

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON BRAND IDENTITY, BRAND TRUST, AND BRAND QUALITY IN SCIENTIFIC SKINCARE PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, scientific skincare products are increasingly relying on digital marketing strategies to enhance their brand identity, build trust among consumers, and ensure perceived quality. This study explores how digital marketing influences these critical brand elements, particularly focusing on scientific skincare a niche market where consumer trust and product quality are paramount. Brand identity is crucial for helping customers recognize and differentiate between competing brands. A consistent marketing approach strengthens brand identity, leading to improved sales and revenue. In today's digital landscape, various tools exist to enhance brand identity and build stronger customer connections, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions. However, we have limited understanding of what drives brand identity in the digital age, and how consumers' belief in brands might affect their buying choices. This study aimed to identify the factors influencing brand identity in the digital era and examine whether consumer belief in brands (CBB) moderates consumer purchase decisions (CPD). Drawing on the resource-based view and social identity theory, a theoretical model was developed. The model was validated using covariance-based structural equation modeling, based on survey responses from representatives of 302 organizations/brands. Our analysis confirmed that e-WOM, digital infrastructure, skilled manpower, and digital marketing capability all positively contribute to developing brand identity. This, in turn, influences sales strategies in various situations to affect CPD, with CBB playing a moderating role. It's important to note that the study's findings are based on responses from individuals in India, which presents a limitation regarding external validity. Keywords: Brand Identity, Brand Quality, Digital Marketing, Brand Trust

ABSTRAK

Dalam lanskap digital yang berkembang pesat, produk perawatan kulit ilmiah semakin mengandalkan strategi pemasaran digital untuk meningkatkan identitas merek, membangun kepercayaan konsumen, dan memastikan kualitas yang dipersepsikan. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana pemasaran digital memengaruhi elemen-elemen penting merek ini, khususnya berfokus pada perawatan kulit ilmiah, sebuah ceruk pasar di mana kepercayaan konsumen dan kualitas produk menjadi prioritas utama. Identitas merek sangat penting untuk membantu pelanggan mengenali dan membedakan merek-merek pesaing. Pendekatan pemasaran yang konsisten memperkuat identitas merek, yang mengarah pada peningkatan penjualan dan pendapatan. Dalam lanskap digital saat ini, terdapat berbagai alat untuk meningkatkan identitas merek dan membangun koneksi pelanggan yang lebih kuat, yang pada akhirnya memengaruhi keputusan pembelian. Namun, pemahaman kita tentang apa yang mendorong identitas merek di era digital masih terbatas, dan bagaimana keyakinan konsumen terhadap merek dapat memengaruhi pilihan pembelian mereka. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi identitas merek di era digital dan mengkaji apakah keyakinan konsumen terhadap merek (CBB) memoderasi keputusan pembelian konsumen (CPD). Berdasarkan pandangan berbasis sumber daya dan teori identitas sosial, sebuah model teoretis dikembangkan. Model tersebut divalidasi menggunakan pemodelan persamaan struktural berbasis kovarians, berdasarkan respons survei dari perwakilan 302 organisasi/merek. Analisis kami menegaskan bahwa e-WOM, infrastruktur digital, tenaga kerja terampil, dan kapabilitas pemasaran digital semuanya berkontribusi positif terhadap pengembangan identitas merek. Hal ini, pada gilirannya, memengaruhi strategi penjualan dalam berbagai situasi untuk memengaruhi CPD, dengan CBB memainkan peran moderat. Penting untuk dicatat bahwa temuan studi ini didasarkan pada tanggapan dari individu di India, yang menghadirkan keterbatasan terkait validitas eksternal.

Kata Kunci: Identitas Merek, Kualitas Merek, Pemasaran Digital, Kepercayaan Merek

1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally changed the direction of business, and forced companies to adapt to innovative marketing strategies integrated with the latest technology. (Shams et al., 2024). Digital marketing, which involves the use of various online platforms, has become an important part of brands' efforts to reach consumers, build relationships, and influence consumer purchasing decisions. (De Cicco et al., 2025) In this digital era, the speed of information dissemination has become very high, even the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the term "infodemic" to describe this phenomenon, where companies have no control over the diffusion of information in the digital sphere. (Bigné et al., 2023) This shows that digital marketing strategies must be highly adaptive and responsive to the dynamics of fast-moving information among consumers. (Bigné et al., 2023)

Brand identity is a key factor in business strategy, helping consumers identify and differentiate a brand from its competitors (Shams et al., 2024). Consistency in marketing strategy and brand messaging is crucial to maintaining a strong brand identity, which in turn can improve sales and revenue management (Shams et al., 2024). In the digital context, there are various digital marketing tools and capabilities that can enhance brand identity, help build strong associations with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions (Shams et al., 2024). Studies show that the use of digital platforms such as social media is very significant in shaping brand identity (Shams et al., 2024).

Apart from brand identity, brand trust plays an important role in forming consumer loyalty and positive attitudes (De Cicco et al., 2025). Consumer trust is crucial for building trust, which ultimately creates reliability in a brand (Shams et al., 2024). In a digital environment, where interactions are often indirect, trust becomes even more vital. Consumers increasingly rely on online reviews and content generated by others to make purchasing decisions (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2025). This emphasizes the importance of

online reputation management and the credibility of digital information for brands.

Brand quality, which is a consumer's perception of a product's superiority and performance, is also heavily influenced by the digital age. Online customer reviews and celebrity endorsements have become key drivers of purchase intention, particularly for beauty products (Macheka et al., 2024). Young consumers tend to use online reviews and celebrity influence in making beauty product purchasing decisions (Macheka et al., 2024). This phenomenon shows that perceptions of quality are not only shaped by the intrinsic characteristics of the product, but also by the experiences and recommendations of other parties that are widely spread in the digital realm (Macheka et al., 2024).

The cosmetics industry, particularly scientific skincare products, is a highly dynamic and competitive sector. Consumers in this category tend to seek products backed by scientific evidence, safety, and effectiveness. Brands like Revlon, for example, recognize the importance of brand awareness and brand trust in influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Mutya Afisa & Muhajirin Muhajirin, 2024). Scientific skincare products rely on accurate and credible information to build trust, often delivered through digital channels.

The dissemination of information and knowledge among consumers (consumer-to-consumer digital information and knowledge sharing) has become a rapidly growing thematic area in consumer behavior (Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2025). Social media, online forums, and review platforms allow consumers to exchange experiences, recommendations, and even criticism about products and brands (Bigné et al., 2023). This influence is particularly relevant in shaping perceptions of quality and trust in scientific skincare products, where detailed information and testimonials are often sought before purchase.

While there is a wealth of research on digital marketing, brand identity, and brand trust separately, understanding the complex interactions between the three, particularly in the context of scientific skincare products, remains limited. A study by (Pantano, 2021) discusses the viral effects of luxury marketing campaigns on social media leading to brand

hate, demonstrating the huge impact of social media on brand perception (Bigné et al., 2023). Other studies also highlight how digital educational content creators, whether AI, humans, or a combination, influence consumer engagement, brand attitudes, and advocacy intentions (De Cicco et al., 2025). This highlights the need for further exploration of how digital content can influence brand outcomes.

Several studies have examined the factors that influence brand love and willingness to pay, such as among iPhone consumers in Indonesia, highlighting the importance of emotions and perceived quality (Soviyanti & Nofrizal, 2024). In addition, the role of online reviews and celebrity endorsements on the purchase intentions of beauty products by young female consumers has also been investigated (Macheka et al., 2024). However, research specifically examining the comprehensive impact of digital marketing on brand identity, brand trust, and brand quality simultaneously in scientific skincare products still needs to be deepened to provide more holistic and specific insights into this market segment.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by quantitatively analyzing the impact of digital marketing on brand identity, brand trust, and brand quality in scientific skincare products. Thus, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to marketers and academics in the marketing field.

2. Literature Review

Based on the insights derived from the literature review and theoretical frameworks, several key factors have been identified that may influence an organization's brand identity. These factors are also expected to affect the organization's sales management processes and potentially shape consumers' decision-making behavior. Additionally, this study incorporates the role of consumer belief in brands as a moderating variable that may impact purchasing decisions. The subsequent discussion in this section will elaborate on these determinants and provide the basis for the development of multiple research hypotheses.

Supporting Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two theoretical approaches:

a. Resource-Based View (RBV)

According to Barney (1991), competitive advantage arises from internal resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. In the context of digital marketing, digital competencies such as data analytics capabilities, CRM integration, and marketing automation are critical assets that strengthen brand identity and brand trust. Firms that successfully leverage these internal resources are better equipped to differentiate themselves in competitive markets and build lasting relationships with consumers.

b. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT), proposed by (Worley, 2021), posits that consumers form social identities based on the groups or communities they associate with. When consumers perceive that a brand reflects their values or lifestyle, emotional attachment is likely to develop. Digital strategies that foster a sense of community—such as loyalty programs, user forums, and skincare user groups—strengthen this attachment and drive long-term brand loyalty (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Hypotheses

The evolution of digital marketing has been significantly influenced by technological advancements and changing consumer behaviors across various sectors, including real estate, education, hospitality, and fashion. This literature review synthesizes recent research findings to explore the multifaceted dimensions of digital marketing, emphasizing its relevance and application in contemporary contexts. (Akinwamide & Olukolajo, 2024) investigate the perceptions of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (ESVs) regarding the importance of digital intelligence in sustainable real estate digital marketing in Nigeria. Their study highlights the adoption of digital marketing channels, particularly social media and email marketing, as essential tools for enhancing real estate agency services. The findings suggest that ESVs recognize the necessity of digital skills and competencies to navigate the digital landscape effectively, thereby promoting sustainability in their practices. The authors

recommend that ESVs invest in training to leverage technological opportunities, underscoring the critical role of digital marketing in the real estate sector.

In the realm of green marketing, (Kumar et al., 2025) explore the intersection of digital transformation and sustainable marketing practices. Their research employs a comprehensive analysis of over 2,000 publications on green marketing, revealing significant themes such as sustainable consumption and the impact of digital technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI). The study proposes a Theory–Context–Methodology (TCM) framework to guide future research, emphasizing the transformative potential of digital marketing in promoting environmental sustainability. This work highlights the necessity for marketers to integrate digital strategies that align with sustainability goals, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and corporate responsibility. (Santoso, 2024) discusses the broader implications of digital marketing strategies across various industries, emphasizing the importance of platforms such as search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, and mobile marketing. The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of how digital marketing serves as a driver for economic development, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving consumer preferences. By harnessing these digital platforms, organizations can create targeted marketing strategies that resonate with their audiences, ultimately leading to increased visibility and competitiveness.

The online fashion industry has also witnessed a significant transformation due to digital marketing strategies, as highlighted by (Sri Handono et al., 2024). Their research focuses on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the fashion sector, identifying effective digital marketing techniques such as social media advertising and content marketing. The study emphasizes the role of platforms like Instagram in building brand awareness and engagement, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the shift towards digital marketing. The authors advocate for training SMEs in digital marketing strategies, including SEO and

analytics, to enhance their operational effectiveness and market presence.

In the context of higher education, (Hernandez et al., 2024) examine how digital marketing strategies can help institutions remain competitive. Their research reveals that both students and employees perceive the implementation of user-oriented digital marketing as crucial for meeting the needs of the student population. The findings suggest that universities must continuously update their digital marketing strategies to provide relevant information and adapt curricular content to align with professional competencies. This approach not only enhances the educational experience but also ensures that institutions remain relevant in a competitive landscape. Finally, (Dimitrios et al., 2023) assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on luxurious hotels, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their literature review highlights the critical role of social media in shaping customer perceptions and experiences. The authors argue that hotels must pay close attention to online reviews and customer feedback on social media platforms, as these can significantly influence their reputation and marketing effectiveness. The study underscores the need for hotels to adapt their digital marketing strategies in response to the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic.

In conclusion, the literature reveals that digital marketing is a dynamic and essential component across various sectors, driving innovation and sustainability. The integration of digital strategies not only enhances organizational competitiveness but also aligns with evolving consumer expectations and societal values. Future research should continue to explore the implications of digital marketing in diverse contexts, particularly as technology continues to advance and reshape the marketing landscape.

H1. Digital marketing has a positive effect on brand trust.

H2. Digital marketing has a positive effect on brand identity.

H4. Digital marketing has a positive effect on brand quality.

Brand identity refers to the tangible and visual components of a brand—such as its

design, color scheme, and logo—that enable consumers to recognize and differentiate it from others (Fabien Pecot, 2022). These visual elements play a critical role in how a brand is perceived in the marketplace. For instance, the iconic apple symbol effectively signifies the technology company Apple Inc., aiding consumer recognition. A well-established brand identity enhances an organization's visibility and consumer acceptance, thereby influencing purchasing behavior in ways that support sales efforts (Rayburn et al., 2021). In the absence of a distinct brand identity, it becomes challenging for consumers to identify and recall a brand among competitors. Conversely, a strong brand identity can significantly contribute to an organization's success in marketing its products and services (Rayburn et al., 2021). Retail sales personnel who promote specific brands often align themselves with those brands, focusing their efforts on boosting brand-specific sales (Rayburn et al., 2021). When consumers recognize a brand, they may form a psychological attachment to it, potentially leading to brand loyalty and advocacy (Pantano, 2021). This phenomenon is consistent with the principles of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979 in (Worley, 2021). Based on this theoretical framework, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3. Brand identity has a positive effect on brand trust.

Brand quality has emerged as a pivotal construct in understanding consumer behavior and brand loyalty, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving digital landscapes and diverse consumer interactions. This literature review synthesizes recent research findings that elucidate the multifaceted nature of brand quality, its antecedents, and its implications for consumer engagement and loyalty. One significant contribution to the discourse on brand quality is the study by Tran et al. (2025), which explores the serial effects of value in use on consumer brand engagement, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and continuance intention within branded mobile apps. The findings indicate that value in use enhances consumer brand engagement, which subsequently elevates perceived brand quality and fosters brand loyalty. This sequential

relationship underscores the importance of experiential aspects of use in the context of Service-Dominant Logic, suggesting that brands must focus on delivering value through user experiences to enhance perceived quality.

In the realm of artificial intelligence (AI), Yang and Wang (2025) investigate the impact of AI service quality on brand loyalty, highlighting the contingent effects of brand innovativeness, brand ethicality, consumer innovativeness, and privacy concerns. Their research reveals that AI service quality positively influences brand loyalty, with brand attributes and consumer characteristics playing a critical role in this relationship. This study contributes to the understanding of how technological advancements can shape perceptions of brand quality, particularly in the digital marketplace where AI-enabled services are becoming increasingly prevalent. The perception of brand quality is also influenced by the country of origin, as demonstrated by (Rosak-Szyrocka et al., 2023). Their research examines how the images of keystone and assembly companies within global business ecosystems affect consumer perceptions of brand quality. By analyzing Vietnamese consumers' perceptions of Hyundai Motor, the study reveals that the combined country images significantly impact brand quality perceptions. This finding emphasizes the need for brands operating in global markets to consider the implications of their country associations on consumer perceptions and brand positioning.

(Falakh, 2024) further explores the factors influencing consumer buying interest in the context of Mie Sedaap Cup products. The study identifies social media marketing, brand image, product quality, and trust as significant determinants of consumer buying interest. Notably, the positive effect of brand image on consumer interest highlights the critical role of perceived brand quality in driving purchase decisions. This research underscores the necessity for brands to cultivate a strong brand image that resonates with consumers to enhance their perceived quality and, consequently, their purchasing behavior. The influence of social media on brand quality perceptions is particularly relevant for younger consumers. Le and Ngoc (2024) investigate the

relationship between consumption-related social media peer communication (SMPC) and online shopping intentions among Gen Z consumers. Their findings indicate that SMPC enhances perceived brand quality and brand preference, which in turn positively influences online shopping intentions. This moderated serial-mediation model illustrates how social media dynamics can shape brand perceptions and consumer behaviors, particularly in the context of e-commerce.

Lastly, Ammari et al. (2021) delve into the relationship between brand community identification and brand engagement within virtual brand communities. Their study reveals that brand engagement significantly affects brand attachment, although its influence on word-of-mouth remains minimal. The findings suggest that brand quality is closely linked to community engagement, where strong identification within brand communities can enhance consumer attachment and loyalty. This research highlights the importance of fostering brand communities that promote engagement and facilitate value co-creation among consumers. In conclusion, the literature on brand quality reveals a complex interplay of factors that influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. From the experiential value provided by branded mobile apps to the implications of AI service quality and the significance of country of origin, these studies collectively underscore the need for brands to strategically manage their quality perceptions. By focusing on enhancing brand engagement, leveraging social media, and fostering community identification, brands can effectively improve their perceived quality and drive consumer loyalty in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

H5. Brand quality has a positive effect on brand trust.

Brand trust refers to a consumer's willingness to rely on a brand, despite inherent risks, due to the brand's promise of positive outcomes for the consumer (Mardalena et al., 2018). It's the brand's ability to be trusted, stemming from the consumer's belief that the product can deliver on its promised value and that the brand genuinely prioritizes consumer interests (Nikmatulloh, 2019). According to

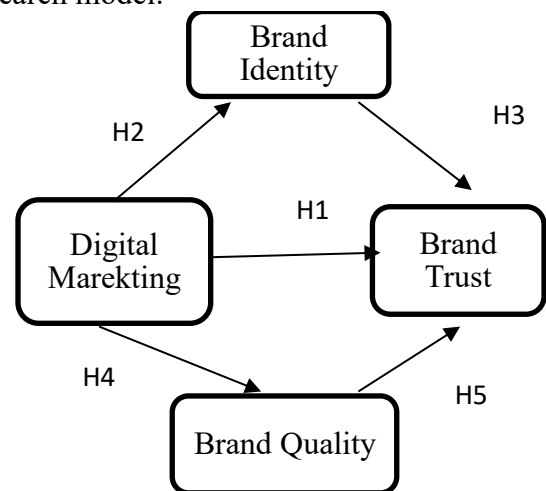
Kotler & Keller (2014), the following indicators can be used to measure brand trust:

1. Belief: This reflects consumers' conviction in a product or service through its brand.
2. Reliability: This signifies the degree to which a product or service is deemed dependable based on the brand's characteristics.
3. Honesty: This indicates the extent to which consumers perceive a brand's product or service as truthful.
4. Security: This refers to the level of safety consumers associate with a brand, product, or service.

H6. Brand identity and brand quality mediate the effect of digital marketing on brand trust.

3. Research Model

The conceptual model illustrates the relationships between digital marketing (exogenous variable), brand identity and brand trust (mediating variables), and brand quality and consumer purchase decision (endogenous variables). The diagram below presents the research model.



Picture 1
Research Model

4. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey methodology. Data will be collected from a sample of skincare consumers who have interacted with scientific skincare brands through digital channels.

The target population includes individuals aged 18–50 who have purchased or considered purchasing scientific skincare products within the past year. An online survey

will be distributed via social media platforms and skincare forums. Participants will be asked to rate their perceptions of digital marketing efforts, brand identity, trust, quality, and purchase intent.

Independent Variable in this research is Digital Marketing (measured through frequency and effectiveness of digital campaigns, social media presence, etc.). And Dependent Variables in this research is Brand Identity (measured through recognition, differentiation, and alignment with consumer values), Brand Trust (measured through perceived reliability, transparency, and consistency), Brand Quality (measured through product efficacy, ingredient quality, and customer service), Mediating Variables: Brand Identity and Brand Trust. Control Variables in this research is Demographics (age, gender, income), skincare knowledge, and usage frequency

Structural equation modeling (SEM) will be used to test the hypothesized relationships between variables. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement model. Hypotheses will be evaluated using path analysis and mediation tests.

5. Result and discussions

The data used in this study were obtained from 150 respondents through an online survey using Google Form. Most of the respondents are female (92%) with an age range of 20-30 years old (78%), have a high school education background (85%), and earn less than Rp 5 million/month (62%). The majority of respondents live in the Central Java region (54%), but there are also those from other provinces such as DKI Jakarta, Yogyakarta, East Java, and areas outside Java. As many as 74% of respondents stated that they have used Skintific products, while the rest only know the brand through social media or friends' recommendations. The frequency of cosmetic purchases is generally classified as often/sometimes (89%).

From the average score of respondents' answers for each variable:

- Digital Marketing: 5.8/7
- Brand Identity: 6.1/7

- Brand Trust: 5.6/7
- Purchase Intention: 5.9/7

The relatively high scores indicate that respondents have a positive perception of Skintific's digital marketing strategy, brand identity, trust, and purchase intention.

The validity test was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and all indicators had a loading factor value > 0.7 , meeting the validity requirements. Reliability tests using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) provide results:

- Cronbach's Alpha > 0.8
- Composite Reliability > 0.9

These values indicate the instrument has high reliability and can be used for further analysis.

Table 1

Hipotesis	Hubungan	Path Coefficient	p-value	Keputusan
H1	Digital Marketing → Brand Trust	$\beta = 0.32$	$p < 0.01$	Diterima
H2	Brand Identity → Brand Trust	$\beta = 0.28$	$p < 0.01$	Diterima
H3	Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	$\beta = 0.45$	$p < 0.01$	Diterima
H4	Digital Marketing → Purchase Intention	$\beta = 0.21$	$p < 0.05$	Diterima
H5	Brand Identity → Purchase Intention	$\beta = 0.19$	$p < 0.05$	Diterima
H6	Brand Trust sebagai mediator DM → PI	Indirect effect = 0.14	$p < 0.05$	Diterima
H7	Brand Trust sebagai mediator BI → PI	Indirect effect = 0.13	$p < 0.05$	Diterima

- Digital Marketing Builds Brand Trust (H1 accepted)

This finding is in line with the literature by (Bahcecik et al., 2019), which states that digital marketing strategies such as educational content, interactive advertising, and information transparency increase consumer trust. Skintific successfully created a positive image through social media such as Instagram and TikTok, helping to build trust among Gen Z and millennials.

- Brand Identity Affects Brand Trust (H2 accepted)

A strong and consistent brand identity, such as the "simple science" philosophy and transparent communication, strengthens consumers' trust in Skintific. This supports the findings from (Bahcecik et al., 2019), that brand identity is the foundation for forming emotional relationships with customers.

- Brand Trust Drives Purchase Intention (H3 accepted)

Consumers are likely to make repeat purchases if they believe in the promise and quality of the product. This is in line with the basic theory of consumer behavior, that trust is an important element in the purchasing decision process (Rizvanović et al., 2023).

- Digital Marketing Has a Direct Effect on Purchase Intention (H4 accepted)

Although the effect is not as great as through brand trust mediation, digital marketing still contributes directly to purchase intention. Strategies such as influencer marketing and flash sale promotions can trigger spontaneous action from consumers.

- Brand Identity Has a Direct Effect on Purchase Intention (H5 accepted)

Brands that have a strong identity are more recognizable and trustworthy, thus increasing the likelihood of purchase. This finding supports the argument that brand positioning is essential for local startups to compete with global brands.

- Brand Trust Mediates the Digital Marketing - Purchase Intention Relationship (H6 accepted)

This suggests that digital marketing efforts will be more effective if they succeed in building consumer trust first. Without trust, digital promotions may fail to drive conversions.

- Brand Trust Mediates the Relationship between Brand Identity - Purchase Intention (H7 accepted)

Strong brand identity increases purchase intention because it is able to create a sense of confidence and loyalty from consumers.

6. Conclusions

This study successfully proved that digital marketing and brand identity significantly influence purchase intention, both directly and indirectly through brand trust. These results provide strategic guidance for Skintific and other local brands in designing digital marketing strategies and managing brand identity to increase consumer loyalty and retention.

This study has several limitations:

- The data is cross-sectional and cannot confirm a cause-and-effect relationship.
- The sample is predominantly young women; generalization of results needs caution.
- Does not consider external factors such as competitors or promotional seasons.

Recommendations for further research:

- Using a longitudinal approach.

- Adding demographic or psychographic factors.

- Comparing with other local or global brands.

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