

Social Media Marketing Role in Building Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention among Generation Z

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Abstract

The expansion of digital marketing has prompted innovative marketing strategies among hand and body lotion brands, including Marina as one of the most popular hand and body lotion brands in Indonesia. This study aimed to examine the impact of user-generated content and influencer on the purchase intention of Marina hand and body lotion, both directly and indirectly, through brand awareness among Generation Z in Jakarta. A quantitative study was conducted with 410 participants through purposive sampling. Overall, 5 out of 6 hypotheses were statistically accepted. Influencer was found to have an insignificant effect on the purchase intention of Marina among Gen Z directly. The statistical results indicate that brand awareness serves as a crucial mediating variable between user-generated content and influencer toward purchase intention. The findings indicate that marketing strategies aimed at Gen Z should focus on enhancing user engagement and promoting authentic brand storytelling to increase brand awareness and translate it into purchase intention. This study also presents several suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Brand Awareness; Influencer; Purchase Intention; User-Generated Content

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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has witnessed significant growth in digital marketing, establishing it as a primary method for driving business growth. In 2023, approximately 89% of businesses adopted digital marketing strategies via social media and online marketplaces (Ain et al., 2024). Digital marketing is recognized for its ability to access a broader and more rapid market, while also offering greater cost efficiency relative to traditional marketing methods (Humaira, 2022).

Content marketing is a frequently employed strategy in digital marketing nowadays (Santika, 2022). Content marketing is a strategic approach that involves the creation and distribution of relevant content aimed at attracting, acquiring, and engaging target consumers to facilitate profitable actions. User-generated content is a widely employed strategy in content marketing by brands. User-generated content is an essential component in achieving marketing success in the current era of globalization (Putri, 2020). User-generated content refers to material

produced by consumers of a brand's products, typically in the form of reviews that reflect individual experiences (Wafiyah & Wusko, 2023) and is considered to be objective about companies, more personable, genuine, and easily embraced by viewers (Putra, 2025). Consequently, user-generated content has emerged as a powerful marketing tool in the digital age, playing a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Another popular digital marketing strategy involves collaboration with influencers. Influencers are regarded as an effective strategy for attracting new customers through their followers (Santika, 2022). People often utilize social media as an informational resource for purchasing decisions, particularly by examining reviews from previous consumers of the product (Lestari, 2024).

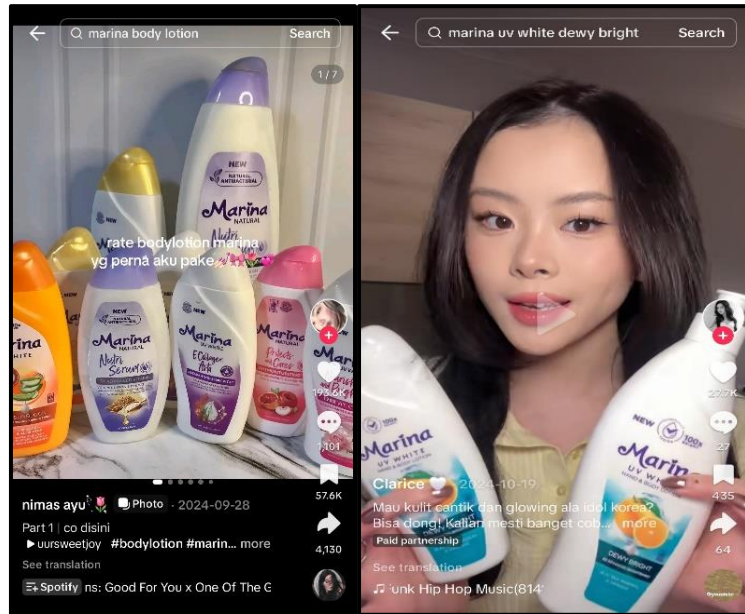


Figure 1. User-generated Content and Review from an Influencer of Marina
Source: TikTok, 2025

The bodycare industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth in recent years. The Indonesian hand and body lotion market is witnessing considerable growth, with the overall skincare market anticipated to reach USD 2.94 billion by 2025 and USD 3.7 billion by 2030 (Statista Research Department, 2025). Recognizing this potential, hand and body lotion brands use content marketing, including user-generated content, as a strategic approach to gain a competitive advantage in the body care market (Lemon Influencer, 2020). Marina, as one of the most popular hand and body lotion brands in Indonesia, also utilizes user-generated content and influencers as their digital marketing strategy to enhance brand awareness and lead purchase intention of potential customers. Figure 1 depicts an example of user-generated content and a review of Marina from an influencer on TikTok. Those strategies led Marina to become the best-selling body lotion brand in 2024 with 15.5% market share of the total hand and body lotion market in Indonesia (Nabilah, 2024). This demonstrates that user-generated content and influencer strategies significantly impact Marina's product sales.

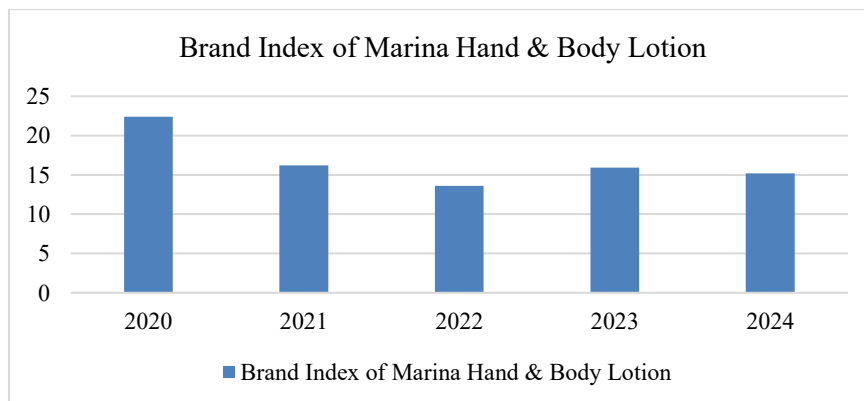


Figure 2. Marina's Top Brand Index
Source: Top Brand Award, 2024

On the other hand, Marina still faces challenges in enhancing brand awareness. According to the Indonesian Top Brand Award, Marina's brand index decreased from 22.4 in 2020 to 15.2 in 2024 (see Figure 2), despite the implementation of a user-generated content and influencer endorsement marketing strategy. Despite excellent sales of Marina hand and body lotion, Marina needs to uphold its brand strength position. Brand awareness serves as the fundamental basis for the strength of the brand. Strong brand awareness allows customer attraction, fosters loyalty, and enhances sales performance. Brand awareness helps consumer recognition and recall of a brand during the purchasing process, thereby impacting their buying decisions. Marina has to evaluate the efficacy of the content marketing strategy to enhance brand awareness. By doing so, Marina can evaluate the continued relevance of user-generated content and influencers as components of their marketing strategy for enhancing brand awareness.

Prior research has shown that user-generated content and reviews from influencers can substantially enhance awareness of a brand by increasing exposure and cultivating a feeling of authenticity and trust (Lawrence et al., 2024; Xu, 2023). Organic content often connects better with prospective consumers than conventional advertising due to its perceived credibility and relatability. Consequently, exposure to content created by customers has been shown to enhance customers' attitudes about a brand and elevate their buying intentions. Furthermore, collaboration with influencers can assist brands in attracting audience attention and fostering a positive association between the influencer and the brand (Xu, 2023). Influencers can facilitate the communication of essential brand messages, including quality, reliability, and overall value. Hence, influencers also play a significant role in enhancing consumer brand awareness. Nonetheless, there remains an insufficient quantity of research examining the integration of social media influencers and user-generated content in fostering brand awareness and attracting targeted consumers to purchase products. Xu (2023), Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024), and Wicaksono & Susan (2024) focus on examining the impact of social media influencers on brand awareness and purchase intention within social media platforms. Liaw et al. (2022) examined the relationship between user-generated content and brand awareness, while Widya (2022) analysed the impact of user-generated content on purchase intention for skincare products. It is crucial to analyse the role of user-generated content and influencers in enhancing brand awareness and shaping consumer purchase intentions.

The implementation of digital marketing strategies, including user-generated content and social media influencers by Marina, has proven to be less effective in enhancing brand awareness and influencing the purchasing intentions of potential consumers. However, previous research has demonstrated that digital marketing strategies effectively enhance brand awareness and influence purchasing intentions among consumers. This indicates an inconsistency between the results of previous research and the phenomena of digital marketing, Marina. Thus, this study tends to investigate the relationship between user-generated content, influencers, brand awareness, and the intention to purchase Marina hand and body lotion. This model addresses the existing gap in the literature regarding research on digital content marketing strategies that integrate user-generated content and influencers to enhance brand awareness and boost purchasing intentions among potential consumers. Consequently, the model presented in this study may be further refined to examine the mechanisms through which brand awareness is established via user-generated content and influencers. This study focuses on Generation Z (Gen Z) because this generation demonstrates a high proficiency in utilizing digital technology, particularly social media. Subsequently, Gen Z is marked as a considerable potential market in the body care industry. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate whether the user-generated content and influencer are effective in building brand awareness and someone's intention to buy Marina hand and body products among Gen Z in Jakarta, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behaviour

Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial for brands seeking to market products efficiently (Dharma et al., 2024). Theories of consumer behaviour offer a comprehensive framework for explaining purchase intention (Hussain et al., 2023; Sultan et al., 2021; Zhu et al., 2020). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework is one of the most extensively utilized grand theories. The S-O-R theory, developed by Mehrabian & Russell (1974), has been extensively utilized to analyse the cognitive and affective processes that mediate the relationship between marketing stimuli and purchasing behaviour. In the context of online marketing, the S-O-R framework is able to explain how online marketing stimuli shape consumer purchase intention. In this framework, user-generated content and social media influencer marketing can be defined as external cues (stimuli) that affect consumers' internal states (organism), which subsequently influence behavioural outcomes (response). User-generated content such as authentic product reviews, unboxing videos, and body care routines shared by peers functions as a credible and relatable stimulus that enhances consumers' perceived value and trust in a brand (Cheung et al., 2020). Influencer-generated content on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok utilizes perceived expertise, attractiveness, and relatability to enhance attitudes toward the product and the brand (Lim et al., 2017). Brand awareness is crucial in this process, serving as a factor that enhances recognition, recall, and familiarity. This enables consumers to process stimuli more favourably and develop stronger purchase intentions (Aaker,

1996; Foroudi et al., 2016). Social media influencer credibility and user-generated content authenticity enhance consumer attitudes directly and increase purchase intention indirectly through the mediating effect of brand awareness.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to an individual's interest in a product promoted by a brand. Purchase intention arises from consumer motivation, leading individuals to undertake actions that satisfy their needs and desires, ultimately leading to a desire for a product (Shakuntala & Ramantoko, 2023). In the context of digital marketing strategy, someone's intention to purchase a product can be influenced by several factors, such as brand attitude (Zhao et al., 2024) and brand awareness (Lestari & Yuniarinto, 2024; Wicaksono & Susan, 2024), which is formed from user-generated content (Kusuma et al., 2023; Putra, 2025; Widya, 2022) and social media influencer (Xu, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024). Intent-based marketing, or consumer intent marketing, leverages consumers' conveyed or determined interest in products or services. This marketing strategy allows brands to customize content and promotions according to consumer intent data, including engagement with brand content (Dharma et al., 2024). Paying attention to consumer intentions enables brands to comprehend the most useful data regarding potential buyers, thereby increasing brand awareness and enhancing consumer purchase intentions.

Purchase intention is commonly utilized to assess different aspects of marketing planning, including product positioning and personalized advertising (Dharma et al., 2024). Ferdinand (2014) identified four dimensions of purchase intention: explorative intention, where consumers actively seek brand-related information; preferential intention, which involves making a product the primary choice; transactional intention, characterized by a strong desire to purchase a product immediately; and referential intention, where consumers recommend the product to others if they express interest.

User-Generated Content

User-generated content represents an innovation in digital marketing, evolving alongside the growing prevalence of social media usage among the Indonesian population. Mir & Rehman (2013) define user-generated content as information generated and shared by consumers on social media platforms. This information presents consumers' personal experiences with a product, characterized by neutrality and fairness, thereby serving as a reliable resource for potential buyers in their product decision-making process. User-generated content enables businesses to promote their products to potential consumers via voluntary participation, thereby reducing marketing costs for brands in the age of digital media.

According to Thomas (2020), four indicators exist for measuring user-generated content. The initial aspect involves indicating when the content includes evaluative information regarding a product or brand, whether positive or negative. Second, pioneering refers to users of products or services who voluntarily contribute to the development, modification, or creation of innovations through the content they generate. The third indicator is co-communication, where consumers generate content and share it with brands (customer-to-business). The final aspect is co-creation, which refers to the process wherein consumers participate in the development of future products by offering suggestions or new ideas to the brand.

User-generated content can enhance a brand's market reach. Sharing personal experiences with a brand's product on social media can enhance the brand's visibility (Putra, 2025). This aligns with the findings of Liaw et al. (2022), which indicate that user-generated content creation and distribution aid consumers in brand recognition and recall. User-generated content can enhance brand awareness of a product. The hypothesis regarding the relationship between user-generated content and brand awareness is stated as follows:

H₁: User-generated content has a positive effect on the brand awareness of Marina hand and body lotion.

Influencer

The increasing popularity of social media has led numerous business professionals to leverage the significant impact of influencers as an effective digital marketing strategy. The term influencer derives from the word influence, signifying an individual's capacity to affect the behavior or opinions of others. An influencer is an individual who garners trust and admiration from their followers or audiences, enabling their conveyed messages, activities, or product endorsements to effectively influence and inspire these individuals (Lestari & Yuniarinto, 2024). Anjani & Irwansyah (2020) also stated that influencers are individuals possessing a substantial following on social media platforms, compensated by brands to endorse their products to these followers, thus influencing purchase intent through their expertise and established relationships. Therefore, Influencers who get respect from their followers often possess the ability to influence and motivate them through their actions and endorsements, including the promotion of purchasing intentions for products featured on social media (Anjani & Irwansyah, 2020).

Shimp & Andrewsm (2020) identify three dimensions for evaluating influencers. The first dimension is trustworthiness, which refers to the extent of trust that potential consumers place in influencers regarding the accurate and clear communication of information about a brand's products. The second dimension refers to the

attractiveness of influencers. Influencers are perceived as attractive when they share similarities with their audience, enabling the audience to adopt the beliefs, interests, and references presented by the influencer. Expertise refers to the extent of follower perception regarding an influencer's capability to convey information, grounded in their skills, knowledge, and experience with the products.

Influencers significantly contribute to digital marketing by facilitating brand exposure to a broader audience (Xu, 2023). Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024) demonstrated that the increased influence of influencers on consumers correlates with a greater likelihood of consumers recognizing, identifying, or recalling a brand. The hypothesis regarding the relationship between influencers and brand awareness is stated as follows:

H₂: Influencer has a positive effect on the brand awareness of Marina hand and body lotion.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a critical component of the marketing approach adopted by a business, facilitating customer recognition and distinction of a brand from its competitors. Brand awareness refers to a brand's capacity to be recalled by consumers within a specific product category and the ease with which it can be remembered (Shimp & Andrews, 2020). Aaker (1991) identified four levels of brand awareness: unaware brand, brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind. The lowest level of brand awareness occurs when consumers are not aware of a brand's existence. Brand recognition represents the basic stage of brand awareness, indicating that consumers have acknowledged and identified the presence of a brand. Brand recall represents a stage of brand awareness in which consumers not only recognize a brand's existence but also can remember it. Top of mind refers to the highest level of brand recognition, where a brand is the primary choice among consumers.

Firmansyah (2019) determines four indicators for measuring brand awareness: recall, recognition, purchase, and consumption. Recall measures the degree to which consumers recall a brand from memory when encouraged about a product within a specific category. Recognition refers to the degree to which consumers can identify a brand within a specific product category upon coming across its name, whether visually or audibly. The concept of purchase demonstrates the degree to which a brand impacts consumers' intentions when selecting a product. Consumption indicates the degree to which consumers retain awareness of and regard for a brand in the context of competing products.

Putra (2025) states that user-generated content can affect purchase intention by enhancing brand awareness, thus raising a brand's visibility and credibility among potential consumers. User-generated content enhances familiarity with the brand, subsequently elevating brand awareness. Consumers generally exhibit purchase intentions toward brands that are familiar and trusted. This aligns with the study of Widya (2022), which indicates that information shared by users with other consumers positively influences purchase intentions. The hypothesis regarding the relationship among user-generated content, brand awareness, and purchase intention is as follows:

H₃: Brand awareness positively mediated the effect of user-generated content on intention to buy Marina hand and body lotion.

H₄: User-generated content has a positive effect on intention to buy Marina hand and body lotion directly.

Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024) claim that influencers have an indirect effect on enhancing consumer purchase intentions via brand awareness. Increased awareness of a brand promoted by an influencer correlates positively with the intention to purchase. This aligns with the findings of Zhao et al. (2024), indicating that an influencer's attractiveness during product reviews can enhance audience purchase intention. The hypothesis concerning the relationship among influencers, brand awareness, and purchase intentions is articulated as follows:

H₅: Brand awareness positively mediated the effect of influencer on intention to buy Marina hand and body lotion.

H₆: Influencer has a positive effect on intention to buy Marina hand and body lotion directly.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative explanatory approach to investigate the proposed research model as depicted in Figure 3. A questionnaire consisting of 30 items utilizing a 6-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=less agree; 4=quite agree; 5=agree; 6=strongly agree) was developed to assess each variable proposed in the research model. The evaluation of user-generated content and purchase intention utilized 8 items, as adopted from Widya (2022). The assessment of influencers was conducted using 6 items from Gunawan (2024), while brand awareness was measured with 8 items derived from Putra (2025). Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was utilized to analyze the data due to its suitability for small to medium sample sizes and its robustness in handling non-normal data distributions (Hair et al., 2021).

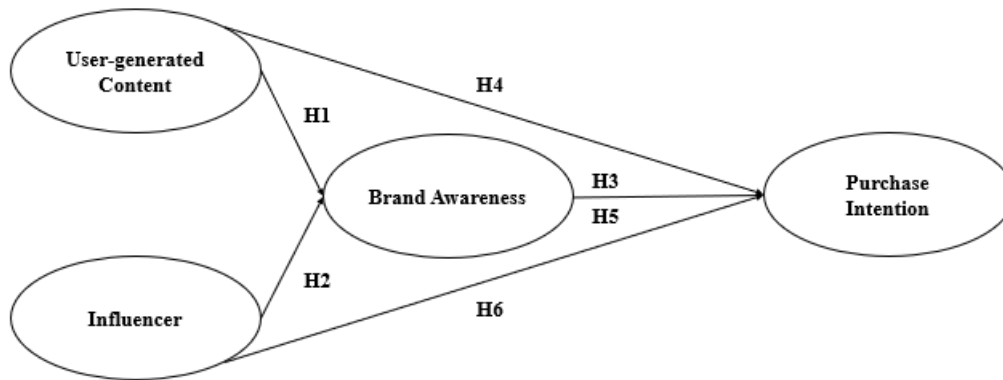


Figure 3. The Proposed Research Model

This study analyzes Generation Z, highlighting its considerable market segmentation potential for hand and body lotion brands. The influence of peer recommendations on purchase intentions within Generation Z is substantial, emphasizing the social dynamics that underscore the necessity for connection and shared experiences among this demographic (Dharma et al., 2024). Therefore, this study selected Generation Z as the target population. Arum et al. (2023) define Generation Z as individuals born between 1997 and 2012, whose lifestyles are significantly shaped by the advancements in technology characteristic of the digital era. Further, Jakarta demonstrates the highest spending on skincare and body care products among cities (Muhamad, 2024). Therefore, the population includes Generation Z women in Jakarta, aged 13 to 28 years in 2025. Purposive random sampling was used to collect the sample with the criteria of women aged 13-28 who are domiciled in Jakarta and active on a social media platform. The online survey using Google from through social media platforms (i.e., Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, TikTok, and X) was conducted on 9th-29th May 2025. The total sample for the current study consisted of 410 participants, which meets the minimum criteria of the ten-times rule for sample size (Hair et al., 2021).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the respondent profile of the current research. The research consisted of 410 respondents, primarily within the 20–22 age range (62%), followed by those aged 23–25 years (17%) and 17–19 years (9%), with lesser representation in the 13–16 and 26–28 age categories (3% and 9%, respectively). Regarding domicile, the majority of respondents were located in East Jakarta (29%), followed by West Jakarta (23%), South Jakarta (21%), North Jakarta (17%), and Central Jakarta (10%). The predominant group of respondents consisted of university students (72%), followed by employees (17%), school students (5%), housewives (5%), and a minor segment classified as others (1%). The demographic composition indicates that the study primarily captures the viewpoints of young adult university students residing in diverse areas of Jakarta.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Profile	Number	Percentage
Age Group		
13-16 years old	12	3%
17-19 years old	38	9%
20-22 years old	254	62%
23-25 years old	70	17%
26-28 years old	36	9%
Domicile		
West Jakarta	92	23%
Central Jakarta	41	10%
South Jakarta	87	21%
East Jakarta	120	29%
North Jakarta	70	17%
Occupation		
Student	22	5%
University Student	293	72%
Employee	68	17%
House Wife	21	5%
Others	6	1%

The first step of data analysis was an outer model test to evaluate the reliability and validity of each construct in the proposed model. Table 2 summarizes the results of the reliability and validity test. Based on the loading factor values, all the constructs have met the minimum criteria (Hair et al., 2021). It implies that all constructs were reliable in explaining each latent variable. The values of Cronbach's alpha were above 0.6, and the composite reliability was also more than 0.7. Hence, these results confirm that the current proposed model has a good internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021). Lastly, the average variance extracted values range from 0.506 to 0.536, indicating that all variables were valid.

Table 2. Outer Model Test Results

Variables	Construct	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
User Generated Content (UGC)	UGC1	0.709	0.860	0.891	0.506
	UGC2	0.686			
	UGC3	0.726			
	UGC4	0.713			
	UGC5	0.718			
	UGC6	0.685			
	UGC7	0.723			
	UGC8	0.727			
Influencer (I)	I1	0.763	0.827	0.874	0.536
	I2	0.728			
	I3	0.747			
	I4	0.714			
	I5	0.701			
	I6	0.738			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.750	0.880	0.905	0.544
	PI2	0.644			
	PI3	0.779			
	PI4	0.754			
	PI5	0.752			
	PI6	0.721			
	PI7	0.766			
Brand Awareness (BA)	BA1	0.690	0.841	0.881	0.517
	BA2	0.715			
	BA3	0.535			
	BA4	0.763			
	BA5	0.773			
	BA6	0.738			
	BA7	0.790			

Table 3 displays the results of hypothesis testing based on the inner model assessment. Overall, 5 of 6 hypotheses were accepted. The p-value for the first and second hypotheses was under 0.000. It implies that brand awareness of Marina hand and body lotion is positively influenced by user-generated content and influencers. According to the t-statistic values of hypotheses 3 and 4, which were greater than 1.96, indicating that user-generated content statistically has a positive effect on Marina's purchase intention both directly and indirectly. In addition, the effect of user-generated content was greater when it was mediated by brand awareness. It means that brand awareness plays a significant role in mediating the influence of user-generated content on the intention to purchase Marina hand and body lotion among Generation Z in Jakarta. Brand awareness also successfully mediated the effect between influencer and purchase intention (t-statistic >1.96). However, the p-value of hypothesis 6 was 0.060, which means that there was no direct influence of the influencer on the purchase intention of Marina hand and body lotion. The predictive power (R^2) of brand awareness was 0.592, and the overall model was 0.682. This indicates that the proposed model demonstrates moderate predictive power (Hair et al., 2021). Moreover, the R^2 of brand awareness was 0.592 and 0.682 for the overall model, indicating that the model has moderate predictive power. This supports the appropriateness of the theoretical framework and shows that a significant proportion of purchase intention can be explained by user-generated content, influencer marketing, and brand awareness.

Table 3. Inner Model Test Results

Hypotheses	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decisions
H ₁ : UGC → BA	0.500	9.827	0.000	Accepted
H ₂ : I → BA	0.351	7.338	0.000	Accepted
H ₃ : UGC → BA → PI	0.354	7.971	0.000	Accepted
H ₄ : UGC → PI	0.098	1.724	0.043	Accepted
H ₅ : I → BA → PI	0.248	6.145	0.000	Accepted
H ₆ : I → PI	0.069	1.558	0.060	Rejected

DISCUSSION

The Effect of User-Generated Content on Brand Awareness

The statistical findings demonstrate that user-generated content has a significant impact on Marina's brand awareness, and it supported the first hypothesis. This finding supports prior studies (Liaw et al., 2022; Putra, 2025) that user-generated content has a significant contribution in assisting consumers to recognize and remember a brand. Liaw et al. (2022) stated that the information derived from user-generated content has a significant positive effect on consumer perception. This implies that organic content shared by consumer, such as unboxing, review, or testimonial of a product on their social media platform, can enhance brand awareness of a product. User-generated content is perceived as neutral regarding business entities, more personal, authentic, and is generally trusted easily by the audience (Putra, 2025). Thus, the credibility and relatability of user generated content often enhance trust and reduce uncertainty. This finding proved that content from Marina's customer on social media contribute to gain potential consumer to recognize that Maria as a brand of hand and body lotion. Based on the construct of user-generated content in this study, co-communicating and co-creating were the most powerful indicator to measure user-generated content. This suggests that content containing shared experiences with Marina products and feedback for product development significantly impacts brand recognition for Marina among Gen Z. Therefore, user generated content does not merely serve as supplementary material but acts as a crucial driver in shaping brand awareness.

The Effect of Influencer on Brand Awareness

The second hypothesis demonstrated that Marina's brand awareness is significantly influenced by social media influencers. This finding is consistent with the studies of Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024) and Kusuma et al. (2023), who revealed that a stronger influence exerted by social media influencers on consumers is positively correlated with a higher likelihood of brand recognition, identification, and recall. The persuasive power of influencers, such as credibility, attractiveness, and relatability, plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and strengthening brand awareness (Kusuma et al., 2023). Moreover, influencers with a significant number of followers on social media can drive brand recognition and recall based on the relationships that the influencer and followers have built (Anjani & Irwansyah, 2020). Thus, this study supports prior research indicating that the growing impact of social media influencers increases customer recognition of Marina as a hand and body lotion brand. The credibility and appeal of influencers are critical factors in developing and enhancing brand awareness, as they foster trust and generate persuasive influence among consumers. The provision of objective information with the unique communication style is crucial to shape brand awareness through social media influencers. Consequently, influencers not only act as intermediaries between the brand and its target audience but also play a strategic role in embedding Marina within consumers' brand consideration set.

The Effect of User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention through Brand Awareness

This study identifies brand awareness as a crucial mediating variable that links user-generated content to purchase intention for Marina hand and body lotion products. The statistical analysis indicates that user-generated content exerts a significant and positive effect on purchase intention when mediated by brand awareness. Accordingly, the third hypothesis of this study is supported. This result reinforces the findings of Putra (2025), Liaw et al. (2022), and Lestari & Yuniarinto (2024), who similarly demonstrated that brand awareness serves as a key mediator in strengthening the relationship between consumer-generated content and purchase behavior. In this context, user-generated content enhances brand recognition and recall, which subsequently fosters trust and familiarity, ultimately leading to higher purchase intention (Liaw et al., 2022). Thus, brand awareness does not merely function as an outcome of user-generated content but also as a pivotal mechanism through which consumer perceptions are translated into purchase decisions. This indicates that consistent and positive user-generated content enhances Generation Z's recognition, familiarity, and overall perception of the brand. This increased awareness enhances the likelihood of brand selection during purchase decisions (Putra, 2025). The presence-mediated effects indicate that user-generated content works as a persuasive process and also operates as a strategic system for brand development.

The Effect of User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention

The fourth hypothesis proved that user-generated content has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. However, this study revealed that the direct influence of user-generated content on the purchase intention of Marina hand and body lotion is relatively small. Despite this modest effect, the finding aligns with prior research (Kusuma et al., 2023; Liaw et al., 2022; Widya, 2022), which consistently highlights the role of consumer-generated content in shaping purchase decisions. Reviews, testimonials, or experience in using a product retain persuasive power as it is often perceived by potential buyers. Those contents foster social proof and peer influence, which can encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions (Lawrence et al., 2024; Liaw et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the results also suggest that while user-generated content contributes to purchase intention, its influence is relatively stronger in building brand awareness among potential consumers. In other words, user-generated content primarily functions as a driver of brand recognition and trust formation, which may then indirectly translate into purchase intention.

The Effect of Influencer on Purchase Intention through Brand Awareness

The statistical results indicate that brand awareness significantly mediated the relationship between influencer and purchase intention, thereby supporting the fifth hypothesis. Brand awareness significantly mediates the relationship between factors influencing purchase intention. Wicaksono & Susan (2024) found that when consumers identify and recognize a cosmetic brand through Instagram influencers, that brand becomes top-of-mind, driving consumers to purchase the product. The intention of consumers to purchase a product, particularly in the beauty industry, increases when promoted by social influencers, thereby affecting consumer decision-making processes regarding the purchase of that product. It implies that the present study is consistent with previous studies, which found that the brand recognition and recall influenced by social media influencers significantly drive purchase intentions (Lestari & Yuniarinto, 2024; Wicaksono & Susan, 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). The interaction between social media influencers and their followers, along with factors such as professionalism, attractiveness, and credibility, significantly fosters a positive attitude toward the brand (Zhao et al., 2024). The professionalism of social media influencers in conveying product information can enhance purchase intention by increasing consumer awareness and brand recognition. Furthermore, how the influencers engage with their followers during product promotions serves as a competitive advantage in enhancing brand recall, thereby motivating followers to purchase the product indirectly.

The Effect of Influencer on Purchase Intention

The role of influencers in directly influencing consumers to purchase Marina hand and body lotion was found to be insignificant, leading to the rejection of the sixth hypothesis. This indicates that information and product reviews provided by social media influencers alone are not sufficient to motivate consumers to make a purchase. Although Anjani & Irwansyah (2020) emphasized that influencers with a significant number of followers can drive purchase intention through their knowledge and the quality of their engagement with followers, the present study reveals that such influence was ineffective in the case of Marina's hand and body lotion. This finding corroborates Kusuma et al. (2023), who also found that influencer reviews on TikTok were unable to directly shape consumers' purchase intentions for cosmetic products. Specifically, the evidence suggests that Generation Z consumers are not easily persuaded to purchase solely based on influencer endorsement. Instead, they tend to seek additional reviews and information from other platforms before making a purchase decision, unless the brand already holds a strong and positive image (Lubis & Hayu, 2025). Hence, social media influencers function more as a reference point within Generation Z's decision-making process rather than a decisive factor in purchase intention. Furthermore, the variation in individual skin types compared to those of influencers may weaken the credibility of product reviews, thereby limiting their persuasive power. For this reason, brands must carefully consider the relevance and similarity between influencers and their target consumers. By selecting influencers whose skin type or consumer profile closely resembles that of the target market, brands may foster stronger identification, enhance trust, and ultimately increase the likelihood of immediate purchase following influencer endorsement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that both user-generated content and social media influencers play significant roles in shaping brand awareness, which subsequently influences the purchase intention of Marina hand and body lotion among Generation Z consumers in Jakarta. While user-generated content directly affects purchase intention, its impact becomes more substantial when mediated by brand awareness, highlighting the importance of brand familiarity and consumer trust in driving purchasing behavior. Social media influencers, on the other hand, were found to enhance brand awareness but did not exert a direct influence on purchase decisions, suggesting that influencer endorsements alone are insufficient without a strong underlying brand connection. These findings emphasize that marketing strategies targeting Generation Z should prioritize fostering consumer engagement and

encouraging authentic brand storytelling, as these efforts are more likely to strengthen brand awareness and ultimately translate into higher purchase intention.

This study identifies several marketing strategies that hand and body lotion brands, including Marina, can adopt to strengthen brand awareness and purchase intention. The first strategy is the strategic utilization of user-generated content through targeted social media campaigns. Such campaigns should encourage customers, particularly those from Generation Z, to actively share their product experiences in the form of reviews, testimonials, or creative content. The use of brand-specific hashtags and mentions can further amplify visibility and foster community engagement around the brand. A second strategy involves collaboration with micro-influencers to co-create authentic and high-quality user-generated content. Compared to macro-influencers, micro-influencers tend to build closer and more trustworthy relationships with their followers, making them effective partners for conveying brand identity, values, and product benefits in a relatable manner. By combining user-generated content with influencer collaborations, brands can strengthen credibility, enhance consumer trust, and nurture stronger brand-consumer relationships.

This study presents several limitations that suggest directions for future research. First, given the limited intervening variables utilized in this study, future research could explore additional psychological or behavioral factors that affect the relationship between user-generated content, influencer, and purchase intention, including trust, perceived quality, or brand loyalty. This study utilizes only one generational group in Jakarta. Extending the research to encompass additional age groups or cities may clarify whether these results are specific to Gen Z in Jakarta or relevant to a broader demographic. Future studies should analyze the effectiveness of user-generated content and influencers across platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X, and YouTube, considering the distinct ways in which content is consumed on each platform.

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