

# Electronic Word of Mouth and Product Quality on Purchase Decision Through Brand Image

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines how Product Quality and Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) influence the decision to purchase certain skincare products on TikTokShop, with Brand Image serving as a mediating factor. A quantitative survey method was used, with questionnaires distributed to 104 members of Generations Y and Z who were familiar with and had shopped at TikTokShop. SmartPLS version 4 is used for partial least squares (PLS) data analysis. The findings show that eWOM and product quality have a positive and significant impact on brand image. Although eWOM does not have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, product quality does have a positive, significant impact. In addition, brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The overall R<sup>2</sup> values of the research model for Brand Image and Purchasing Decision were 0.597 and 0.787, respectively, suggesting that independent variables adequately explained the dependent variables. These findings show how important product quality and brand perception are in fostering consumer loyalty and influencing purchasing decisions on social media-based e-commerce platforms like TikTokShop.

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## INTRODUCTION

The scientific community has paid significant attention to the decision-making process in consumer purchases, as shown by previous research that has examined various aspects of purchasing decision-making (Ummah, 2020; Arnanda, 2022; Majid & Sumadi, 2022; Herman Djaya, 2023; Scientific & Education, 2023; Irvawan & Amelia, 2023; Kertiriasih, 2023; Marcella et al., 2023; Brands et al., 2023; Yakin & Hutauruk, 2023; Soleha et al., 2024; Economics et al., 2025). In accordance with the findings of the data analysis carried out by Merek et al. (2023), the eWOM variable has a positive effect on the purchase decision for Somethinc products (Marcella et al., 2023). According to Nursyabani and Silvianita (2023), eWOM significantly and positively affects purchase intentions. However, these findings differ from those of other studies, such as Ekonomika et al. (2025), which found that eWOM variables may have a negligible negative impact on purchasing decisions. Several studies on how product quality affects purchase intent have shown that product quality strongly and positively influences choice-making. Research by Herman Djaya et al. from 2023 also shows that the quality of goods positively influences a decision. However, Kertiriasih et al. (2023) and Yakin & Hutauruk (2023) show that consumers' decisions to buy products or services are not significantly influenced by product quality.

According to Soleha et al. (2024), electronic word-of-mouth advertising and product quality favorably influence consumer decision-making. As stated by Rizkiyah et al. (2025), electronic word-of-mouth advertising has a favorable and significant impact on brand image, which, in turn, influences consumer choices. However, another study by Majid & Sumadi (2022) found that electronic word of

mouth has a minimal impact on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Mardiyah & Saputra (2025) emphasized that brand impressions have little effect on purchasing decisions. At least fifteen articles presenting the findings of different studies are cited, as indicated earlier. This research will be reviewed with an alternative goal in order to improve the marketing management literature. The main subject of this research, then, is Skin Care Products.

Salsa Agnia et al. (2023). Rapid technological advances have drastically changed the way the internet operates. The internet has evolved into a platform that allows the public to engage in a variety of activities, including online commerce, as well as a communication tool. Online purchases provide several conveniences to customers and potential buyers. With this technology, consumers can transact at any time and from any location without visiting a physical store, and they have easier access to product information. In addition, it is easier for customers to make comparisons. A wide range of products, including food, electronics, books, cosmetics, and more, are now offered for sale online due to the rapid expansion of e-commerce sites.

As awareness of self-care grows among both men and women, Indonesia's beauty industry has grown significantly. With so many beauty products, buyers should evaluate each product's benefits and features before making a purchase. The Indonesian market is already filled with locally made cosmetics and skincare products that are safe to use and suitable for various skin types. However, some people continue to believe that products from other countries are better. Something is a new local business specializing in body and skin care products, and also offers accessories and equipment. Many products have been certified as non-comedogenic, hypoallergenic, halal, and cruelty-free. Additionally, the business prioritizes transparency about its makeup ingredients, allowing customers to choose products that suit their skin needs and concerns. Some products are available both online and offline.



**Figure 1. Top Selling Cosmetic Brands in E-Commerce in Q2 2022**

*Source: compas.co.id (2022)*

The decision to buy follows evaluation of the product or service. During this process, a person gathers information about the products they want to buy based on their preferences and brand considerations to create a list of options. Negative customer perceptions are usually the result of inaccurate information. Today's customers can easily get this information through social media and the internet. eWOM aims to provide viewers with clear, understandable information about the product experience. Ongoing technological developments have influenced people's interest in engaging through social media and the internet, and one type of information shared in these interactions concerns goods or services they have tried. In addition to Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), product quality is an important

consideration that can influence consumers' purchase decisions. Consumer trust in a particular brand is reflected in its image. Brand image encompasses how consumers perceive it as a whole, shaped by a range of prior experiences and information. As a result, companies must continue to build and maintain their brand image to ensure that it is stable and well-liked by the general public.

The study by Ummah et al. (2020) has several limitations that must be considered. This study has not applied mediation variables and focuses more on luxury crime products in East Surabaya; therefore, the researchers are interested in modifying it to focus on Somethinc skincare products on TikTok Shop. Based on the explanation above, TikTok Shop was chosen because it has experienced substantial growth and is known as a major e-commerce innovation. TikTok Shop offers users a more interactive, engaging shopping experience by combining live shopping with short-form video content. TikTok is becoming a valuable asset in digital marketing tactics due to its growing popularity, especially among younger audiences.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a quantitative methodology, namely the collection and analysis of numerical data. This study investigated and assessed the impact of eWOM variables and product quality on the brand reputation of Somethinc skincare products on Tiktokshop, using brand image as an intervention variable. This study uses primary data collected through an electronic questionnaire administered directly to pre-selected sources. To collect reliable, accurate data from pre-selected respondents, electronic questionnaires were distributed during the research data collection process. The research population consisted of men and women from the local writers' community who were familiar with the TikTok Shop feature. A total of 104 respondents were selected through purposive sampling because they met the research criteria. The data for this quantitative study were collected through an electronic questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The main analytical techniques include reliability testing, validity testing, model suitability assessment, multicollinearity analysis, and hypothesis testing. To ensure the validity and consistency of the questionnaire items, a validity and reliability test was conducted. The data were analyzed using external model and internal model analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A respondent description is a section that describes respondents who participated in the study based on several characteristics, including occupation, age, and gender. Respondents in this study had different characteristics, so their perceptions of the questions would also differ. The respondents in this study were Gen Z to Gen Y, both women and men, who were aware of the existence of Somethinc Skincare Products on the TikTok Shop. This study involved respondents from two generations, namely Generation Z and Generation Y, who were deliberately selected based on their experience in buying Somethinc skincare products through TikTok Shop. Generation Z respondents were individuals born between 1996 and 2012 who were active on social media, while Generation Y respondents were selected based on their older age range. The main criterion for selecting respondents is that they have made purchases on the TikTok Shop and are familiar with Somethinc skincare products, enabling them to provide relevant insights into Somethinc's skincare consumption patterns on the TikTok platform. The number of respondents was fairly representative, with a sample of 100 people, to ensure data validity. The focus of this research is to understand how eWOM and Product Quality influence purchasing decisions and the Somethinc skincare Brand Image, especially among Generations Z and Y, who are highly active on social media and online shoppers. The questionnaire was distributed directly in print form from March 26, 2025, to April 20, 2025, to 104 people who were included in the respondent category for this study. The following table shows the amount of data collected between the first and fourth days:

**Table 1. Research Data Collection**

| Day, date                  | Number   |
|----------------------------|----------|
| March 26, 2025 (Wed)       | 2 dates  |
| March 27, 2025 (Thu)       | 37 dates |
| March 28, 2025 (Friday)    | 2 dates  |
| March 29, 2025 (Sat)       | 5 data   |
| March 30, 2025 (Sun)       | 1 data   |
| April 2, 2025 (Wednesday)  | 2 dates  |
| April 3, 2025 (Thu)        | 1 data   |
| April 4, 2025 (Friday)     | 0 data   |
| April 5, 2025 (Saturday)   | 0 data   |
| April 06, 2025 (Sun)       | 0 data   |
| April 07, 2025 (Monday)    | 0 data   |
| April 08, 2025 (Tue)       | 0 data   |
| April 09, 2025 (Wednesday) | 0 data   |
| April 10, 2025 (Thu)       | 0 data   |
| April 11, 2025 (Friday)    | 0 data   |
| April 12, 2025 (Saturday)  | 0 data   |
| April 13, 2025 (Sun)       | 0 data   |
| April 14, 2025 (Monday)    | 0 data   |
| April 15, 2025 (Tue)       | 0 data   |
| April 16, 2025 (Wednesday) | 0 data   |
| Apr 17, 2025 (Thu)         | 0 data   |
| April 18, 2025 (Friday)    | 28 dates |
| Apr 19, 2025 (Sat)         | 24 dates |
| Apr 20, 2025 (Sun)         | 2 dates  |

*Source: processed primary data, 2025*

Data from 104 respondents were successfully collected for this study. The SmartPLS app version 4 will then be used to check all this data.

**Table 2. Description of respondents by gender**

| Gender | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Woman  | 79     | 76%        |
| Man    | 25     | 24%        |
| Entire | 104    | 100%       |

*Source: processed primary data, 2025*

This study involved 100 respondents, comprising 79 women (75.96%) and 25 men (24.04%), as shown in Table 2.

**Table 3. Description of Respondents by Age**

| Age    | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| 17-20  | 60     | 57.69%     |
| 23-28  | 30     | 28.85%     |
| 29-34  | 10     | 9.62%      |
| 35-40  | 4      | 3.85%      |
| Entire | 104    | 100%       |

*Source: processed primary data, 2025*

The text breaks down the demographics of respondents by age group: 60 individuals (57.69%) are between 17 and 20 years old, 30 individuals (28.85%) are between 23 and 28 years old, 10 individuals (9.62%) are between 29 and 34 years old, and four individuals (3.85%) are between 35 and 40 years old.

**Table 4. Description of Respondents by Occupation**

| Work                     | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------------|--------|------------|
| Student/Student          | 85     | 81.73%     |
| Private sector employees | 10     | 9.62%      |
| Other                    | 9      | 8.65%      |
| Entire                   | 104    | 100%       |

*Source: processed primary data, 2025*

The 104 points of analyzable data described above were obtained from questionnaires completed by members of Generations Z and Y with diverse professional backgrounds. This group included 10 employees in the private sector (9.62%), nine other respondents (8.65%), and 85 students (81.73%).

**Table 5. Description of Those Who Have Used Something Skincare Products**

| Something Uses Skincare Products | Number | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Yes                              | 73     | 70.19          |
| Not                              | 31     | 29.81          |
| Number                           | 104    | 100%           |

*Source: Primary analysis data, 2025*

The characteristics of respondents' experiences with Somethinc skincare products are shown in the table below. According to the table, 73 people have used the product, while 31 have not.

**Table 6. TikTok Shop Usage Description**

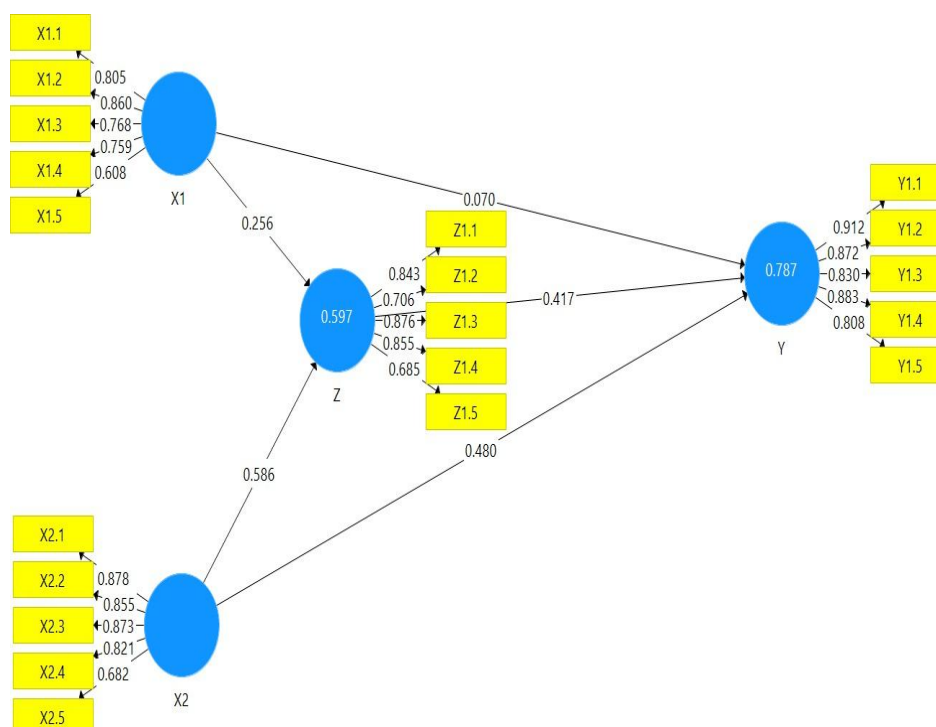
| Using TikTok Shop | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Yes               | 92     | 88.46%     |
| Not               | 12     | 11.54%     |
| Entire            | 104    | 100%       |

*Source: Primary analysis data, 2025*

Twelve respondents have never used TikTokShop, while 92 respondents have used the platform, according to a table showing respondents' characteristics regarding their use.

### Analysis Results

SmartPLS version 4 was used to test the study's hypothesis using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach and structural equation modeling (SEM). The schematic of the tested PLS model is shown below.



**Figure 1. Outdoor Models**

To evaluate the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, external models were examined for multicollinearity, validity, and reliability.

### External Model Analysis

#### Convergent Validity

If the indicator's external loading value is greater than 0.7, the indicator is said to have sufficient convergent validity.

**Table 7. Outer Loading Value**

| Variable                             | Indicators                                                                                         | External Loading |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Electronic Word of Mouth (X1)</i> | 1. Frequently access information about products on social media.                                   | 0.805            |
|                                      | 2. Frequently interact with other users about products                                             | 0.860            |
|                                      | 3. Frequently write reviews about products                                                         | 0.768            |
|                                      | 4. Consider the positive and negative comments from other users                                    | 0.759            |
|                                      | 5. The TikTok shop account conveys enough information about product variants                       | 0.608            |
| <i>Product Quality (X2)</i>          | 1. Feel the benefits after using the product and feel comfortable while wearing it.                | 0.878            |
|                                      | 2. Buying a product because there are benefits that other products do not have                     | 0.855            |
|                                      | 3. Buy products because they are safe to use and have been registered with BPOM.                   | 0.873            |
|                                      | 4. Products conform to standards                                                                   | 0.821            |
|                                      | 5. The product is packaged with attractive packaging                                               | 0.682            |
| <i>Brand Image (W)</i>               | 1. Products give a good impression                                                                 | 0.843            |
|                                      | 2. Brands that consumers remember                                                                  | 0.706            |
|                                      | 3. This product has advantages and is of good quality compared to other products                   | 0.876            |
|                                      | 4. This product conveys good product quality and will still choose the product over other products | 0.855            |
|                                      | 5. Ads for thin skincare products often appear on TikTok Shop                                      | 0.685            |
| Purchase Decision (Y)                | 1. Has a lightweight texture when used on the skin                                                 | 0.912            |
|                                      | 2. The quality of some skin care products is excellent                                             | 0.872            |
|                                      | 3. It has a wide range of ingredients suitable for different skin types                            | 0.830            |
|                                      | 4. Willing to recommend products to others                                                         | 0.883            |
|                                      | 5. Buy skincare products that are thin because the quality is guaranteed.                          | 0.808            |

*Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025*

According to the table, most indicators of the study variables have external loadings greater than 0.7. As a result, each indicator is considered legitimate and appropriate for further research and analysis.

#### Discriminatory Validity

The variable must have an AVE value greater than 0.5 to be considered valid in terms of discriminant validity.

**Table 8. Extracted Mean Variance Value**

| Variable                      | AVE (Average Variance Extracted) | Description |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Electronic word of mouth (X1) | 0.585                            | Legitimate  |
| Product Quality (X2)          | 0.680                            | Legitimate  |
| Brand Image (Z)               | 0.635                            | Legitimate  |
| Purchase Decision (Y)         | 0.742                            | Legitimate  |

*Source: Primary data analysis, 2025*

Table 8 shows that the Average Extracted Variance (AVE) value for each variable in this study is greater than 0.5. The following are the AVE values for each variable: Brand Image (Z) = 0.635, Product Quality (X2) = 0.680, Word-of-mouth Electronics (X1) = 0.585, and Purchase Decision (Y) = 0.742. This indicates that each variable meets the requirements for discriminant validity.

### Reliability Test

The reliability test of the measuring instrument shows how stable and reliable the results are when the exact measurement is taken under the same conditions. If the measuring instrument provides consistent results even after repeated use, it is considered to have high reliability (Anggraini et al., 2022)—as evidenced by Alpha Cronbach and reliability testing.

The internal consistency of the variable across its indicators can be evaluated using composite reliability. If a variable's composite reliability meets the criteria set in this study, the variable is considered to meet the composite's reliability requirements.

**Table 9. Composite Reliability**

| Variable                      | Composite Reliability |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Electronic word of mouth (X1) | 0.874                 |
| Product Quality (X2)          | 0.913                 |
| Brand Image (Z)               | 0.896                 |
| Purchase Decision (Y)         | 0.935                 |

*Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025*

Each variable in this study had a Composite Reliability score of 0.7 or higher, as shown in the table above. The following are the Composite Reliability values for each variable: Brand Image (Z) = 0.896; Product Quality (X2) = 0.913; Electronic Word-of-Mouth Promotion (X1) = 0.874; and Purchase Decision (Y) = 0.935. This indicates that each variable has high reliability and that all variables meet the composite reliability criteria. Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical technique for evaluating the internal consistency of instruments or psychometric data, was used to assess the reliability of this study. A construct is considered credible if its Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.60. The Alpha Cronbach value of the study is shown below.

**Table 10. Cronbach Alfa**

| Variable                      | Alpha Cronbach |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Electronic word of mouth (X1) | 0.819          |
| Product Quality (X2)          | 0.880          |
| Brand Image (Z)               | 0.854          |
| Purchase Decision (Y)         | 0.913          |

*Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025*

Each variable in this study had an Alpha Cronbach value greater than 0.6, as shown in the table above. This indicates that all constructions are reliable, as the Cronbach's alphas meet the specified standards.

### Multicollinearity Test

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance value are used to assess multicollinearity. Multicollinearity is considered non-existent if the tolerance value is higher than 0.1 or the VIF is less than 5. The VIF values of the study are shown below.

**Table 11. Collinearity Statistics (VIF)**

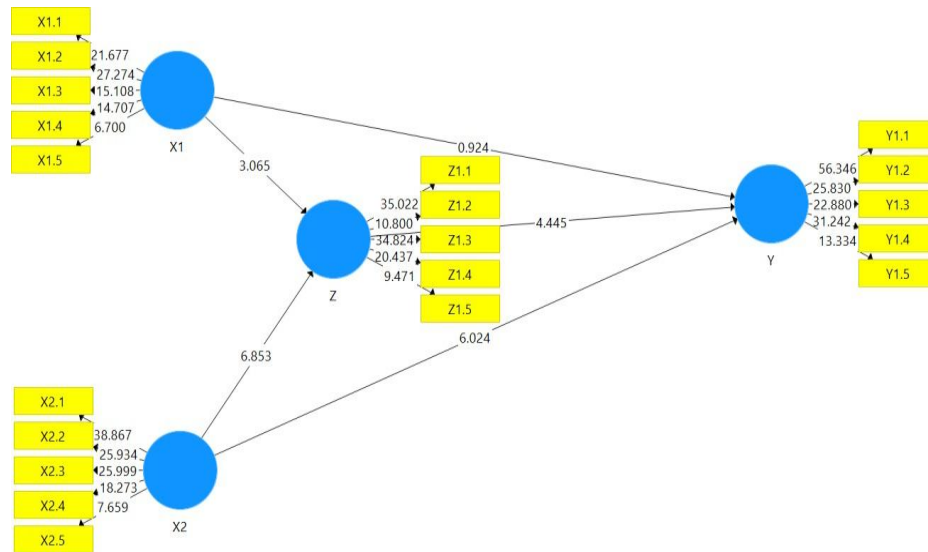
|                               | Brand Image | Purchase Decision |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Electronic word of mouth (X1) | 1.64        | 1.807             |
| Product Quality (X2)          | 1,644       | 2,495             |
| Brand Image (Z)               |             | 2,481             |
| Purchase Decision (Y)         |             |                   |

*Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025*

Table 11 presents the results of the Collinearity Statistics (VIF) multicollinearity test, which indicate that the values for Brand Image (1.644) and Purchase Decision (1.807) are within the acceptable range. In contrast, the Product Quality variable has a value of 1,644 for Brand Image and 2,495 for Purchase Decision. For the purchase decision, the brand image has a value of 2.481. The multicollinearity test is not violated because all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 5.

## Deep Model Analysis

This study will provide the results of hypothesis tests, suitability tests, and path coefficient tests.



**Figure 2. Inner Model**

To evaluate the relationships and impacts between latent variables, an internal model is used. Value assessment (R-Square), good fit (GoF), and path coefficient are the three main techniques used to assess internal models.

### Conformity Test Pros Model

Structural models are assessed to examine the relationships among real and latent variables, including primary predictor variables, mediators, and outcome variables, within a comprehensive model. A higher R2 score indicates greater determination. R2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively, indicate strong, medium, and weak models (Rosario et al., 2025). The following are the values found in this investigation.

**Table 12. R-Square Value**

| Variable          | R-Square     | R-Square Customized |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Brand Image       | <b>0,597</b> | <b>0,589</b>        |
| Purchase Decision | <b>0,787</b> | <b>0,780</b>        |

Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025

Table 12 shows that the R-squared value, which is used to evaluate how much the Electronic Word of Mouth and Product Quality variables affect Brand Image, is 0.597 (59.7%), indicating a moderate relationship. In addition, the R-squared value of 0.787 (78.7%) indicates a substantial correlation between product quality and electronic word of mouth in purchase decisions.

Next is the Q-Square test. The Q2 value is used to assess the predictive relevance in structural model testing. The Q2 value indicates the model's and its parameters' predictive performance. If the value of Q2 is greater than 0, the model shows predictive relevance; If it is less than 0, the model is considered to produce a less significant prediction.

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q\text{-Square (Brand Image)} &= 1 - [(1 - R^2_1)] \\
 &= 1 - [(1 - 0.597)] \\
 &= 1 - (0.403) \\
 &= 0.597
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q\text{-Square (Purchase Decision)} &= 1 - [(1 - R^2_1)] \\
 &= 1 - [(1 - 0.787)] \\
 &= 1 - (0.213) \\
 &= 0.787
 \end{aligned}$$

According to the research, the Q2 Brand Image score is 0.597, indicating it is above 0. Moreover, the Q2 Purchase Decision value was 0.787, indicating, once again, a value higher than 0. Therefore, the suitability or feasibility of the model in this investigation is considered sufficient.

### Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate the effects of the variables, a path coefficient table is analyzed as part of the hypothesis-testing process. To obtain the original sample value, t-statistic, or p-value (critical ratio), the path coefficient is tested using the bootstrap approach. A p-value of less than 0.05 indicates a direct effect between variables, while a value greater than 0.05 indicates no direct effect. An effect is considered significant if the t-statistic is greater than 1.96, because the significance criterion in this study is  $t = 1.96$  (significance level 5%). This hypothesis test was performed using SmartPLS software version 4, and the path coefficient values are shown below.

### Direct Effects

**Table 13. Line Coefficient (Direct Effect)**

|                                                        | Hypothesis | Original Sample | T- Statistics | P-Value | Information             |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|-------------------------|
| Electronics from word of mouth (X1) → Brand Image (Z)  | H1         | 0,256           | 3,065         | 0,002   | Significant positives   |
| Product Quality (X2) → Brand Picture (W)               | H2         | 0,586           | 6,853         | 0,000   | Significant positives   |
| Word-of-mouth electronics (X1) → Purchase Decision (Y) | H3         | 0,070           | 0,924         | 0,356   | Insignificant positives |
| Product Quality (X2) → Purchase Decision (Y)           | H4         | 0,480           | 6,024         | 0,000   | Significant positives   |
| Brand Image (Z) → Purchase Decision (Y)                | H5         | 0,417           | 4,445         | 0,000   | Significant positives   |

*Source: Primary Analysis Data, 2025*

The following interpretation is based on the table provided:

- The first hypothesis is to ascertain whether eWOM has a significant and positive impact on brand image. The table data show an effect coefficient of 0.256, a p-value of 0.002, and a t-statistic of 3.065. Since the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, the first hypothesis is accepted.
- The second hypothesis aims to ascertain whether product quality has a significant and positive impact on brand image. The table displays a p-value of 0.000, an effect size of 0.586, and a t-statistic of 6.853. Since the t-statistical value is more than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, the second hypothesis is also accepted.
- The third hypothesis is to ascertain whether electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has a positive and substantial impact on purchasing decisions. Based on the values displayed in the table, the t-statistic is 0.924, the effect size is 0.070, and the p-value is 0.0356. Since the t-statistical value does not exceed 1.96 even though the p-value is less than 0.05, the third hypothesis is rejected.
- The fourth hypothesis is to determine whether product quality has a substantial and favorable impact on consumers' decision to buy. The results in the table show that the t-statistical value is 6.024, the effect coefficient is 0.480, and the p-value is 0.000. The fourth hypothesis is considered acceptable because the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05.
- The fifth hypothesis is to determine whether the brand image is highly and positively influencing the purchase decision. The table shows a p-value of 0.000, an effect size of 0.417, and a t-statistic of

4.445. Since the t-statistical value is more than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, the fifth hypothesis is acceptable.

### ***Discussion***

Although eWOM contributes to image formation, its direct influence on Somethinc's purchase decision on TikTok Shop may be reduced by other, more determinative factors such as price, availability, and perceptions of product quality. Logically, eWOM tends to play a more powerful role as a contextual shaper (e.g., improving image, reducing doubts) than as a driver of end-of-purchase decisions when consumers prioritize utilitarian criteria (e.g., price, material safety). This is consistent with the findings of Ekonomika et al. (2025), who show that the effectiveness of eWOM varies according to product type, platform, and consumer priorities. So for skincare products whose purchases are influenced by safety and long-term effectiveness, eWOM alone may not be enough to drive purchase decisions significantly.

Product quality serves as the foundation of a brand's reputation: premium formulations, consistent results, and proven claims can create a strong association with quality in consumers' minds. When consumers experience or see evidence that a product is safe and effective, the brand's perception increases as trust builds that it delivers on its product promises. This relationship aligns with Herman Djaya's (2023) statement that market position and customer loyalty can be maintained or improved through consistent maintenance of product quality.

Rationally, consumers assess the relative benefits of the product before purchasing; clear quality (e.g., safe ingredients, clinical claims, reviews demonstrating effectiveness) lowers perceived risk and increases willingness to pay. Therefore, results showing a positive and significant influence of quality on purchase decisions are in line with Soleha et al. (2024), who found that quality goods are more acceptable and affect consumer decisions. For skincare products, safety and effectiveness are often the primary determinants, turning intent into a buying action.

A strong brand image—which includes attributes such as trust, reputation, and positive associations—makes it easier for consumers to choose a brand among competitors by reducing uncertainty and shortening the evaluation process. Consumers who place brands in the "trusted" category are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend them to others. This explains why brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions, in line with the findings of Rizkiyah et al. (2025).

Conceptually, eWOM and product quality follow slightly different yet interrelated paths: eWOM strengthens or accelerates the formation of a brand image through social proof. In contrast, product quality is a fundamental source of that image. It is therefore natural for eWOM to exert a strong influence on image. However, a weaker direct effect on purchasing decisions — brand image and quality are often important mediators between eWOM and buying behavior. Additionally, contextual variables such as price, promotion, and the role of influencers (as mediators or moderators) can change the magnitude and direction of influence; For example, high-quality influencer marketing can reinforce the transfer of eWOM impact to purchase decisions.

For Somethinc practitioners, the optimal strategy is to maintain product quality (the product as the foundation of credibility) by facilitating quality eWOM (e.g., encouraging authentic reviews and real user testimonials) and partnering with credible influencers—so that eWOM not only shapes image but also translates into conversions. On platforms like TikTok Shop, content formats (short videos, before-and-after, UGC) and review verification mechanisms need to be optimized to make eWOM a convincing signal for potential buyers.

This discussion acknowledges limitations: cross-sectional analysis cannot establish causal inference, and the influence of eWOM may vary by demographics, price segment, or content type. Further research recommendations include: (1) a mediated test of brand image and quality on the eWOM path → purchase decisions, (2) field experiments or longitudinal designs to capture the effects of time, (3) consumer segmentation analysis to see when eWOM becomes the primary determinant versus when quality/pricing is more dominant, and (4) including influencer marketing variables as mediators/moderators because the role of influencers in the context of TikTok Shop is generally significant. It can increase consumer trust in

the brand. This result aligns with Herman Djaya's (2023) assertion that a brand's market position can be improved and customer loyalty increased by maintaining consistent product quality.

Although EWOM influences the decision to buy, this effect is not statistically significant for Something products on TikTokShop. According to Ekonomika et al. (2025), EWOM efficiency can vary by product type, platform, and consumer characteristics, especially when other criteria, such as price and product quality, are more important.

On the other hand, it has been shown that consumers' purchasing decisions are positively and significantly influenced by product quality. When making a purchase, consumers consider factors such as convenience, safety, and efficacy. This is consistent with the findings of Soleha et al. (2024), who found that consumers are more likely to accept and be influenced by high-quality goods.

The brand image itself positively and significantly influences the decision to buy Something items. Strong brand perception increases consumer confidence in product selection. A positive brand perception makes consumers feel safer and more confident when making purchases, especially amid fierce competition for beauty products on digital platforms. This claim aligns with Rizkiyah et al. (2025), who emphasize that brand image has a significant impact on consumer decisions.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a significant, positive influence on brand image. In addition, product quality has been proven to positively and significantly affect brand image. Although eWOM positively influences purchasing decisions, the effect is not statistically significant. On the other hand, both product quality and brand image have a positive, significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. These findings confirm that perceptions of product quality and brand image play an important role in consumers' decision-making processes.

These results have strategic implications for businesses and marketers. Focusing on improving product quality will not only strengthen the brand image but also directly drive purchasing decisions. Additionally, although eWOM's influence on purchasing decisions is insignificant, its role in shaping brand image remains important. Therefore, companies need to actively manage digital communications and consumer reviews to reinforce positive perceptions of their brand.

This study has limitations in generalizability, as the respondents' context and characteristics may not reflect the broader consumer population. In addition, the influence of eWOM on insignificant purchase decisions may be mediated or moderated by variables that have not been studied. For further research, it is recommended to explore other factors such as consumer trust, brand loyalty, or the role of social media as intervening variables. The longitudinal approach can also be used to look at the dynamics of influence over time.

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