



THE INFLUENCE OF WORD OF MOUTH, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE, AND RISK PERCEPTION ON PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR WARDAH PRODUCTS

Irfan Andinata¹, Nurlaila², Annio Indah Lestari Nasution³

^{1,2,3}Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The skincare industry has experienced rapid growth in line with increasing public awareness of the importance of skin care, particularly among younger generations. Skintific, a skincare brand based on dermatological research, faces intense competition, making it essential to understand the factors that influence consumer purchase decisions. This study aims to examine the effect of Word of Mouth (WOM), customer experience, and perceived risk on purchase decisions for Skintific products. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected through questionnaires distributed to consumers who had previously used Skintific products. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that WOM, customer experience, and perceived risk have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions, both individually and collectively. These findings suggest that positive WOM, satisfying customer experiences, and effective management of perceived risk are crucial strategies to encourage consumer interest and purchasing decisions. The practical implications of this research highlight the need for Skintific to strengthen testimonial-based communication, improve the quality of customer interactions, and provide comprehensive product education to reduce consumer concerns.

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Corresponding Author:

Irfan Andinata
Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam
Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of modernization and globalization, the beauty industry is experiencing very rapid growth, particularly in the skincare product category. This phenomenon is also driven by increased public awareness of the importance of skincare as part of a healthy lifestyle. Skincare is no longer just an additional need, but has become part of daily routines, especially among millennials and Gen Z. According to Statista data (2024), the global skincare market value is projected to reach USD 189.3 billion by 2025, showing significant growth compared to USD 145.3 billion in 2019.

In Indonesia itself, interest in skincare products has experienced an extraordinary surge. Local and international products are competing fiercely to win over consumers. One brand that is showing rapid growth is Skintific, a skincare brand known for its innovation in dermatologically researched active ingredients. However, amidst intense competition, consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by various psychological and social

factors. The three main variables of interest in this study are Word of Mouth (WOM), Customer Experience, and Risk Perception.

Word of Mouth (WOM) has long been recognized as one of the most effective forms of promotion. According to Arndt (1967), as cited in recent research by Chandra et al. (2025), WOM is defined as informal communication between consumers regarding the characteristics of a product or service. In the digital context, Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has become highly dominant with the increasing use of social media. Research by Setyaning & Waskita (2025) found that eWOM has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for beauty products, particularly among Gen Z in Indonesia. They highlighted that recommendations from peers and reviews on social media are the primary references before making skincare purchases. This aligns with the research by Pankham & Thanapuech (2024), which shows that trust in the source of WOM moderates the strength of its influence on purchasing decisions.

Customer experience encompasses all consumer interactions with a brand, from pre-purchase to post-purchase. According to the concept updated by Dui et al. (2024), customer experience is the collection of emotional, sensory, cognitive, and behavioral perceptions that customers acquire throughout their relationship with a company. In the skincare industry, customer experience is crucial because the products are directly related to consumers' skin and health. Zahid & Ruswanti's (2024) study on Skintifics users showed that positive experiences, such as ease of transaction, responsive customer service, and product effectiveness, increase loyalty and encourage repeat purchases. Similarly, research by Hudzaifah et al. (2024) confirms that positive experiences strengthen brand trust and purchase intention.

Risk perception is a consumer's expectation of the likelihood of an undesirable outcome resulting from a product purchase decision. According to Bauer (1960), further developed by Purnama & Aurellia (2024), there are several dimensions of risk in skincare purchases, including functional risk (product is ineffective), health risk (allergic reaction), and financial risk (price is not commensurate with quality). Research by Nur'aini & Utami (2024) shows that the higher the perceived risk of new skincare products, the lower the purchase intention. However, positive WOM and previous user experiences can significantly reduce this perception of risk (Sulistiyowati & Hwihanus, 2024). Skintific products have gained widespread attention in the Indonesian market over the past two years. Based on the study by Dharma & Hadi (2024), Skintific skincare products containing active ingredients such as AHA, BHA, and PHA received an 85% consumer satisfaction rating based on reviews from marketplaces and social media. Additionally, endorsements from dermatologists and positive reviews on TikTok and Instagram strengthen positive WOM for this brand. Risk perception remains a significant challenge, especially for new consumers unfamiliar with certain active ingredients in Skintific formulations. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how WOM, customer experience, and risk perception interact to shape consumer purchasing decisions regarding Skintific products.

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Given the increasing competition in the skincare industry and the importance of maintaining customer loyalty, this research is crucial to conduct. The results of this research are expected to provide managerial implications for the Skintific brand in designing communication strategies, improving the customer journey, and managing consumer risks more effectively.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Research Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to test the relationship between variables and obtain a measurable overview of the phenomenon being studied (Sugiyono, 2019).

Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of all students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra who use Wardah skincare products. Given the relatively limited number of identified users of Wardah skincare products, the sample determination technique used was saturated sampling, meaning that all members of the population were included in the sample (Sugiyono, 2019). Thus, the sample size used in this study is 30

respondents. This number also meets the minimum sample size criteria according to (Memon, M et al., 2020), which is 30–500 respondents for quantitative research.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire compiled based on the indicators of the research variables. The questionnaire was administered directly to respondents who met the criteria, namely students of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra who use Wardah skincare products. In addition to the questionnaire, supporting data were obtained through a literature review from various relevant sources such as books, journals, and scientific articles.

Research Instruments

The research instrument used was a closed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." This scale was chosen to make it easier for respondents to provide answers and to allow the researcher to obtain more measurable data. Before being used, research instruments are first tested for their validity and reliability to ensure they produce valid and consistent data (Ghozali, 2018).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of answers for each research indicator. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis using the latest version of the SPSS program, including validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, as well as simple and multiple linear regression analysis as needed for the research (Santoso, 2019).

Operational Definition

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variables	Indicator
Word of Mouth (X_1)	1. Talking about the product to others 2. Recommending it to friends 3. Encouraging others to buy
Customer Experience (X_2)	1. Satisfaction with product usage 2. Ease of use 3. Product suitability with expectations
Risk Perception (X_3)	1. Financial risk 2. Product performance risk 3. Social or image risk
Purchase Decision (Y)	1. Need for the product 2. Information search 3. Evaluation of alternatives 4. Final purchase decision

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out using a closed questionnaire (survey) that was compiled based on the indicators of each research variable. Each statement in the questionnaire uses a 1–5 Likert scale, with the following answer options:

Table 2. Likert Scale

Score	Answer Category
5	Strongly Agree (SS)
4	Agree (S)
3	Neutral (N)
2	Disagree (TS)

1 Strongly Disagree (STS)

Data Analysis Techniques

After the data is collected, the following data analysis techniques are applied:

1. Classical Assumption Tests: This includes normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure the validity of the regression model.
2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis: To determine the simultaneous and partial influence of independent variables (X_1, X_2, X_3) on the dependent variable (Y).

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where:

Y = Purchase Decision
 X_1 = Word of Mouth
 X_2 = Customer Experience
 X_3 = Risk Perception
A = Constant
 b_1, b_2, b_3 = Regression Coefficients
e = Error Term

Significance Tests:

1. T-test: To test the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable.
2. F-test: To test the simultaneous influence of all independent variables on the dependent variable.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS**Results****Instrument Test****Validity Test**

(Sugiyono, 2019) explains that validity is an instrument that can be used to measure the match between the data that occurs in the object and the data that can be collected by the researcher. Another aspect of the meaning of validity is the accuracy of measurement. A valid measuring instrument can perform its measuring function accurately and also has high precision (Ghozali, 2018). A statement item is declared valid if $r\text{-calculated} > r\text{-table}$ and its significance value < 0.05 , whereas if $r\text{-calculated} \leq r\text{-table}$ or the significance value > 0.05 , then the item is declared invalid (Ghozali, 2018).

Table 3. Validity Test Results

Variables	Item	Corrected item-total correlation	Decision
X1	X1.1	0,890	Valid
	X1.2	0,632	Valid
	X1.3	0,914	Valid
X2	X2.1	0,338	Valid
	X2.2	0,615	Valid
	X2.3	0,777	Valid
X3	X3.1	0,605	Valid
	X3.2	0,750	Valid
	X3.3	0,536	Valid
Y	Y1	0,472	Valid
	Y2	0,587	Valid
	Y3	0,367	Valid
	Y4	0,414	Valid

Reliability Test

The reliability test is used to determine the extent to which a research instrument can provide consistent results when used repeatedly under the same conditions. An instrument is said to be reliable when respondents' answers to statement items are stable over time (Ghozali, 2018). According to (Ghozali, 2013), if $\alpha > 0.90$, then the reliability is perfect.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Cronbach's Alpha ^a	N of Items
,720	13

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

A regression model that is normally or nearly normally distributed is a good regression model. The data normality test used in this study is the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test; data can be said to have a normal distribution if the Asymp. Sig. value is > 0.05 (Gunawan, 2020).

Table 5. Normality Test Results

		Unstandardized Residual
N		30
Normal Parameters ^{ab}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	,90495082
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,103
	Positive	,094
	Negative	-,103
Test Statistic		,103
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200 ^{cd}

Multicollinearity Test

According to (Gunawan, 2020), the multicollinearity test is a regression model test used to determine whether there is a correlation between variables. To determine the presence or absence of multicollinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance. If the tolerance value is greater than 0.10 or the VIF value is less than 10, it can be said that there is no multicollinearity between the variables in the regression model, or it can be concluded that the data is free from the symptoms of multicollinearity.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Results

No	Variables	Tolerance Value	VIF
1	X1	,903	1,108
2	X2	,995	1,005
3	X3	,907	1,102

Heteroskedasticity Test

The heteroskedasticity test is used to determine whether or not there is a deviation from the classical assumption of heteroskedasticity, which is the inequality of the variance of residuals for all observations in the regression model (Aminatus Zahriyah, SE. et al., 2021).

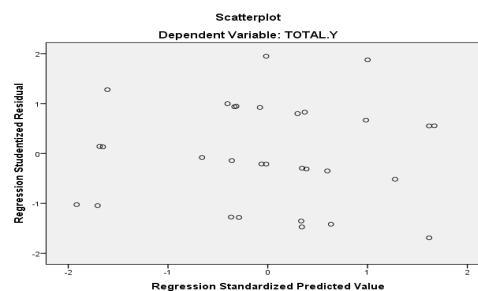


Figure 1. Heteroskedasticity Test Results**Hypothesis Testing****T-test (Partial Test)**

According to Sugiyono (2018:206), "The t-test or partial test is a test used to determine whether the independent variables partially have a significant effect on the dependent variable." The test criteria are determined based on a comparison between the calculated t-value and the t-table value. If the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table value, then H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted (Pratiwi & Lubis, 2021).

Table 7. T-Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	20,006	2,381			4,040	,000
TOTALX1	-,062	,095	-,131		3,680	,022
TOTALX2	,005	,129	,007		4,140	0,000
TOTALX.3	-,125	,124	-,204		3,122	0,000

Simultaneous F-test

According to Sugiyono (2018:208), "This test is used to determine whether the two independent variables simultaneously or together have a significant effect on the dependent variable." This test is used to determine whether the two independent variables simultaneously or together have a significant effect on the dependent variable. The F-statistic test is used to test the significance of the influence of all independent variables (X) on the dependent variable (Y).

Table 8. F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares		Mean Square		F	Sig.
		df				
1 Regression	1,051	3	,350		14.381	,002 ^b
Residual	23,749	26	,913			
Total	24,800	29				

Determination Test (R²)

According to Sugiyono (2018:201), "Determination analysis is a test to see the extent of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable partially."

Table 9. R² Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,206 ^a	,250	,231	,95573

Analysis**The Influence of Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions**

The results of this study indicate that Word of Mouth (WOM) has a positive and significant influence on the purchase decisions of Wardah skincare products among students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. This means that the more often consumers hear recommendations, experience stories, or encouragement from friends and relatives, the higher their likelihood of making a purchase. This finding supports the view (Kotler & Keller, 2016) that WOM is an effective form of marketing communication in building consumer trust. In line with this, research by Slamet & Ahmad Ulil Albab (2023) and Waskita & Setyaning (2025) found that electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) through social media plays a significant role in influencing purchase intention, particularly among Gen Z.

However, other findings indicate a downside to the influence of WOM. Negative WOM, such as bad reviews or unpleasant experiences shared by consumers, can decrease purchase intention. A study (Bo et al., 2023) states that contradictory reviews, both positive and negative, can cause confusion and risk perception, reducing consumers' likelihood to purchase. Thus, although WOM proved to have a positive influence in this study, companies still need to maintain product quality so that the WOM formed in society tends to be positive.

The Influence of Customer Experience on Purchase Decisions

The research findings show that customer experience significantly influences purchase decisions. Consumers who are satisfied with product quality, ease of use, and product alignment with expectations are likely to repurchase and even recommend the product. This aligns with the theory (Schmitt, 2021) which states that customer experience creates emotional value that increases consumer attachment to the product. (Syafaah & Santoso, 2022) also confirms that positive experiences encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions more quickly.

However, customer experience does not always guarantee an increase in purchasing decisions. If the product price is considered too high or the product benefits don't outweigh the cost, consumers might postpone or even cancel their purchase despite having a good experience. Additionally, an expectation gap where consumer expectations are higher than what the product delivers can lead to negative experiences that are detrimental to the company. Therefore, manufacturers need to maintain consistency between brand promises and the actual customer experience to ensure purchasing decisions are maintained.

The Influence of Risk Perception on Purchase Decisions

This study found that risk perception significantly influences purchase decisions for Wardah skincare products. The lower the perception of financial, performance, and social risks, the greater the likelihood that consumers will decide to purchase the product. Rahmi's research (Rahmi Nur Fadhilah and Irni Rahmayani, 2023) shows that although consumer risk perception of skincare products through e-commerce is moderate, risk perception does not have a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Conversely, consumers' beauty lifestyle has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. This finding indicates that consumer lifestyle factors may be more dominant than risk concerns in influencing the decision to purchase skincare products, especially in the current digital era where the convenience of online shopping is very high. However, managing risk perception remains important to ensure consumers feel comfortable and informed when purchasing products through digital platforms.

Additionally, recent research by (Utami Puji Lestari et al., 2025) revealed that risk perception significantly influences purchasing decisions. Consumer concerns about product side effects or incompatibility can be reduced through effective product quality management and communication strategies, thereby increasing trust and purchase interest. This finding underscores the importance of product quality and communication that can reduce consumer doubt as key factors in driving skincare product purchase decisions.

The Influence of Word of Mouth, Customer Experience, and Risk Perception on Purchase Decisions

The research findings indicate that Word of Mouth (WOM) has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Recommendations from friends and positive social media reviews encourage consumers to trust and purchase products, as explained by Kotler & Keller (2016). Research by Setyaning Waskita (2025) and Slamet & Ahmad Ulil Albab (2023) also emphasizes the importance of eWOM in purchasing decisions, particularly among young people. Satisfactory customer experiences regarding product and service quality add emotional value and consumer loyalty, supporting the findings of Huang and Sarigll (2021). However, there are also drawbacks where negative WOM can cause confusion and increase risk perception, leading to a decrease in purchase interest (Bo et al., 2023). Additionally, positive experiences do not necessarily guarantee an increase in purchase decisions, especially if the price is not balanced with the benefits, leading to an expectation gap (Santoso, 2022). Therefore, maintaining consistency in product quality and customer experience is important to keep WOM positive and manage risk perception effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

The research findings on the influence of Word of Mouth, Customer Experience, and Risk Perception on the Purchase Decision of Wardah products indicate that all three variables have a positive and significant influence, both partially and simultaneously, on the purchase decision. Word of mouth has proven to be an important factor in building consumer trust, with recommendations from friends, relatives, and positive reviews on social media able to increase purchase interest. Meanwhile, a satisfying customer experience, including product quality, ease of use, and alignment with expectations, encourages consumers to repurchase and recommend the product to others. On the other hand, risk perception plays an important role in determining purchasing decisions, as consumers are more likely to be confident in buying a product when financial, performance, and social risks are perceived to be low. Overall, these findings confirm that purchasing decisions are not only influenced by external information through WOM, but also by consumers' personal experiences and their perceived level of risk. Thus, companies need to optimize testimonial-based communication, maintain

consistency in customer experience, and manage risk through improved product quality and education in order to sustainably strengthen consumer purchasing decisions.

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