skincare products, particularly those exposed to information through digital platforms such as social media, Shopee, and online beauty forums. The study only examines E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust as independent variables and Purchasing Decision as the dependent variable. Furthermore, the research exclusively focuses on Skintific sunscreen products and consumers located in Batam City during a specific research period representing current market conditions. Accordingly, this study investigates whether E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust individually and simultaneously influence purchasing decisions regarding Skintific skincare products in Batam City.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative research approach. According to (Apuke, 2017), quantitative research is a systematic method used to collect and analyze numerical data to explain, predict, and

examine relationships among variables objectively. The approach is deductive, theory-based, and generally utilizes standardized instruments to ensure validity and reliability.

A quantitative approach was selected because this study aimed to statistically measure consumer perceptions and examine the causal relationships among E-WOM, Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchasing Decisions in the skincare industry.

The study consisted of four variables, including three independent variables and one dependent variable. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) (X1) refers to digital communication among consumers regarding information, experiences, and recommendations about a brand. This variable was measured through review intensity, review valence, and message content. Review intensity reflects the frequency of online reviews, review valence represents positive or negative consumer evaluations, and message content refers to the relevance and informativeness of online reviews regarding Skintific products. Brand Image (X2) refers to consumer perceptions of the Skintific brand formed through experiences and associations, which were assessed through company image, product image, and user image indicators. Brand Trust (X3) reflects consumer confidence in a brand's ability to consistently fulfill its promises, maintain honesty, and prioritize consumer interests, as reflected in perceptions of reliability, integrity, and product quality. The dependent variable was Purchasing Decision (Y), defined as the process through which consumers decide to purchase Skintific skincare products after considering factors such as E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust.

According to (Amin et al., 2023), population refers to the entire group of research objects or subjects possessing specific characteristics relevant to a study. The population in this research consisted of consumers in Batam who had purchased Skintific products, although the exact population size was unknown. Therefore, the study applied the Cochran sampling approach for an unlimited population and obtained a total sample of 150 respondents. Because the population size could not be identified precisely, non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique was used. Respondents were required to have purchased Skintific skincare products at least once within the previous six months, be at least 17 years old, and have obtained information regarding Skintific products through social media, online reviews, or digital promotions.

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through questionnaires containing statements related to E-WOM, Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchasing Decision variables. Secondary data were obtained from scientific journals, textbooks, previous studies, online articles, and the official Skintific website to strengthen the theoretical framework and research background.

Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. Respondents' perceptions and attitudes were measured using a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with scores from one to five (Yosefine & Budiono, 2023). Descriptive analysis was employed to explain respondent characteristics and identify response tendencies for each variable. The results were classified into categories ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree based on the calculated scale range.

Data quality testing included validity and reliability tests. Validity testing was conducted to determine whether the questionnaire items accurately represented the indicators of each research variable (Sugiyono, 2023). Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha through SPSS to evaluate the consistency and stability of the measurement instrument. A reliable instrument was defined as one capable of producing stable and consistent results under similar conditions.

Classical assumption testing included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method through SPSS, where data were considered normally distributed if the significance value exceeded 0.05. Multicollinearity testing examined the Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to determine whether strong correlations existed among independent variables. Heteroscedasticity testing was performed using the Glejser test to identify whether residual variances remained consistent across predictor values.

To examine the influence of E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust on Purchasing Decisions, this study applied multiple linear regression analysis. The analysis aimed to measure both the individual and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on the dependent

variable. In addition, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was used to evaluate the extent to which the independent variables collectively explained variations in purchasing decisions. Higher  $R^2$  values indicated stronger explanatory power of the independent variables.

Hypothesis testing consisted of partial and simultaneous tests. The t-test was conducted to determine the partial effect of each independent variable on purchasing decisions, while the F-test was used to assess the simultaneous influence of all independent variables on the dependent variable. Data processing and statistical analysis were performed using SPSS software.

This research was conducted among consumers purchasing Skintific products through the Shopee marketplace in the Lubuk Baja District, Batam City.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Research Object Profile

The object of this study was the Skintific skincare brand, one of the fastest-growing beauty brands in the Indonesian market in recent years. Skintific is recognized for promoting a science-based skincare concept that combines modern dermatological technology with high-quality active ingredients. The brand gained widespread popularity in Indonesia around 2021, particularly among younger consumers. Its rapid market growth was strongly supported by digital marketing strategies, including social media promotion, influencer collaborations, and consumer reviews across online platforms, which enhanced product visibility and consumer trust (Dwi Rahayu & Sukaris, 2024). Skintific products emphasize skin barrier repair through ingredients such as ceramide, hyaluronic acid, and niacinamide. In addition, the brand highlights product safety and effectiveness through dermatological testing, attracting consumers who are increasingly aware of the importance of safe and high-quality skincare (Evana & Ahmadi, 2024). The company has also expanded product distribution through e-commerce platforms and offline stores, strengthening its competitiveness within the Indonesian beauty industry (Permana et al., 2024). The company logo used in this study was obtained from the official Skintific website (2025).

#### Research Results

The research findings were obtained through questionnaire distribution to 150 respondents residing in Batam City. Respondent characteristics were analyzed based on gender, age, occupation, and purchase frequency to provide a comprehensive overview of demographic conditions and consumer preferences.

The gender distribution showed that female respondents dominated the sample, accounting for 60% or 90 respondents, while male respondents represented 40% or 60 respondents. This finding indicates that women demonstrate greater interest in purchasing Skintific products compared to men. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 17 and 25 years old, representing 66.7% of the sample. Respondents aged 26 to 30 years accounted for 19.3%, those aged 31 to 50 years represented 9.3%, and respondents above 50 years accounted for 4.7%. These results indicate that younger consumers are more active in following skincare trends and digital information related to beauty products.

Regarding occupation, students constituted the largest respondent group with 60.7%, followed by private employees at 25.3% and entrepreneurs at 14.0%. This condition reflects the strong influence of social media and beauty trends among students and young consumers. In terms of purchase frequency, most respondents purchased Skintific products three to four times, representing 50% of the sample, while 37.3% reported purchasing more than five times and 12.7% purchased one to two times. These findings suggest relatively high repurchase behavior among Skintific consumers.

Descriptive analysis indicated that all research variables were categorized within the "agree" range. The E-WOM variable obtained an average score of 559.67, indicating that respondents generally agreed that online reviews, recommendations, and digital discussions regarding Skintific products were easily accessible, informative, and influential in shaping purchase decisions. The Brand Image variable achieved an average score of 575.00, reflecting positive consumer perceptions regarding product reliability, company reputation, and modern lifestyle associations. Brand Trust recorded an average score of 565.00, indicating that respondents generally trusted Skintific products in terms of quality, safety, and consistency. Meanwhile, the

Purchasing Decision variable obtained an average score of 569.00, demonstrating that respondents actively searched for information, compared alternatives, and felt confident in purchasing Skintific products.

Validity testing using SPSS version 26 demonstrated that all questionnaire items were valid because each calculated correlation coefficient exceeded the required r-table value of 0.1603. The E-WOM variable showed correlation values ranging from 0.464 to 0.732, Brand Image ranged from 0.496 to 0.753, Brand Trust ranged from 0.642 to 0.752, and Purchasing Decision ranged from 0.394 to 0.628. Reliability testing further indicated that all variables were reliable because Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.60. E-WOM obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.677, Brand Image 0.732, Brand Trust 0.791, and Purchasing Decision 0.667.

Classical assumption testing confirmed that the regression model satisfied all statistical requirements. The histogram and Normal P-P Plot indicated normal data distribution, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.200, exceeding the 0.05 significance threshold. Multicollinearity testing demonstrated that all variables possessed tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity. Furthermore, the scatterplot analysis showed randomly distributed residual points above and below zero without forming a specific pattern, indicating that heteroscedasticity was not present in the regression model.

Multiple linear regression analysis revealed positive relationships between all independent variables and Purchasing Decision. The regression results showed that E-WOM had a regression coefficient of 0.430, indicating that stronger online reviews and recommendations significantly increased purchasing decisions. Brand Image produced a coefficient of 0.323, demonstrating that positive consumer perceptions regarding the Skintific brand strengthened purchase intentions. Brand Trust showed a coefficient of 0.352, indicating that higher consumer trust toward product quality and reliability increased purchasing decisions. The constant value of 5.342 further indicated that improvements in E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust positively contributed to Purchasing Decisions.

The coefficient of determination analysis demonstrated an Adjusted R Square value of 0.853, indicating that 85.3% of the variation in Purchasing Decisions could be explained by E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust, while the remaining 14.7% was influenced by other factors outside the research model.

This high Adjusted R-Square value indicates that the research model possesses strong explanatory power and demonstrates that E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust are highly relevant predictors of skincare purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis testing through the t-test confirmed that all independent variables significantly influenced Purchasing Decisions. E-WOM produced a t-value of 8.564, Brand Image generated a t-value of 8.227, and Brand Trust recorded a t-value of 7.904, all exceeding the t-table value of 1.976 with significance values below 0.05. These results confirmed that E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust individually exerted significant effects on Purchasing Decisions.

The simultaneous F-test further demonstrated that all independent variables collectively influenced Purchasing Decisions. The regression model generated an F-value of 288.596, exceeding the F-table value of 2.67, with a significance level below 0.05. Therefore, E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust simultaneously had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions regarding Skintific skincare products.

## Discussion

The t-test results demonstrated that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) significantly and positively influenced purchasing decisions, with a t-value of 8.564 and a significance level of 0.000, which was below 0.05. These findings confirmed the proposed hypothesis regarding the effect of E-WOM on purchasing decisions. Theoretically, E-WOM represents consumer-to-consumer communication through digital platforms containing experiences, reviews, and recommendations regarding products. The findings indicated that respondents strongly considered information obtained from social media, marketplaces, and online review platforms before purchasing Skintific products. This reflects current consumer behavior in which individuals actively seek product-related information rather than relying solely on company promotions. The positive influence of E-WOM

suggests that favorable online reviews increase consumer interest and confidence in purchasing decisions, whereas negative reviews may generate uncertainty and negatively affect consumer perceptions (N. A. C. Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, E-WOM functions not only as a source of information but also as an important mechanism for shaping consumer trust and initial product perceptions. Respondents in this study demonstrated a strong tendency to read and evaluate online reviews before purchasing Skintific skincare products, reinforcing the strategic role of E-WOM in consumer decision-making processes.

Brand Image also showed a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, as indicated by a t-value of 8.227 and a significance level of 0.000. These results supported the acceptance of the proposed hypothesis. Brand Image refers to consumer perceptions regarding a brand, including product quality, reputation, and the overall impression associated with the product. The findings demonstrated that a positive brand image enhanced consumer attraction toward Skintific products. Consumers generally prefer brands perceived as trustworthy and high quality. In this study, Skintific was viewed as a modern and reliable skincare brand that aligned with contemporary skincare needs. Descriptive analysis further indicated that respondents perceived Skintific as a reputable and dependable brand. The positive effect of Brand Image on purchasing decisions suggests that stronger brand perceptions increase the likelihood of product selection and purchase (Nuryani, 2025). Furthermore, Brand Image serves as a differentiating factor that enables companies to compete more effectively in the skincare market.

Brand Trust was also found to positively and significantly influence purchasing decisions, with a t-value of 7.904 and a significance level of 0.000. These findings confirmed the proposed hypothesis regarding the relationship between Brand Trust and purchasing decisions. Brand Trust reflects consumer confidence in a brand, including perceptions of reliability, safety, and the belief that the product can fulfill consumer expectations (Hidayat & Sugiarto, 2026). The results demonstrated that consumer trust in Skintific played an important role in encouraging purchasing behavior. Higher levels of trust increased consumers' willingness to purchase because they felt more confident regarding product quality, safety, and suitability for their skincare needs. Respondents in this study showed relatively strong trust toward Skintific products, particularly regarding product quality and the credibility of brand claims.

In the context of intense local skincare competition, companies must strengthen Brand Trust through consistent product quality, responsive customer service, transparent communication, and active digital engagement to maintain consumer loyalty and competitiveness.

Simultaneous testing through the F-test demonstrated that E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust collectively exerted a significant effect on purchasing decisions, as reflected by an F-value of 288.596 and a significance level below 0.05. In addition, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) reached 0.856, indicating that 85.6% of the variation in purchasing decisions could be explained by these three variables, while the remaining 14.4% was influenced by factors outside the research model. These findings suggest that E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust are closely interconnected and jointly play a substantial role in shaping purchasing decisions. E-WOM functions as a primary information source, Brand Image shapes consumer perceptions and brand impressions, while Brand Trust strengthens confidence and security in product usage. The integration of these factors creates a stronger and more convincing consumer decision-making process. Consumers do not rely on a single factor when purchasing skincare products, but instead combine multiple considerations before deciding to purchase Skintific products. Therefore, companies should simultaneously strengthen E-WOM strategies, maintain a positive Brand Image, and enhance Brand Trust to improve consumer purchasing decisions.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the research findings and discussion, this study concludes that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Brand Image, and Brand Trust positively and significantly influence purchasing decisions for Skintific skincare products. The results indicate that positive online reviews, comments, and recommendations distributed through digital platforms increase consumer willingness to purchase Skintific products. These findings imply that skincare companies should prioritize interactive social media marketing strategies through influencer collaborations, educational beauty content, user-

generated reviews, and active digital engagement to strengthen consumer attraction and purchasing decisions. In addition, a strong Brand Image characterized by positive reputation, perceived quality, and modern brand perception enhances consumer interest and confidence in purchasing decisions. Brand Trust also plays a crucial role, as consumer confidence regarding product quality, safety, and credibility significantly encourages purchasing behavior. Simultaneously, E-WOM, Brand Image, and Brand Trust collectively exert a substantial influence on purchasing decisions, indicating that digital information, positive brand perception, and consumer trust are the primary factors driving consumer purchases of Skintific skincare products. Based on these findings, Skintific is recommended to continuously improve product quality, maintain a positive brand image, and strengthen consumer engagement through responsive digital communication and customer service in order to encourage positive E-WOM. Companies should also improve after-sales service quality by responding more quickly to complaints, ensuring product consistency, and providing transparent communication to reinforce consumer trust and long-term loyalty. Future researchers are encouraged to include additional variables such as price, product quality, promotion, or customer loyalty to broaden and deepen the research scope. Future studies are also recommended to examine variables such as influencer credibility, customer satisfaction, perceived value, social media engagement, and repurchase intention across broader demographic and geographic contexts. Furthermore, this study is expected to provide useful insights for readers regarding the factors influencing purchasing decisions in the skincare industry and serve as a reference for more informed consumer decision-making.

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