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The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty Mediated by **Customer Satisfaction in Scarlett Whitening Serum Products in Bandung City**

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of product quality on customer loyalty with customer satisfaction as a mediating variable among users of Scarlett Whitening serum in Bandung City. This study uses a quantitative approach as the research method, analyzed using simple regression, multiple regression, and the Sobel test through SPSS. The results show that product quality has a significant influence on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer satisfaction also has a strong positive effect on loyalty and mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. These findings indicate that high product quality enhances satisfaction, which in turn strengthens customer loyalty. This study contributes to the literature by emphasizing the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between perceived product quality and customer loyalty in the skincare industry. To increase customer retention, Scarlett Whitening is recommended to maintain product efficacy, enhance user experience, and utilize customer satisfaction testimonials in marketing strategies.

Keywords: Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Scarleyy Whitening, Bandung City

INTRODUCTION

The business market in the era of globalization demands companies to continuously improve the quality of their products and services (Anggarawati, 2021; Ma'azah, & Prasetyo, 2024). Technology can drive company growth or business sectors in particular, as these developments occur due to increasing consumer needs, expectations, and behaviors (Hariyadi, 2024; Aprelyani, 2024). Modern marketing is not only focused on selling high-quality goods, offering affordable prices, and providing easy access to products for customers. Customers' choice of skincare product companies is influenced by social media, particularly by digital marketing tactics including influencer marketing, sponsored advertising, and direct brand-to-consumer interactions on sites like Instagram and TikTok (Laura, & Thaib, 2025). Continued efforts at environmental management are necessary, including through changes in product consumption patterns (Sari, & Asyhari, 2025). Competition among companies is increasingly fierce. This can be seen from the number of products, services, advertisements, and consultations provided by companies (Kartajaya & Kotler, 2019). The new competition involves more than just the goods produced by companies in factories (Kotler, 2016).

In recent years, Indonesia's beauty business has grown significantly, especially in the skincare area (Indy, Yanti, Yusuf, & Rahmadi, 2024). While numerous studies have explored cutomer loyalty and satisfaction within the beautyindustry, there remains a significant gap in the research regarding the culture and market dynamics that play a crucial role in consumer decisions and behaviors in major Indonesian cities like Bandung. Most existing research tends to focus on global or regional analyses whitout accounting for local variables that may have a substantial impact on consumer's perceptios and purchasing decisions. Products from the cosmetics sector include makeup, skincare, body care, and more. (Rachmawati & Santika, 2022; Rinte Meylinda, & Septyanto, 2024)

Body care is one of the sectors in the cosmetics industry that is highly popular and has even become a daily necessity (Septi & Nurtjahjadi, 2023; Ulya, & Masreviastuti, 2024). The increasing interest in halal-certified products is one of the driving factors behind the growth of skincare sales. This is supported by data showing that the demand for skincare products continues to rise.

Table 1
Estimated Revenue of Skincare Products in Indonesia (2014–2025)

		Year			
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
5.91M	5.52M	5.86M	6.15M	6.11M	
		Year			
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
6.5M	5.93M	6.34M	7.23M	7.95M	
		Year			
2024				2025	
8.32M				9.09M	

source: databoks.katadata.co.id, 2022

It can be seen from the table that in 2022, revenue in the beauty and personal care sector reached USD 7.23 billion, equivalent to IDR 111.83 trillion (exchange rate IDR 15,467.05). The beauty industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth in recent years, driven by high public demand for skincare products. One local brand that has successfully captured consumer attention is Scarlett Whitening. Known for its innovative product range, Scarlett offers benefits such as brightening the skin, reducing acne scars, and improving skin texture. Amid increasingly intense market competition, companies must produce quality products and services to ensure customer satisfaction (Dhameria, 2019; Pratama, & Prianthara, 2024).

Scarlett Whitening, which debuted in 2017, has experienced rapid growth in the local market. However, in fierce competition with brands such as MS Glow, Somethine, and Skintific, Scarlett faces challenges in maintaining a loyal customer base. Sales data shows a decline in performance in early 2024, especially as other brands dominate e-commerce platforms. Nonetheless, Scarlett's serum products remain a popular choice due to affordability and proven effectiveness.

Table 2
Scarlett Whitening Sales Data

DATE/MONTH/YEAR	INCOME
1 – 31 December 2023	12.250.000.000
1 – 31 January 2024	20.440.000.000
1 – 29 February 2024	12.810.000.000
1 – 29 March 2024	11.770.000.000

source: (katadata.com, 2024

The data indicates that Scarlett Whitening sales experienced a clear decline since the beginning of 2024, with a drop of IDR 7.63 billion from January to February, followed by another drop of IDR 1.40 billion from February to March. This highlights the importance of customer loyalty in the beauty industry. Continuous sales declines reflect not only a lack of consumer trust but also how public perception affects customer loyalty.

The most apparent research gap in previous studies is the lack of focus on cultural influences in cosmetic consumer behaviour. While internasional research has highlighted the role of culture in influencing cosmetic purchase decisions in Asia (Jin & Kim, 2016; Wong et al., 2020), few studies have examined how these cultural factors specifically operate in Indonesia. In this regard, a study on Scarlett Whitening in Bnaung can offer a more comprehensive perspective by introducing new variables such as digital satisfaction, influencer marketing, and experiential marketing that may have a more significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions.

Product Quality

Product quality is defined as the consumer's response to the overall excellence or superiority of a product or service relative to alternatives (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994). It refers to a product's ability to meet customer preferences or fulfill their needs and requirements, depending on the company's ability to offer quality (Razak, 2019). Product quality represents the consumer's perception of a product's superiority compared to other alternatives in the market (Zeithaml, 1988). High-quality products are crucial for creating customer loyalty, as they determine whether customers are satisfied with the product. From satisfaction comes loyalty to the product or service offered. Consumers tend to assign higher value to products that meet high-quality standards, which positively impacts repurchase decisions. According to Aaker & Jacobson (1994), the construct of product quality consists of three indicators: perceived quality, brand attitude, and performance. Lin and Lin (2007) also emphasized that product knowledge and quality perception play a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions in skincare markets across Asia.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an emotional condition that arises when customers assess whether a product's performance matches, exceeds, or falls short of their expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It is a perception formed after comparing actual performance to expectations. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in a highly competitive market, as there is a significant difference in loyalty between merely satisfied customers and those who are genuinely delighted (Lubis & Suwitho, 2017). When a product meets the expectations of buyers, they experience pleasure. High satisfaction leads to customers being happy and loyal, often resulting in repeated purchases (Erlin & Alimuddin, 2022). Positive, non-harmful interactions and good interpersonal relationships are also signs of customer satisfaction (Rahmawati & Hasan, 2023). The indicators of customer satisfaction include performance perception, expectation alignment, and customer assessment (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of beauty and skincare, product effectiveness and user experience strongly determine satisfaction levels (Hanzaee & Rezaeyeh, 2013).

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the strong commitment of consumers to continue using a product, even in the presence of situational factors that could lead them to switch to alternatives (Kotler, 2016). Loyalty refers to a customer's willingness to make repeat purchases as a form of commitment to a brand or business. According to Tjiptono & Chandra (2012), customer satisfaction provides two main advantages: building loyalty and generating voluntary word-of-mouth promotion. Satisfied customers are more likely to share their positive experiences with others, which can attract new customers and strengthen brand loyalty (Amanggara & Rahanatha, 2018). Kotler & Keller (2016), define customer loyalty as a strong willingness of customers to repurchase or stay subscribed to a product despite competitive offers. Loyalty can also be described as a deep-rooted commitment to a brand or product. According to Lovelock et al. (2010), indicators of customer loyalty include repeat purchases, resistance to switching to competitors, and willingness to recommend. In global beauty markets, brand image, differentiation, and perceived quality are consistently identified as strong antecedents of loyalty (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The study conducted by Afnina and Hantuti (2018) revealed that product quality significantly contributes positively to customer satisfaction. Pardede & Madiawati (2021) also stated that product quality has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Similarly, Tamon, Manoppo, & Tamengkel (2021) affirmed that product quality contributes positively to customer satisfaction. These findings suggest that product quality is a crucial factor that consistently affects the level of customer satisfaction. Therefore, the first hypothesis proposed is:

H1: Product quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty

Product quality has been shown to contribute positively to customer loyalty (Dewantoro, Wisnalmawati & Istanto, 2021). Pratiwi & Rivai (2022) also stated that product quality positively contributes to customer loyalty. Likewise, Febryanti, Hadi, & Listyorini (2024) confirmed that product quality has a significant positive influence on customer loyalty. These findings indicate that product quality plays a very important role in shaping and increasing customer loyalty. Thus, the second hypothesis proposed is:

H2: Product quality has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

According to a study by Prastiwi & Rivai (2020), customer satisfaction significantly contributes positively to customer loyalty. Gultom, Arif & Fahmi (2020) also showed that the level of customer satisfaction significantly affects loyalty, meaning that satisfied customers tend to become more loyal based on their positive experiences. Similarly, Trilaksono & Prabowo (2023) found that customer satisfaction has a positive influence on customer loyalty. These findings show that customer satisfaction is a key factor in building loyalty. Therefore, the third hypothesis proposed is:

H3: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer loyalty.

The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty Mediated by Customer Satisfaction

Research findings supported by data from Amaraggna & Rahanatha (2018) stated that customer satisfaction mediates the effect of product quality on customer loyalty, indicating that product quality combined with satisfaction influences customer loyalty. Alfareza & Sukaatmadja (2024) also proved that customer satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. These findings highlight the significant mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between perceived product quality and customer loyalty. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis proposed is:

H4: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of product quality on customer loyalty.

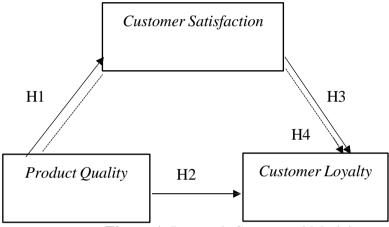


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model

METHOD

This study employed a purposive sampling technique with 90 respondents who were current or former users of Scarlett Whitening serum in Bandung. While this approach allowed the researchers to directly target the intended population, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged. Respondents included both males and females aged between 17 and 43 years, who are considered teenagers or adults with experience using the product under study.

The research instrument was developed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to measure the respondents' perceptions of each statement. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27, supported by the Sobel calculator to test mediation effects. The tests included validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests (normality and heteroscedasticity), multiple regression, simple regression, and Sobel test to examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the model.

First, the sample size of 90 participants can be considered relatively small for generalizing the findings to a wider consumer population. According to Hair et al. (2014), larger sample sizes are typically recommended in consumer behavior studies to enhance statistical power and external validity. Consequently, while the study provides meaningful insights into the behavior of young urban consumers in Bandung, the results should be interpreted with caution when extending to different demographic or geographic segments.

Second, the use of purposive sampling introduces the possibility of selection bias. Respondents were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria (users of Scarlett Whitening serum), which may limit the representativeness of the sample. As Calder, Phillips, and Tybout (1981) argue, non-

probability sampling methods may reduce the ability to generalize beyond the sampled group, although they can still be valuable for theory testing and model exploration.

Third, while the regression and Sobel test results indicate significant relationships and mediation effects, the study could be strengthened by reporting additional statistical indicators such as model fit indices and effect sizes. Reporting these measures would improve the transparency and rigor of the findings, aligning with international standards in marketing and consumer behavior research (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Expanding the sample across different regions and employing probability-based methods would improve generalizability, while including model fit and effect size reporting would enhance the robustness of the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total number of collected samples was 105 respondents, all users or previous users of Scarlett Whitening serum. However, only 90 respondents domiciled in Bandung were included in the data analysis. The remaining 15 responses were excluded due to failing to meet the research criteria or being identified as outliers that could compromise the validity of the results.

Most respondents were aged 17–23 years (43 people), followed by the 24–30 age group (39 people). In terms of gender, the majority were female (92%), while male respondents made up 8%. All respondents lived in Bandung and had used Scarlett Whitening serum. In terms of occupation, 29 respondents were students, and 26 were entrepreneurs. Income-wise, most respondents earned between IDR 1 million and IDR 5 million (44 people). These findings indicate that the majority of Scarlett Whitening serum users in this study are young, economically active individuals with diverse educational and professional backgrounds.

Table 3
Validity and Reliability Test Results

No	Statement	Validity Test Result	Reliability Test Result	
		R Value (Pearson	Cronbach's Alpha	
		Correlation)		
Proa	luct Quality\			
1	In my opinion, Scarlett serum is effective in	0.760		
	maintaining facial skin moisture.			
2	in my opinion, the texture of Scarlett serum is easily	0.836	0.711	
	absorbed into the facial skin.		0.711	
3	In my opinion, Scarlett serum can help reduce dark	0.837		
	spots on the facial skin.			
Cust	omer Satisfaction			
1	I am satisfied with the texture of Scarlett serum that is	0.860		
	easily absorbed.			
2	I am satisfied with choosing Scarlett serum as my	0.865	0.796	
	preferred skincare product.		0.790	
3	I am satisfied with the effectiveness of Scarlett serum	0.812		
	in reducing dark spots on my facial skin.			
Cust	omer Loyalty			
1	I am willing to repurchase Scarlett serum in the future.	0.747		
2	I am willing to stay loyal to Scarlett serum even when	0.813		
	there are attractive offers from other brands.		0.678	
3	I am willing to recommend Scarlett serum products to	0.786		
	others.			

Source: (Processed Data using SPSS, 2025)

The validity test results showed that all items for the product quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty variables had correlation values (r-count) > 0.6, indicating all items are valid in measuring their respective constructs. The reliability test results demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.6 for all variables, confirming strong internal consistency and reliable measurement tools.

Normality Test

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

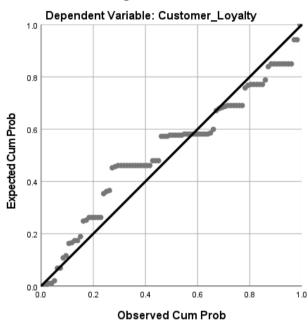


Figure 2. Normal P-P Plot

Source: (Data Analysis Results using SPSS, 2025)

The Normal P-P Plot indicated that residuals for the customer loyalty regression model were normally distributed, as most data points were close to the diagonal line. This confirmed that the regression model met the assumption of normality.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Scatterplot

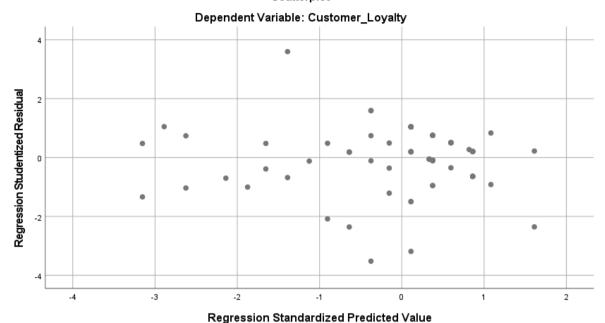


Figure 3. Scatterplot

Source: (Data Analysis Results using SPSS, 2025)

The scatterplot displayed a random distribution of points around the zero line with no distinct pattern. This confirmed that the model did not suffer from heteroscedasticity and thus met the classical linear regression assumptions.

Table 4
Simple Regression Analysis

	эшр	e regression	111111111111111111111111111111111111111		
MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		
	В	STD. ERROR	BETA	T VALUE	SIG.
(C	2.067				001
(Constant)	2.967	0.813		3.649	001
Product	0.770	0.063	0.794	12.234	001
Quality					
Dependent Va	riable: Customer Satisfaction				

Source: (Processed Data using SPSS, 2025)

Equation: Y = 2.967 + 0.770 X

The regression analysis results indicate that Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.770 with a standard error of 0.063, and the standardized coefficient (Beta) is 0.794. The t-value of 12.234 and a significance level (p-value) of 0.001 (< 0.05) confirm that the relationship is statistically significant. These findings suggest that an increase in product quality leads to a substantial improvement in customer satisfaction for Scarlett Whitening serum products in Bandung City.

Table 5
Multiple Regression Analysis

MODEL	UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS		
	В	STD. ERROR	BETA	T VALUE	SIG.
(Constant)	-063	1.223		-052	0.959
Product	0.348	0.145	0.281	2.398	0.019
Quality					
Customer	0.640	0.149	0.503	4.282	0.000
Satisfaction					
Dependent Va	riable: Customer Loyalty				

Source: (Processed Data using SPSS, 2025)

Equation: Z = -0.063 + 0.348 X + 0.640 Y

The regression analysis demonstrates that both Product Quality and Customer Satisfaction significantly influence Customer Loyalty. The unstandardized coefficient for Product Quality is 0.348 with a standard error of 0.145 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.281. The t-value is 2.398 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.019 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant effect. Similarly, Customer Satisfaction has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.640 with a standard error of 0.149 and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.503. The t-value is 4.282 and the significance level is 0.000 (< 0.01), which indicates a highly significant positive effect. These results suggest that both higher product quality and greater customer satisfaction contribute significantly to increasing customer loyalty toward Scarlett Whitening serum products in Bandung City.

Table 6
Sobel Test

Relationship					Sobel Test Results	Interpretation
Between Variables	a	b	Sa	Sb	(t-value)	
$X \to Y \to Z$	0.770	0.924	0.063	0.093	7.70954647	Interpretation

Source: (Processed Data using SPSS, 2025)

The Sobel test result showed a t-value of 7.709 (> 1.986), indicating that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. This means that high product quality improves satisfaction, which in turn boosts customer loyalty.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Product Quality on Customer Satisfaction

The results of the simple regression analysis indicate that product quality significantly affects customer satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.770 and a significance value of 0.001. This implies that as consumers perceive higher product quality, their satisfaction levels increase accordingly.

This finding supports previous research by Afnina & Hastuti (2018), Pardede & Madiawati (2021), and Tamon, Manoppo, & Tamengkel (2021), all of which showed that product quality positively influences customer satisfaction. In this study, product quality includes consumer perceptions of the serum's ability to moisturize, absorb easily, and reduce dark spots factors that directly contribute to satisfaction after use.

The Effect of Product Quality on Customer Loyalty

The results of the multiple regression analysis also show that product quality significantly influences customer loyalty, with a significance value of 0.019 and a coefficient of 0.348. This indicates that consumers who perceive the product as high quality are more likely to remain loyal to the brand.

This finding supports studies by Dewantoro et al. (2021), Pratiwi & Rivai (2022), and Febryanti et al. (2024), who found that product quality increases the likelihood of repeat purchases, resistance to switching brands, and willingness to recommend the product. High-quality products foster consumer trust and help build long-term relationships.

The Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty

In the same multiple regression model, customer satisfaction was found to be the most dominant variable affecting customer loyalty, with a significance value of 0.000 and a coefficient of 0.640. This suggests that higher satisfaction leads to stronger loyalty to Scarlett Whitening serum.

These results align with previous research by Prastiwi & Rivai (2020), Gultom et al. (2020), and Trilaksono & Prabowo (2023), which show that customer satisfaction is a key determinant of loyalty. Satisfied consumers are more likely to make repeat purchases and recommend the product to others, even when faced with offers from competing brands.

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction

The Sobel test produced a t-value of 7.709, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.986, indicating that customer satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between product quality and customer loyalty. In other words, while product quality directly influences loyalty, the indirect influence via satisfaction also plays an important role.

This supports the findings of Amaraggna & Rahanatha (2018) and Alfareza & Sukaatmadja (2024), which emphasized that satisfaction acts as a key mechanism linking perceived product quality to loyalty. Although product quality is crucial, consumers are more likely to remain loyal after experiencing genuine satisfaction.

Compared to competitors, Scarlett faces distinct challenges. Somethinc and Skintific position themselves with "scientific credibility" through advanced formulations, while MS Glow leverages a strong reseller-based community network. Scarlett's competitive edge, therefore, lies in emphasizing positive user experience and tangible results (e.g., reducing dark spots, maintaining skin moisture), which the study has shown to be the strongest drivers of satisfaction and subsequent loyalty.

In summary, this study highlights that while product quality functions as an entry point, satisfaction serves as the true foundation of customer loyalty. To sustain its market share amidst fierce competition, Scarlett must consistently deliver customer experiences that create both functional and emotional value, thereby reinforcing long-term consumer commitment.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that customer satisfaction acts as the dominant mediator in the relationship between product quality and loyalty among Scarlett Whitening serum users in Bandung. Furthermore, customer satisfaction plays a mediating role, strengthening the effect of product quality on loyalty. These findings suggest that customer loyalty is not only directly shaped by perceptions of product quality but is more strongly influenced by the level of satisfaction experienced after using the product. Therefore, customer satisfaction serves as an essential bridge in building loyalty toward Scarlett Whitening serum products. Future research is recommended to include additional variables such as brand image, price perception, or service quality, and to expand the sample across different regions or age groups to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable results.

From a managerial perspective, the results demand strategies beyond generic quality improvement. First, digital engagement should be enhanced through interactive social media campaigns, user-generated content, and app-based loyalty programs. Second, experiential marketing can be implemented via beauty workshops, free trial kits, and pop-up experiential stores in Bandung's retail hubs. Third, Scarlett should leverage consumer communities by collaborating with local influencers and youth-oriented brand ambassadors. These targeted strategies would strengthen post-consumption satisfaction while simultaneously building emotional attachment, leading to sustained loyalty.

Future research should pursue more ambitious directions. Longitudinal studies are needed to capture how loyalty develops and evolves over time. Cross-cultural comparisons would be valuable to examine whether the mediating role of satisfaction holds across different consumer markets. Moreover, future studies should investigate the impact of digital platforms (e.g., TikTok Shop, Instagram Reels, e-marketplaces) on satisfaction and loyalty, given the central role of digital ecosystems in shaping skincare consumption today. Such research would not only broaden geographic scope but also enrich consumer behavior theory in the digital era.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, which show that product quality has a significant influence on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable, it is recommended that Scarlett Whitening continuously improve its product quality by maintaining the effectiveness and safety of its ingredients. The company should strengthen its marketing strategies by focusing on customer experience and utilizing satisfaction-based testimonials through various digital platforms such as social media and influencer collaborations to build trust and enhance loyalty. In addition, Scarlett is encouraged to foster closer relationships with consumers through interactive activities such as beauty workshops and pop-up stores, which allow customers to experience the products directly and develop emotional attachment to the brand. After-sales services should also be optimized by providing online consultations and quick responses to complaints, enabling the company to better understand customer needs. Furthermore, collaborations with dermatologists, beauty influencers, and e-commerce platforms are expected to expand market reach and increase brand credibility. For future research, it is suggested to include additional variables such as brand image, price perception, or service quality, and to expand the research area so that the results can be more widely generalized to the beauty industry in Indonesian.

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