

Influence of Promotion, Product Quality, and Brand Image on Purchase Decisions for Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion among UTM Jakarta Students: Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of promotion, product quality, and brand image on purchase decisions for Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion, with purchase intention serving as a mediating variable among students at Muhammadiyah University of Technology Jakarta. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 100 students selected through purposive sampling and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that promotion and brand image significantly enhance purchase intention, whereas product quality does not. Purchase intention significantly influences purchase decisions and mediates the effects of promotion and brand image, but not product quality. These findings highlight the pivotal role of purchase intention in consumer decision-making and suggest that strengthening promotional effectiveness and brand image is more critical than relying solely on product quality to increase purchase decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's cosmetics and personal care sector has shown significant growth in recent years, indicative of heightened consumer consciousness regarding personal care and the swift development of local producers. The Ministry of business of the Republic of Indonesia reports that the quantity of cosmetic enterprises rose from 760 in 2022 to 797 in 2023, signifying a more active and competitive business. With the influx of firms into the market, consumers gain access to a broader selection of items that exhibit similar quality, functionality, and pricing, hence rendering competitiveness more reliant on adept marketing tactics rather than mere product supply (Kementerian Perindustrian, 2023; Kontan, 2022). In a highly competitive landscape, businesses must consistently enhance their marketing efforts, uphold exceptional product standards, and cultivate a positive brand reputation to sway consumer buying choices (Assauri, 2022).

The Indonesian body lotion sector illustrates this fierce rivalry. Scarlett Whitening, a domestic skincare label established in 2017, has effectively achieved significant visibility using digital marketing, influencer promotions, and brand ambassador initiatives aimed at younger demographics (Montolalu et al., 2021; Hamid & Rumyeni, 2024). Notwithstanding its significant visibility and appeal, market performance suggests that brand awareness does not inherently lead to consumer purchasing choices. Kompas (2024) indicated that Scarlett Whitening comprised merely around 3.9% of body lotion sales in 2024, trailing behind well-established rivals like Marina, Vaseline, and Nivea. In a similar vein, earlier market analyses indicated that while Scarlett Whitening previously contended closely with top brands in Indonesia's e-commerce sector, the body lotion category has continued to be significantly fragmented, exhibiting only minor variations in market share among rival brands (Kompas, 2024; Sidi, 2022). These results indicate that consumers have a plethora of options, rendering their purchasing choices more susceptible to marketing influences than merely brand reputation.

Consumer buying choices in the cosmetics sector are shaped by various interconnected elements, such as advertising, product excellence, and brand reputation. Promotion functions as a vital communication mechanism that educates consumers, ignites curiosity, and motivates product acquisitions. Nonetheless, the efficacy of promotional initiatives varies throughout empirical research. Martani (2023) indicated that promotion has a favourable impact on purchasing decisions, while Yuse et al. (2025) discovered that promotion mainly effects purchase intention, which in turn affects purchasing decisions. These divergent results suggest that the efficacy of promotions can function indirectly via consumers' psychological motivations instead than directly on their purchase actions.

Product quality serves as a pivotal factor influencing customer behaviour, especially within the cosmetics sector, where buying choices are intricately linked to perceptions of safety, efficacy, and appropriateness. Due to the fact that customers assess cosmetic items based on personal experiences, judgements of quality frequently differ among users. Prior research often endorses a favourable correlation between product quality and consumer purchasing choices (Martani, 2023). Nugroho and Prasetyo (2022) illustrated that product quality might indirectly affect purchasing decisions via purchase intention, indicating that customer perceptions alone may not suffice to drive real purchases without prior favourable behavioural intentions. These contradictory results suggest that the connection between product quality and buying choices necessitates additional empirical research.

In a like manner, brand image has evolved into a strategic resource in ever competitive consumer marketplaces. A positive brand reputation bolsters consumer trust, diminishes perceived risk, and amplifies confidence in product acquisition. However, robust brand awareness does not invariably lead to enhanced market outcomes. Notwithstanding Scarlett Whitening's comprehensive digital marketing initiatives, its market share continues to lag behind several rival brands (Compas, 2024). Empirical data similarly yields contradictory findings. Martani (2023) indicated a notable direct impact of brand image on consumer purchasing choices, while Katamso and Sugianto (2024) discovered that brand image predominantly affects purchasing decisions via purchase intention. These conflicting results indicate that purchase intention could serve as a crucial psychological factor connecting marketing stimuli to customers' ultimate buying choices.

The significance of buying intention grows more pertinent when analysing Generation Z consumers. This demographic constitutes one of the most rapidly expanding market categories for skincare items due to its significant involvement in self-care routines and internet platforms. As per Jakpat (2024), almost 86% of Generation Z consumers favour skincare products over cosmetics, whilst Populix (2024) indicated that nearly 65% of Generation Z and Millennials acquire skincare knowledge via social media channels like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These traits are strongly associated with students at Universitas Teknologi Muhammadiyah (UTM) Jakarta, who primarily belong to Generation Z and are often engaged with digital marketing initiatives. As a result, their buying choices are probably swayed by both marketing exposure and their views of product quality, brand reputation, and the purchase intent fostered by these promotional activities.

Notwithstanding comprehensive studies on consumer buying behaviour, numerous research deficiencies persist. Initially, earlier research has yielded contradictory results concerning the direct and indirect influences of promotion, product quality, and brand image on consumer purchasing choices, especially in relation to the mediating function of purchase intention (Martani, 2023; Katamso & Sugianto, 2024; Nugroho & Prasetyo, 2022; Yuse et al., 2025). Secondly, the majority of current research has examined skincare items broadly instead of concentrating exclusively on Scarlett Whitening body lotion. Third, scant

research has concurrently investigated promotion, product quality, and brand image within a unified model, while integrating purchase intention as a mediating variable among university students embodying Generation Z customers.

This research tackles these deficiencies by investigating how promotion, product quality, and brand image influence purchasing decisions, mediated by purchase intention, among students at Universitas Teknologi Muhammadiyah Jakarta. The research theoretically enhances the behavioural intention aspect of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, framing purchase intention as the cognitive process by which marketing stimuli affect buying choices, without examining the entire TPB model. The research provides novel insights into Indonesia's intensifying body lotion market by examining a leading domestic cosmetic brand and a digitally savy Generation Z demographic. The results are anticipated to enhance the body of knowledge regarding consumer behaviour, while offering actionable data for cosmetic firms aiming to bolster their marketing tactics and refine purchasing choices in fiercely competitive markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Promotion and Purchase Intention

Promotion plays a strategic role in marketing communication by informing consumers about product attributes, persuading them to evaluate product benefits, and reinforcing brand awareness. Effective promotional activities enable firms to communicate product value while reducing consumer uncertainty during the evaluation process. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Fauji, 2021) define promotion as a marketing communication activity intended to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products and services offered by a company. Consequently, promotional efforts not only increase product awareness but also influence consumers' cognitive and emotional evaluations, which are essential in stimulating purchase intention.

Empirical findings further support this theoretical argument. Yuse et al. (2025) reported that promotional activities significantly increase consumers' purchase intention in the beauty industry by attracting attention, creating favorable product perceptions, and encouraging consumers' willingness to purchase. Similarly, continuous exposure to promotional content through digital advertising, social media, influencer marketing, and sales promotion programs enhances consumers' familiarity with a product and increases their likelihood of considering a future purchase (Kotler & Keller, as cited in Fauji, 2017). Based on the theoretical perspective of TPB and previous empirical findings, effective promotional activities are expected to strengthen consumers' purchase intention toward Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion by creating favorable product evaluations and increasing behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991; Yuse et al., 2025).

H₁: Promotion positively influences consumers' purchase intention.

Product Quality and Purchase Intention

Product quality is widely recognized as a primary determinant of consumer purchase intention because it reflects a product's ability to satisfy customer expectations and deliver promised benefits. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Martani, 2023) define product quality as a product's capability to perform its intended functions, including durability, reliability, and conformity with consumer expectations. In the cosmetics industry, where consumers carefully evaluate product effectiveness and safety before purchasing, perceived product quality becomes particularly important in shaping purchasing intentions.

Previous empirical studies support this theoretical explanation. Martani (2023) demonstrated that perceived product quality significantly influences consumers' purchase intention toward Scarlett Whitening products. Consumers who believe that a product provides superior performance and satisfies their expectations exhibit stronger intentions to purchase than those with less favorable quality perceptions. Furthermore, perceived quality enhances consumer confidence while reducing perceived purchasing risk, thereby strengthening purchase intention.

H₂: Product quality positively influences consumers' purchase intention.

Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image represents consumers' overall perceptions and associations regarding a particular brand and constitutes one of the most valuable intangible assets in contemporary marketing. According to Kotler and Keller (as cited in Katamso & Sugianto, 2024), brand image refers to consumers' perceptions reflected in brand associations stored in their memory. Positive brand associations enhance consumers' trust, confidence, and emotional attachment, making consumers more likely to consider purchasing products from brands they perceive favorably. Empirical evidence also supports this relationship. Katamso and Sugianto (2024) found that brand image positively influences consumers' purchase intention toward Scarlett Whitening products. Consumers who associate the brand with quality, credibility, and positive experiences demonstrate stronger purchasing intentions than those with less favorable perceptions. These findings indicate that brand image functions as a psychological mechanism capable of stimulating consumer interest before actual purchasing decisions occur.

H₃: Brand image positively influences consumers' purchase intention.

Promotion and Purchasing Decision

Promotion influences not only consumers' purchase intention but also their final purchasing decisions by providing persuasive information regarding product benefits and competitive advantages. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Fauji, 2017) argue that promotional activities function as marketing communication tools that inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products available in the marketplace. Well-designed promotional campaigns increase consumers' awareness, facilitate product evaluation, and encourage purchasing behavior. Empirical findings demonstrate that promotion significantly affects purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry. Yuse et al. (2025) reported that promotional

effectiveness positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions because persuasive promotional communication strengthens consumer confidence and encourages actual product purchases. Accordingly, promotion is expected to directly influence purchasing decisions regarding Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion by increasing product awareness, reducing uncertainty, and encouraging consumers to complete the purchasing process (Ajzen, 1991; Yuse et al., 2025).

H₄: Promotion positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions.

Product Quality and Purchasing Decision

Product quality remains one of the most influential determinants of consumers' purchasing decisions because purchasing behavior is strongly influenced by consumers' evaluations of product performance and expected benefits. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Martani, 2023) emphasize that product quality reflects a product's ability to perform according to consumer expectations through characteristics such as reliability, durability, and functional performance. Consumers generally compare product quality with competing alternatives before making purchasing decisions. Products perceived as safe, reliable, and capable of delivering promised benefits reduce perceived purchasing risk while increasing consumer confidence. Consequently, favorable quality evaluations encourage consumers to select a particular product over competing brands.

Previous empirical research supports this argument. Martani (2023) found that product quality significantly influences purchasing decisions regarding Scarlett Whitening products. Consumers demonstrating stronger perceptions of product quality exhibit greater confidence in purchasing the product because they believe it will satisfy their functional and psychological expectations. Based on TPB and previous empirical evidence, higher perceived product quality is expected to increase consumers' purchasing decisions regarding Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion because favorable quality evaluations strengthen consumers' confidence in selecting the product (Martani, 2023).

H₅: Product quality positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions.

Brand Image and Purchasing Decision

Brand image has long been recognized as a strategic marketing asset that shapes consumers' perceptions and influences their purchasing behavior. A favorable brand image reduces perceived risk, strengthens consumer confidence, and differentiates a product from competing alternatives. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Katamso & Sugianto, 2024) define brand image as consumers' perceptions of a brand reflected through the associations stored in their memory. These associations are developed through consumers' experiences, marketing communications, and accumulated knowledge regarding a brand. Previous empirical findings support this theoretical proposition. Katamso and Sugianto (2024) demonstrated that brand image positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products. Consumers with favorable perceptions of the brand are more likely to trust the product, perceive lower purchasing risk, and ultimately decide to purchase it. These findings indicate that

brand image extends beyond brand recognition by directly influencing consumers' purchasing behavior.

H₆: Brand image positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions.

Purchase Intention and Purchasing Decision

Purchase intention represents consumers' psychological readiness and willingness to purchase a product after evaluating available alternatives. Mehta (as cited in Katamso & Sugianto, 2024) defines purchase intention as consumers' tendency or likelihood to purchase a particular product or brand. Within consumer behavior literature, purchase intention is consistently regarded as the most immediate predictor of actual purchasing behavior. Empirical studies provide consistent evidence supporting this relationship. Katamso and Sugianto (2024) found that purchase intention significantly and positively influences purchasing decisions for beauty products. Consumers with stronger purchase intentions exhibit a greater likelihood of completing the purchasing process than consumers with weaker intentions. These findings reinforce the central proposition of TPB that behavioral intention constitutes the primary antecedent of actual consumer behavior.

H₇: Purchase intention positively influences consumers' purchasing decisions.

Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship between Promotion and Purchasing Decision

Promotion influences purchasing decisions not only directly but also indirectly through consumers' purchase intention. Promotional activities increase consumers' awareness, improve product knowledge, and stimulate favorable evaluations that encourage future purchasing behavior. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Fauji, 2017) argue that promotional communication is intended to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products offered in the marketplace. This theoretical argument is supported by previous empirical evidence. Yuse et al. (2025) found that promotion positively influences purchase intention, which subsequently affects purchasing decisions for beauty products. Their findings indicate that promotional effectiveness primarily operates by strengthening consumers' willingness to purchase before influencing actual purchasing behavior.

H₈: Purchase intention positively mediates the relationship between promotion and consumers' purchasing decisions.

Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship between Product Quality and Purchasing Decision

Product quality not only influences purchasing decisions directly but also shapes consumers' purchase intentions before actual purchasing behavior occurs. Consumers who perceive a product as reliable, effective, and capable of satisfying their expectations tend to develop stronger intentions to purchase. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Martani, 2023) emphasize that product quality reflects a product's ability to perform according to consumer expectations and deliver superior value. Empirical evidence also supports this mediating relationship. Martani (2023) reported that product quality positively influences

purchase intention, which subsequently contributes to purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products. These findings suggest that consumers do not immediately convert favorable quality perceptions into purchasing behavior; rather, they first develop purchase intentions before making actual purchasing decisions.

H₉: *Purchase intention positively mediates the relationship between product quality and consumers' purchasing decisions.*

Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in the Relationship between Brand Image and Purchasing Decision

Brand image contributes to purchasing decisions by establishing consumer trust, credibility, and emotional attachment toward a product. However, the influence of brand image is often realized through consumers' psychological intentions before actual purchasing behavior occurs. Kotler and Keller (as cited in Katamso & Sugianto, 2024) argue that brand image reflects consumers' accumulated perceptions and associations regarding a brand, which subsequently shape purchasing behavior. Previous empirical findings reinforce this argument. Katamso and Sugianto (2024) demonstrated that brand image positively influences purchase intention, which subsequently contributes to purchasing decisions for Scarlett Whitening products. Their findings indicate that consumers who perceive the brand positively first develop stronger purchase intentions before completing the purchasing process.

H₁₀: *Purchase intention positively mediates the relationship between brand image and consumers' purchasing decisions.*

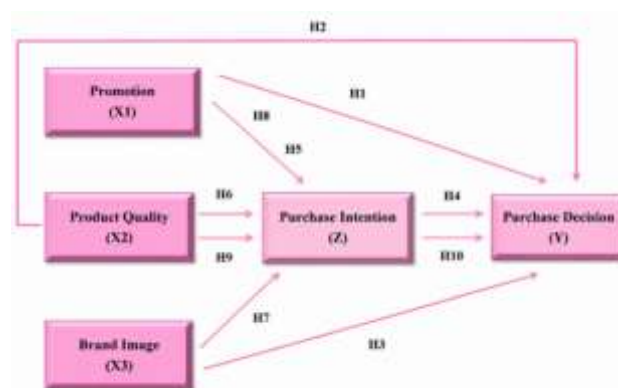


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design to investigate the causal relationships among promotion, product quality, brand image, purchase intention, and purchasing decision. A quantitative research design was considered appropriate because the study sought to empirically examine the proposed hypotheses and quantify the relationships among latent constructs. The conceptual framework was developed based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which explains that behavioral

intention functions as the primary determinant of actual behavior and mediates the influence of external factors on consumers' purchasing decisions (Ajzen, 1991). A cross-sectional survey design was adopted, whereby data were collected from respondents at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire. This design is appropriate for examining consumers' perceptions and behavioral intentions while enabling statistical testing of the proposed structural model.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population of this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled at Universitas Teknologi Muhammadiyah Jakarta who were familiar with or had previously used Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion. University students were selected because they predominantly represent Generation Z, a consumer segment characterized by intensive social media usage and high exposure to digital marketing activities. Since not every student met the research objectives, a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, was employed to ensure that respondents possessed relevant experience with the product under investigation. To be eligible for participation, respondents were required to be active undergraduate students at Universitas Teknologi Muhammadiyah Jakarta, have prior knowledge of Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion, have purchased or used the product at least once, and voluntarily agree to participate in the survey. This sampling procedure ensured that the collected data accurately reflected the perceptions and purchasing behavior of individuals with direct experience using the product.

Sample Size and Statistical Power

The sample size was determined based on the recommendations for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to Hair et al. (2022), the minimum sample size can be estimated using the ten-times rule, which recommends that the sample should be at least ten times the largest number of structural paths directed toward an endogenous construct. In the proposed research model, the purchasing decision construct receives four direct paths originating from promotion, product quality, brand image, and purchase intention, resulting in a minimum recommended sample size of 40 respondents. Nevertheless, to increase statistical power, improve parameter estimation accuracy, and enhance the predictive capability of the structural model, this study targeted between 250 and 300 respondents. This sample size exceeds the minimum recommendation and is considered sufficient for estimating complex structural relationships using PLS-SEM.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in marketing and consumer behavior to evaluate the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of each measurement item. A pilot study involving a small group of respondents was subsequently conducted to identify ambiguous wording and improve questionnaire readability. The final questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected respondents' demographic

information, including gender, age, study program, semester, and previous experience using Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion. The second section contained measurement items for the research variables. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the objectives of the research, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to discontinue participation at any time. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were analyzed anonymously for research purposes only.

Measurement of Variables

The measurement instruments were adapted from previously validated studies to ensure content validity while maintaining consistency with the research context. Promotion was measured using indicators adapted from Kotler and Keller, as cited in Fauji (2021), which capture advertising effectiveness, promotional attractiveness, sales promotion, and digital marketing communication. Product quality was measured using indicators adapted from Kotler and Keller, as cited in Martani (2023), including product performance, reliability, durability, safety, and conformity with consumer expectations. Brand image was measured using indicators proposed by Kotler and Keller, as cited in Katamso and Sugianto (2024), covering brand reputation, consumer trust, uniqueness, and overall brand associations. Purchase intention was measured using the dimensions proposed by Mehta, as cited in Katamso and Sugianto (2024), including transactional intention, referential intention, preferential intention, and exploratory intention. Purchasing decision was measured using indicators adapted from Kotler and Keller that reflect consumers' decisions regarding product selection, brand selection, purchase timing, purchase quantity, and payment method. All measurement items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating stronger agreement with each statement.

Validity and Reliability Assessment

The quality of the measurement model was assessed following the guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2022). Indicator reliability was first evaluated by examining outer loading values, with values greater than 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability. Internal consistency reliability was subsequently assessed using both Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), where values exceeding 0.70 demonstrated acceptable construct reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values above 0.50 indicating that the construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators. Discriminant validity was examined using both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Adequate discriminant validity was confirmed when the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs and HTMT values remained below the recommended threshold of 0.90.

RESEARCH RESULT

The results section presents the findings of the study based on the data analysis conducted to examine the relationships among the variables investigated. The findings are organized systematically to address the research objectives and provide empirical evidence supporting the proposed hypotheses.

Convergent Validity Assessment Analysis

Table 1. Loading Factor of Convergent Validity Assessment

Variable	Item Code	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Promotion (X1)	X1.1	Advertising	0.602	Not Valid
	X1.10	Advertising	0.087	Not Valid
	X1.2	Sales Promotion	0.498	Not Valid
	X1.3	Sales Promotion	0.509	Not Valid
	X1.4	Promotional Media	0.709	Valid
	X1.5	Promotional Media	0.748	Valid
	X1.6	Advertising	0.734	Valid
	X1.7	Sales Promotion	0.773	Valid
	X1.8	Promotional Media	0.099	Not Valid
Product Quality (X2)	X1.9	Promotional Media	0.147	Not Valid
	X2.1	Product Performance	0.125	Not Valid
	X2.10	Product Performance	0.853	Valid
	X2.2	Product Safety	0.209	Not Valid
	X2.3	Product Safety	0.170	Not Valid
	X2.4	Durability	0.075	Not Valid
	X2.5	Durability	0.021	Not Valid
	X2.6	Conformity	0.138	Not Valid
	X2.7	Conformity	0.758	Valid
Brand Image (X3)	X2.8	Product Performance	0.804	Valid
	X2.9	Conformity	0.842	Valid
	X3.1	Corporate Image	0.799	Valid
	X3.10	Corporate Image	0.783	Valid
	X3.2	Product Image	0.725	Valid
	X3.3	Product Image	0.679	Not Valid
	X3.4	User Image	0.128	Not Valid
	X3.5	User Image	0.785	Valid
	X3.6	Product Image	0.795	Valid
Purchase Intention (Z)	X3.7	Corporate Image	0.797	Valid
	X3.8	User Image	0.871	Valid
	X3.9	Product Image	0.795	Valid
	Z.1	Interest	0.758	Valid
	Z.10	Interest	0.339	Not Valid
	Z.2	Preference	0.315	Not Valid
	Z.3	Preference	0.739	Valid
	Z.4	Purchase Intention	0.653	Not Valid
	Z.5	Purchase Intention	0.823	Valid
	Z.6	Interest	0.763	Valid
	Z.7	Preference	0.734	Valid
	Z.8	Purchase Intention	0.763	Valid
	Z.9	Purchase Intention	0.771	Valid

Variable	Item Code	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	Need Recognition	0.772	Valid
	Y.10	Need Recognition	0.068	Not Valid
	Y.2	Purchase Decision	0.320	Not Valid
	Y.3	Purchase Decision	0.764	Valid
	Y.4	Post-Purchase Behavior	0.728	Valid
	Y.5	Post-Purchase Behavior	0.860	Valid
	Y.6	Recommendation	0.126	Not Valid
	Y.7	Recommendation	0.083	Not Valid
	Y.8	Purchase Decision	0.044	Not Valid
	Y.9	Post-Purchase Behavior	0.108	Not Valid

Convergent validity was assessed using the outer loading values of each indicator. In PLS-SEM, indicators with outer loading values of 0.70 or higher are considered to have adequate convergent validity, while those below the threshold are generally removed to improve the measurement model. As presented in Table 4.6, the Promotion (X1) construct retained four valid indicators (X1.4, X1.5, X1.6, and X1.7), whereas the remaining indicators did not meet the required loading threshold. For Product Quality (X2), only indicators X2.7, X2.8, and X2.9 were valid, indicating that these items best represented the construct. The Brand Image (X3) construct demonstrated good convergent validity, with eight valid indicators (X3.1, X3.2, X3.5, X3.6, X3.7, X3.8, X3.9, and X3.10), while X3.3 and X3.4 were excluded. Similarly, the Purchase Intention (Z) construct retained seven valid indicators (Z1, Z3, Z5, Z6, Z7, Z8, and Z9), whereas Z2, Z4, and Z10 were removed due to low outer loadings. For the Purchase Decision (Y) construct, four indicators (Y1, Y3, Y4, and Y5) satisfied the validity criterion, while the remaining indicators were excluded.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Description
Brand Image	0.636	Adequate Convergent Validity
Purchase Decision	0.626	Adequate Convergent Validity
Product Quality	0.672	Adequate Convergent Validity
Purchase Intention	0.601	Adequate Convergent Validity
Promotion	0.587	Adequate Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of the measurement model was further evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) criterion. AVE measures the extent to which a latent construct explains the variance of its indicators relative to measurement error. According to the recommended threshold, an AVE value of 0.50 or higher indicates that a construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its indicators, thereby demonstrating adequate convergent validity.

As presented in Table 2, all constructs achieved AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. The Product Quality construct recorded the highest AVE value (0.672), suggesting that this construct explains approximately 67.2% of the variance in its measurement indicators. This finding indicates that the retained indicators provide a strong representation of the Product Quality construct. Similarly, the Brand Image construct obtained an AVE value of 0.636, indicating that 63.6% of the variance in its indicators is captured by the latent construct. The Purchase Decision construct also demonstrated adequate convergent validity with an AVE value of 0.626, confirming that its indicators sufficiently reflect the underlying construct. Furthermore, the Purchase Intention construct achieved an AVE value of 0.601, exceeding the minimum recommended threshold and indicating that the construct adequately explains the variance of its indicators. Although the Promotion construct recorded the lowest AVE value among the five constructs (0.587), it still surpassed the recommended criterion of 0.50, confirming that the construct possesses acceptable convergent validity.

Cross Loadings

Table 3. Cross Loadings

Item Code	Brand Image	Purchase Decision	Product Quality	Purchase Intention	Promotion
X1.4	0.460	0.432	0.518	0.454	0.737
X1.5	0.504	0.551	0.627	0.475	0.717
X1.6	0.536	0.603	0.489	0.625	0.802
X1.7	0.519	0.540	0.488	0.597	0.805
X2.10	0.581	0.598	0.860	0.596	0.603
X2.7	0.615	0.484	0.747	0.521	0.553
X2.8	0.578	0.528	0.811	0.518	0.557
X2.9	0.560	0.595	0.857	0.585	0.541
X3.1	0.796	0.629	0.632	0.664	0.462
X3.10	0.780	0.605	0.498	0.608	0.503
X3.2	0.713	0.518	0.659	0.585	0.472
X3.5	0.793	0.642	0.537	0.618	0.538
X3.6	0.790	0.712	0.543	0.735	0.557
X3.7	0.827	0.726	0.536	0.768	0.538
X3.8	0.867	0.704	0.548	0.759	0.511
X3.9	0.806	0.711	0.597	0.771	0.622
Y.1	0.793	0.758	0.524	0.753	0.533
Y.3	0.594	0.788	0.446	0.763	0.487
Y.4	0.469	0.739	0.563	0.566	0.543
Y.5	0.726	0.874	0.611	0.822	0.651
Z.1	0.793	0.758	0.524	0.753	0.533
Z.3	0.594	0.788	0.446	0.763	0.487
Z.5	0.726	0.874	0.611	0.822	0.651
Z.6	0.643	0.626	0.514	0.783	0.494
Z.7	0.660	0.669	0.586	0.772	0.563
Z.8	0.583	0.629	0.470	0.753	0.532
Z.9	0.694	0.645	0.514	0.778	0.579

Table 3 presents the cross-loading values used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity is established when each indicator exhibits a higher loading on its corresponding construct than on any other construct. The results indicate that all retained indicators have the highest loading values on their respective latent constructs. Specifically, the indicators of Promotion (X1) load highest on the Promotion construct (0.717–0.805), Product Quality (X2) on the Product Quality construct (0.747–0.860), Brand Image (X3) on the Brand Image construct (0.713–0.867), Purchase Intention (Z) on the Purchase Intention construct (0.753–0.822), and Purchase Decision (Y) on the Purchase Decision construct (0.739–0.874). Although several indicators show moderate correlations with other constructs, their highest loading consistently remains on the construct they are intended to measure.

Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	Brand Image	Purchase Decision	Product Quality	Purchase Intention	Promotion
Brand Image	0.798				
Purchase Decision	0.828	0.791			
Product Quality	0.709	0.675	0.820		
Purchase Intention	0.870	0.928	0.679	0.775	
Promotion	0.661	0.700	0.687	0.711	0.766

Table 4 presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion used to evaluate the discriminant validity of the measurement model. The criterion requires that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (diagonal values) be greater than its correlations with other constructs. The results show that Product Quality (0.820), Brand Image (0.798), Purchase Decision (0.791), Purchase Intention (0.775), and Promotion (0.766) are the square roots of the AVE for their respective constructs. However, several inter-construct correlations, particularly between Purchase Intention and Purchase Decision (0.928) and between Purchase Intention and Brand Image (0.870), exceed the corresponding diagonal values. These results indicate that the Fornell-Larcker criterion is not fully satisfied, suggesting that discriminant validity among some constructs remains insufficient due to the high correlations observed. Therefore, additional evaluation using the HTMT criterion is recommended to further verify discriminant validity before interpreting the structural model.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Purchase Decision	0.867	0.790
Purchase Intention	0.790	0.785

Table 5 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) values, which indicate the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by their predictor variables. Higher R^2 values indicate stronger explanatory power of the structural model. The results show that the Purchase Intention construct has an R^2 value of 0.790, indicating that 79.0% of the variance in purchase intention is explained by the exogenous variables included in the model, while the remaining

21.0% is influenced by factors outside the proposed model. Similarly, the Purchase Decision construct records an R^2 value of 0.867, meaning that 86.7% of the variance in purchase decisions is explained by the predictor variables, whereas 13.3% is attributable to other factors not examined in this study.

Predictive Relevance

Table 6. Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Variable	R Square (R^2)
Purchase Decision	0.867
Purchase Intention	0.790
Predictive Relevance (Q^2)	0.972

Table 6 presents the predictive relevance (Q^2) value of the structural model. The Stone-Geisser Q^2 statistic is used to evaluate the model's predictive capability, where a value greater than zero indicates that the model has predictive relevance. The results show a Q^2 value of 0.972, which is substantially greater than zero. This indicates that the proposed structural model possesses very strong predictive relevance, meaning that the exogenous constructs effectively predict the endogenous constructs, namely Purchase Intention and Purchase Decision.

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2) - (1 - R_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,867) - (1 - 0,790)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0,133) - (0,210)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0,02793$$

$$Q^2 = 0,972$$

Path Coefficients of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

Table 7. Path Coefficients of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	Promotion → Purchase Intention	0.232	2.935	0.003	Supported
H2	Product Quality → Purchase Intention	0.022	0.314	0.754	Not Supported
H3	Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.701	8.843	0.000	Supported
H4	Promotion → Purchase Decision	0.057	1.003	0.316	Not Supported
H5	Product Quality → Purchase Decision	0.051	0.627	0.531	Not Supported
H6	Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.049	0.544	0.587	Not Supported
H7	Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.810	10.416	0.000	Supported
H8	Promotion → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.188	2.796	0.005	Supported
H9	Product Quality → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.018	0.306	0.760	Not Supported

H10	Brand Image → Purchase Intention → Purchase Decision	0.568	6.338	0.000	Supported
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Table 7 presents the results of the structural model analysis used to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings reveal that five out of ten hypotheses are supported, while the remaining five are not supported. The results indicate that Promotion has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.232$, $t = 2.935$, $p = 0.003$), supporting H1. In contrast, Product Quality does not significantly influence Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.022$, $t = 0.314$, $p = 0.754$), leading to the rejection of H2. Brand Image exhibits the strongest positive effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = 0.701$, $t = 8.843$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3.

Regarding direct effects on Purchase Decision, the results show that Promotion ($\beta = 0.057$, $p = 0.316$), Product Quality ($\beta = 0.051$, $p = 0.531$), and Brand Image ($\beta = 0.049$, $p = 0.587$) do not have significant direct effects. Therefore, H4, H5, and H6 are not supported. However, Purchase Intention has a strong and significant positive effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.810$, $t = 10.416$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H7.

The mediation analysis demonstrates that Purchase Intention significantly mediates the relationship between Promotion and Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.188$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H8. Likewise, Purchase Intention significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.568$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H10. However, Purchase Intention does not mediate the relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.018$, $p = 0.760$), leading to the rejection of H9.

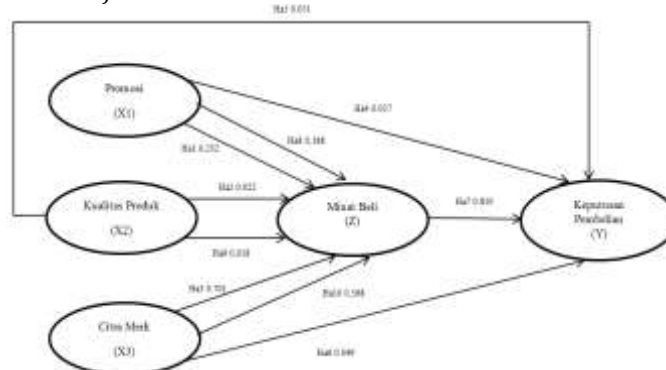


Figure 2. Result Path Analysis

DISCUSSION

Promotion and Purchase Intention

The findings demonstrate that promotion significantly enhances consumers' purchase intention. This indicates that digital promotional activities, including social media campaigns, discounts, and influencer endorsements, successfully attract consumers' attention and encourage their willingness to purchase Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion. These findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which suggests that positive information received by consumers shapes favorable attitudes and subsequently strengthens behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2016). The results are consistent with Yuse et al. (2025), who found that digital promotion positively influences consumers' purchase intention,

particularly among Generation Z consumers who actively engage with social media platforms.

Product Quality and Purchase Intention

Unlike promotion, product quality does not significantly affect purchase intention. This suggests that respondents do not primarily rely on product quality when considering whether to purchase Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion. Instead, consumers appear to pay greater attention to promotional activities and brand reputation. Since skincare products generally offer similar functional benefits, product quality may be perceived as a basic requirement rather than a differentiating factor. This finding contradicts Martani (2023) but supports studies indicating that promotional exposure and brand perception are more influential

Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image emerges as the strongest determinant of purchase intention. A positive brand image strengthens consumers' trust, confidence, and emotional attachment, ultimately increasing their willingness to purchase. This finding is consistent with TPB, where favorable perceptions contribute to positive attitudes that shape behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2016). It also supports Katamso and Sugianto (2024), who reported that a strong brand image substantially increases consumers' purchase intention in the skincare industry. For Generation Z consumers, brand reputation established through digital media and influencer recommendations appears to be more persuasive than objective product evaluation.

Promotion and Purchase Decision

Promotion does not directly influence purchase decisions. This finding indicates that promotional activities mainly create awareness and attract consumers' attention rather than immediately encouraging purchasing behavior. According to TPB, marketing stimuli influence actual behavior indirectly through behavioral intention. Therefore, promotion becomes effective only after consumers develop a strong intention to purchase. This explains why promotion significantly affects purchase intention but not purchase decisions directly.

Product Quality and Purchase Decision

The results also reveal that product quality does not significantly affect purchase decisions. Consumers' purchasing decisions appear to be influenced more by psychological and social factors, such as brand reputation, online reviews, and recommendations from influencers, than by their perceptions of product quality. This finding suggests that maintaining product quality alone is insufficient to encourage purchasing decisions in the highly competitive skincare market.

Brand Image and Purchase Decision

Similarly, brand image does not exert a direct influence on purchase decisions. Instead, its effect occurs indirectly by first strengthening consumers' purchase intention. This finding supports TPB, which emphasizes that behavioral intention serves as the immediate antecedent of actual behavior. Consequently, although consumers perceive Scarlett Whitening positively, such perceptions must first develop into purchase intention before leading to purchasing decisions.

Purchase Intention and Purchase Decision

Purchase intention is found to be the strongest predictor of purchase decisions. This result reinforces TPB by confirming that behavioral intention is the most important determinant of actual purchasing behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2016). Consumers with stronger purchase intentions are considerably more likely to complete the purchasing process. For Generation Z consumers, purchasing decisions are generally preceded by information searching, product comparisons, and evaluation through social media content before actual buying occurs.

The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

The mediation analysis further confirms the importance of purchase intention in explaining consumer purchasing behavior. Purchase intention significantly mediates the effects of both promotion and brand image on purchase decisions, indicating that these marketing variables influence purchasing behavior primarily by strengthening consumers' willingness to buy. Conversely, purchase intention does not mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase decision because product quality itself does not significantly increase purchase intention. These findings highlight that emotional and psychological factor, particularly brand image and promotional attractiveness, are more effective in stimulating consumer purchasing behavior than functional product attributes alone.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research determines that the intention to purchase is the primary factor influencing buying decisions for Scarlett Whitening Body Lotion among students at Universitas Teknologi Muhammadiyah (UTM) Jakarta. Promotion and brand image greatly enhance the likelihood of purchase, whereas product quality does not substantially influence buy intention. Moreover, marketing, product excellence, and brand reputation do not directly affect buying choices. Purchase decisions are predominantly shaped by consumers' intent to buy. The mediation analysis illustrates that purchase intention effectively mediates the impact of promotion and brand image on purchasing decisions, suggesting that both factors indirectly affect buying behaviour via the formation of consumers' intent to purchase. Conversely, purchase intention does not serve as a mediator in the connection between product quality and purchasing decisions, indicating that perceived product quality alone is inadequate to stimulate buying behaviour in this research setting. The results suggest that, for Generation Z customers, psychological elements such as buying intention are more influential in determining purchasing choices than the direct impact of marketing

considerations. These results bolster the Theory of Planned Behaviour by validating the pivotal function of behavioural intention as the direct precursor to actual purchasing behaviour. As a result, businesses ought to emphasise marketing tactics that bolster brand reputation and promotional efficiency to improve consumers' buying intentions, ultimately resulting in increased purchasing decisions.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies are encouraged to expand the research by involving more diverse respondents from different regions and demographic backgrounds to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers are also recommended to incorporate additional variables, such as price perception, consumer trust, e-WOM, influencer marketing, and customer satisfaction, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer purchase decisions. Furthermore, future research may employ longitudinal or experimental research designs to better capture changes in consumer behavior over time and to establish stronger causal relationships among the variables. Such extensions would provide richer theoretical insights and more practical recommendations for marketing strategies in the cosmetics and personal care industry.

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