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Abstract

Indonesian people are becoming more aware of the significance of skincare, increasing the demand for beauty care products. As a result, the frequency of purchasing skincare products in Indonesia has also risen. Local Indonesian skincare is a popular choice among the public. The variety of local skincare products encourages competition among companies to market their products. In the times, marketing through social media is increasingly popular to interact directly with customers. Indonesia ranks second in the world, with the number of TikTok users reaching 109.90 million. This research uses the S-O-R Model to analyze the positive influence of Marketing Activities on social media on Brand Loyalty, with the mediating role of Customer Brand Engagement and Brand Trust. The hypothetical relationships in the proposed model are tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Of the total respondents who were TikTok users for six months or more, 87.3% were women. This research aims to understand how social media marketing activities (SMMA) impact brand loyalty (BLO) for local skincare brands in Indonesia. It also considers the mediating roles of customer-based equity (CBE) and brand trust (BTR) in this relationship. The results of hypothesis testing showed a significant positive influence on all variables tested. The role of mediation has also proved significant, albeit with varying degrees of influence. Some variables tend to have a low influence on Brand Loyalty, while the most significant influence is seen in the influence of SMMA on Brand Trust. Thus, this study has important implications for local skincare companies in developing effective marketing strategies to build strong brand loyalty and increase customer trust in the brand.

Keywords: *brand loyalty, brand trust, local skincare, social media marketing activities, stimulus-organism-response model*

Abstrak

Kesadaran masyarakat Indonesia terhadap pentingnya perawatan kulit semakin meningkat, sehingga produk perawatan kecantikan telah menjadi kebutuhan sekunder yang meningkatkan frekuensi pembelian produk *skincare* di Indonesia. *Skincare* lokal Indonesia menjadi pilihan yang populer di antara masyarakat. Tingginya variasi produk *skincare* lokal

mendorong persaingan di antara perusahaan-perusahaan untuk memasarkan produk mereka. Dalam perkembangan zaman, pemasaran melalui media sosial semakin populer untuk berinteraksi langsung dengan pelanggan. Indonesia menempati peringkat kedua di dunia dengan jumlah pengguna TikTok mencapai 109.90 juta. Penelitian ini menggunakan Model S-O-R untuk menganalisis pengaruh positif Aktivitas Pemasaran di Media Sosial terhadap *Brand Loyalty*, dengan peran mediasi dari *Customer Brand Engagement* dan *Brand Trust*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana aktivitas pemasaran media sosial (SMMA) memengaruhi loyalitas merek (BLO) terhadap merek perawatan kulit lokal di Indonesia. Penelitian juga mempertimbangkan peran mediasi dari ekuitas berbasis pelanggan (CBE) dan kepercayaan merek (BTR) dalam hubungan ini. Hubungan hipotetis dalam model yang diusulkan diuji menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM). Dari total responden yang merupakan pengguna TikTok selama 6 bulan atau lebih, sebanyak 87.3% adalah perempuan. Hasil pengujian hipotesis menunjukkan adanya pengaruh positif yang signifikan pada seluruh variabel yang diuji. Peran mediasi juga terbukti signifikan, meskipun dengan tingkat pengaruh yang bervariasi. Beberapa variabel cenderung memiliki pengaruh rendah pada *Brand Loyalty*, sedangkan pengaruh terbesar terlihat pada pengaruh SMMA terhadap *Brand Trust*. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini memiliki implikasi penting bagi perusahaan *skincare* lokal dalam mengembangkan strategi pemasaran yang efektif untuk membangun loyalitas merek yang kuat dan meningkatkan kepercayaan pelanggan terhadap brand.

Kata Kunci: *brand loyalty, brand trust, local skincare, social media marketing activities, stimulus-organism-response model,*

Introduction

Effective communication, seen as the most visible aspect of a product's marketing mix in marketing, is considered crucial for success in promoting products, building brand awareness, and engaging with customers. The means through which relationships are established, messages conveyed, and consumer behavior influenced, communication is the focus of substantial annual investments by thousands of companies. These funds are directed towards informing buyers about product availability, explaining benefits, sharing price reductions, and promoting product and corporate brands. Companies have undergone significant changes in managing communication over the past decades, with a notable shift from traditional, company-driven mass media to customer-driven interactions on social media (Chernev, 2014).

Social media has become a go-to for businesses to connect with customers and build relationships. Indonesia has approximately 167 million social media users as of January 2023, with TikTok being the second most used app, boasting 109.90 million users (Kemp, 2023). TikTok provides a video platform and a shop feature that has become a phenomenon in e-commerce. This has enabled brands to activate the TikTok Shop feature, allowing viewers to shop without leaving the app. Among the top 10 brands with the highest income on TikTok Shop Indonesia, 3 are health and beauty brands (Firmansyah, 2023). Based on the number of viewers on TikTok, five local skincare brands have emerged: Somethinc, Wardah, Avoskin, Emina, and Lacoco (Devita, 2020).

Currently, more targeted skincare trends focus on anti-aging, acne, and dullness (Yuliastuti, 2022). Both women and men now consider healthy and well-maintained facial skin a secondary need, with skincare products playing a vital role (Dwi Wulandari, 2022). Indonesian people's awareness of the importance of caring for their skin is increasing. This has led to an increase in purchasing essential skincare products. According to the survey results from Populix, 45% of respondents in Indonesia buy essential skin care products once a month. Meanwhile, 23% of respondents buy essential skin care products with a frequency of less than once a month.

Brand Trust (BTR) is a crucial factor that affects purchase intent. It refers to the level of trust that customers have in a particular brand. Customers who trust a brand are more likely to buy its products. Social media can help customers find information about a brand by using hashtags and engaging with its content (Sarin & Sharma, 2023). As companies strive to connect with their customers, focusing on achieving customer engagement is essential. This can help counteract the growing level of customer resistance and skepticism toward traditional commercial media. Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) can be explained as cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activities performed by customers and related to unique interactions between customers and brands. In addition, Brand Loyalty (BLO) can be interpreted as the extent to which a customer feels attached to a particular Brand and is considered one of the most important outcomes and is generally conceptualized as loyalty based on behavior or attitude (Brodie et al., 2011; Sarin & Sharma, 2023).

This research's conceptual frameworks and hypotheses have centered around the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory. According to the theory, it is believed that mass media can wield a significant influence when it comes to motivating and ultimately shaping the customers' responses in ways that the communicator expects. According to the S-O-R framework, specific aspects of an environment can influence a person's cognitive and emotional state, affecting their behavior (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). In social media communication, a stimulus refers to information shared through social media that affects how a customer thinks and feels. The S-O-R model categorizes the outcomes as either approach or avoidance regarding behavioral responses (Heng Wei et al., 2023). Behavior in the context of social media involves positive actions such as Brand Loyalty (Bilgin, 2018).

Previous research has investigated how social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram contribute to CBE (Hazzam, 2022; Kim & Ko, 2012). The novelty of this research is to investigate and analyze the influence of TikTok as a social media platform on the purchasing decisions of skincare products. TikTok is a widely popular platform that has gained immense traction among the younger generation, especially regarding beauty and skincare products (Firmansyah, 2023). The objective of this research paper is to delve into the relationship between the impact of Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) and Brand Loyalty (BLO) while taking into consideration the mediating roles of Customer-Based Equity (CBE) and Brand Trust (BTR). This research explores how these factors can positively influence Brand Loyalty toward local skincare brands in Indonesia.

Literature Review and research hypotheses

Young customers rely on social media platforms to communicate with friends and engage with brands. This has disrupted traditional methods of communication, information acquisition, customer relations, and value creation. Social media tools and interactive communication have transformed the marketing ecosystem, allowing brand community pages to engage with customers through information sharing. Instagram is a popular platform for interactive and informative SMM activities. By using various techniques, SMMA can influence marketing communications and customer perception of the brand. Choosing the right marketing content is crucial for companies to differentiate their products and services from other brands (Hazzam, 2022).

For example, SMM interactive activity refers to how customers share content, view, and exchange information with brand messages and other customers. This interactive message shows the brand listens and responds immediately to the customer. Customer interest is aroused, and brand engagement is promoted when a brand captivates them, impacting their cognitive, emotional, and activation processes. (Brodie et al., 2013; Hazzam, 2022).

Customer marketing experience through social media positively affects Brand Trust. To manage long-term relationships with customers. Trust and commitment are the most critical variables. Previous research mentioned that interaction and communication between users and brands can occur through the brand's social media platforms. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that social media marketing will positively impact Brand Trust (Sanny et al., 2020). Using social media for marketing is an effective way to build customer relationships. These interactions can establish trust and remove doubts that might prevent customers from engaging with brands and making transactions through social media (Puspaningrum, 2020). Thus, put forward the following hypothesis:

H₁: SMMA has a positive influence on Customer Brand Engagement

H₂: SMMA has a positive influence on Brand Trust

Customer Brand Engagement is not equivalent to actual engagement. Indeed, engaged users must have a strong psychological connection to the brand, encouraging participation in behavior beyond expectations. Simply put, customer engagement refers to the emotional bond between an individual customer and a particular brand that results in a proactive mindset such as passion, dedication, and attachment that encourages behaviors that involve expected roles and behaviors outside those roles. Customers who engage more with the brand are more likely to interact, add value, and become loyal (Brodie et al., 2011; Theadora et al., 2022). According to several previous studies, good customer engagement can influence customers, resulting in brand loyalty (Tanzaretha & Rodhiah, 2021). The following hypothesis is proposed:

H₃: Customer Brand Engagement has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty

Trust is one of the main aspects of the relationship between customers and companies. Trust is crucial for creating strong relationships between consumers and brands (Urban et al., 2000). When customers trust a particular brand, loyalty is more likely to be maintained, other brands endorsed by it are more likely to be purchased, higher prices for its products are more likely to be paid, and word about their preferences is more likely to be spread (Mabkhot et al., 2017). Research also shows that Brand Loyalty is customers' attitude toward brand selection based on the previous shopping experience, as measured by customers' repeat buying behavior towards the same brand (Atulkar, 2020). Thus, put forward the following hypothesis:

H4: Brand Trust has a positive influence on Brand Loyalty

Meditation Effect of Brand Trust and Customer Brand Engagement

Trust is considered a mediator of the relationship between marketing activities on social media and behavioral intentions (Puspaningrum, 2020). Brand trust positively correlates with customer experience and satisfaction and is vital in increasing online purchase intent. At the same time, Brand Trust is one of the most important antecedents of Brand Loyalty.

Customer Brand Engagement is an important driver of Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty. Building a strong relationship between customers and brands requires trust. In addition, past research has shown that trust plays a crucial role in explaining the relationship between customer brand engagement and brand loyalty and acts as a mediator between the two (Samarah et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H5: Brand Trust mediates SMMA positive influence on BLO

H6: Customer Brand Engagement mediates the positive influence of SMMA on BLO

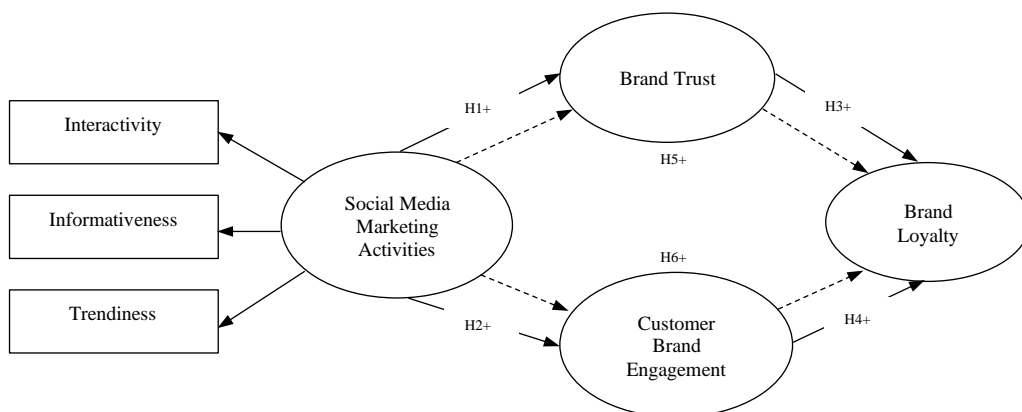


Figure 1: Research Model

Methods

A population is an entire group of people or events with certain characteristics to study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The population of this study is all TikTok social media users in Indonesia. According to a statistical report, TikTok social media users in Indonesia reached 109.90 million users in Indonesia (Kemp, 2023). Generally, the minimum number of samples is at least five times more than the number of indicators. The number of indicators in this study was 22 items. This study set a sample size of 220 samples. The sampling method used in this study is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling is sampling where all population members do not have the same opportunity to be sampled (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The type of data used in this study is primary data, where data is collected directly through the distribution of questionnaires through google forms.

The questionnaire was disseminated in June 2023 to customers in Indonesia who use TikTok social media. As a result, 220 responses to the questionnaire qualified for statistical analysis. As many as 48.6% of respondents follow the brand's social media account used, while 51.4% do not follow. The most used local brands by respondents are Somethinc (31.8%), Skintific (23.6%), Avoskin (17.7%).

Respondents in this study consisted of Women (87.3%) with the highest age range of 26-30 years (43.2%) and 20-25 years (36.4%), and most respondents had a bachelor's education background (66.4%) and had an income of >6,500,001 (48.2%).

Table 1. Variables and Factor Loading

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>	<i>CA</i>
<i>SMMA</i>			0.914
1. INT1		0.620	
2. INT2		0.780	
3. INT3		0.782	
4. INF1		0.811	
5. INF2	(Hazzam, 2022)	0.822	
6. INF3		0.838	
7. TRE1		0.768	
8. TRE2		0.769	
9. TRE3		0.754	
<i>BTR</i>			0.789
1. BTR1	(Sarin & Sharma, 2023)	0.806	
2. BTR2		0.889	
3. BTR3		0.824	
<i>CBE</i>			0.852
1. CBE1		0.797	
2. CBE2		0.856	
3. CBE3	(Theadora et al., 2022)	0.768	
4. CBE4		0.790	
5. CBE5		0.766	

<i>BLO</i>		0.853
1. BLO1		0.671
2. BLO2	(Theadora et al., 2022)	0.791
3. BLO3		0.853
4. BLO4		0.850
5. BLO5		0.816

The number of samples studied will affect the value of the loading factor, which will be used as the limit for decision-making provisions in the validity test. In this study, the number of samples used was 220 respondents, so the loading factor value that became the limit was 0.40. The basis for making decisions on the validity test is if the Loading Factor is $\geq (0.40)$, then the statement item is valid; if the Loading Factor is $< (0.40)$, then the statement item is invalid (Hair et al., 2019). The basis for making decisions on reliability tests is if Cronbach alpha $\geq (0.60)$, then the statement items are reliable. In comparison, if Cronbach alpha $< (0.60)$, then the statement items are not reliable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Descriptive statistics aims to describe a variable. The mean value in descriptive statistics is commonly used for data with an interval scale. The mean value shows the average value of the respondent's assessment of each variable statement (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Table 2 results from descriptive statistical calculations of each variable described through average values.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	No. Items	Mean	SD
SMMA	9	3.965	0.648
BTR	3	4.050	0.695
CBE	5	3.399	0.804
BLO	5	3.967	0.706

Based on Table 2, the mean value of the SMMA variable is 3.965, which means that the average respondent feels that the selected local TikTok Brand Skincare account provides interaction, information, and the latest trends. The standard deviation is 0.648, meaning respondents' responses to SMMA are pretty diverse. The mean value of the BTR variable is 4.050, which means that the average respondent feels trust in the respondent's Skincare brands on TikTok. Moreover, a standard deviation of 0.695 means that respondents' responses to BTR are quite diverse.

Table 3. Goodness of Fit

Measurement	Value	Recommended acceptance limits	Conclusion
RMSEA	0,092	$\leq 0,1$	<i>Goodness of fit</i>
CMIN/DF	2,839	Lower limit 1, upper limit 5	<i>Goodness of fit</i>

ECVI	3,296	Approximates Saturated value rather than independent	<i>Goodness of fit</i>
AIC	721,920		<i>Goodness of fit</i>

The mean value of the CBE variable is 3.399, which means that the average respondent feels an engagement with the respondent's skincare brand through TikTok social media, and the standard deviation value is 0.804, which means that respondents' responses about CBE are varied. The mean value of the BLO variable is 3.967, which means that the average respondent has a sense of loyalty to the brand and chooses to continue using the brand in the future. The standard deviation value is 0.706, meaning respondents' responses about BLO are pretty diverse.

In this research, the data analysis tool used is *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM), run with the AMOS program. The decision to employ SEM was because a significant number of variables were examined in this study and were presented in a hierarchical conceptual framework. This approach was deemed to be more efficient and effective in addressing the complex relationships among the variables. Before testing the six hypotheses proposed, a *goodness of fit* model will be tested to see whether this research model can be declared feasible. Table 3 states that four measurements state *the goodness of fit*, so the research model can be declared feasible or passed. Thus, the research model can be declared feasible to proceed to the next test, namely hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2019).

Results and Discussion

Table 4 showcases the conclusive findings of the hypothesis tests conducted in the study. These results provide a direct insight into the outcomes of the research. H1, H2, H3, and H4 are supported because the resulting p-value < 0.05 with a positive estimate value per the proposed hypothesis. The research's results based on the H1 hypothesis test showed a positive and significant influence of SMMA on CBE, following previous research (Fetis et al., 2022; Hazzam, 2022). Research has proven that brands that frequently offer information, keep up with the latest trends, and engage with their customers tend to have higher customer engagement with their brand.

Table 4. Direct Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	P-value	Estimate	Conclusion
H1: SMMA → CBE	0.000	0.640	Supported
H2: SMMA → BTR	0.000	0.696	Supported
H3: CBE → BLO	0.000	0.363	Supported
H4: BTR → BLO	0.000	0.229	Supported

Notes: SMMA = social media marketing activities; CBE = customer brand engagement; BTR = brand trust; BLO = brand loyalty

Source: Data processing using AMOS (attached)

According to the findings of the H2 test, it has been observed that the SMMA displays a significant and positive impact on BTR. This implies that when brands frequently engage with customers, provide valuable information, and stay updated with the latest trends, customers will have increased trust in the brand. Therefore, brands should make optimal use of TikTok to offer customers relevant content. The results of this study support previous research, which stated that SMMA has a positive effect on Brand Trust (Puspaningrum, 2020; Sanny et al., 2020; Sarin & Sharma, 2023).

The results of the H3 test prove that Customer Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Loyalty. This shows that customers who enjoy interacting with other customers who use the same skincare brand and feel happy with the praise shown to the brand will create a positive perception in these customers. Positive perceptions and perceived satisfaction can influence customers to buy back repeatedly from the customer's chosen skincare brand. The results of this study are also supported by previous research that found a positive influence of CBE on Brand Loyalty. Furthermore, the results obtained from the analysis of H4 imply that there exists a robust and promising relationship between the level of trust customers have in a brand and their tendency to remain loyal to that brand over time. This means that if a customer feels trust and then makes a purchase through the TikTok shop of their chosen brand, the customer will be more likely to buy back from that brand. With trust in place, customers can decide to stick with their chosen brand for some time. Previous research has supported the idea that there is a positive relationship between Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty (Puspaningrum, 2020; Samarah et al., 2022).

Table 5. CBE Mediation Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis 5	P-value	Estimate	Conclusion
Model 1 (Direct Frame) There is an influence of SMMA on BLO	0.000	0.406	
Model 2 (Full Frame) There is an influence between SMMA on CBE	0.000	0.641	Condition (a) met (Sig.)
There is influence between CBE on BLO	0.000	0.381	Condition (b) is met (Sig.)
There is an influence of SMMA on BLO	0.000	0.137	Condition (c) is met (Sig decreases.)

Source: Data processing using AMOS (attached)

The study also examined the influence of indirect or mediated variables. The Customer Brand Engagement variable can mediate if it meets several conditions (Baron & Kenny, 1986). It can be seen in Table 5 that the conditions that are met are: a) There is an influence between SMMA on Customer Brand Engagement, b) There is an influence between Customer Brand Engagement on Brand Loyalty, c) There is an influence of SMMA on Brand Loyalty. Mediation can be categorized into partial and full mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The role of Customer Brand

Engagement Mediation is still accepted but categorized as partial mediation because in condition c in the second model, the results obtained remain significant with the estimated value weakened, meaning that SMMA can affect Brand Loyalty, both through Customer Brand Engagement first and directly.

Table 6. BTR Mediation Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis 6	P-value	Estimate	Conclusion
Model 1 (Direct Frame) There is an influence of SMMA on BLO	0.000	0.406	
Model 2 (Full Frame) There is an influence between SMMA and BTR	0.000	0.693	Condition (a) met (Sig.)
There is an influence between BTR and BLO	0.000	0.386	Condition (b) is met (Sig.)
There is an influence of SMMA on BLO	0.065	0.138	Condition (c) met (No sig.)

Source: Data processing using AMOS (attached)

Table 6. shows the results of the mediation hypothesis test. H6 is supported because it meets the required qualifications. It means that BTR has qualified to be a variable mediating the influence of SMMA on BLO, according to (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

In H6, the Brand Trust variable fully mediates because the second model in condition c shows insignificant results. If a brand is engaging, informative, and up-to-date on TikTok, customers will have more confidence in it. This will increase the likelihood of customers continuing to purchase the brand's skincare products and recommending them to others.

In line with the S-O-R framework, particular elements of an environment have the potential to impact an individual's cognitive and emotional condition, thereby influencing their conduct (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). Within the realm of social media communication, a stimulus pertains to information disseminated through these platforms that shapes a customer's thoughts and emotions. The S-O-R model classifies the results into either approach or avoidance concerning behavioral reactions (Heng Wei et al., 2023). Actions within the scope of social media encompass favorable behaviors like demonstrating Brand Loyalty (Bilgin, 2018). Relationships are established, messages are conveyed, and consumer behavior is influenced through communication. In conclusion, according to the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, the findings show that social media marketing activities through TikTok in this research increase consumer brand engagement and brand trust, resulting in greater brand loyalty for local skincare brands in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it has been determined that the utilization of social media platforms can have a positive impact on both Brand Trust (BTR) and Customer Brand Engagement (CBE), which in turn can ultimately influence Brand Loyalty (BLO). Companies can significantly benefit from this knowledge by ensuring they understand BTR and CBE's role in influencing BLO to enhance their brand-customer relationships. These findings can guide skincare brand companies in developing effective strategies for optimizing customer interactions using one of their social media tools, TikTok.

Among the four hypotheses tested, the research found that SMMA had the most significant impact on BTR, with an estimated value of 0.696. Moreover, despite H4 indicating that BTR had a negligible effect on BLO, the variable was found to entirely mediate the influence between SMMA and BLO. This finding implies that companies can leverage TikTok to their advantage by keeping themselves updated with trends that resonate with their skincare concept and promoting customer engagement through interactions with the brand. The more information and interactions are shared, the more customer trust in the brand will increase.

Partner with influencers on TikTok who align with the brand's values and target audience. Influencers can effectively communicate the brand's message and create engaging content that resonates with their followers. Brands can maximize TikTok's features, such as trending songs or video concepts, to create engaging content for customers. To maintain trust, brands need consistency in serving customers who want to transact through TikTok shops. Customer trust would increase if the claims made by the brand followed by reality after customers receive their goods. It is critical to avoid making exaggerated claims about products to maintain the trust of existing customers. Implementing this strategy can potentially increase customer loyalty, which is a highly valuable asset for any brand.

In the results of the hypothesis test of BTR mediation and CBE mediation on Brand Loyalty in this study, a significant and positive influence was found but with a small, estimated value. It is recommended to conduct follow-up research to see how it develops over time or with other objects. This research relies on self-report data collection methods that require honesty and accuracy from respondents. More accurate responses can occur, posing limitations to this method. The study focused on skincare brands and TikTok, limiting the generalizability of findings to other industries or social media platforms. Future research should consider diverse industries and platforms to assess the broader applicability of the observed relationships. The study's sample may not fully represent the diversity of consumers. Future research could employ more extensive and diverse samples to enhance the external validity of the findings.

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