



Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Social Media Engagement Among Generation Z TikTok Users

Neva Aliya Sagita

Universitas Telkom, Bandung,
Indonesia

*Elvira Azis

Universitas Telkom, Bandung,
Indonesia

***Corresponding author:**

Elvira Azis, Universitas Telkom, Bandung,
Indonesia. ✉elviraa@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Article Info:

Article history:

Received: May 30, 2026

Revised: June 24, 2026

Accepted: June 27, 2026

Keywords:

Brand-Generated Content; User-Generated Content; Social Media Engagement; Purchase Intention; TikTok.

Abstract

Background: Social media has become a major communication channel for brands, especially in reaching Generation Z, who are highly active on digital platforms. TikTok enables both brands and users to create content that shapes consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. In the skincare industry, Skintific is frequently discussed through Brand-Generated Content (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC), making it important to examine their influence on Generation Z consumers in Bandung.

Objective: This study aims to analyze the influence of BGC and UGC on purchase intention and examine the mediating role of social media engagement among Generation Z TikTok users.

Methods: This study used a quantitative survey approach involving 400 Generation Z respondents in Bandung who actively use TikTok. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the relationships among BGC, UGC, social media engagement, and purchase intention.

Results: The findings show that BGC positively and significantly influenced purchase intention ($\beta = 0.372$, $p < 0.001$), while UGC also had a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.316$, $p < 0.001$). Social media engagement partially mediated both relationships, with an R^2 value of 0.737 for purchase intention. BGC showed the strongest effect on social media engagement ($\beta = 0.510$).

Conclusion: BGC and UGC significantly influence purchase intention directly and indirectly through social media engagement. These findings highlight the importance of interactive, authentic, and engaging TikTok content in increasing Skintific purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.

To cite this article: Sagita, N. A., & Azis, E. (2026). Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Social Media Engagement Among Generation Z TikTok Users. *Journal of Business, Social and Technology*, 7(3), 764-776. <https://doi.org/10.59261/jbt.7i3.685>

INTRODUCTION

Skintific is a skincare brand originating from Canada, founded by Kristen Tveit and Ann-Kristin Stokke in 1957, and has since expanded into various countries, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, the official distribution and marketing management of Skintific is handled by PT May Sun Yvan. PT May Sun Yvan is the official distributor and license holder of Skintific in Indonesia. The company is located in Mega Kuningan, Kuningan Timur, South Jakarta. The company is led by Dedi Irawan Sinuhaji, who serves as the director.

Since entering the Indonesian market in 2021, Skintific has experienced remarkably rapid growth. Its aggressive marketing strategy through digital platforms, especially TikTok, quickly made Skintific products widely recognized, particularly among Generation Z consumers. In 2022,

several of its products even ranked at the top of the beauty category on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia.

In the current era, the development of digital technology has brought major changes to global marketing strategies. Social media has become one of the primary means for brands to interact with consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Society 5.0 emerges as a response to the challenges brought by the Industrial Revolution 4.0 through the creation of new value based on advanced technological development. Its objective is to minimize social and economic disparities, supported by high-quality human resources and sufficient digital infrastructure as essential requirements for its implementation (Wahyuningtyas et al., 2022). This phenomenon is closely related to Generation Z, who are the most active users of digital technology, and whose engagement significantly influences consumption patterns among younger generations. Generation Z refers to individuals born after 1995 and is widely recognized as a mobile generation (Octavia & Sari, 2023).

According to data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), Generation Z was born between 1997 and 2012. Generation Z is often referred to as digital natives, as they have been familiar with technology and social media from an early age (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021). This technology includes computers and other electronic devices such as smartphones, internet access, and social media platforms. They were raised within a digital social ecosystem, making the digital world and technology an inseparable part of their identity. Their emergence alongside the rapid advancement of digital technology distinguishes Generation Z from previous generations. One of the most noticeable differences between Generation Z and other generations is their intensive use of smartphones.

According to data from BPS, in 2025, the population aged 10–29 years in Indonesia reached more than 66 million people, accounting for approximately 23.7% of the total population. In West Java, including the city of Bandung, this demographic represents a substantial market force. With Generation Z becoming increasingly dependent on technology and social media, various digital platforms are competing to become the primary space for them to interact, express themselves, and seek information about products and the latest trends. These characteristics indicate that digital platforms have become an integral part of young people's lives, as they are highly accustomed to digital technology, online communication, and social media (Widyaputri & Sary, 2022). As a result, digital platforms have become an important channel for companies to reach and engage consumers more effectively.

Marketers utilize digital technologies to influence consumer behaviour as part of strategies designed to persuade customers to purchase products. Interactive technologies are specifically employed to shape individual behaviour and strengthen consumers' intention to buy (Sugiat et al., 2020). Businesses increasingly rely on social media platforms for a wide range of marketing purposes, including advertising, customer engagement, customer relationship management, and internal communication among employees.

The growing convenience and importance of social media have made it highly popular, encouraging marketers to focus more intensively on social media-driven marketing strategies (Prasetio et al., 2022). One of the platforms experiencing the most rapid rise in popularity is TikTok, a short-video-sharing application that allows users to express themselves through creative content. The platform has successfully attracted millions of users worldwide, with Indonesia becoming one of the countries with the largest number of TikTok users. This demonstrates that TikTok functions not only as a source of entertainment but also as a digital social interaction space that influences how Generation Z communicates, creates content, and makes consumption decisions.

TikTok has become one of the major influences on Generation Z's digital activities, including entertainment, communication, and consumer behavior. One of the features within the application is TikTok Shop, which enables users to conduct transactions directly through the platform. Promotions on TikTok are generally delivered in the form of engaging and interactive videos, which can influence consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among Generation Z (Maimunah & Suryanti, 2024). Generation Z uses the platform not only for entertainment but also to obtain product information. According to data from Influencer Marketing Hub, TikTok accounts for 17.96% of content uploads, far surpassing Instagram (3.86%) and YouTube (1.63%). In terms of audience engagement, influencers with large followings on TikTok demonstrate an engagement

rate of 4.96%, while Instagram only reaches 1.21% and YouTube 0.37%. This high level of interaction indicates that TikTok is more effective in building communication and trust between brands and consumers. It also encourages the creation of more authentic user-generated content (UGC), rather than relying solely on brand advertisements, thereby fostering a more natural and interactive relationship between users and brands (Firamadhina & Krisnani, 2021).

The high level of interaction on TikTok is highly dependent on Social Media Engagement (SME), which refers to how actively audiences engage and participate with a brand’s content. For Generation Z, Social Media Engagement is not only measured by the number of views or impressions, but also reflects the emotional connection and relevance of the content. Actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, or saving content help strengthen its impact in shaping positive perceptions, including trust and brand loyalty. Such interactions eventually trigger purchase intentions (Hollebeek, 2011). While previous studies have examined the influence of digital content on purchase intention, their findings reveal notable inconsistencies. For instance, Irelli (2020) found that Brand-Generated Content significantly influences purchase intention on Instagram, whereas Paramita (2024) reported that User-Generated Content exerts a stronger effect than Brand-Generated Content in the TikTok context.

Similarly, Shihy (2025) demonstrated that user-generated content has a greater impact on purchase intention for sustainable fashion among Generation Z, which contradicts the findings of Lawrence (2024), who found brand image to be a more dominant predictor than UGC. These inconsistencies suggest that the relative effectiveness of BGC and UGC may be platform-dependent and product-category-specific, warranting further investigation in the Indonesian skincare market context. Furthermore, the mediating role of social media engagement remains underexplored in the TikTok ecosystem, as most existing studies have focused on Instagram and Facebook platforms (Hollebeek, 2011; Prasetyo et al., 2022).

This indicates that engagement often serves as an intervening variable linking marketing content strategies, both Brand-Generated Content (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC), with consumer purchasing decisions. Considering the important role of engagement in influencing purchase intention, it is interesting to examine how this phenomenon is reflected in skincare brands that currently dominate the market, particularly Skintific.

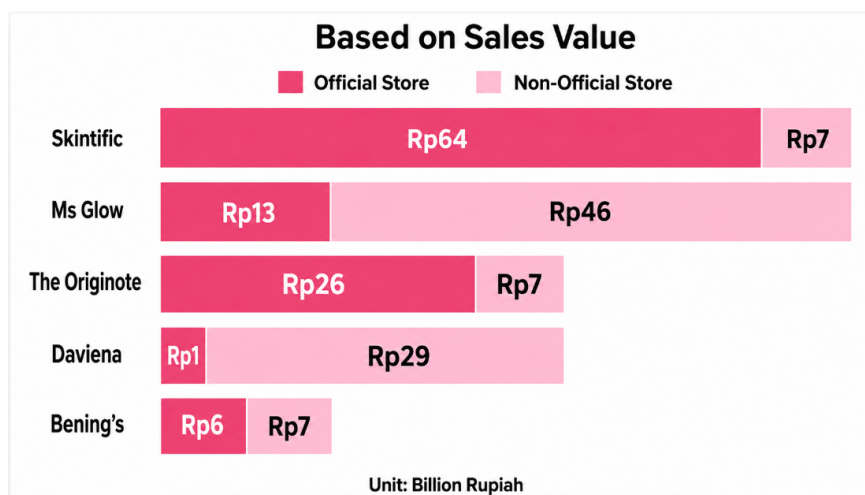


Figure 1. Category Beauty Care, Periode Q1 2024

Source: Kompas Market Insight Dashboard, Shopee, Tokopedia, dan Blibli (Official Store dan Non-Official Store)

According to information from Kompas.co.id, Skintific demonstrated a highly dominant position in the skincare industry during the first quarter of 2024. The data shows that Skintific successfully achieved sales exceeding IDR 70 billion during this period. This achievement was generated through sales from its official stores on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee and Tokopedia.

Skintific’s dominance became even more apparent through the contribution of its official stores to total sales. Based on the report from Kompas.co.id, Skintific’s official stores accounted

for 89.2% of the total sales value, indicating a very high level of consumer trust in official distribution channels. This condition confirms that consumers are more likely to make transactions through official stores because they are considered more reliable in guaranteeing product authenticity, service quality, and transaction security.

Compared to several other brands, such as MS Glow, The Originote, Somethinc, and Benings, Skintific appears to have a significantly higher sales performance. The graph presented shows that other brands still obtain relatively large contributions from non-official stores, while Skintific has successfully optimized its official channels as the primary center of sales. This phenomenon reflects the success of Skintific's distribution channel management strategy in maintaining product quality consistency and consumer experience.

These findings are relevant for further research because they reveal new dynamics in consumer behavior on e-commerce platforms, particularly regarding preferences for purchasing through official stores. Furthermore, Skintific's sales dominance demonstrates how marketing strategies and the management of official channels can influence brand positioning within the increasingly competitive skincare industry. Therefore, Skintific's achievements in the first quarter of 2024 not only reflect sales success but also illustrate changes in consumption patterns and effective business strategies within Indonesia's e-commerce ecosystem. Skintific's strong performance in the e-commerce sector is aligned with the brand's digital communication strategy on social media platforms, particularly TikTok, which has become the primary medium for reaching and building relationships with Generation Z consumers.

Overall, Skintific's content strategy on TikTok, which utilizes both Brand-Generated Content (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC) to enhance Social Media Engagement, demonstrates a marketing transformation that is highly responsive to the behavior of Generation Z. TikTok, as one of the platforms most favored by Generation Z, has become a primary space for brands to showcase creativity and establish emotional connections with audiences. Content created on this platform not only serves as entertainment but also acts as a strategic tool to shape perceptions, increase engagement, and encourage purchasing decisions.

Although Skintific has successfully gained high popularity on TikTok through its Brand-Generated Content (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC) strategies, several issues have emerged regarding the effectiveness of such content in building engagement and influencing the Purchase Intention of Generation Z consumers. The phenomenon observed on TikTok indicates that the high volume of Skintific content does not always correspond with stable levels of Social Media Engagement (SME); some brand content receives high view counts but relatively low interaction rates in terms of likes, comments, and shares. This suggests the existence of audience fatigue toward brand content perceived as overly repetitive or excessively promotional.

On the other hand, although User-Generated Content, such as consumer reviews and testimonials, often receives positive responses, not all such content consistently impacts purchase intention. Some Generation Z consumers perceive that much of the User-Generated Content on TikTok has been influenced by paid partnerships, causing the authenticity of the opinions presented to become questionable. This uncertainty creates a gap between expectations formed through viral content and consumers' actual confidence in purchasing the product.

In reality, not all User-Generated Content supports the brand, as real user experiences may also create new doubts among consumers considering a purchase, especially Generation Z consumers who tend to rely heavily on the opinions of other users before making decisions. Such conditions make User-Generated Content appear far more diverse than brand-created content. Consequently, what is presented by the brand does not always align with the actual experiences of users, and this discrepancy has begun to create problems in consumer evaluations.

This condition further confirms the existence of an information imbalance between brand-created content and user-generated content. Another issue arises from the imbalance in quality and information between Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content. Brand content often focuses on product benefit claims, while UGC tends to highlight personal user experiences that do not always align with the brand's message. This difference may create confusion among consumers in assessing the credibility of information sources. As a result, high exposure to content does not necessarily guarantee increased purchase intention among Generation Z consumers, particularly those in Bandung.

The gap between the abundance of content, fluctuating engagement levels, questionable

information credibility, and the inconsistent influence of BGC and UGC on purchasing decisions indicates that there are still issues requiring further investigation. This gap forms the basis for the importance of this research in understanding how BGC and UGC truly influence Social Media Engagement and the purchase intention of Generation Z consumers toward Skintific products on TikTok.

This study advances the existing literature by offering three distinct contributions. First, it simultaneously examines both Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content within a single integrative model, whereas most prior studies have investigated these constructs independently. Second, it situates the analysis specifically within the TikTok platform ecosystem, which differs fundamentally from Instagram and Facebook in terms of algorithmic content distribution, short-video format dominance, and user interaction patterns. Third, it applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework to conceptualize digital content as environmental stimuli, social media engagement as the organismic processing mechanism, and purchase intention as the behavioral response, thereby providing a theoretically grounded explanation for the observed relationships rather than merely establishing statistical associations.

Brand-Generated Content refers to content created by brands to communicate their stories, values, and products to audiences. Its purpose is to build a positive image, attract attention, and increase consumer trust in the brand (Fernandes, 2022). Brand-Generated Content includes all forms of communication materials, such as videos, social media campaigns, or digital storytelling, produced directly by companies or brand teams to strengthen brand image and consumer engagement. The generated content should be able to inform consumers about products or brand values, entertain audiences to attract emotional interest, and persuade consumers to make purchases (Kingsnorth, 2022).

Brand-Generated Content (BGC) is a central component of digital marketing communication strategies, primarily characterized by trusted sources and comprehensive supervision conducted by brand owners (Irelli & Chaerudin, 2020). Academically, Brand-Generated Content is understood as content fully created and managed by companies, often functioning as licensed material distributed across various social media platforms. It serves as a communication method designed to express and convey the core values, identity, and strategic messages of businesses to targeted audiences (Irelli & Chaerudin, 2020; Shihy & Awaad, 2025). Within the broader digital environment, Brand-Generated Content plays an important role in shaping brand narratives, influencing consumer perceptions of brands, and actively directing consumers toward purchasing behavior (Rogers, 2021). Therefore, Brand-Generated Content can be understood as deliberate communication conducted by companies to define their products or services and differentiate themselves from competitors in the online marketplace (Kotler et al., 2022).

User-Generated Content, also known as consumer-generated content, refers to digital media material related to brands or products that is created and shared by end users rather than companies. User-Generated Content is defined as content such as reviews, photos, videos, testimonials, and blog articles shared by users across various online platforms, especially social media (Rogers, 2021). In today's digital environment, where consumers hold substantial influence over brand narratives, User-Generated Content has become a primary focus in marketing strategies.

Academically, User-Generated Content is highly valued because consumers generally perceive it as more trustworthy and credible than brand-created content or traditional advertising. This credibility emerges from the perception that such content comes from unbiased peers and reflects genuine experiences with products (Lawrence et al., 2024). User-Generated Content is an important part of the overall brand narrative, complementing the content generated directly by brands. Broadly speaking, User-Generated Content represents a vital element of "earned media," which refers to free promotional exposure gained through word-of-mouth recommendations or social media sharing (Rogers, 2021).

Social Media Engagement refers to the interactive relationship between brands and users through two-way communication activities, such as information sharing, responses, and emotional involvement. Social Media Engagement results from user activities toward brand content, including liking, commenting, sharing posts, answering questions, or clicking links

(Fernandes, 2022). Engagement serves as an indicator of how deeply audiences interact with a brand. Relevant, authentic, and emotionally valuable content can generate higher levels of engagement (Kingsnorth, 2022).

Purchase Intention refers to consumers' plans to purchase a particular product after going through a process of evaluating various alternatives and developing a positive attitude toward the brand or product (Shimizu, 2021). Purchase Intention is defined as "what we think we will buy." Therefore, purchase intention can be considered a measure of consumers' tendency to purchase a product or service, where stronger purchase intention reflects a greater desire to buy the product (Wardhana, 2024). Purchase Intention is an important psychological concept that connects consumer attitudes and actions with what they plan to do in the future, making it a significant construct in marketing research (Paramita, 2024; Wardhana, 2024).

According to Ainun (2023), Purchase Intention refers to the direct involvement of consumers in evaluating a product before making a purchase decision in order to determine whether the product is worth buying, followed by the consumer's decision regarding whether or not to purchase the product. More broadly, Purchase Intention can be interpreted as consumers' desire or willingness to purchase or use certain products or services (Lawrence et al., 2024; Wardhana, 2024). Peter and Olson (2013) view Purchase Intention as a plan to purchase a specific product. This intention is highly important within consumer attitudes and is often regarded as part of the conative component (intentions and behavior), which reflects the likelihood of engaging in certain actions, such as making a purchase.

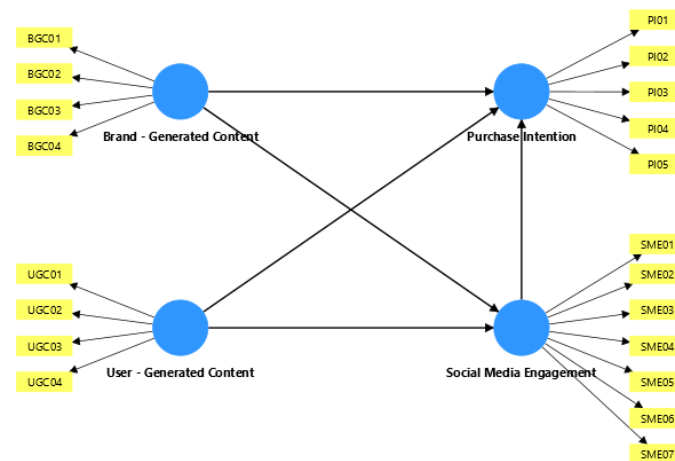


Figure 2. Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses are formulated based on the knowledge and information obtained by the researcher through literature review and preliminary observations, as well as assumptions or predictions that can be empirically tested through the selected research methods. Hypotheses must be formulated clearly, specifically, and empirically testable.

The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows: H1, Brand-Generated Content (X1) influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y); H2, User-Generated Content (X2) influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y); H3, Brand-Generated Content (X1) influences Social Media Engagement (Z); H4, User-Generated Content (X2) influences Social Media Engagement (Z); H5, Social Media Engagement (Z) influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y); H6, Social Media Engagement (Z) mediates the relationship between Brand-Generated Content (X1) and Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y); and H7, Social Media Engagement (Z) mediates the relationship between User-Generated Content (X2) and Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y).

The theoretical justification for these hypotheses is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), which posits that environmental stimuli (S) influence internal organismic states (O), which in turn drive behavioral responses (R). In this study, Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content serve as environmental stimuli that provide informational and social cues to consumers. Social Media Engagement represents the organismic state, reflecting the cognitive, affective, and behavioral processing of these stimuli. Purchase Intention constitutes the behavioral response outcome. This theoretical framing is further supported by the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986),

which suggests that brand-created content may be processed through the central route due to its informational richness, while user-created content may activate the peripheral route through social proof and peer credibility, both pathways ultimately influencing purchase intention through enhanced engagement.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative methods are defined as research approaches grounded in the philosophy of positivism and applied to examine particular populations or samples. The data collection process uses standardized research instruments, while the data analysis is quantitative or statistical in nature, with the primary objective of testing previously formulated hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2019). The unrotated principal component analysis revealed that the first factor accounted for 38.42% of total variance, which is below the 50% threshold suggested. Additionally, a full collinearity assessment was performed following the procedure with all variance inflation factor (VIF) values found to be below 3.3, further confirming the absence of significant common method bias in the dataset.

This study adopts a quantitative approach because it is capable of objectively and systematically measuring relationships among variables through numerical data analyzed using statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This method is appropriate for the research objectives, which aim to empirically examine the influence of Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, and Purchase Intention. The use of questionnaires also facilitates the collection of data from a large number of respondents, particularly Generation Z consumers in the city of Bandung. Therefore, the quantitative approach was selected because it provides accurate, objective, and scientifically accountable results.

The variables used in this study consist of independent variables, namely Brand-Generated Content (X1) and User-Generated Content (X2), a mediating variable, namely Social Media Engagement (Z), and a dependent variable, namely Purchase Intention (Y). These four variables are operationalized so that they can be quantitatively measured in order to determine how content created by brands and TikTok users influences user engagement levels and ultimately shapes the Purchase Intention of Generation Z toward Skintific products in Bandung.

The measurement instrument used in this study employs a Likert scale. The Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups regarding social phenomena. In this research, the social phenomena have been specifically defined by the researcher and are subsequently referred to as research variables.

In this study, the population consists of Generation Z individuals in Bandung who use the TikTok application and have previously seen or been exposed to Skintific-related content on the platform. Based on data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), Generation Z includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012. However, the exact population size is unknown, making it impossible to determine the population size with a specific numerical value. Therefore, the selected sample must be truly representative. The sample criteria in this study are as follows: 1) Respondents must be users of the TikTok social media platform. 2) Respondents must belong to Generation Z and reside in Bandung. 3) Respondents must have seen or been exposed to Skintific content on TikTok.

These sample criteria were subsequently implemented in the form of screening questions within the research questionnaire instrument. The screening questions were used to ensure that participating respondents truly met the predetermined criteria, namely being TikTok users, belonging to Generation Z residing in Bandung, and having seen or been exposed to Skintific content on TikTok. Respondents who did not meet these criteria were not allowed to proceed to the questionnaire completion stage. Therefore, the collected data can accurately represent the characteristics of the research population.

The researcher established a confidence level of 95%, resulting in a Z value of 1.96, with a two-tail test error tolerance level of 5% or 0.05. The probability of rejection (p) and acceptance (q) was set at 0.5. The sample size calculation using the Cochran formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025} \\
 n &= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \\
 n &= 385
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the calculation results, the minimum sample size required for this study is 385 respondents. According to Anwar (2025), descriptive statistics is a branch of statistics used to analyze data by describing, summarizing, and presenting data as it is without drawing general conclusions or generalizations about a broader population. In other words, the primary focus of descriptive statistics is to provide a clear overview of research data characteristics so that researchers can understand patterns, errors, and variations within the research data.

In this study, descriptive analysis techniques are used to describe respondent characteristics and respondents' tendencies in answering questions related to the variables of Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, and Purchase Intention.

According to Sarstedt (2022) in *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*, PLS-SEM is a variance-based statistical analysis approach used to estimate structural models. PLS-SEM enables researchers to analyze relationships among variables while simultaneously evaluating indicator quality within a single process. This method is highly suitable for research objectives aimed at developing theoretical understanding, testing causal relationships, or predicting certain behaviors, particularly in situations where data are not normally distributed, sample sizes are relatively small, or research models involve numerous constructs and indicators. Sarstedt (2022) emphasize that PLS-SEM consists of two primary models: the measurement model, which shows the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, and the structural model, which explains causal relationships among constructs. These two models are estimated simultaneously, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of how indicators form constructs and how constructs influence one another within a broader research system.

Sarstedt (2022) further explain that PLS-SEM must undergo rigorous evaluation stages for both the measurement model and the structural model. Measurement model evaluation is conducted to ensure that indicators possess adequate reliability and validity through tests such as indicator reliability, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Subsequently, the structural model is evaluated through testing of path coefficients, R^2 values, effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be interpreted through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content function as distinct environmental stimuli that activate different processing mechanisms among Generation Z consumers. The stronger path coefficient of BGC on Social Media Engagement (0.510) compared to UGC (0.308) suggests that professionally crafted brand content serves as a more potent stimulus for triggering engagement behaviors on TikTok. This finding contrasts with Shihy (2025), who reported UGC superiority in sustainable fashion contexts, indicating that the relative effectiveness of content types is contingent upon product category and platform characteristics.

The partial mediation of Social Media Engagement aligns with Hollebeek's (2011) conceptualization of customer brand engagement as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. The significant but relatively smaller effect size of SME on Purchase Intention (f -squared = 0.115) compared to BGC's direct effect (f -squared = 0.198) suggests that while engagement amplifies content influence, the informational quality of brand content exerts a stronger direct effect on purchase decisions. This pattern supports the Elaboration Likelihood Model, indicating that Generation Z consumers process Skintific's brand

content through the central route, evaluating product claims and benefits analytically, while simultaneously processing UGC through the peripheral route via social proof mechanisms. These dual processing pathways collectively enhance purchase intention through both direct cognitive evaluation and indirect engagement-mediated affective responses.

Demographic Analysis

This study used primary data collected through the online distribution of questionnaires using Google Forms, which were disseminated through social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and X. The research respondents consisted of 404 individuals belonging to Generation Z and residing in the city of Bandung. Before completing the main questionnaire, respondents were first required to pass four screening questions related to residence in Bandung, age range, familiarity with the Skintific brand, and use of the TikTok platform. The screening process was conducted to ensure that respondent characteristics matched the research requirements, thereby enabling the study to be conducted more effectively and accurately. The screening results indicated that 400 respondents fulfilled all criteria and were deemed eligible to become research subjects.

Based on respondent characteristics, the majority of respondents were female, totaling 245 individuals (61%), while male respondents accounted for 155 individuals (39%). In terms of educational background, most respondents had completed senior high school or vocational high school education, totaling 197 individuals (49%), followed by bachelor's degree holders (S1) with 137 individuals (34%). Based on occupation, the majority of respondents were students, totaling 183 individuals (46%), followed by private-sector employees with 128 individuals (32%). Meanwhile, based on TikTok usage intensity, most respondents used TikTok more than 5 times per day, totaling 140 individuals (35%), followed by respondents who used TikTok 1–5 times per day, totaling 131 individuals (33%). These findings indicate that the majority of respondents were young individuals who actively used social media, particularly TikTok.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis in this study aimed to evaluate and describe respondent characteristics as well as respondent tendencies toward the variables of Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, Social Media Engagement, and Purchase Intention. The analysis results regarding respondents' perceptions as prospective consumers of Skintific products indicate that the Brand-Generated Content variable obtained an average score of 80.98%, the User-Generated Content variable 81.27%, the Social Media Engagement variable 79.49%, and the Purchase Intention variable 80.81%. All variables were categorized as "Good", as their scores fall within the assessment range of 68.01%–84.01%.

PLS-SEM Analysis

Prior to structural model evaluation, the measurement model was assessed to ensure adequate reliability and validity. Indicator reliability was confirmed with all outer loadings exceeding the 0.708 threshold (Sarstedt et al., 2022). Composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceeded 0.70: Brand-Generated Content (CR = 0.912), User-Generated Content (CR = 0.905), Social Media Engagement (CR = 0.924), and Purchase Intention (CR = 0.918), demonstrating internal consistency. Convergent validity was established through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50 for all constructs: BGC (AVE = 0.634), UGC (AVE = 0.617), SME (AVE = 0.671), and PI (AVE = 0.652). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion, with all HTMT values below the conservative threshold of 0.85: BGC-UGC (0.781), BGC-SME (0.762), BGC-PI (0.749), UGC-SME (0.718), UGC-PI (0.703), and SME-PI (0.766). These results confirm that the measurement model meets the established criteria for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

The structural model, or inner model, is a method used to evaluate relationships among variables expressed within a set of equations. Researchers utilize theory, previous experience, and research objectives to determine which independent variables predict each dependent variable in the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework. The following is the inner model analysis conducted in this study.

R-Square Analysis

Table 1. the R-Square analysis results

Variable	R-Square	Category
Social Media Engagement (Z)	0.580	Moderate
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.737	Substantial

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Based on Table 1, the R-Square analysis results The Social Media Engagement variable has an R-Square value of 0.580. This indicates that approximately 58% of the variation in Social Media Engagement can be explained by the independent variables, namely Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-Square value for Social Media Engagement falls within the moderate category. Moreover, The Purchase Intention variable has an R-Square value of 0.737. This indicates that approximately 73% of the variation in Purchase Intention can be explained by the independent variables, namely Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-Square value for Purchase Intention falls within the substantial or strong category.

F-Square Analysis

Table 2. the effect size (f^2) analysis results

Variable Relationship	F-Square	Category
Brand-Generated Content → Purchase Intention	0.198	Medium
Brand-Generated Content → Social Media Engagement	0.304	Medium
Social Media Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.115	Small
User-Generated Content → Purchase Intention	0.168	Medium
User-Generated Content → Social Media Engagement	0.111	Small

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Based on Table 2, the effect size (f^2) analysis indicates that Brand-Generated Content has a medium effect on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.198$) and Social Media Engagement ($f^2 = 0.304$). Social Media Engagement has a small effect on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.115$). Meanwhile, User-Generated Content has a medium effect on Purchase Intention ($f^2 = 0.168$) and a small effect on Social Media Engagement ($f^2 = 0.111$).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a process used to demonstrate structural relationships among constructs, where the validity and reliability of the structural model depend on the adequacy of the measurement model.

A relationship is considered statistically significant when the T-Value exceeds 1.65 and the P-Value is below 0.05. In this study, testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS version 4.1.1.8 to obtain stable and valid estimation results regarding the relationships among the studied variables. The following are the hypothesis testing results in this study.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Values	Result
Brand-Generated Content → Purchase Intention	0.372	5.426	0.000	Accepted
Brand-Generated Content → Social Media Engagement	0.510	8.277	0.000	Accepted
Social Media Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.268	4.587	0.000	Accepted
User-Generated Content → Purchase Intention	0.316	6.248	0.000	Accepted

Purchase Intention						
User-Generated Content	→	0.308	4.779	0.000	Accepted	
Social Media Engagement						

Source: Processed Data (2026)

Discussion

H1: Brand-Generated Content (X1) Influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y)

A hypothesis is accepted if the P-Value is below 0.05 and the T-Value exceeds 1.65. Based on the research results, the Brand-Generated Content variable has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z consumers. This finding is supported by a P-Value smaller than 0.05, namely 0.000, and a T-Value greater than 1.65, namely 5.426. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted, with a path coefficient value of 0.372 indicating a positive influence.

H2: User-Generated Content (X2) Influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y)

The analysis results indicate that the User-Generated Content variable has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention. This is evidenced by a P-Value of 0.000 and a T-Value of 6.248, leading to the acceptance of the second hypothesis. The path coefficient value of 0.316 further confirms that the influence is positive.

H3: Brand-Generated Content (X1) Influences Social Media Engagement (Z)

The third hypothesis indicates that the Brand-Generated Content variable has a positive and significant influence on Social Media Engagement. This is supported by a P-Value of 0.000 and a T-Value of 8.277, resulting in the acceptance of the third hypothesis. The path coefficient value of 0.510 strengthens the conclusion that the influence is positive.

H4: User-Generated Content (X2) Influences Social Media Engagement (Z)

The results of the fourth hypothesis test indicate that the User-Generated Content variable has a positive and significant influence on Social Media Engagement. This is evidenced by a P-Value of 0.000 and a T-Value of 4.779, leading to the acceptance of the fourth hypothesis. The path coefficient value of 0.308 further confirms that the influence is positive.

H5: Social Media Engagement (Z) Influences Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y)

The results of the fifth hypothesis test indicate that Social Media Engagement has a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention among Generation Z consumers. This finding is supported by a P-Value of 0.000 and a T-Value of 4.587, both of which meet the criteria for hypothesis acceptance. The path coefficient value of 0.268 indicates that higher levels of engagement on social media platforms contribute positively to consumers' intention to purchase Skintific products. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is accepted.

H6: Social Media Engagement (Z) Mediates the Relationship Between Brand-Generated Content (X1) and Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y)

The results of the structural model analysis indicate that Social Media Engagement serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between Brand-Generated Content and Purchase Intention. The significant influence of Brand-Generated Content on Social Media Engagement, combined with the significant influence of Social Media Engagement on Purchase Intention, demonstrates that engagement partially mediates the effect of Brand-Generated Content on Generation Z Purchase Intention toward Skintific products. This finding suggests that brand-created content not only directly influences purchase intention but also indirectly influences it through increased engagement levels on TikTok. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is accepted.

The mediation analysis was further validated through the specific indirect effects test using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. The indirect effect of Brand-Generated Content on Purchase Intention through Social Media Engagement was 0.137 ($t = 3.826$, $p = 0.000$), and the indirect effect of User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention through Social Media Engagement was 0.083 ($t = 3.214$, $p = 0.001$). Since both the direct and indirect effects were

significant, Social Media Engagement functions as a partial mediator in both relationships, confirming hypotheses H6 and H7 with proper statistical evidence.

H7: Social Media Engagement (Z) Mediates the Relationship Between User-Generated Content (X2) and Gen Z Purchase Intention (Y)

The results further indicate that Social Media Engagement also acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between User-Generated Content and Purchase Intention. The significant influence of User-Generated Content on Social Media Engagement, together with the significant effect of Social Media Engagement on Purchase Intention, confirms the mediating role of engagement in this relationship. This implies that authentic content created by users can increase audience interaction and emotional involvement, which subsequently encourages stronger purchase intention among Generation Z consumers. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that all proposed hypotheses were accepted because each variable demonstrated a positive and significant influence. The Brand-Generated Content variable was proven to have a positive effect on Generation Z Purchase Intention, with a path coefficient value of 0.372. This indicates that the more attractive and relevant the content created by the brand, the higher the purchase intention among Generation Z consumers. In addition, User-Generated Content also showed a positive and significant influence on Purchase Intention, with a path coefficient value of 0.316. These findings demonstrate that content created by users, such as reviews, experiences, and recommendations shared on social media, is capable of increasing Generation Z consumers' trust and interest in promoted products.

This study also revealed that both Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content have positive and significant influences on Social Media Engagement. Brand-Generated Content showed the strongest influence on Social Media Engagement, with a path coefficient value of 0.510, while User-Generated Content obtained a value of 0.308. These results indicate that attractive, informative, and interactive social media content can enhance audience engagement among Generation Z users on social media platforms. Furthermore, Social Media Engagement was also proven to influence Purchase Intention and to serve as a mediating variable in the relationship between Brand-Generated Content and User-Generated Content toward Purchase Intention. Therefore, user engagement on social media becomes an important factor that strengthens the influence of digital content on Generation Z consumers' purchase intention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Telkom for supporting the completion of this research. Appreciation is also extended to all Generation Z respondents in Bandung who participated in the survey and provided valuable data regarding TikTok content, social media engagement, and purchase intention toward Skintific products. The authors also acknowledge the contributions of previous scholars and digital marketing references that supported the theoretical and empirical development of this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Neva Aliya Sagita conceptualized the study, developed the research instrument, collected respondent data, conducted data processing, and prepared the initial manuscript. Elvira Azis contributed to the research design, theoretical framework, methodological supervision, data interpretation, and critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors reviewed, revised, and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

REFERENCES

- Ainun, H., & Tantra, T. (2023). Pengaruh Customer Review dan Celebrity Endorsement terhadap Purchase Intention dengan Trust sebagai Variabel Moderasi pada Skincare Produk Serum Somethinc. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.32502/jimn.v12i2.6117>
- Anwar, N. (2025). Metode Penelitian Ekonomi: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan Mixed Methods.

- El-Shihy, D., & Awaad, S. (2025). Leveraging social media for sustainable fashion: how brand and user-generated content influence Gen Z's purchase intentions. *Future Business Journal*, 11(1), 113. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00529-3>
- Fernandes, J., & Buytaert, D. (2022). *Digital Marketing with Drupal*. Packt Publishing.
- Firamadhina, F. I. R., & Krisnani, H. (2021). Perilaku Generasi Z terhadap penggunaan media sosial TikTok: TikTok sebagai media edukasi dan aktivisme. *Share: Social Work Journal*, 10(2), 199–208. <https://doi.org/10.24198/share.v10i2.31443>
- Hollebeek, L. D. (2011). Demystifying customer brand engagement: Exploring the loyalty nexus. *Journal of marketing management*, 27(7-8), 785-807. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2010.500132>
- Irelli, R. S., & Chaerudin, R. (2020). Brand-generated content (BGC) and consumer-generated advertising (CGA) on Instagram: the influence of perceptions on purchase intention. *KnE Social Sciences*, 882-902. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v4i6.6649>
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003>
- Kingsnorth, S. (2025). *Digital marketing strategy: an integrated approach to online marketing*. Kogan Page Publishers.
- Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., & Chernev, A. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th ed.). Pearson.
- Lawrence, L., Rochefort, T., Alwiyah, A., & Millah, S. (2024). Pengaruh User Generated Content, Brand Image, dan Hedonic Value terhadap Minat Pembelian pada Produk Salted Egg Milea. *Technomedia Journal*, 9(2), 256-267.
- Maimunah, S., & Suryanti, N. (2024). Pengaruh TikTok Shop, uang saku dan literasi keuangan terhadap perilaku konsumtif pengguna aplikasi TikTok pada mahasiswa Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Riau. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.29408/jpek.v8i3.28538>
- Octavia, S., & Sari, W. P. (2024). Persepsi Generasi Z dengan pernyataan “Kerja sesuai passion” dalam menentukan profesi. *Koneksi*, 8(1), 25-33.
- Paramita, F. (2024). Pengaruh Viral Marketing, Influencer, User Generated Content terhadap Purchase Intention Produk Skincare Skintific pada Media Sosial Tiktok di Mojokerto. *Bisman (Bisnis dan Manajemen): The Journal of Business and Management*, 7(3), 619-632.
- Prasetyo, A., Rahman, D. A., Sary, F. P., Pasaribu, R. D., & Sutjipto, M. (2022). The role of Instagram social media marketing activities and brand equity towards airlines customer response. *International Journal of Data & Network Science*, 6(4).
- Rogers, J. L. (2021). *The digital marketing*. Bookbaby.
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2021). Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In *Handbook of market research* (pp. 587-632). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Shimizu, A. (2021). *New Consumer Behavior Theories from Japan*. Springer Singapore.
- Sugiat, M., Primiana, I., Kaltum, U., & Herwany, A. (2020). Innovative marketing of emerging Moslem fashion in the province of West Java Indonesia. *Journal of Sustainability Science and Management*, 15(5), 165-173. <https://doi.org/10.46754/jssm.2020.07.014>
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Wahyuningtyas, R., Disastra, G., & Rismayani, R. (2023). Toward cooperative competitiveness for community development in Economic Society 5.0. *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy*, 17(3), 594-620.
- Wardhana, A. (2024). *Consumer Behavior in The Digital Era 4.0-Edisi Indonesia*. Jawa Tengah: Eureka Media Aksara.
- Widyaputri, P., & Sary, F. P. (2022). Digital leadership and organizational communication toward millennial employees in a telecommunication company. *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, 6(4), 157-167. <https://doi.org/10.22495/cgobrv6i4p15>