Journal of Digital Business and Marketing (JDBM)
ISSN 3110-6986, Vol 2, No 1, 2026, 21-37 https://doi.org/10.35912/JDBM.3844

The Effect of Product Quality and Brand Awareness on Consumers' Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Social Media Marketing

Galon Pernando Sigalingging[1], Hery Winoto Tj[2]
Universitas Kristen Krida Wacana, Jakarta, Indonesia[1,2]
galon.012023198@civitas.ukrida.ac.id

Article History:
Received on 5 January 2026
1st Revision on 12 January 2026
2nd Revision on 15 January 2026
Accepted on 20 January 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effects of product quality and brand awareness on skincare purchase intention, with social media marketing as a proposed mediating mechanism, among Generation Z consumers in Jakarta.

Methodology: Data were collected from 100 Generation Z consumers in Jakarta with prior skincare usage experience, using a cross-sectional survey. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4.0 was used to analyze the data, assessing direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. The measurement model showed satisfactory reliability and validity.

Results: Product quality and brand awareness significantly influence social media marketing, which, in turn, affects purchase intention. However, social media marketing did not mediate the relationship between product quality or brand awareness and purchase intention. All three constructs—product quality, brand awareness, and social media marketing—exert significant positive effects on purchase intention.

Conclusions: Product quality and brand awareness remain the dominant drivers of purchase intention for Generation Z consumers, operating independently of social media marketing.

Limitations: The study's focus on Generation Z consumers in Jakarta limits the generalizability of findings to other regions or age groups. Additionally, social media marketing did not mediate the relationship between product quality or brand awareness and purchase intention, suggesting the need for further research on other mediators.

Contribution: This study adds to the literature on consumer behavior and digital marketing by highlighting the limited role of social media marketing as a mediator in the skincare purchase context in emerging markets.

Keywords: *Brand Awareness, Generation Z, Product Quality, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing.*

How to Cite: Sigalingging, G. P., & Tj, H.W. (2026). The Effect of Product Quality and Brand Awareness on Consumers' Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Social Media Marketing. *Journal of Digital Business and Marketing*, 2(1), 21-37

1. Introduction

The global beauty industry has exhibited sustained growth over the past decade, with the skincare sector emerging as one of the most dynamic segments, including in emerging markets such as Indonesia. Increasing consumer awareness of skin health and appearance—driven by modern lifestyle changes, exposure to environmental pollution, and greater outdoor activity—has significantly reshaped skincare consumption patterns. Consumers no longer seek products that are merely functional; instead, they demand assurances of safety, effectiveness, and superior quality. In this context, product quality has

become a primary determinant shaping consumers' value perceptions, satisfaction, and evaluations of skincare product performance.

In an increasingly competitive market, brand awareness plays a strategic role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions. Brand awareness functions as an initial cognitive mechanism that enables consumers to recognize, recall, and differentiate a brand from available alternatives. High levels of awareness reduce perceived risk and uncertainty, particularly for experiential and high-involvement product categories such as skincare. Marketing literature consistently demonstrates that brands with strong awareness are more trusted and more frequently considered during purchase decision-making processes than less familiar brands (Rayo, Rayo, & Mandagi, 2024).

The rapid expansion of e-commerce and social media marketing (SMM) has further intensified the dynamic relationship among product quality, brand awareness, and purchase intention. Social media has evolved into a primary marketing communication channel that enables brands to engage in two-way interactions with consumers, communicate product value propositions, and shape brand image and personality in a more personalized, real-time manner. For younger consumers—particularly Generation Z—social media serves not only as a source of product information but also as a social space where opinions, norms, and consumption references are formed. User reviews, user-generated content, and influencer endorsements have been shown to play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of quality and brand credibility within the skincare market.

Nevertheless, despite extensive research examining the effects of product quality, brand awareness, and social media marketing on purchase intention, empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of social media marketing remains inconclusive. Some studies find that SMM acts as a mediating mechanism, strengthening the influence of product quality and brand awareness on purchase intention (Fasha, Indriyani, & Nurjanah, 2025). In contrast, other studies suggest that consumers continue to rely more on direct evaluations of product quality and brand strength than on exposure to social media marketing. This inconsistency is particularly salient in the context of skincare markets in emerging economies, where consumer literacy levels, competitive intensity, and digital marketing dynamics may differ substantially from those in developed markets.

Moreover, much of the existing literature has focused primarily on direct relationships among key constructs, with relatively limited attention to the indirect mechanisms and boundary conditions underlying the role of social media marketing. A more comprehensive understanding of whether and how SMM mediates the effects of product quality and brand awareness on purchase intention is therefore critical for advancing digital marketing theory and informing managerial practice within an increasingly digitalized and competitive beauty industry (Sihombing & Febriansyah, 2025).

Addressing these gaps, this study aims to examine the effects of product quality and brand awareness on purchase intention, with social media marketing conceptualized as a mediating variable, among Indonesian skincare consumers. This research is expected to contribute theoretically by clarifying the role and limitations of social media marketing in shaping consumer purchase intentions, while offering practical insights for skincare firms in designing more effective, integrated, and evidence-based marketing strategies in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Concept

2.1.1 Product Quality

Product quality represents a core construct in modern marketing, as it directly shapes customer satisfaction, perceived value, and brand loyalty. Chusnaini and Rasyid (2022) define product quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that determine its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs. As such, product quality is a critical determinant of consumers' purchase and repurchase decisions, particularly in competitive markets with low switching costs.

From a strategic perspective, product quality serves as a key positioning tool that influences product performance and value perception (Chusnaini & Rasyid, 2022). Higher levels of quality enhance consumers' evaluations of functional reliability, durability, and overall utility, thereby increasing satisfaction and reinforcing favorable attitudes toward the brand. These evaluations are not limited to technical specifications but extend to consumers' cumulative usage experiences, which shape their holistic assessment of product value.

Empirically, product quality reflects consumers' overall judgment of a product, encompassing the excellence of materials, product durability, safety, and its effectiveness in delivering promised benefits (Maurencia, Tj, & Wahyoedi, 2021). Products that consistently meet or exceed consumer expectations are more likely to generate repeat purchases, positive word of mouth, and long-term loyalty. Consequently, maintaining superior product quality constitutes a strategic imperative for firms seeking to strengthen consumer relationships and sustain competitive advantage in dynamic markets (Christyawan & Sulasari, 2024).

2.1.2 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness has been empirically shown to exert a positive and significant influence on consumers' purchase decisions (Hong, Tj, & Purnama, 2023). Higher levels of brand awareness enhance brand recall and recognition when consumers encounter needs within a specific product category, thereby increasing the likelihood that the brand is considered during the evaluation stage. As a salient cognitive cue, brand awareness reduces perceived risk and simplifies decision-making, increasing the likelihood that the brand will be chosen over less familiar alternatives. Consequently, developing strong brand awareness is a strategic imperative for firms seeking to effectively shape consumer preferences and purchasing behavior.

2.1.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to a digital marketing strategy that leverages social media platforms to promote products and facilitate interactive communication with consumers. Through the strategic use of visual content, videos, paid advertisements, and real-time engagement, SMM aims to enhance brand awareness and deepen consumers' understanding of brand value (Raihan, 2021). Unlike one-way promotional tools, social media enables two-way communication, allowing firms to actively engage users and shape brand-related perceptions (Walean, Rantung, & Mandagi, 2025).

Beyond information dissemination, SMM functions as a relational marketing mechanism that encourages consumer participation, experience sharing, and peer-to-peer interaction. Consumers can exchange reviews, testimonials, and usage experiences, which enhances perceived credibility and strengthens trust in the brand (Hafez, 2022). Such user-generated, authentic content positions social media as an open dialogue space that amplifies social influence and significantly shapes purchase decisions.

Compared with traditional marketing channels, SMM offers distinct advantages, including interactive engagement, personalization, rapid information dissemination, and the ability to capitalize on emerging trends. These characteristics foster electronic word of mouth and enable firms to reach broader audiences efficiently. Consequently, social media marketing has become a critical driver of market expansion and competitive advantage, particularly for digitally oriented industries and experience-based products (Hanaysha, 2022).

2.1.4 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects an individual's conscious willingness to engage in actual purchasing behavior toward a particular product, service, or brand and often serves as a reliable predictor of future consumption, including repeat purchases (Laparojkit & Suttipun, 2022). Beyond momentary interest, purchase intention captures consumers' evaluations of trust, perceived value, and satisfaction with the offerings, thereby signaling the effectiveness of firms' marketing strategies and product positioning.

Prior studies indicate that purchase intention is shaped by multiple determinants, among which product quality plays a central role. Higher perceived product quality enhances consumer confidence and positively influences purchase intention (Tsaniya & Telagawathi, 2022). Though empirical findings remain mixed, with some studies reporting insignificant effects (Amanda, Tj, Kusniawati, & Surjaatmadja, 2021). From a managerial perspective, purchase intention—particularly repurchase intention—represents a valuable behavioral indicator for forecasting revenue potential and assessing customer satisfaction (Hasan & Sohail, 2021). Sustained repurchase intentions suggest favorable consumption experiences and contribute to the development of long-term customer loyalty (Ismail, 2022).

In the digital context, social media marketing has been shown to significantly strengthen purchase intention by exposing consumers to persuasive information, social endorsement, and interactive brand communication (Chafidon, Margono, & Sunaryo, 2022). Marketing stimuli disseminated through social media serve as external cues that consumers cognitively process and subsequently translate into purchase-related decisions. Consistent with this view, purchase intention is inherently cognitive in nature and emerges as consumers acquire sufficient and credible product-related information, enabling them to evaluate product attributes and benefits with greater confidence (Darmawan & Prabawani, 2020).

2.2 Research Framework

The conceptual framework is essentially a logical arrangement that illustrates the relationship between the concepts that are the focus of a study. This framework functions as a theoretical bridge linking the research variables, especially in explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables that will be analyzed in the study (Sugiyono, 2017).

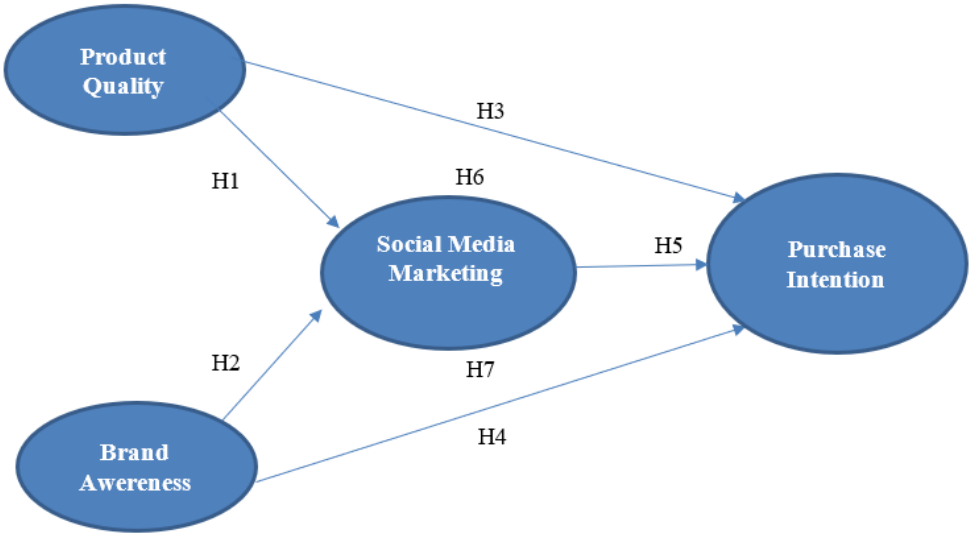


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model
Source: Processed Data by the Researcher (2025)

2.3 Hypothesis Development

2.3.1 Product Quality and Social Media Marketing

Product quality represents a central market signal that conveys a product's functional performance, safety, and reliability to consumers. In the skincare industry, where products are closely associated with health and personal appearance, perceived product quality becomes particularly salient in shaping consumer evaluations. High-quality products are more likely to generate favorable user experiences, which subsequently translate into positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), online reviews, and consumer-generated content on social media platforms. These organic interactions enhance the effectiveness of social media marketing by increasing engagement, credibility, and message diffusion.

From a signaling theory perspective, superior product quality strengthens the authenticity and persuasiveness of marketing messages disseminated through social media, thereby improving consumer responsiveness to digital marketing activities. Prior empirical studies confirm that perceived product quality positively influences consumer engagement and the effectiveness of social media marketing communications (Hu, Wang, & Chen, 2024; Ramdani, Sahara, & Anisa, 2025).
H1: Product quality has a positive effect on social media marketing.

2.3.2 Brand Awareness and Social Media Marketing
Brand awareness reflects the extent to which a brand is recognized and recalled by consumers and serves as a foundational component of brand equity. Brands with high awareness enjoy greater visibility and familiarity, which facilitates consumer attention and interaction in digital environments. In social media contexts, brand awareness increases the likelihood that marketing content will be noticed, trusted, and engaged with by consumers. Social influence theory suggests that familiar brands benefit from stronger social validation, leading to higher engagement rates such as likes, shares, and comments. Empirical evidence indicates that brand awareness enhances the effectiveness of social media marketing by strengthening consumer engagement and message resonance (Amitay, Tj, & Wahyoedi, 2020; Sri & Drusika, 2025).
H2: Brand awareness has a positive effect on social media marketing.

2.3.3 Product Quality and Purchase Intention
Product quality is a primary determinant of consumer purchase intention, particularly in product categories characterized by high perceived risk, such as skincare. Consumers tend to prefer products that are perceived as safe, effective, and aligned with their specific skin needs. High perceived quality increases perceived value and reduces uncertainty, thereby strengthening consumers' intention to purchase. Extant literature consistently demonstrates that perceived product quality exerts a direct and positive influence on purchase intention across various consumer markets, including cosmetics and personal care products (Madhavedi, Ramakrishna Prasad, Hoo, Suhud, & Mamoon, 2025; Tanuwijaya & Slamet, 2021).
H3: Product quality has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.3.4 Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention
Brand awareness plays a crucial role in the early stages of the consumer decision-making process by shaping consideration sets and reducing perceived risk. Well-known brands are more likely to be trusted and evaluated favorably, increasing the likelihood of purchase intention. In the skincare industry, brand awareness is particularly important due to consumers' heightened sensitivity to product safety and efficacy. Prior studies confirm that brand awareness positively influences purchase intention by enhancing brand credibility and consumer confidence (Hu et al., 2024; Syalsabilla & Budiono, 2024).
H4: Brand awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.3.5 Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention
Social media marketing has become a dominant communication channel influencing consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions, especially among younger consumer segments. Interactive, informative, and persuasive social media content enables firms to communicate product benefits, foster emotional connections, and stimulate consumer interest. According to the stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) framework, social media marketing acts as an external stimulus that shapes consumers' internal evaluations, ultimately leading to behavioral responses such as purchase intention. Empirical evidence consistently supports the positive effect of social media marketing on purchase intention (Akbar, 2023; Hanaysha, 2022).
H5: Social media marketing has a positive effect on purchase intention.

2.3.6 The Mediating Role of Social Media Marketing
Beyond direct effects, social media marketing may serve as a mediating mechanism, translating product- and brand-related attributes into purchase intention. High product quality increases the likelihood of favorable reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content on social media, thereby amplifying marketing effectiveness and influencing consumer purchase decisions. Similarly, strong

brand awareness enhances message credibility and social media engagement, which, in turn, strengthens purchase intention. Empirical studies suggest that social media marketing mediates the relationship between product attributes, brand equity, and consumer behavioral outcomes (Al-Hanaan, Nurhadi, Rachmat, & Ronny, 2023; Saputra & Wardana, 2023) . However, evidence remains mixed, particularly in emerging market contexts, warranting further investigation.

H6: Social media marketing mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intention.
H7: Social media marketing mediates the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Object and Subject

This study examines the relationships between product quality and brand awareness as independent variables, social media marketing as a mediating variable, and purchase intention as the dependent variable. The research focuses on the Scarlett beauty brand as the study subject. Scarlett was selected due to its strong market presence and popularity among Generation Z, particularly as a local beauty brand that actively leverages social media platforms. In the contemporary beauty industry, brands increasingly function not only as functional products but also as symbols of lifestyle and self-identity, making Scarlett a relevant and appropriate context for investigating consumer purchase intention.

3.2 Population and Sample

3.2.1 Population

The population of this study consists of Generation Z consumers who use Scarlett beauty products in the Jabodetabek region. This population was selected to align with the research objectives and reflect the brand's dominant consumer segment targeted by its social media marketing activities.

3.2.2 Sample

This study employs a non-probability sampling approach using purposive sampling. Respondents were selected based on predefined criteria to ensure their relevance to the research context. The criteria included individuals who (1) reside in the Jabodetabek area and (2) have prior experience using Scarlett products. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because it allows the selection of respondents with the necessary knowledge and experience to provide valid and meaningful data on the variables under investigation.

3.3 Operational Definition of Variables

This study employs clearly defined and measurable constructs to ensure analytical rigor. Each variable is operationalized based on established literature and translated into observable indicators suitable for quantitative analysis. Product quality reflects consumers' overall evaluation of a product's attributes, including design, functionality, durability, and performance. Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers can recognize and recall a brand during purchase-related situations (Tecoalu, Tj, & Ferdian, 2021).

Social media marketing represents firms' strategic use of social media platforms to create, share, and disseminate content, foster consumer interaction, and build online communities (Hafez, 2022; Sarah, Hurriyati, & Hendrayati, 2021). Purchase intention denotes consumers' likelihood and willingness to purchase a particular product, reflected in transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory intentions (Laparojkit & Suttipun, 2022; Septyadi, Salamah, & Nujiyatillah, 2022). The indicators used to measure each construct are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Operational Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Product Quality	Product Quality is an overall assessment of a product, encompassing various important aspects such as the raw materials used in its manufacturing	1. Form 2. Design 3. Customization 4. Performance Quality

	process, the durability of the product during storage, and the extent to which the product provides real benefits to its users (Maurencia et al., 2021).	(Kotler, Philip, Keller, & Lane, 2017).
Brand Awareness	Brand Awareness refers to the extent to which consumers recognize a brand and how easily the brand can be identified when in a purchasing situation (Kotler, Philip, & Keller, 2016)	1. Recall 2. Recognition 3. Purchase 4. Consumption (Tecoalu et al., 2021).
Social Media Marketing	Social Media Marketing is a digital marketing strategy aimed at delivering information about a product or service to consumers through various social media platforms, where consumers can share their experiences, reviews, and benefits they have gained from the product or service with others (Hafez, 2022).	1. Content Creation 2. Content Sharing 3. Building Connections 4. Building Community (Sarah et al., 2021)
Purchase Intention	Purchase intention is a reflection of a consumer's tendency or attitude to make a real purchase decision for a specific product, service, or brand, often demonstrated through repeated purchasing behavior (Laparojkit & Suttipun, 2022).	1. Transactional Interest 2. Referential Interest 3. Preferential Interest 4. Exploratory Interest (Septyadi et al., 2022)

Source: Processed Data by the Researcher (2025)

3.4 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using a quantitative survey approach to examine the relationships among the study variables. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the operationalized indicators and measured using a Likert scale. The survey was administered online via Google Forms to respondents residing in the Jabodetabek region who met the predetermined sampling criteria. Data collection was conducted between July and August 2025. The collected data were subsequently analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS, which is suitable for predictive analysis and complex mediation models.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

This study employs variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) approach, implemented with SmartPLS 4.0. PLS-SEM is a multivariate analytical technique designed to simultaneously estimate measurement and structural models and is particularly suitable for predictive-oriented research and theory development. Compared to conventional regression-based methods, SEM enables the analysis of complex relationships among multiple latent constructs while accounting for measurement error.

PLS-SEM is appropriate for this study due to its flexibility with respect to data distribution assumptions, its suitability for reflective measurement models, and its strong predictive capabilities. The analysis follows the standard three-stage procedure: (1) evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), (2) assessment of the structural model (inner model), and (3) hypothesis testing using bootstrapping procedures.

3.6 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model assesses the extent to which observed indicators reliably and validly represent their respective latent constructs. All constructs in this study are modeled using reflective indicators. Measurement model evaluation focuses on construct validity and reliability, ensuring the adequacy of

the research instrument. Convergent validity is assessed through indicator loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity ensures that each construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the model. Reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), with threshold values of 0.70 indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

3.7 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model examines the hypothesized relationships among exogenous and endogenous constructs. Model evaluation is conducted using a bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS and assessed based on several criteria: R^2 (coefficient of determination) to evaluate explanatory power, Q^2 to assess predictive relevance, f^2 to determine effect size, and Goodness of Fit (GoF) to evaluate overall model adequacy. The R^2 values indicate the proportion of variance explained by exogenous constructs, while Q^2 values greater than zero confirm the model's predictive relevance. Effect size (f^2) values are interpreted as small (0.02), medium (0.15), or large (0.35), reflecting the substantive impact of each predictor.

3.8 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses are tested based on path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. At a 5% significance level, hypotheses are supported when the t-value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05. Both direct effects and indirect (mediated) effects are examined. Mediation effects are considered significant when the indirect path coefficient demonstrates a p-value below 0.05, indicating that the mediating construct plays a substantive role in transmitting the effect of the exogenous variable to the endogenous variable.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Statistical Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) through SmartPLS software. This approach was chosen because it is effective in processing complex variable relationships, including latent variables, and is suitable for data with non-normal distribution.

4.1.1 Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

The measurement model (outer model) analysis is used to evaluate the validity and reliability of each indicator that reflects the latent variables in the study. The outer model evaluation includes four main aspects: Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

4.1.1.1 Convergent Validity Test

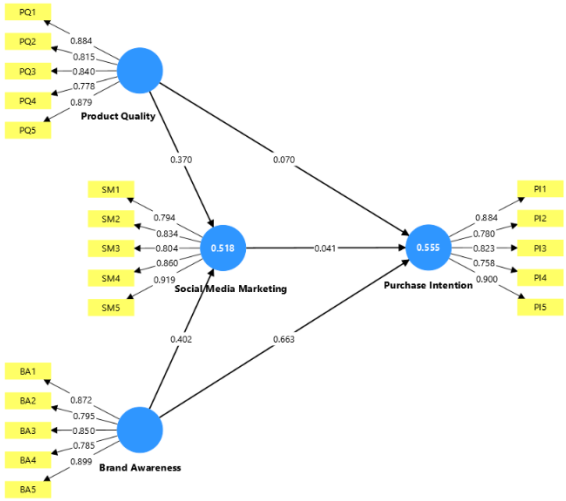


Figure 2. Construct Model
Source: Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

Convergent validity assesses the extent to which indicators of a construct are correlated and collectively represent the construct. In PLS-SEM, convergent validity is evaluated using outer loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Outer loading values above 0.70 indicate satisfactory convergent validity, while loadings above 0.60 may be considered acceptable in exploratory research. In addition, CR values exceeding 0.70 confirm adequate internal consistency, indicating that the indicators reliably measure the same construct.

The estimated PLS-SEM measurement model is presented in Figure 2 and Table 2, with indicator loadings used to assess construct measurement quality. Product Quality, Brand Awareness, Social Media Marketing, and Purchase Intention are each operationalized using five reflective indicators (PQ1–PQ5, BA1–BA5, SM1–SM5, and PI1–PI5, respectively).

Tabel 2. Loading Factor Values

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Remarks
Product Quality	PQ1	0.884	Valid
	PQ2	0.815	Valid
	PQ3	0.840	Valid
	PQ4	0.778	Valid
	PQ5	0.879	Valid
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.872	Valid
	BA2	0.795	Valid
	BA3	0.850	Valid
	BA4	0.785	Valid
	BA5	0.899	Valid
Social Media Marketing	SM1	0.794	Valid
	SM2	0.834	Valid
	SM3	0.804	Valid
	SM4	0.860	Valid
	SM5	0.919	Valid
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.884	Valid
	PI2	0.780	Valid
	PI3	0.823	Valid
	PI4	0.758	Valid
	PI5	0.900	Valid

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

4.1.1.2 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a key indicator in testing convergent validity. This measure shows the proportion of the variance of an indicator that is explained by the latent construct, compared to the variance arising from error. A good AVE value, theoretically, should be greater than 0.50, which means that the measured structure can explain more than 50% of the indicator's information. Therefore, the higher the AVE value, the better the structure's ability to represent each indicator. An AVE value below 0.50 is considered inadequate for convergent validity, and the indicators may need to be adjusted.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Remarks
Product Quality	0.706	Valid
Brand Awareness	0.708	Valid
Social Media Marketing	0.711	Valid
Purchase Intention	0.690	Valid

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

In Table 3, it can be seen that the AVE values for each construct have exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.50. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research model does not have issues with convergent validity.

4.1.1.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity in research is used to ensure that the model structures are distinct from one another. The testing is conducted using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading values. A construct is said to meet discriminant validity based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion if the square root of the AVE is higher than the correlation of the construct with other structures. Meanwhile, through the cross-loading check, discriminant validity in the research is considered satisfied if each indicator has a loading value on the measured construct higher than on any other constructs. If both criteria are met, then the research instrument is considered capable of adequately distinguishing between each construct. Overall, the instrument validity test in this study ensures that the indicators used to measure Product Quality, Brand Awareness, Social Media Marketing, and Purchase Intention meet the feasibility criteria, allowing the research to proceed to the reliability testing phase and structural model analysis.

Table 4. Cross Loadings

Indicator	Product Quality	Brand Awareness	Social Media Marketing	Purchase Intention
PQ1	**0.884**	0.686	0.607	0.589
PQ2	**0.815**	0.570	0.500	0.340
PQ3	**0.840**	0.578	0.470	0.465
PQ4	**0.778**	0.554	0.508	0.475
PQ5	**0.879**	0.671	0.673	0.541
BA1	0.624	**0.872**	0.580	0.701
BA2	0.569	**0.795**	0.516	0.547
BA3	0.557	**0.850**	0.593	0.631
BA4	0.645	**0.785**	0.527	0.579
BA5	0.692	**0.899**	0.615	0.654
SM1	0.539	0.517	**0.794**	0.403
SM2	0.529	0.597	**0.834**	0.520
SM3	0.536	0.559	**0.804**	0.347
SM4	0.568	0.530	**0.860**	0.405
SM5	0.631	0.630	**0.919**	0.552
PI1	0.491	0.654	0.440	**0.884**
PI2	0.371	0.501	0.414	**0.780**
PI3	0.481	0.685	0.524	**0.823**
PI4	0.497	0.541	0.365	**0.758**
PI5	0.570	0.672	0.462	**0.900**

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

The results indicate that discriminant validity was assessed by comparing each indicator's outer loading with its cross-loadings on other constructs. As shown in Table 4, all indicators load more strongly on their respective constructs than on any other constructs. For instance, indicator PQ1 exhibits a loading of 0.884 on *product quality*, which exceeds its loadings on *brand awareness* (0.686), *social media marketing* (0.607), and *purchase intention* (0.589). A similar pattern is observed across all brand awareness indicators (BA1–BA5) and the remaining constructs.

These results demonstrate that each indicator is more closely associated with its intended construct than with alternative constructs, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity based on the cross-

loading criterion. Discriminant validity was further evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (√AVE) for each construct with the inter-construct correlations. The results show that the √AVE values for all constructs exceed their corresponding correlations with other constructs, providing additional support for discriminant validity.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Values

Variable	Brand Awareness	Product Quality	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness	**0.841**			
Product Quality	0.734	**0.840**		
Purchase Intention	0.742	0.584	**0.831**	
Social Media Marketing	0.674	0.666	0.535	**0.843**

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

As reported in Table 5, the square root of the average variance extracted (√AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, thereby satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Specifically, √AVE values are 0.841 for *brand awareness*, 0.840 for *product quality*, 0.831 for *purchase intention*, and 0.843 for *social media marketing*. For example, the √AVE of brand awareness (0.841) is higher than its correlations with product quality (0.734), purchase intention (0.742), and social media marketing (0.674). A similar pattern is observed for all remaining constructs, confirming adequate discriminant validity. Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTT), a recommended alternative for reflective measurement models. All HTMT values fall below the conservative threshold of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), providing additional evidence that discriminant validity is established. Here are the results of the HTMT test:

Table 6. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Values

Variabel	Brand Awareness	Product Quality	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
Brand Awareness				
Product Quality	0.814			
Purchase Intention	0.824	0.639		
Social Media Marketing	0.749	0.732	0.589	

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

As a conclusion, all constructs tested in this study meet the discriminant validity criteria based on the HTMT criterion, as shown in Table 6, because all HTMT values are below the threshold of 0.90.

4.1.2 Instrument Reliability Test

The next stage in the analysis is to ensure that the research instruments do not have issues related to measurement. For this purpose, a final evaluation of the outer model is conducted through testing for unidimensionality, which includes composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha tests.

4.1.2.1 Composite Reliability

Composite Reliability is used to evaluate the internal consistency of the indicators forming a construct. An instrument is considered to meet the reliability requirements if the composite reliability value is above 0.7, although a value of 0.6 is still acceptable for exploratory research. Below is the calculation result for composite reliability values for each construct.

Table 7. Composite Reliability Values

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Product Quality	0.923	0.896	Reliable
Brand Awareness	0.924	0.896	Reliable
Social Media Marketing	0.925	0.898	Reliable

Purchase Intention	0.917	0.887	Reliable

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

Based on Table **7**, all constructs show composite reliability values higher than 0.7. This indicates that each construct in this study has a good level of reliability, and it can be concluded that there are no reliability issues with the model that has been built.

4.1.2.2 Cronbach's Alpha

Instrument reliability testing is further reinforced by the Cronbach's Alpha value. A construct is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.7. Based on Table 7, all constructs show excellent Cronbach's Alpha values, which are above 0.7. It can be concluded that each indicator in the outer model has met the validity and reliability criteria, and the analysis can proceed to the next stage, which is the inner model testing.

4.1.3 Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

Structural model assessment was conducted to evaluate the relationships among exogenous and endogenous constructs and to examine the model's predictive capability. Consistent with PLS-SEM guidelines, the evaluation was based on the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and model fit indices.

Table 8. R Square (R^2)

Matrix	R-Square	Remarks
Product Quality and Brand Awareness on Social Media Marketing	0.518	Moderately Strong
Social Media Marketing, Product Quality and Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention	0.555	Moderately Strong

The results indicate that product quality and brand awareness jointly explain 51.8% of the variance in social media marketing ($R^2 = 0.518$), suggesting a moderate explanatory power. Furthermore, product quality, brand awareness, and social media marketing together account for 55.5% of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.555$), which also falls within the moderate range. These findings suggest that the proposed model demonstrates adequate explanatory strength in predicting the endogenous constructs.

Table 9. Model Fit Test Results

Parameter	Rule of Thumb	Parameter Value	Remarks
SRMR	Less than 0.10	0.076	Fit
d_ULS	> 0,05	1.203	Fit
d_G	> 0,05	1.265	Fit
Chi-square	X^2 statistic ≥ X^2 table	581.823 ≥ 31.410	Fit
NFI	Approaches 1	0.694	Fit

Source**:** SmartPLS – Model Fit Test

The model's predictive relevance was assessed using the Q^2 statistic, which yielded a value of 0.786, exceeding the recommended threshold of zero. This result indicates strong predictive relevance, confirming that the structural model has a high capability to predict the endogenous variables. Model fit was further evaluated using several global fit indices. The SRMR value of 0.076 falls below the recommended cut-off, indicating an acceptable model fit. Additional indices, including d_ULS (1.203), d_G (1.265), Chi-square (581.823), and NFI (0.694), collectively support the conclusion that the proposed structural model exhibits an adequate overall fit and is suitable for hypothesis testing.

4.1.4 Hypothesis Testing

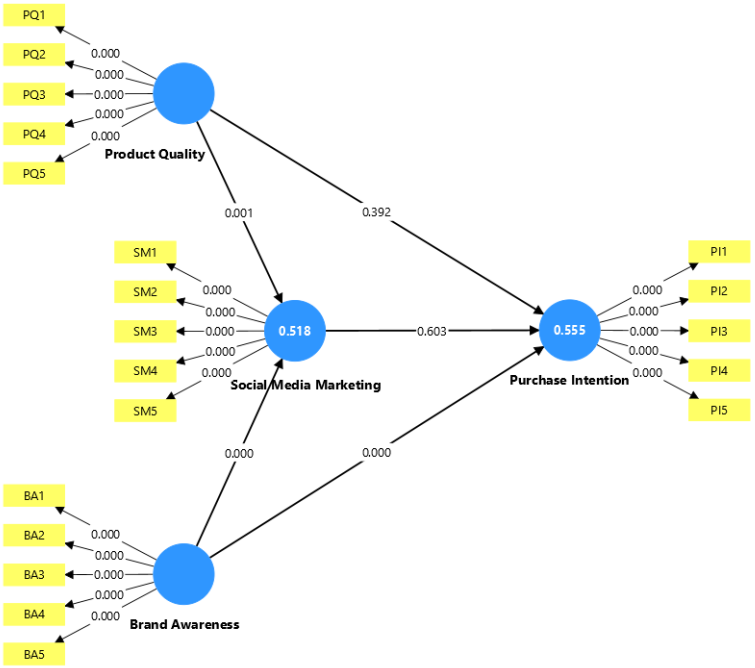


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Construct Model
Source: Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

4.1.4.1 Direct Effect
A hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value is greater than 1.96 and the significance value (p-value) is below 0.05 (5%), with a positive coefficient direction. Below are the bootstrapping results explaining the direct effect of each variable.

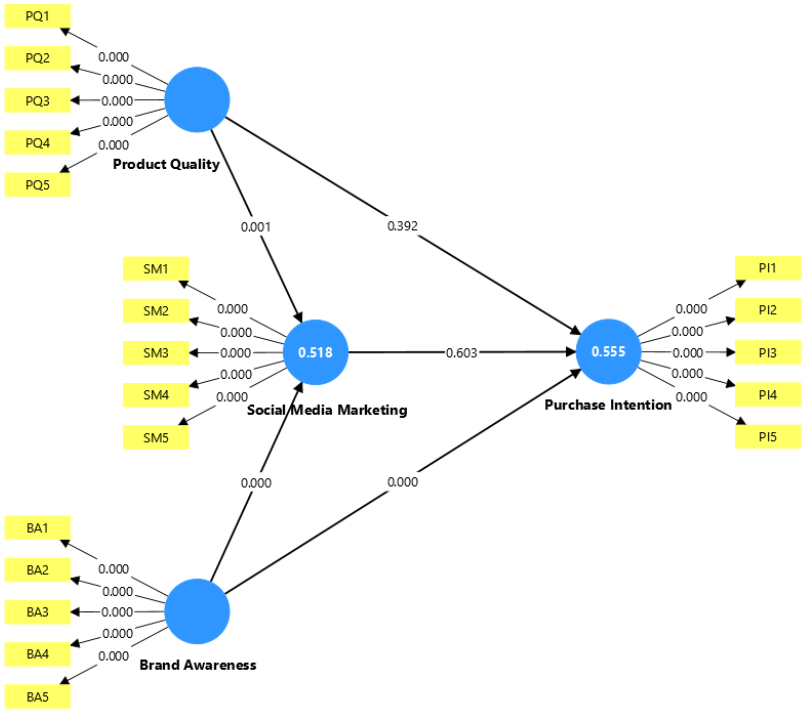
Table 10. Path Coefficients

Path Coefficients	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
Product Quality -> Social Media Marketing	0.370	0.371	0.114	3.252	0.001	Accepted
Brand Awareness -> Social Media Marketing	0.402	0.404	0.105	3.844	0.000	Accepted
Product Quality -> Purchase Intention	0.070	0.073	0.082	0.856	0.392	Rejected
Brand Awareness -> Purchase Intention	0.663	0.662	0.120	5.540	0.000	Accepted
Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Intention	0.041	0.040	0.078	0.521	0.603	Rejected

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS Path Coefficient (2025)

There are five hypotheses with direct effects tested in this study, as follows:

4.1.4.2 Hypothesis Testing Results
The results indicate that product quality has a positive and significant effect on social media marketing ($\beta = 0.370$, $t = 3.252$, $p = 0.001$), supporting H1. Similarly, brand awareness positively and significantly influences social media marketing ($\beta = 0.402$, $t = 3.844$, $p < 0.001$), providing support for H2.



In contrast, product quality does not significantly affect purchase intention (β = 0.070, t = 0.856, p = 0.392); therefore, H3 is not supported. Conversely, brand awareness demonstrates a strong positive and significant effect on purchase intention (β = 0.663, t = 5.540, p < 0.001), lending support to H4. Finally, social media marketing does not have a significant effect on purchase intention (β = 0.041, t = 0.521, p = 0.603), indicating that H5 is not supported.

4.1.4.3 Indirect Effect

The Role of Mediator Variables in the Structural Model is Evaluated through Testing the Significance of Indirect Effects Using the Bootstrapping Procedure. Table 11 presents the estimation results of the indirect path coefficients along with the supporting statistical values.

Table 11. Indirect Effect (Mediation) Values

Path Coefficient	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
Product Quality -> Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Intention	0.015	0.015	0.031	0.482	0.630	Rejected
Brand Awareness -> Social Media Marketing -> Purchase Intention	0.016	0.016	0.034	0.487	0.626	Rejected

Source**:** Processed Data by SmartPLS (2025)

a. Hypothesis six states that product quality positively affects purchase intention through social media marketing. The analysis results show that the indirect effect coefficient is 0.015, indicating a positive direction of influence. However, the t-statistic value of 0.482 is smaller than the critical value of 1.96, with a p-value of 0.630 (> 0.05), indicating that the indirect effect is not statistically significant. This finding suggests that social media marketing does not act as a mediating variable in the relationship between product quality and purchase intention. Therefore, hypothesis six is not supported.

b. Hypothesis seven states that brand awareness positively affects purchase intention through social media marketing. Based on the test results, the indirect effect coefficient of 0.016 shows a positive

direction. However, the t-statistic value of 0.487 (< 1.96) and a p-value of 0.626 (> 0.05) indicate that the effect is not significant. Thus, there is not enough empirical evidence to state that social media marketing mediates the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. Therefore, hypothesis seven is also not accepted.

5. Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Conclusion

Based on PLS-SEM analysis of Generation Z consumers in Jakarta, this study yields several key conclusions. First, product quality has a positive and significant effect on social media marketing engagement, indicating that higher perceived product quality encourages consumers to actively interact with brand-related content, such as sharing experiences and posting reviews. Second, brand awareness positively and significantly influences social media marketing, suggesting that greater brand familiarity enhances consumer engagement on digital platforms.

Third, brand awareness also positively and significantly affects purchase intention, confirming its critical role in shaping Gen Z consumers' buying decisions. In contrast, product quality does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention, implying that although quality is valued, it alone is insufficient to trigger purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers. This finding highlights the importance of complementary factors such as trends, pricing, digital reviews, and peer recommendations. Furthermore, social media marketing does not mediate the relationships between product quality and purchase intention, nor between brand awareness and purchase intention. These results indicate that while social media marketing supports engagement and brand visibility, purchase intention among Gen Z consumers is primarily driven by direct brand-related perceptions, particularly brand awareness.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the consumer behavior and digital marketing literature by demonstrating that brand awareness plays a more decisive role than product quality in shaping Gen Z purchase intention within the skincare context. The non-significant mediating role of social media marketing suggests that digital engagement does not automatically translate into purchase intention, thereby challenging assumptions of linear mediation effects in social media–driven models. Future research is encouraged to extend the model by incorporating constructs such as trust, customer satisfaction, perceived value, and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which may better capture the psychological and social mechanisms underlying Gen Z purchase decisions. Expanding the sample across different regions and product categories may also enhance the generalizability of the findings.

5.2.2 Managerial Implications

For practitioners, the findings highlight the strategic importance of strengthening brand awareness to stimulate purchase intention among Gen Z consumers. Firms should invest in consistent and authentic branding efforts that enhance brand recognition, credibility, and emotional resonance. Although product quality does not directly influence purchase intention, maintaining high and transparent quality standards remains essential to support positive brand perceptions and consumer trust. In addition, while social media marketing does not function as a direct driver of purchase intention, it remains a critical platform for brand communication, consumer education, and relationship building. Therefore, firms should prioritize value-driven and informative content that reinforces brand identity and supports long-term consumer engagement.

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