

Brand-Generated Content, User-Generated Content, and Perceived Value as Predictors of Gen Z Purchase Intention toward Skintific in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how brand-generated content, user-generated content, and perceived value influence Generation Z purchase intention toward Skintific products in Indonesia. Using a quantitative single cross-sectional survey, data were collected from 306 Generation Z respondents aged 18-29 years who knew Skintific, had interacted with Skintific-related social media content, and had never purchased its products. The reduced direct-effect model retained brand-generated content, user-generated content, utilitarian value, hedonic value, symbolic value, and purchase intention, with age, gender, and income included as control variables. The data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The measurement model showed satisfactory reliability and validity, while the structural model explained 64.7% of the variance in purchase intention. The findings show that brand-generated content and symbolic value have positive effects on purchase intention. User-generated content, utilitarian value, and hedonic value do not show significant direct effects at the 5% level. Income is the only significant control variable. These findings highlight the importance of official brand communication and symbolic fit in shaping Gen Z purchase intention in the skincare category.

Keywords: *brand-generated content, user-generated content, perceived value, symbolic value, purchase intention.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed how consumers recognize, evaluate, and consider skincare products. Indonesian consumers increasingly encounter product claims, reviews, recommendations, short videos, and social conversations before making purchase decisions. DataReportal (2025) reported a large Indonesian digital audience, while Kompas (2025) noted Skintific as a leading brand in Shopee Indonesia beauty packages in the first quarter of 2025. This context makes Skintific a relevant case for examining how digital content and perceived value shape purchase intention among potential Generation Z consumers.

Two types of digital content are central to this study. Brand-generated content refers to official content created and controlled by the brand, including promotional posts, product information, visual campaigns, and brand narratives. User-generated content refers to reviews, testimonials, recommendations, and experience-based content created by consumers. Prior studies suggest that firm-created and consumer-created content may influence consumer responses differently because brand content can provide professional cues, while user content can provide perceived authenticity and social proof (Colicev et al., 2018; El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025). In skincare, this distinction matters because potential consumers often evaluate product benefits, suitability, safety, and user experiences before trying a product.

This paper also incorporates perceived value. Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as consumers' overall assessment of what is received relative to what is given. In shopping and digital contexts, perceived value is not limited to functional benefits. Utilitarian value captures practical usefulness, information, and problem-solving benefits; hedonic value captures enjoyment and emotional experience; and symbolic value captures fit with identity, lifestyle, and social meaning (Babin et al., 1994; Dua, 2024; Rintamaki et al., 2006). For Generation Z consumers, skincare content may therefore influence purchase intention not only by informing them but also by entertaining them and signaling identity relevance.

This study therefore examines whether brand-generated content, user-generated content, utilitarian value, hedonic value, and symbolic value directly influence Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific. The study contributes to digital marketing literature by comparing content-source effects and perceived-value effects in a pre-purchase skincare context. It also provides practical insights for skincare brands seeking to convert social media exposure into purchase intention among potential consumers who are familiar with the brand but have not yet purchased it.

1.1. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The Elaboration Likelihood Model explains that consumers process persuasive messages through central and peripheral routes depending on their motivation and ability to elaborate information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In social media, brand-generated content can work through visual quality, professional presentation, and brand credibility, while user-generated content can encourage deeper evaluation through reviews and user experiences (Mardhatilah et al., 2023; El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025). Both content sources may support purchase intention because they provide cues that help potential consumers reduce uncertainty before buying skincare products. Therefore, this study proposes:

H1: Brand-generated content positively affects Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific.

H2: User-generated content positively affects Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific.

Perceived value is also expected to influence purchase intention. Utilitarian value may increase purchase intention when content helps consumers understand product functions, ingredients, benefits, and quality. Hedonic value may increase purchase intention when content is visually attractive, enjoyable, and emotionally stimulating. Symbolic value may increase purchase intention when consumers feel that the product fits their self-image, lifestyle, or desired social identity. Prior studies have linked utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic value to consumer intention in digital shopping contexts (Anderson et al., 2014; Dua, 2024). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Utilitarian value positively affects Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific.

H4: Hedonic value positively affects Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific.

H5: Symbolic value positively affects Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific.

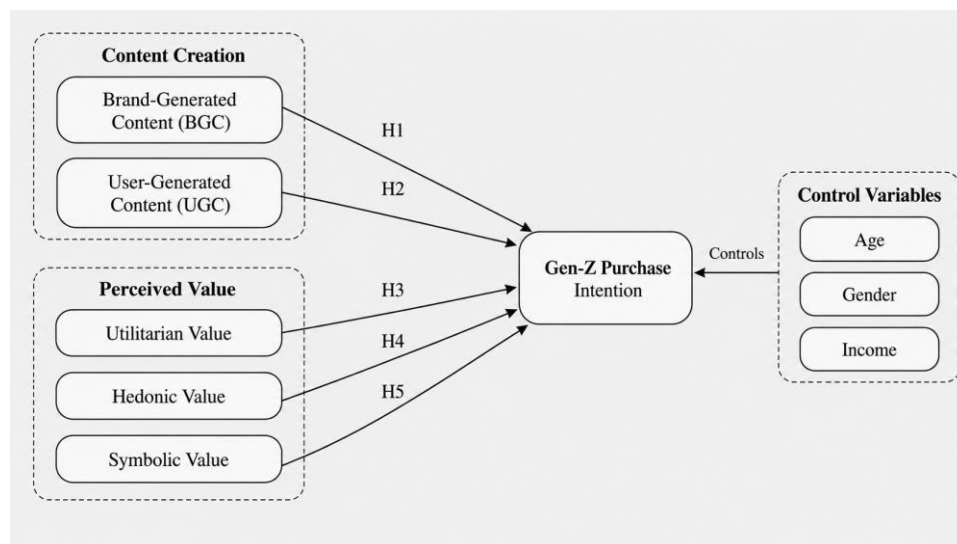


Figure 1. Research Model

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative, descriptive, single cross-sectional survey design. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents who met purposive sampling criteria. The target respondents were Generation Z consumers aged 18-29 years who actively used social media, had seen skincare content, knew or had seen Skintific products, had interacted with Skintific-related content, and had never purchased Skintific products. The non-buyer criterion was used to keep the analysis focused on pre-purchase intention rather than post-purchase satisfaction or repurchase intention.

A total of 353 responses were collected. After screening, 47 responses were excluded because they did not meet the criteria: one did not agree to participate, two were under 18 years old, four had never interacted with Skintific content, and 40 had already purchased Skintific products. The final sample consisted of 306 respondents. Most respondents were female (70.26%), aged 18-20 years (32.35%), had senior high school or equivalent education (54.58%), were students (55.23%), and used social media several times a day (94.44%). Instagram (94.44%) and TikTok (86.93%) were the most frequently used platforms.

The reduced model retained six reflective constructs: brand-generated content, user-generated content, utilitarian value, hedonic value, symbolic value, and purchase intention. Each construct used four reflective indicators, resulting in 24 retained indicators. Age, gender, and income were included as control variables. Items for brand-generated content, user-generated content, and purchase intention were adapted from El-Shihy and Awaad (2025), while items for utilitarian, hedonic, and symbolic value were adapted from Dua (2024). All construct indicators were measured using a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM following reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, collinearity, and bootstrapping procedures recommended by Hair et al. (2022) and Henseler et al. (2015).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Measurement Model

The descriptive results show generally favorable perceptions toward the retained constructs. The mean construct scores were 4.17 for brand-generated content, 4.39 for user-generated content, 4.16 for utilitarian value, 4.01 for hedonic value, 3.92 for symbolic value, and 4.02 for purchase intention. These values indicate that respondents tended to agree that Skintific-related content was informative, user reviews were considered important, and purchase intention was present among potential non-buyer consumers.

The retained measurement model met the key PLS-SEM criteria. All outer loadings for the retained constructs ranged from 0.747 to 0.916, except none below the minimum retention threshold used in this study. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were above 0.70 for all retained constructs, while AVE values were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was also acceptable because all HTMT values among the substantive constructs were below 0.90; the highest values were 0.863 between brand-generated content and utilitarian value, and 0.858 between symbolic value and purchase intention. Outer VIF values were below 5, indicating no serious indicator collinearity problem.

Table 1. Reliability and convergent validity of retained constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Brand-generated content	0.834	0.888	0.666
User-generated content	0.908	0.935	0.783
Utilitarian value	0.866	0.909	0.713
Hedonic value	0.903	0.932	0.774
Symbolic value	0.892	0.926	0.759
Purchase intention	0.877	0.916	0.732

3.2. Structural Model

The structural model was assessed using the latest PLS-SEM output after deleting the mediation construct. The model explained 64.7% of the variance in purchase intention, with an adjusted R-square of 63.8%. The estimated SRMR was 0.066, indicating acceptable model fit. Inner VIF values ranged from 1.075 to 3.045, below the threshold of 5, so structural collinearity was not problematic. Table 2 presents the direct paths and control-variable effects.

Table 2. Direct effects and control-variable effects on Gen Z purchase intention

Hypothesis	Path	Path coefficient	t-statistics	p-value	Decision
H1	BGC -> PI	0.199	1.904	0.028	Supported
H2	UGC -> PI	0.079	1.570	0.058	Not supported
H3	UV -> PI	0.051	0.507	0.306	Not supported
H4	HV -> PI	0.114	1.409	0.079	Not supported
H5	SV -> PI	0.452	5.751	<0.001	Supported
Control	Age -> PI	0.039	0.991	0.161	Not significant
Control	Gender -> PI	0.108	1.508	0.066	Not significant
Control	Income -> PI	0.065	1.992	0.023	Significant

Note: BGC = brand-generated content; UGC = user-generated content; UV = utilitarian value; HV = hedonic value; SV = symbolic value; PI = purchase intention. Decisions are based on directional bootstrapping at the 5% significance level. Effect sizes were strongest for symbolic value ($f^2 = 0.192$), followed by brand-generated content ($f^2 = 0.041$), while UGC ($f^2 = 0.013$), hedonic value ($f^2 = 0.013$), utilitarian value ($f^2 = 0.002$), age ($f^2 = 0.003$), gender ($f^2 = 0.006$), and income ($f^2 = 0.009$) were small to negligible.

3.3. Discussion

The results indicate that brand-generated content positively affects purchase intention. This means that official Skintific content may influence potential Gen Z consumers even when they do not yet have purchase experience. In skincare, brand-generated content can function as an official information source by presenting product claims, usage information, benefits, and visual demonstrations. This supports the argument that brand-controlled content can influence consumer intention when it offers clear and attractive cues (El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025).

User-generated content had a positive but statistically insignificant direct effect on purchase intention at the 5% level. This result suggests that reviews, testimonials, and consumer-created content may still be relevant as social proof, but they were not decisive enough to directly predict intention once brand-generated content, perceived value dimensions, and control variables were included. For skincare products, consumers may use user reviews to reduce uncertainty, but purchase intention toward Skintific appears to depend more strongly on official brand cues and symbolic value.

Symbolic value was the strongest direct predictor of purchase intention. This suggests that purchase intention toward Skintific is shaped more by self-image, lifestyle fit, and social acceptance than by functional usefulness or entertainment alone. The result is consistent with the idea that symbolic and social meanings can influence consumer evaluation when products are connected to identity expression (Rintamaki et al., 2006; Dua, 2024). For Generation Z, skincare consumption may not only be about solving skin problems but also about presenting a desired self-image and belonging to a socially accepted beauty routine.

Utilitarian value and hedonic value did not show significant direct effects on purchase intention. This does not mean that functional information and enjoyable content are irrelevant. Rather, their direct effects were not strong enough once symbolic value and content-source variables were considered. The control-variable results also show that income significantly affected purchase intention, while age and gender did not. This implies that affordability or purchasing capacity may matter more than demographic age differences within the Gen Z range.

4. CONCLUSION

This conference paper examines brand-generated content, user-generated content, utilitarian value, hedonic value, and symbolic value as predictors of Gen Z purchase intention toward Skintific in Indonesia. The retained measurement model shows adequate reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and collinearity results. The structural model explains 64.7% of purchase intention. The findings show that brand-generated content and symbolic value positively affect purchase intention, while user-generated content, utilitarian value, and hedonic value do not show significant direct effects at the 5% level. Among all predictors, symbolic value is the strongest direct predictor.

The study provides managerial implications for skincare brands. Skintific and similar brands should maintain informative official content and strengthen symbolic value by communicating self-expression, confidence, lifestyle fit, and social relevance. User-generated content should still be encouraged because it can support social proof, but the results suggest that it may not be sufficient by itself to create purchase intention among potential non-buyers. Future research can compare potential consumers with actual buyers, test additional skincare categories, and examine whether user-generated content works indirectly through trust, perceived credibility, or brand attitude.

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