

## Research Articles

# The Influence of *Online Customer Review* and *Celebrity Endorsement* on Purchasing Decision of Skintific Products in Shopee: The Role of *Brand Image* as a Mediating Variable (Case Study of Padang State University Students)

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**Abstract:** Skintific is a skincare brand that has experienced significant growth through the Shopee platform with a marketing strategy based on customer reviews and celebrity endorsements. This study aims to analyze the influence of Online Customer Reviews and Celebrity Influencers on Purchasing Decisions for Skin-tific products on Shopee, and to evaluate the role of Brand Image as a mediating variable in students at Padang State University. The method used is a quantitative approach through a questionnaire survey to respondents. The results of the study indicate that Online Customer Reviews have a positive and significant effect on Brand Image and Purchasing Decisions, and are a dominant factor in influencing purchasing decisions. Celebrity Influencers have a positive and significant effect on Brand Image, but do not have a direct effect on Purchasing Decisions. Brand Image itself has a positive but insignificant effect on Purchasing Decisions, and does not act as a significant mediator between Celebrity Influencers and Online Customer Reviews on Purchasing Decisions. These findings confirm that in increasing purchasing decisions for Skintific products on Shopee, customer reviews have a much stronger role than celebrity-based promotional strategies. Marketing strategies that focus on strengthening trust through customer experience are the main key in driving purchasing decisions.

**Keywords :** Celebrity Endorsement, Online Customer Review, Skintific

## 1. Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology in recent years has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life. One of the most striking changes is the emergence of e-commerce, which has become the main option for consumers to make online purchases and sales transactions. E-commerce allows consumers to purchase goods and services without having to make transactions directly in a physical store, providing convenience and flexibility that were previously unavailable. This is revealed through the projected figures for e-commerce users which show a sharp decline from year to year.

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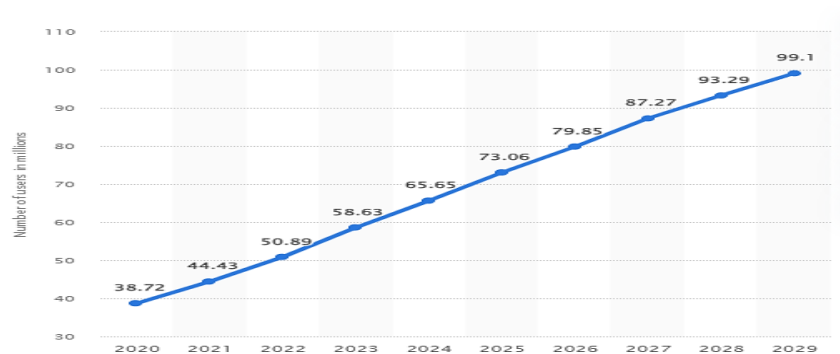


Figure 1.1 Projection of the Number of E-Commerce Users in Indonesia for 2020-2029 Source: Statista (2024)

Based on SimilarWeb digital analytics data, Shopee still holds the leading position in the Indonesian e-commerce market. This competition is getting tighter, especially when viewed from the average number of visits per month.

Table 1 E-Commerce with the Most Visitors  
Source: SimilarWeb, (2024)

No.	E-Commerce	Number of Visitors 2024	Decrease (%)
1.	Shopee	235.900.000	-4,01 %
2.	Tokopedia	100.300.000	-0,04%
3.	Lazada	45.030.000	-4,74%
4.	Blibli	24.150.000	-7,74%
5.	Bukalapak	4.420.000	-22,86%

From the data collected, Shopee recorded 235.9 million visitors, although down 4.01%. Tokopedia followed with 100.3 million visitors, down 0.04%. Lazada recorded 45.03 million visitors (-4.75%), followed by Blibli with 24.15 million visitors (-7.74%) and Bukalapak with 4.42 million visitors (-22.86%). From the data, it can be concluded that Shopee is one of the most popular marketplaces among consumers and the most frequently used online shopping platform.

Amidst the tight competition in the e-commerce industry, with Shopee standing out as one of the largest platforms. cosmetic companies such as Skintific, which started marketing its products in Indonesia in August 2021, face challenges in winning the attention of consumers. To that end, Skintific relies on a marketing strategy that combines Online Customer Reviews and celebrity endorsements. The use of celebrities such as (Nichola Saputra) as Skintific's brand ambassador, as well as the use of customer reviews, has proven effective in building consumer trust and driving purchasing decisions (Maulida & Yuana, 2024).

According to the report, Skintific managed to achieve the highest market share in 2022, with a figure of 40.9% in the skincare category, and in the first quarter of 2024, the company managed to maintain its leading position as the market leader in the beauty package category (Kompas.co.id, 2024).



Figure 1.1 Beauty Package Sales in Q1 2024  
Source: Kompas.co.id (2024)

However, even though Skintific has succeeded in stealing the attention of consumers, competition on the Shopee platform is getting tighter, with many other cosmetic brands offering similar products. This phenomenon creates challenges for companies to develop more effective marketing strategies, especially in understanding the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions.

According to Kotler & Keller (2019:240), a purchasing decision is the process of choosing between several existing options and is achieved after considering various factors, so that finally deciding to choose the option that is considered the best. What is meant by a purchasing decision is the decision to buy a product can be applied to many types of products, one of which is skincare. This is because basically, everyone needs appropriate skin care to maintain the health and appearance of the skin, which in turn supports the smooth running of daily activities (Widiastuti, 2024). Therefore, in the process, consumers must consider various options before making a decision. Moreover, in online buying and selling transactions, consumers cannot directly see the products or goods they want. Although online shopping provides many conveniences, the purchasing decision-making process still requires careful consideration. Various factors can influence consumer purchasing decisions for a product, including Online Customer Reviews, Celebrity Endorsements, and Brand Image.

Positive reviews from consumers play a significant role in increasing trust in a product, while negative reviews can decrease purchase interest, which ultimately affects purchasing decisions. The consequences of this purchasing decision are very significant. If these factors are supportive, the company can experience increased sales and customer loyalty, where satisfied consumers tend to make repeat purchases and recommend the product. Conversely, if negative reviews or a bad Brand Image are formed, there can be a decrease in sales and damage to the brand's reputation, which ultimately reduces the competitiveness of the product in the market. Therefore, companies need to develop effective marketing strategies to maintain a positive image and increase competitiveness in a competitive market.

Online Customer Reviews, as a form of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), provide valuable information that allows potential buyers to evaluate product quality based on other users' experiences, thus influencing their decisions (Andani, 2024). Clear and credible reviews can strengthen positive perceptions of a product, while unclear or incomplete reviews can actually create confusion, especially for products that have a variety of uses such as skincare.

In addition, the use of Celebrity Endorsement in product marketing can accelerate purchasing decisions. The presence of celebrities as brand ambassadors increases the credibility and appeal of the product, as seen in the promotion of Skintific through Nicholas Saputra. This has proven effective in attracting consumer attention and increasing their confidence in purchasing the product, because celebrities can influence purchasing decisions through strong social influence (Tithes Kinasih et al., 2023).

Brand image also plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. A strong brand image, built through consistent product quality and promotion, strengthens consumer trust in a brand. Skintific, with a positive brand image as a safe and trusted skincare product, is able to create loyalty among consumers, especially among students who are the main target market (Supriyadi et al., 2017). With a good brand image, consumers feel more comfortable and confident in making purchases.

Overall, Online Customer Review, Celebrity Endorsement, and Brand Image have a significant impact on purchasing decisions for Skintific products on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. The combination of positive reviews, relevant celebrity endorsements, and a strong Brand Image can accelerate the purchasing decision process, increase sales, and build customer loyalty, especially among students of Universitas Negeri Padang who are a potential market segment in e-commerce.

## 2. Literature Review

### Buying decision

According to Sumarwan (2015:357) defines a decision as the selection of an action from two or more alternatives. A consumer who wants to make a choice must have alternative choices. Setiadi (2015:342) states that decision making (consumer decision making) is an integration process that combines knowledge to evaluate two or more alternative behaviors, and chooses one of them. All aspects of influence and cognition are involved in consumer decision making, including knowledge, meaning, beliefs activated from memory, and attention and understanding involved in translating new things into the environment. However, the core of consumer decision making is the integration process that combines knowledge to evaluate two or more alternative behaviors, and chooses one of them. The result of this integration process is a choice, which is presented cognitively as a behavioral desire. Setiadi (2015:343) views consumer decision making as a problem solving and assumes that consumers have goals that they want to achieve or satisfy.

### Online Customer Reviews

Reviews are user generated content or can be called *Online Customer Reviews* are another form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) which can be understood as one of the consumer media to see direct opinions from someone and not an advertisement (Hariyanto & Trisunarno, 2020). This is very helpful for sellers to see responses, criticisms, and suggestions from consumers after receiving the product. These responses, criticisms, and suggestions from consumers will be used by sellers as evaluation materials to review performance related to the products being marketed.

### Celebrity Endorsement

*Celebrity Endorsement* is a role model that can turn people into consumers with famous celebrities, as advocates so that people can learn about the product in the hope of trying and buying it. Celebrity endorsement is defined as a contract that allows a celebrity to use their name or image in a certain way with another brand or company (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).

### Brand Image

According to Keller (2013: 3) *Brand image* is a consumer's perception of a product brand formed from information obtained by consumers through experience using the product. *Brand image* is a consumer's response to a brand based on the good and bad of the brand that consumers remember. Brand image is a belief formed in the minds of consumers about the product object that they have felt.

## 3. Method

### Types of research

The research method used in this study is a quantitative method, where the data collected is in the form of numbers or numerics. The quantitative approach is applied to measure respondents' opinions on the proposed constructs using a measurement scale. The purpose of this quantitative method is to test theories, estimate data, and predict the results.

This approach aims to provide a statistical overview of the influence of various variables on consumer purchasing interest. The nature of this study is descriptive and correlational, which aims to describe and analyze the extent to which Online Customer Reviews, celebrity

endorsements, and Brand image influence purchasing decisions for Skintific products on the Shopee e-commerce platform.

### **Place and Time of research**

This research was conducted in Padang City, West Sumatra Province, focusing on students of Padang State University. The research period was carried out from January 2025 to completion.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **Data Analysis**

This study uses the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the help of the SmartPLS version 4.0 application to analyze complex relationships between variables simultaneously. This method was chosen because of its ability to test structural and measurement models simultaneously.

The model testing process is divided into two main stages, namely the outer model and inner model tests. The outer model test aims to measure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Validity is tested through convergent and discriminant validity analysis to ensure that each indicator is able to measure the appropriate construct. Meanwhile, reliability is assessed based on internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.

Next, the inner model test is used to assess the relationship between latent variables through the R-square value and hypothesis testing. The R-square value indicates the extent to which the independent variables can explain the variability of the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing is then carried out to determine whether the relationship between variables is significant or not.

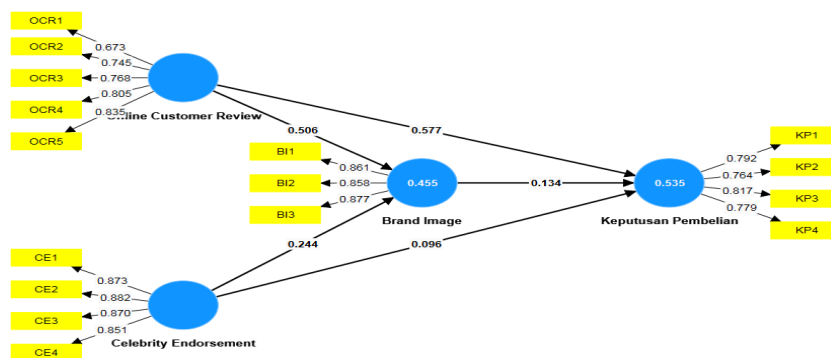
With this approach, research can ensure the accuracy of the measurement of variables in the model while gaining a deeper understanding of the contribution of each variable. The results are expected to provide meaningful theoretical insights and practical contributions in relevant fields.

### **Outer Model Analysis**

The outer model analysis in this study includes validity and reliability tests to ensure that each indicator accurately and consistently measures the latent variable. The outer model functions to verify that the construct has relevant indicators so that the resulting analysis is valid and reliable. Validity tests consist of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity evaluates the extent to which indicators of one construct are closely correlated using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A high AVE value indicates that the construct is able to explain the variability of its indicators well. Meanwhile, discriminant validity ensures that each construct is different from other constructs by comparing the correlation between constructs and AVE values. Reliability tests are conducted to assess the internal consistency of indicators through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. High values on both of these measures indicate that the construct has good consistency. By using the SmartPLS version 4.0 application, outer model analysis helps ensure the accuracy of the research instrument, thus supporting valid and reliable results for further model testing.

### Convergent Validity

Convergent validity evaluates the extent to which an indicator accurately measures a latent variable. A correlation or outer loading above 0.70 indicates a strong relationship, although in the early stages a value between 0.50 and 0.60 is still acceptable (Hair et al., 2017). According to Ghozali in a journal by Suriadarma et al. (2023), an indicator is valid if the loading factor value is more than 0.70, which means that the indicator contributes significantly to the latent construct. Convergent validity is also assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An AVE value above 0.5 indicates that the construct is able to explain most of the variance of its indicators. In this study, the standard loading factor used was 0.70. With this analysis, the study ensures that the indicators used have a strong relationship with the latent construct, supporting the accuracy of the model testing results. The following is an initial image of the research construct:



**Figure 6 results of outer loading smartPLS Version 4.1.8 initial model**

To make it easier to understand, the following table shows the outer loading value of each measured indicator.

**Table 1 Initial Model Outer Loading Values**

	Brand Image	Celebrity Endorsement	Buying decision	Online Customer Reviews
BI1	0.861			
BI2	0.858			
BI3	0.877			
CE1		0.873		
CE2		0.882		
CE3		0.870		
CE4		0.851		
KP1			0.792	
KP2			0.764	
KP3			0.817	
KP4			0.779	
OCR1				0.673
OCR2				0.745
OCR3				0.768
OCR4				0.805
OCR5				0.835

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

After observing the image above, it can be seen that there are several indicators with outer loading values of less than 0.70. Indicators that have outer loading values below 0.70 need to be removed because they are considered unable to effectively measure the variables studied. Table 1 below presents details of the indicators that have been removed from the model to ensure better validity and reliability in this analysis.

**Table 2 Eliminated Indicators**

Variable	Indicator	Indicator Code
Online Customer Reviews	Online customer reviews make it easier for me to make purchasing decisions about Skintific products on Shopee.	OCR1

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

The next step is to recalculate to see if there are still invalid indicators. Table 2 below shows the outer loading values after recalculation.

**Table 3 Outer Loading Values after Reestimation**

	Brand Image	Celebrity Endorsement	Buying decision	Online Customer Reviews
BI1	0.861			
BI2	0.857			
BI3	0.878			
CE1		0.873		
CE2		0.882		
CE3		0.870		
CE4		0.851		
KP1			0.788	
KP2			0.765	
KP3			0.818	
KP4			0.780	
OCR2				0.711
OCR3				0.783
OCR4				0.844
OCR5				0.858

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

Table 3 shows the results after elimination, where all remaining indicators have outer loading values above 0.70, ensuring the validity and reliability of the model. The following is the model after eliminating several indicators:

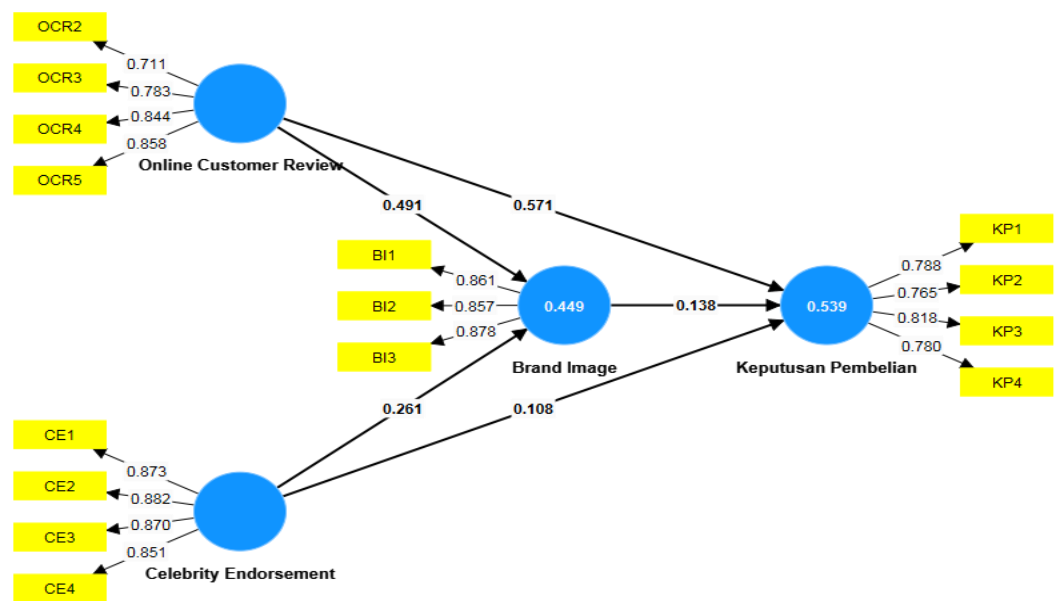


Figure 2 Outer Loading Results of SmartPLS 4.1.8 After

## Retesting

## Convergent Validity

According to Hair et al. (2017), measurement validity with discriminant validity can be assessed through two methods:

- Cross loading value: The indicator has a higher correlation with its own variable compared to other variables.
- Fornell-Larcker Criterion root AVE value: The root of AVE of a variable must be greater than the correlation between other variables to indicate good discriminant validity.

The following are the results of cross loading between indicators and each construct:

Table 4 Cross Loading Values

	Brand Image	Celebrity Endorsement	Buying decision	Online Customer Reviews
BI1	<b>0.861</b>	0.520	0.518	0.546
BI2	<b>0.857</b>	0.383	0.448	0.533
BI3	<b>0.878</b>	0.461	0.473	0.564
CE1	0.432	<b>0.873</b>	0.435	0.447
CE2	0.420	<b>0.882</b>	0.409	0.446
CE3	0.398	<b>0.870</b>	0.438	0.508
CE4	0.567	<b>0.851</b>	0.428	0.495
KP1	0.421	0.259	<b>0.788</b>	0.505
KP2	0.518	0.357	<b>0.765</b>	0.524
KP3	0.483	0.478	<b>0.818</b>	0.615
KP4	0.332	0.433	<b>0.780</b>	0.603
OCR2	0.429	0.443	0.477	<b>0.711</b>
OCR3	0.475	0.496	0.583	<b>0.783</b>



OCR4	0.574	0.383	0.621	<b>0.844</b>
OCR5	0.539	0.445	0.604	<b>0.858</b>

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

The output of cross loading indicates that the correlation value of each indicator with its construct must be higher than the correlation with other constructs. In Table 4, discriminant validity is stated to be quite good because each indicator shows a higher value on its latent variable compared to the correlation between indicators on other variables. Therefore, the results of the discriminant validity obtained can be said to be valid. In addition, discriminant validity can also be evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. Based on this method, a variable is considered discriminantly valid if the root AVE value of the variable is greater than the correlation between other variables. By considering these two approaches, the discriminant validity of the analyzed model has been met well.

### Reliability Test

Reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha value must be more than 0.6 and Composite Reliability more than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). The results of the analysis show that both values have met the standards, so that the instruments used are declared consistent and accurate in measuring the research construct.

**Table 5 Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Brand Image	0.832	0.899
Celebrity Endorsement	0.892	0.925
Buying decision	0.798	0.868
Online Customer Reviews	0.813	0.877

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

Based on Table 5, the Cronbach's Alpha value on the three variables is more than 0.6 and the Composite Reliability value is more than 0.7. This shows that all variables have good reliability.

### Structural Model Test (Inner Model)

The R-square value on the dependent variable shows how much the independent variable contributes to explaining its variability. The higher the R-square value, the better the structural model is in describing the relationship between variables. Conversely, a low R-square value indicates the need for re-evaluation of the independent variable or the addition of other variables to strengthen the model.

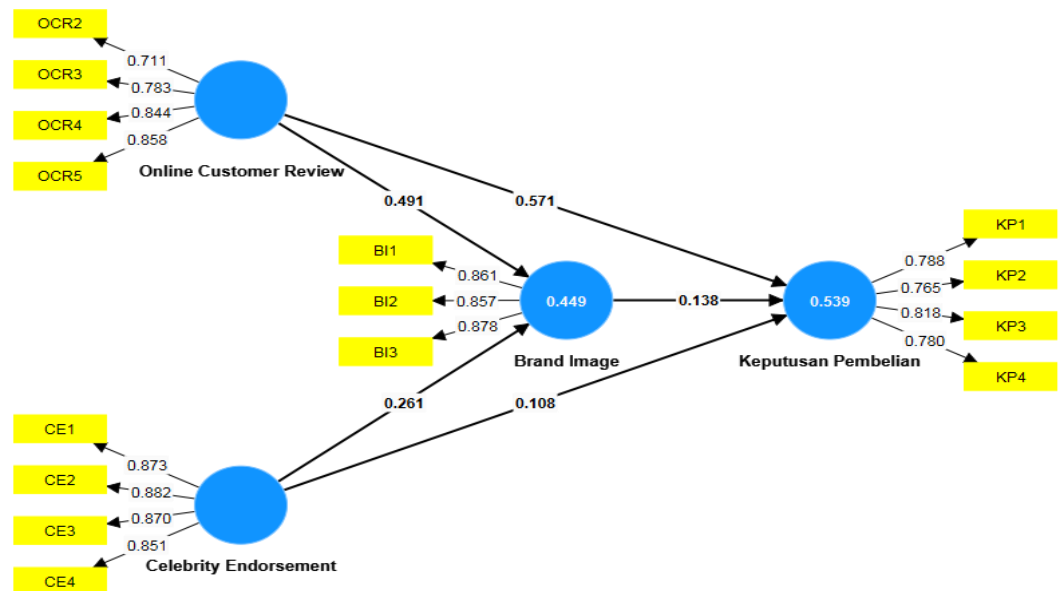
**Table 6 R-Square**

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand Image	0.449	0.442
Buying decision	0.539	0.530

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

## Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is done using the bootstrapping feature in SmartPLS software version 4.0. The relationship between variables, both positive and negative, can be seen through the original sample value in the path coefficients. The hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic is more than 1.65 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Here are the bootstrapping results:



### Bootstrapping Results

The results of the bootstrapping test on SmartPLS 4 through path coefficient analysis show the significance of the relationship between variables in the structural model. The path coefficient reflects the direction and strength of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The relationship is considered significant if the t-statistic is more than 1.96 at a significance level of 5% (p-value <0.05).

**Table 7 Results of Path Coefficient *Bootstrapping Direct Effect***

	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.138	1,534	0.063
Celebrity Endorsement -> Brand Image	0.261	3,076	0.001
Celebrity Endorsement -> Purchase Decision	0.108	1.186	0.118
Online Customer Review -> Brand Image	0.491	6,046	0.000
Online Customer Review -> Purchase Decision	0.571	6,921	0.000

Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

## Mediation Testing

The relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables through the mediating variables in this study is presented in the following table.

**Table 8 Output Indirect Effects**

	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Celebrity Endorsement -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.036	1,350	0.089

Online Customer Review -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.068	1,439	0.075
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Source: SmartPLS data processing version 4 (2025)

## Discussion of Results

In this sub-chapter, we will discuss in depth the research results that have been obtained regarding the influence of online customer reviews. And celebrity endorsement to decision to purchase Skintific products on Shopee, with the role brand image as a mediating variable. This discussion aims to interpret the data that has been analyzed and relate it to previous theories and research. Thus, this analysis is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

### The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions for Skintific Products on Shopee

Brand image (BI) has a positive influence on purchasing decisions (KP) with a path coefficient of 0.138. And T-statistic 1.534. However, the value p-value of 0.063 shows that this relationship is not significant at the 5% level of significance. These results indicate that although a good brand image can increase the appeal of a product, it is not always the main factor in purchasing decisions. In addition, purchasing decisions are also influenced by several other factors such as price, product quality, consumer reviews, and personal preferences.

The results of this study indicate that the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions is not significant ( $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ ), although the direction of the influence is positive. This finding is in line with Halim's research (2019), which states that brand image does not always have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, depending on the industry context and consumer preferences. Utami and Prasetyo's research (2020) also states that in some cases, consumers tend to consider other factors, such as price, quality, and previous customer experience in choosing a product. Thus, although brand image remains an important element in shaping consumer perceptions, its influence on purchasing decisions can vary depending on more complex external factors and consumer characteristics.

### The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Skintific Product Brand Image on Shopee

Celebrity endorsement (CE) has a positive influence and significant on brand image (BI) with a path coefficient of 0.261, T-statistic 3.076, and p-value 0.001. This shows that celebrities used in product promotions can help improve brand image in the eyes of consumers. The credibility, popularity, and suitability of celebrities with the advertised product are important factors in building positive perceptions of the brand.

These results are in line with research conducted by Ariani, D., & Nugroho, A. (2020) This study states that celebrity endorsement has a significant influence on brand image, especially in terms of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. This shows that celebrities who are widely known and have a good reputation can form a more positive brand image in the minds of consumers. Research according to Putri, SD, & Hidayat, A. (2021) also states that the use of celebrities who are in accordance with the target market can strengthen brand image and increase the perception of product quality. Thus, the use of celebrities in marketing strategies can be an effective tool to strengthen brand image on e-commerce platforms.

### The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Skintific Product Purchase Decisions on Shopee

Although celebrity endorsement has an effect on brand image, the direct effect on purchasing decisions is not significant. With a path coefficient of 0.108, T-statistic of 1.186, and p-value of 0.118, these results indicate that the presence of celebrities in marketing is

not always the main factor in encouraging consumers to buy a product. In addition, consumer purchasing decisions can also be influenced by various other factors such as perceptions of product quality, prices offered, personal experiences or reviews from other users, and the relevance between the product and consumer needs.

This result is in line with research (Larasati & Riva'i, 2022) that Celebrity Endorsement has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions. Increasing public awareness of its products, companies can also use Celebrity Endorsers as a tool in their promotional media to convey messages in advertisements (Azzahra et al., 2022). The use of celebrities can be effective if it reflects a key attribute of a product that can encourage consumer purchasing decisions (Maryanti, 2022).

Consumers may rely more on other factors such as other customers' experiences, product quality, and price before deciding to purchase a product. These results suggest that while celebrities can increase brand awareness, they do not always drive direct purchase conversions. Thus, while the use of celebrities can strengthen brand image and increase brand awareness, this does not necessarily lead to direct purchase decisions. Consumers often consider other factors such as product quality, price, and reviews from other users before making a final purchase decision.

### **The Influence of Online Customer Reviews on Skintific Product Brand Image on Shopee**

The results of the study show that online customer reviews (OCR) have positive and significant influence on brand image (BI), with a path coefficient of 0.491, T-statistic of 6.046, and p-value 0.000. This shows that the better the reviews given by previous customers, the stronger the brand image formed in the minds of consumers. Trust in other customers' testimonials plays an important role in improving brand perception on e-commerce platforms.

These results are in line with research by Septiani, L., & Wibowo, FW (2020) which states that online customer reviews have a significant effect on brand image. Positive reviews can increase trust and form a strong brand perception in the minds of consumers. This is in accordance with the context of Skintific on Shopee, where consumers often rely on reviews before buying a product. Research according to Amelia, R., & Nugroho, A. (2021) also states that authentic and detailed reviews of the product usage experience can increase credibility and overall brand image. Positive reviews about the quality, benefits, and effectiveness of the product will help strengthen the brand image, which in turn can influence the perceptions of potential buyers.

### **The Influence of Online Customer Reviews on Purchasing Decisions for Skintific Products on Shopee**

Online customer reviews (OCR) are also proven to have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions (KP), with a path coefficient of 0.571, T-statistics of 6.921, and a p-value of 0.000.

These results indicate that customer reviews are one of the main factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions on Shopee. Purchasing decisions are often based on previous user experiences, especially related to product quality and brand satisfaction.

These results are in line with research conducted by Gravina, E., & Herly, A. (2024), which states that Online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The better the reviews given by consumers, the more it increases consumer purchasing decisions for the product. Research according to Raudah and Saputra (2024), also states that online Customer Reviews are a form of online reviews from customers who have purchased or used Skintific skincare, which can influence and play a role in the purchasing

decision process. Information obtained from online consumer reviews can be used to identify and evaluate products needed by consumers.

Consumers tend to trust other customers' reviews more than the marketing strategies carried out by companies, including the use of celebrities as brand ambassadors. Therefore, it is important for companies to ensure that the products they offer have the quality that meets customer expectations in order to get positive reviews.

### **The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image as a Mediating Variable**

The results of the analysis show that brand image does not significantly mediate the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchasing decisions. With a path coefficient of 0.036 , T-statistic of 1.350 , and p-value 0.089 , this result shows that although celebrity endorsement can improve brand image, the improvement in brand image does not necessarily contribute directly to purchasing decisions.

This result is in line with research conducted by Putri and Suryani (2021) which states that brand image can be a significant mediating variable between celebrity endorsers and purchasing decisions, because positive perceptions of celebrities can form a strong brand image in the minds of consumers. Research conducted by Halim and Rachmawati (2020) also supports that brand image has a strong mediating role between celebrity endorsements and purchasing decisions. Brand image acts as a bridge between celebrity appeal and purchase intention, especially in product categories with emotional involvement such as cosmetics.

These findings suggest that consumers tend to be more influenced by other factors in making purchasing decisions, such as customer reviews, price, and product benefits. Thus, although celebrity endorsements can increase brand awareness and strengthen brand image, they may not necessarily drive purchase conversions if other factors do not support them.

### **The Influence of Online Customer Reviews on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image as a Mediating Variable**

The results of the analysis show that brand image also does not significantly mediate the relationship between online customer reviews and purchasing decisions. With a path coefficient of 0.068 , T-statistic 1.439 , and p-value 0.075 , these results indicate that although customer reviews can improve brand image, the direct influence of online customer reviews on purchasing decisions remains stronger than its influence through brand image.

The results of this study indicate that online customer reviews have an indirect effect on purchasing decisions through brand image as a mediating variable. This is in line with the findings of Amelia and Nugroho (2021) which state that positive and credible customer reviews can improve the brand image of a product, which then has an impact on increasing purchasing decisions. In addition, Sari and Kurniawan (2022) also emphasized that brand image mediates the influence of electronic word of mouth such as online customer reviews on purchasing decisions, especially in the beauty and skincare industry. Thus, it can be concluded that brand image plays an important role in bridging the influence of consumer reviews on purchasing decisions for Skintific products on Shopee.

In other words, potential buyers are more likely to make decisions based on other customers' experiences directly, without having to consider the brand image formed from the reviews. This shows that in e-commerce platforms like Shopee, customer reviews have a more dominant role than brand image in driving purchasing decisions.

## The Most Influential Factors on Skintific Product Purchase Decisions on Shopee

From the results of the path analysis, online customer reviews have the strongest influence on purchasing decisions compared to other variables. With a path coefficient of 0.571, T-statistics of 6.921, and p-value of 0.000, this influence is much greater than the influence of celebrity endorsement and brand image on purchasing decisions.

These results are in line with the research of Fadhlillah and Hidayati (2022) which shows that customer reviews have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. They emphasize that reviews given by previous consumers can form a positive perception of the product and increase consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions. In addition, Chi (2021) in his research also found that online reviews have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for fashion products on Shopee. Authentic and detailed reviews are considered the main reference by consumers in determining product choices that suit their needs and preferences.

This shows that in the context of e-commerce, potential buyers rely more on the experiences and recommendations of other customers than just brand image or celebrity promotions. Customer reviews that include information related to product quality, benefits, and satisfaction of other users are the main factors in making purchasing decisions.

Thus, companies need to focus on strategies to increase customer satisfaction in order to get positive reviews that can increase potential buyers' trust in the products offered.

## 5. Conclusion

### Conclusion

This study aims to examine the influence of *online customer reviews* and *celebrity endorsements* on purchasing decisions for Skintific products on Shopee, with *brand image* as a mediating variable. Using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method, several key findings were obtained.

First, *brand image* has a positive but insignificant influence on purchasing decisions. This shows that although brand image is important, other factors such as price, quality, and customer experience are more influential in determining purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, *celebrity influencers* are proven to have a positive and significant influence on *brand image*, indicating that celebrity credibility and popularity can strengthen Skintific's brand image.

However, the direct influence of *celebrity influencers* on purchasing decisions is not significant. This indicates that the presence of celebrities in promotions does not necessarily encourage consumers to buy, because consumers trust other aspects such as user reviews and product quality more.

Furthermore, *online customer reviews* have a positive and significant influence on *brand image* and also purchasing decisions. This shows that customer reviews are an important factor in shaping brand image and consumer decisions to purchase products. However, *brand image* does not act as a significant mediator in the relationship between *celebrity influencers* and purchasing decisions, or between *online customer reviews* and purchasing decisions.

Finally, it can be concluded that *online customer reviews* have the strongest influence on purchasing decisions compared to other variables. This confirms the importance of consumer trust in customer reviews in the decision-making process.

## Suggestion

### For Companies

Companies should encourage customers to provide honest and positive reviews about products, and respond to negative reviews in a solution-oriented manner. In addition, the selection of celebrities or *influencers* should be adjusted to the brand image and target market to be more effective in building trust. The main strategy also needs to be focused on improving product quality to get positive reviews organically from consumers.

### For Further Researchers

Further research may consider expanding the sample scope to make the results more representative. In addition, other method approaches such as experiments or qualitative research may be considered to gain deeper insights into consumer behavior and the influence of digital media on purchasing decisions.

### For Consumers

Consumers are advised to always consider other customers' reviews before purchasing a product, especially in ensuring the authenticity and quality of the product. Reliance on celebrity *endorsements* should be minimized, and more emphasis should be placed on the real experiences of previous users to make a wiser decision.

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