

Electronic word of mouth and social media influencers: Their effect on purchasing decisions of 'Finally Found You' skincare package in Surabaya



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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and social media influencers on consumer purchase decisions regarding the Finally Found You Skincare Package in Surabaya. Driven by rapid social media developments that transform consumer behavior, this quantitative research investigates how consumer reviews and influencer endorsements drive purchasing choices. Data were gathered through a survey of 108 consumers chosen via purposive sampling and examined using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that both electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) and social media influencers exert a positive, statistically significant influence on purchase decisions. These findings illustrate that information transmitted through social media, whether generated by consumers or influencers, significantly enhances consumer confidence and encourages buying decisions. Consequently, Finally Found You is recommended to optimize its E-WOM strategy and collaborate with credible, relevant social media influencers to effectively strengthen consumer purchase decisions in the competitive skincare market.

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth; Social Media Influencer; Purchase Decision; Skincare Package*



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INTRODUCTION

Digital technology advancements have dramatically reshaped how consumers look up information and decide on purchases, including within the skincare market. The Digital 2026 report from We Are Social shows that Indonesia now has 230 million internet users, accounting for 80.5 % of the total population, a rise of 8.7 % over the previous year. In parallel, the number of social-media users jumped 26 % to 180 million, representing 62.9 % of the population. On average, Indonesians devote 21 hours and 50 minutes per week to social media and actively use about 7.7 platforms each month (We Are Social, 2026). This high intensity of social media use means that digital platforms are no longer merely a means of socializing; rather, they have transformed into the primary space for seeking information, entertainment, and economic activities including shopping decisions.

The change in behavior has further amplified the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which serves as the digital counterpart to traditional word-of-mouth: all positive or negative remarks expressed by existing, prospective, or former customers regarding a product or brand and disseminated widely online (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Numerous prior studies have consistently demonstrated that eWOM has a positive and significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions across various product categories, including beauty products (Siregar, 2024). This phenomenon appears to be particularly strong in Indonesia. A YouGov survey of more than 6,000 respondents in Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore, conducted from late 2024 through early 2025, found that Indonesian consumers ranked highest in trust in UGC compared to those in the two neighboring countries. The survey also noted that 54% of Indonesian respondents trust peer reviews more than content from social media influencers, and 94% of Indonesian women reported having purchased beauty products in the past 12 months (YouGov, 2025).

Nevertheless, eWOM and Social Media Influencers (SMI) actually complement each other in shaping purchasing decisions; user reviews are trusted because they are perceived as authentic, while influencers play a key role in fostering public conversation and presenting more curated information to their audiences. An influencer's perceived credibility, appeal, and expertise have been shown to spark interest and build trust among their followers regarding recommended products, which ultimately drives purchase decisions. Research on skintific skincare products in Bandung, for example, found that influencer endorsements, online customer reviews, and perceived quality collectively have a significant influence on how consumers decide what to buy (Manurung & Sisilia, 2024). Similar findings were also reported in a broader study of the Indonesian skincare industry, which showed that customer reviews and influencer reviews are essential in building trust and driving consumers' intent to purchase beauty products.

This phenomenon is emerging amid the increasingly rapid growth of the national cosmetics and skincare industry. Data from the Food and Drug Supervisory Authority (Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan, BPOM) also shows that there are 1,500 cosmetics industry players in Indonesia, about 87% of which are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), indicating an increasingly intense level of competition among local brands (Ministry of Industry, 2025). Amid this competition, the local skincare brand Finally Found You (FFY) has emerged as one of the fastest-growing players. FFY was founded in 2022 by Putu Maharaja Segara Putra and Frans Layendra, with the founder previously having gained widespread recognition for building his personal brand on the TikTok before launching the skincare business. Within three years of its founding, FFY has released more than 20 product SKUs, sold up to 1.5 million units per year, expanded to

over 500 retail locations across Indonesia, and amassed a follower base of more than 356,000 accounts on its official Instagram platform (@finallyfoundyou.id). This growth is closely tied to the brand's digital marketing strategy, which leverages consumer reviews and collaborations with social media influencers as part of its efforts to build trust and brand awareness.

Surabaya, as Indonesia's second-largest metropolitan city and a major economic and commercial hub in East Java, is a strategic market for local skincare products such as FFY. The city's large working-age population, urban lifestyle, and high adoption of online shopping mean that consumers here are heavily exposed to eWOM and social media influencer content before deciding to purchase beauty products. However, based on the author's research, academic studies that specifically examine the influence of online word-of-mouth and social-media influencers on buying decisions for Finally Found You skincare kits, particularly within this setting of consumers in Surabaya remain very limited. Most previous studies on this topic have focused on other skincare brands, such as Skintific, or on e-commerce platforms in general, leaving a research gap that needs to be filled.

This study aims to examine the influence of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and social media influencers on the purchasing decisions of consumers of the Finally Found You skincare package in Surabaya. By analyzing the relationship between these variables, the study seeks to provide a better understanding of the factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior in the digital skincare market. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on digital marketing communication and consumer behavior while offering practical insights for Finally Found You and other industry stakeholders in developing effective marketing strategies to strengthen brand awareness and encourage purchasing decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Marketing Management

Marketing management involves a set of tasks that blend the scientific and artistic aspects of planning, developing, and overseeing marketing strategies aimed at target audiences (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). Through these activities, firms aim to draw in new clients, keep current ones, and foster enduring relationships by generating, delivering, and conveying value that serves consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2021). The American Marketing Association defines marketing as the collection of activities, institutions, and processes that create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that provide value to customers, partners, and the broader society (Kotler et al., 2022).

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to consumer communication that occurs via online platforms, including social media, review platforms, online forums, blogs, and e-commerce sites, to share experiences, opinions, recommendations, or evaluations of a product, service, or organization (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). The information shared can take the form of positive or negative feedback based on real-life experiences after using a product or service. Unlike promotional messages designed by companies, E-WOM arises voluntarily from consumers and is therefore perceived as having a higher level of authenticity, credibility, and trust by prospective consumers in the purchase decision making process (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022).

Social Media Influencer

A social media influencer is a person with a sizable follower base on social platforms who can shape the opinions, attitudes, and actions of their audience through the content they share (Ki et al., 2020). This ability stems from the level of trust built with their followers, coupled with the ability to produce content that is engaging, informative, and tailored to the audience's needs (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Therefore, influencers are often utilized as a marketing communication tool to shape consumer perceptions and increase interest in a product or brand (Ki et al., 2020).

Purchase Decision

The purchase decision constitutes the concluding phase of the consumer decision-making process, defined by the act of choosing and buying a product or service after completing a series of steps, ranging from identifying needs, seeking information, to evaluating the various available alternatives (Kotler, 2022). This decision is based on considerations regarding the benefits to be gained and the product's capacity to satisfy consumer needs and wants. Beyond product attributes, buying decisions are also shaped by a range of elements such as price, quality, brand reputation, promotional offers, prior usage experiences, and advice from social contacts (Kotler, 2022). Hence, purchase decisions represent the final result of the consumer's evaluation process before completing a purchase.

Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and previous empirical studies, this study proposes the following hypotheses to examine the influence of electronic word of mouth and social media influencers on the purchase decisions of Finally Found You skincare package consumers in Surabaya:

- H1 : Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive effect on the purchase decision for the "Finally Found You" Skincare Package in Surabaya.*
- H2 : Social Media Influencers have a positive effect on the purchase decision for the "Finally Found You" Skincare Package in Surabaya*

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the effects of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and social media influencers on the purchase decisions of Finally Found You skincare package consumers in Surabaya. A non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique was applied because the population size could not be determined (Ghozali, 2020). Selecting participants who had previously purchased the Finally Found You skincare package, resided in Surabaya, and had seen influencer comments or review videos about the product on social media or other electronic media. The sample size was determined following Ghozali's (2020) guidelines, which recommend multiplying the number of indicators by a factor between 5 and 10. With 12 indicators, the calculation (12×9) produced a sample of 108 respondents.

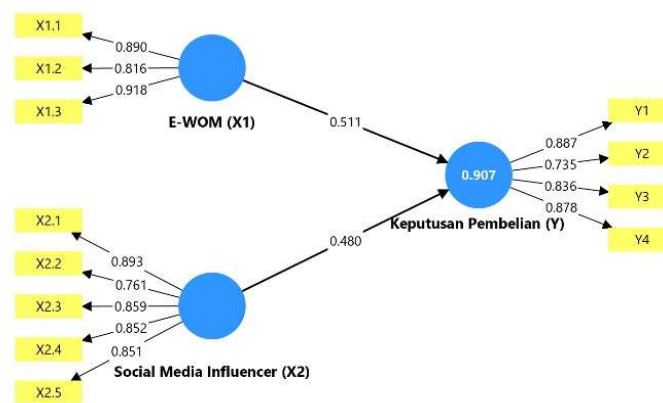
The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. Following the procedure proposed by Ghozali (2020). The data analysis consisted of two main stages. First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated by examining indicator reliability (outer loadings), convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Second, the structural model (inner model) was assessed by analyzing the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, and

hypothesis testing to examine the relationships among the research variables (Ghozali, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Structural Model

The structural model represents the relationships among latent constructs and illustrates the hypothesized causal relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables in the research model. It is used to examine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships between constructs and to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. Figure 1 presents the structural model developed in this study, illustrating the hypothesized relationships between Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Social Media Influencers (SMI), and Purchase Decision (Hair et al., 2022).



Source : Processed primary data, Output PLS 2026

Figure 1
Outer Model

Referring to the image of the outer model, it can be known that all over indicators that form E-WOM variables (X1), Social Media Influencer (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) obtained mark outer loading exceed the number 0.70, so that condition validity convergent can fulfilled. The height mark outer loading the indicates that each indicator capable reflect construct the variables in a way good, so overall indicators in research This can said to be valid and worthy used for stages analysis furthermore in the research model.

The evaluation of outer loading is conducted to assess the convergent validity of the measurement model by determining whether each indicator adequately represents its corresponding latent construct. According to (Ghozali, 2020), an indicator is considered valid when it has an outer loading value greater than 0.70, indicating that the indicator adequately measures its intended construct. The results of the outer loading analysis are presented in Table 1, which shows the loading values of each indicator on its respective latent construct.

Table 1
Outer loadings (Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X1.1 <- E-WOM (X1)	0.890	0.888	0.024	37,802	0.000
X1.2 <- E-WOM (X1)	0.816	0.813	0.038	21,469	0.000
X1.3 <- E-WOM (X1)	0.918	0.917	0.019	47,425	0.000
X2.1 <- Social Media Influencers (X2)	0.893	0.890	0.028	32,320	0.000
X2.2 <- Social Media Influencers (X2)	0.761	0.756	0.048	15,887	0.000
X2.3 <- Social Media Influencers (X2)	0.859	0.855	0.037	23,198	0.000
X2.4 <- Social Media Influencers (X2)	0.852	0.848	0.037	22,818	0.000
X2.5 <- Social Media Influencers (X2)	0.851	0.845	0.043	19,618	0.000
Y1 <- Purchase Decision (Y)	0.887	0.885	0.025	35,458	0.000
Y2 <- Purchase Decision (Y)	0.735	0.728	0.065	11,375	0.000
Y3 <- Purchase Decision (Y)	0.836	0.834	0.034	24,590	0.000
Y4 <- Purchase Decision (Y)	0.878	0.875	0.027	32,718	0.000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

According to Table 1, the outer loading test results demonstrate that every indicator within the E-WOM, Social Media Influencer, and Purchase Decision constructs attained loading factor values above 0.70. Thus, all indicators are deemed valid and adequately represent their respective research constructs. Additionally, each indicator displayed T-statistics exceeding 1.96 with p-values of 0.000, confirming their statistical significance in explaining the measured latent variables. These outcomes show that the research instrument satisfies the criteria for convergent validity.

Cross loading analysis is performed to evaluate discriminant validity by comparing the loading value of each indicator on its associated construct with its loading values on other constructs. According to (Ghozali, 2020), discriminant validity is achieved when each indicator has a higher loading value on its corresponding construct than on the other constructs, indicating that the indicators adequately distinguish between different latent variables. The results of the cross-loading analysis are presented in Table 2, which demonstrates the discriminant validity of the indicators across the respective latent constructs.

Table 2
Cross Loading

	E-WOM (X1)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Social Media Influencer (X2)
X1.1	0.890	0.852	0.808
X1.2	0.816	0.704	0.603
X1.3	0.918	0.844	0.796
X2.1	0.690	0.785	0.893
X2.2	0.681	0.757	0.761
X2.3	0.751	0.783	0.859
X2.4	0.765	0.802	0.852
X2.5	0.679	0.717	0.851
Y1	0.802	0.887	0.804
Y2	0.639	0.735	0.714
Y3	0.811	0.836	0.755
Y4	0.804	0.878	0.777

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

According to Table 2, each indicator exhibits the highest cross loading value on its respective construct compared with the other constructs. This finding indicates that every indicator is more strongly associated with its intended latent variable than with other latent variables. Therefore, the measurement model satisfies the discriminant validity criterion, confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another (Ghozali, 2020).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to evaluate convergent validity by measuring the extent to which a construct explains the variance of its indicators. According to (Ghozali, 2020), a construct demonstrates adequate convergent validity when the AVE value is greater than 0.50, indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. The results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis are presented in Table 3, which indicates the convergent validity of each construct in the measurement model.

Table 3
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Information
E-WOM (X1)	0.767	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.699	Valid
Social Media Influencer (X2)	0.713	Valid

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

According to Table 3, indicates that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the E-WOM construct (X1) is 0.767, for the Purchase Decision construct (Y) 0.699, and for the Social Media Influencer construct (X2) 0.713. Each of these values surpasses the minimum benchmark of 0.5, showing that every construct accounts for more than 69 % of the variance in its indicators. Accordingly, the three constructs demonstrate solid convergent validity and are suitable for the subsequent structural model analysis.

Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha are used to evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model by assessing the extent to which the indicators consistently measure their respective latent constructs. According to (Ghozali,

2020), a construct is considered reliable when the Composite Reliability value exceeds 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among its indicators. The results of the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha analysis are presented in Table 4, which summarizes the internal consistency reliability of each latent construct in the measurement model.

Table 4
Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Information
E-WOM (X1)	0.848	0.908	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.854	0.902	Reliable
Social Media Influencer (X2)	0.898	0.925	Reliable

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

According to Table 4, the Composite Reliability values for the E-WOM (X1), Purchase Decision (Y), and Social Media Influencer (X2) constructs are 0.908, 0.902, and 0.925, respectively. In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.848 to 0.898. All Composite Reliability values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the constructs have satisfactory internal consistency reliability. Therefore, the indicators consistently measure their respective latent constructs, confirming that the measurement model is reliable (Ghozali, 2020).

Latent Variable Correlation analysis is used to examine the strength and direction of the relationships among latent constructs in the research model. According to (Ghozali, 2020), the latent variable correlation matrix provides an overview of the degree of association between constructs and serves as an initial evaluation of the relationships before testing the structural model. The results of the latent variable correlation analysis are presented in Table 5, which illustrates the strength and direction of the relationships among the latent constructs in the research model.

Table 5
Latent Variable Correlations

	E-WOM (X1)	Purchase Decision (Y)	Social Media Influencer (X2)
E-WOM (X1)	1,000	0.917	0.847
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.917	1,000	0.913
Social Media Influencer (X2)	0.847	0.913	1,000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

According to Table 5, the correlations among the latent variables indicate strong positive relationships between all constructs. The highest correlation is observed between E-WOM (X1) and Purchase Decision (Y), with a correlation coefficient of 0.917, followed by the relationship between Social Media Influencer (X2) and Purchase Decision (Y), with a coefficient of 0.913. Meanwhile, the correlation between E-WOM (X1) and Social Media Influencer (X2) is 0.847. These findings indicate that the latent constructs are positively associated with one another, providing preliminary evidence that the variables are related within the proposed research model (Ghozali, 2020).

The coefficient of determination (R-Square) is used to evaluate the explanatory power of the structural model by measuring the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct that can be explained by the exogenous constructs. According (Ghozali, 2020), higher R-Square values indicate greater predictive accuracy of the structural model, where values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are generally interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The results of the coefficient of determination (R-Square) analysis are presented in Table 6, which shows the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous constructs.

Table 6
R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Purchase Decision	0.907	0.905

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

The structural model test results reveal an R-square of 0.907 for the Purchase Decision variable, with an adjusted R-square of 0.905. These figures indicate that the E-WOM (X1) and Social Media Influencer (X2) variables account for 90.7 % of the variation in purchase decisions, leaving 9.3 % attributable to other factors outside the model. According to established criteria, an R-square of 0.907 falls into the very strong category, demonstrating that the constructed research model possesses a high capacity to predict the impact of E-WOM and social media influencers on purchase decisions.

Path coefficient analysis is conducted to evaluate the magnitude and direction of the relationships between latent constructs in the structural model. According to (Ghozali, 2020), the significance of the structural relationships is assessed using the bootstrapping procedure, where a relationship is considered statistically significant if the T-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05 at the 5% significance level. The results of the path coefficient analysis are presented in Table 7, which summarizes the magnitude, direction, and significance of the relationships between the latent constructs in the structural model.

Table 7
Path Coefficient (Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
E-WOM (X1) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.511	0.511	0.080	6,379	0.000
Social Media Influencer (X2) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.480	0.481	0.077	6,220	0.000

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, it can be identified that :

1. The test findings reveal that Electronic Word of Mouth (X1) exerts a positive and significant impact on the Purchase Decision (Y) of consumers of the Finally Found You Skincare Package in Surabaya City, so H1 is accepted. This study indicates that the more intensive information and reviews product circulating on social media, increasingly high motivation consumer for do purchase. This is confirm that decision

purchase not only influenced by information official from the brand, but also heavily influenced by opinions and experiences other users.

Indicator Content (X1.3) recorded as the most dominant contributor, showing that consumer more prioritize depth and completeness content review compared to just frequency emergence information. On the other hand, indicators Valence of Opinion (X1.2) has contribution lowest, even though still fulfil condition validity. This study indicates that quality and completeness content review more determine decision consumer compared to many opinion or recommendation positive circulating.

The results in study participate give strengthening to findings research previous, especially in aspects Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM). Research by Solikhah & Aminah (2023) on the Marina Hand Body Lotion product also proves that that E-WOM has an impact positive to decision purchase, this study in line with recent study that electronic e-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions of the Finally Found You Skincare Package.

In addition, research conducted by Salman & Zawawi (2025) on the product Wardah lipstick in Gresik City also proves that E-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions. The similarity in the findings further confirms that E-WOM is an important variable that plays a significant role in shaping consumers purchasing decisions across both body care and skincare product categories. ~~results the more~~ Content shared on social media makes a significant contribution to consumers purchasing decision-making processes and cannot be overlooked in today's digital era.

2. Test results of the second hypothesis, where Social Media Influencer (X2) is influential positive and significant on the Purchase Decision (Y), so that H2 is accepted. The findings of this study indicate that the greater the attractiveness, credibility, expertise, popularity, and relevance of influencer content, the higher the consumers' motivation to make a purchase. This result confirms the role important influencer as intermediary delivery information product to consumers on social media.

Indicator Attractiveness (X2.1) becomes the most dominant contributor, showing that Power visual appeal and packaging content become factor main point of interest attention consumers. Meanwhile that, indicator Trustworthiness (X2.2) has contribution lowest, which is suspected caused by increasing awareness consumer to characteristic commercial endorsement content, so that consumer tend verify information through other sources such as experience personal or review fellow users before put trust full of claims influencer.

The result reinforces prior studies Anjani (2025) on The Originote product, demonstrating that influencers markedly affect buying choices, which aligns with our findings that social-media influencers exert a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions for the Finally Found You Skincare Package. Likewise, research by Harahap and Fionita (2025) on Skintific items sold through TikTok Shop shows that influencer marketing positively and significantly shapes consumer purchases.

In the same vein, the work of Salman and Zawawi (2025) concerning Wardah lipstick in Gresik City also substantiates the strong influence of influencers on buying behavior. The consistency across these studies underscores the pivotal role of social-media influencers in directing consumer decisions for both skincare and cosmetics. Consequently, influencers act as essential intermediaries that convey product information on social platforms, playing a vital and indispensable part in consumer purchase decision-making in the digital era.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study concludes that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a positive and significant effect on consumers' purchase decisions regarding the Finally Found You Skincare Package in Surabaya. These findings indicate that more favorable online reviews, recommendations, and consumer experiences shared through digital platforms encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. In addition, Social Media Influencers also have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. The findings suggest that influencers strengthen consumer confidence by providing product information, reviews, and recommendations, thereby increasing consumers' interest and intention to purchase the Finally Found You Skincare Package. Overall, both E-WOM and Social Media Influencers play important roles in influencing consumers' purchase decisions, with E-WOM showing a slightly stronger effect than Social Media Influencers.

Considering the findings from the analysis and discussion, several recommendations can be proposed. Finally Found You is advised to encourage consumer participation in sharing informative reviews that provide detailed explanations of the advantages and disadvantages of its products. Furthermore, the company should maintain and continuously improve its Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) strategy, as this variable has been proven to make a significant contribution to consumers' purchasing decisions. In addition, Finally Found You is advised to improve the quality of content produced by influencers, particularly in terms of visual presentation and message delivery. Since the Trustworthiness indicator demonstrated the lowest contribution, the company should be more selective in selecting influencers with high credibility and should communicate promotional collaborations or endorsements transparently to strengthen consumer trust. Overall, the company should continue to maintain and develop its Social Media Influencer strategy, as this variable has been proven to make a significant contribution to consumers' purchasing decisions.

For future research, it is recommended to include additional variables that may influence purchase decisions, such as Brand Trust, Brand Image, Perceived Quality, Customer Satisfaction, and Price Perception. These variables are important because consumers' purchasing decisions are not only affected by Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) and Social Media Influencers but also by their level of trust in the brand, perceptions of product quality, brand reputation, price evaluation, and overall satisfaction. In addition, future studies are encouraged to expand the research scope by involving different products, industries, or geographical areas and increasing the sample size to improve the generalizability of the findings

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