The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Gen Z Women's Buying Interest Through Brand Attitude and Brand Equity in Cosmetic Products

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ABSTRACT

Marketing through social media has become a marketing strategy that is widely used by the cosmetics industry, especially with the number of consumers that continue to grow as generations increase. Generation Z women are a potential market in this industry where this generation is a new entrant consumer. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of marketing through social media on the intention to make purchases with variables mediating brand attitude and brand equity on cosmetic products in the city of Makassar. The research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 288 respondents, selected using a non-probability sampling technique known as convenience sampling. The collected primary data is then processed using the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method using AMOS 23 software. The research results indicate that marketing via social media has a positive and significant impact on brand attitude and brand equity but does not significantly influence the purchasing intentions of Gen Z women. Additionally, brand attitude and brand equity do not effectively mediate the relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions. These findings suggest that cosmetic companies need to refine their social media marketing strategies to better target Gen Z women.

Keywords: brand attitude; brand equity; purchase intention; social media marketing, gen z.

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing through digital media is currently garnering significant attention within the industry for implementation. According to (Grahanurdian.com, 2022), data regarding internet usage in Indonesia for 2022 indicates that it will encompass 77% of the country's total population, equating to approximately 204.7 million individuals. Moreover, existing data suggests that the number of social media users in Indonesia is projected to increase by 12.6% compared to 2021, reaching a total of 191.4 million users

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in 2022. Presently, companies worldwide are leveraging social media platforms to conduct marketing activities and enhance the brand equity of their products (Aji et al., 2020).
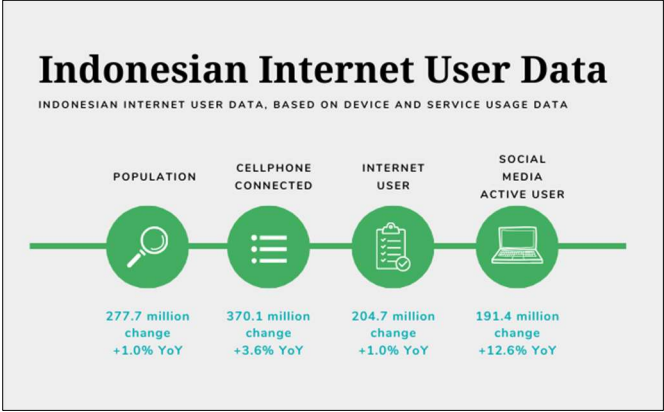

Figure 1. Data on Indonesian internet users in 2022
Source. Grahanurdian.com. accesed 2023

Generation Z, also referred to as the iGeneration or Internet Generation, encompasses individuals born between 1995 and 2010, who have grown and developed during the era of digitalization across various domains (Citra Christiani & Ikasari, 2020). This generation is notably proficient in utilizing digital technology. According to data from (Grahanurdian.com, 2022), the highest concentration of social media users falls within the Generation Z demographic in Indonesia. Among Gen Z social media users, there is a higher proportion of females compared to males. Specifically, female Gen Z social media users aged 18-24 years account for 16.6%, and those aged 25-34 years represent 18.0% of all social media users in Indonesia, as depicted in Figure 2.
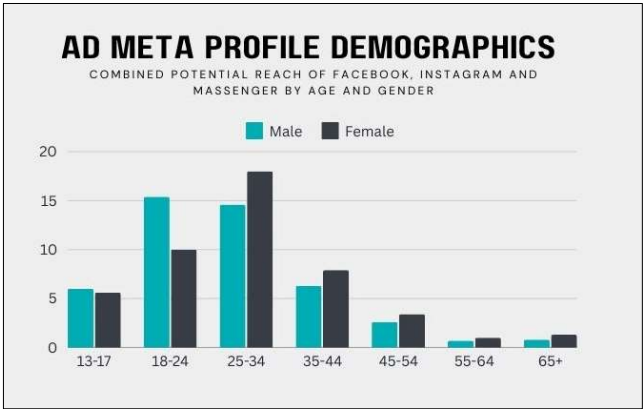

Figure 2.   Map of Social media reach in Indonesia by age & gender in 2022
Source. Grahanurdian.com. accesed 2023

The cosmetics market stands out as one of the fastest-growing sectors, largely driven by the influx of new, youthful consumers (Choedon & Lee, 2020). With the emergence of this new demographic, it is imperative for cosmetic companies to adapt their marketing strategies accordingly. One such adaptation involves leveraging social

media platforms for marketing purposes (Mandasari et al., 2023). Typically, in social media marketing strategies, cosmetic companies disseminate product information through these platforms and engage in communication and dialogue with potential consumers, fostering attachment and favorable impressions of their products (Qiutong & Rahman, 2019).

Marketing activities through social media are undertaken by companies to stimulate consumer interest in purchasing. Research conducted by Sanny et al., (2020) indicates a significant influence of social media marketing on the intention to transact men's skincare products in Indonesia, mediated by several variables. Other studies have explored the mediating roles of product attitude (brand attitude) and product strength (brand equity) in the relationship between social media marketing variables and product purchase intentions, as evidenced by research conducted by Angelica, (2021) and Zollo et al., (2020).

This research aims to investigate the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing intentions of female Generation Z consumers in the city of Makassar, mediated by brand attitude and brand equity of cosmetic products. Previous research has rarely examined the impact of brand attitude and brand equity on the purchasing interest in cosmetics among Gen Z women in Makassar. Generation Z, which controls 40% of the global market, is deeply integrated with technology (Ameen et al., 2022). Several similar studies have explored social media marketing's effect on the buying interest of Gen Z in Makassar. For instance, Putri & Nofri, (2023) examined the mediating roles of Brand Image and Online Reviews, while Mubarak & Basalamah, (2024) focused on Brand Image and Influencer Marketing. Additionally, Khairunnisa & Heriyadi, (2023) investigated impulsive buying behavior as a mediating variable among Makassar's Gen Z women.

A preliminary survey conducted among 388 female university students in Makassar City revealed that 61.34% reported using three or more social media platforms and following accounts related to cosmetic products. Additionally, 65.21% stated that they regularly use cosmetics, with 56.96% allocating a minimum of IDR 100,000 each month for cosmetic purchases. These findings suggest that female Generation Z university students represent a significant potential market for the cosmetics industry in Makassar City. Building upon this, the current study will examine the impact of social media marketing on the intention to purchase cosmetic products among Gen Z women in Makassar City. The analysis will consider the mediating effects of brand attitude and brand equity variables.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social-Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a strategic process employed by companies to engage with digital platforms and promote their products, thereby enhancing value for stakeholders (Ebrahim, 2020). Utilizing social media platforms enables companies to reach large numbers of consumers and foster communication among them (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This marketing approach involves companies communicating and offering goods and services to stakeholders through social media platforms while establishing and nurturing close relationships by facilitating interactions, sharing information, facilitating transactions, and generating word-of-mouth (Koay, 2021).

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Information intended for dissemination via social media is typically packaged as content and disseminated with the goal of informing, communicating, or influencing consumers (Haudi et al., 2022). Qiutong & Rahman (2019) propose several indicators for effective social media marketing of cosmetic products, including profitable campaigns, relevant content, frequency of content updates, popularity of content, and utilization of various platforms.

Research conducted by Lin et al., (2021) demonstrates the positive impact of social media marketing activities, particularly those facilitated by influencers, on the brand attitude towards the product. Certain consumers engage with social media platforms to explore specific product brands due to their pre-existing attitudes towards the product and their interest in promotional campaigns (Ahmed & Saeed, 2021). Other studies present different findings. For instance, research by Wardani, (2023) indicates that social media marketing variables do not significantly impact brand attitude among Shopee application users. Similarly, Perdana, (2023) found that firm-created content does not significantly influence brand attitude in the context of Nike product marketing. Building upon this premise, the hypothesis of this study is:

H1: Marketing through social media has a positive effect on brand attitude

Research conducted by Koay et al. (2021) reveals a positive and significant influence of social media marketing on brand equity, employing the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model. Marketing activities via social media serve as channels through which product brands are perceived by consumers, thereby increasing attention and brand equity (Hutter et al., 2013). Different results were found by Ramdhani & Masnita, (2023), who reported that social media marketing efforts by smartphone companies did not significantly impact brand equity.

H2: Marketing via social media has a positive effect on brand equity.

Social media platforms enable companies to foster brand loyalty through networking, communication, and community engagement (Qiutong & Rahman, 2019). Brand networks established via social media exert a positive influence on value creation, thereby enhancing consumer loyalty within communities (Ahmed & Saeed, 2021). Research suggests that loyal consumers exhibit higher purchase intentions for products compared to moderately loyal or new consumers (Poturak & Softić, 2019). However, (Putra & Aristana, 2020) found different results, indicating that social media marketing activities did not significantly impact purchase intention in the context of vocational school marketing in Gianyar, Bali. Based on this, while social media marketing can influence product purchase intentions, the third hypothesis of this research is formulated accordingly.

H3: Marketing via social media has a positive effect on the intention to purchase cosmetic products by Gen Z women in Makassar City.

2.2. Brand Attitude

Brand attitude refers to an individual consumer's perception and evaluation of a product, which companies can leverage for product development. A consumer's attitude towards a brand reflects their assessment of the product's qualities. The more positive the

consumer's attitude towards the product, the greater the potential increase in market share (Timpal et al., 2016). According to Ardani Sahputra & Hanny Nurlatifah, (2020), brand attitude encompasses the inclination of consumers to consistently exhibit certain behaviors towards specific objects. Indicators of brand attitude, as identified in the research by Timpal et al. (2016), include enjoyment of product usage, a favorable reputation, and positive attributes.

Prior research demonstrates a positive and significant relationship between brand attitude and intention to purchase a product. For instance, Folkvord et al., (2020) found a positive and significant association between brand attitude and intention to purchase healthy food products via the Instagram platform. Similarly, Lin et al. (2021) revealed a positive influence of brand attitudes through social media influencers on the intention to purchase products. However, research conducted by Yudianto, (2022) shows different results, indicating that brand attitude has a negative influence on purchase intention for fashion products. Building upon this literature, the fourth research hypothesis is as follows:

H4: Brand attitude has a positive effect on the intention to purchase cosmetic products by Gen Z women in Makassar city.

2.3. Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the strength or added value that a product possesses, often shaped by consumer perceptions. It enhances a company's marketing efforts by providing value and fostering competitive advantages against competitors (Padhy & Sawlikar, 2018). Brand equity can improve the effectiveness of marketing programs, leading to higher earnings ratios and increased shareholder value through enhanced consumer loyalty to the product (Poturak & Softic, 2019).

Prior studies have explored the impact of brand equity on consumer purchase intentions. Poturak & Softić (2019) and (Mahendra Putri et al., 2024) assert that a higher level of brand equity for a product corresponds to an increased likelihood of purchasing the same product. Building upon the findings of previous researchers, which suggest that a more positive consumer perception of a product strengthens the intention to purchase, the fifth hypothesis of this research is as follows:

H5. Brand equity has a positive effect on the intention to purchase cosmetic products by Gen Z women of Makassar City.

2.4. Brand Purchase Intention

Brand purchase intention refers to consumers' likelihood and desire to purchase a product following exposure on social media platforms. It signifies a consumer's intent to procure a product or service in the future (Choedon & Lee, 2020). Numerous studies suggest that heightened purchase intention correlates with increased actual purchases of the respective product.

Several previous studies have indicated that marketing activities via social media positively influence product purchase intentions by shaping attitudes toward the brand and enhancing brand equity. When consumers harbor positive attitudes toward a brand, fostered through social media interactions, their intention to purchase goods or services increases (Choedon & Lee, 2020). Research conducted by Majeed et al., (2021) demonstrates that social media campaigns facilitate brand storytelling and enhance consumer engagement, thereby aiding companies in determining suitable content themes

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based on consumer feedback. The findings of this study indicate a positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions for fashion products in Ghana, mediated by brand equity. Building upon these insights, the sixth and seventh hypotheses of this research are as follows:

H6: Marketing via social media significantly influences product purchase intentions through brand attitude.

H7: Marketing via social media significantly influences product purchase intentions through brand equity.
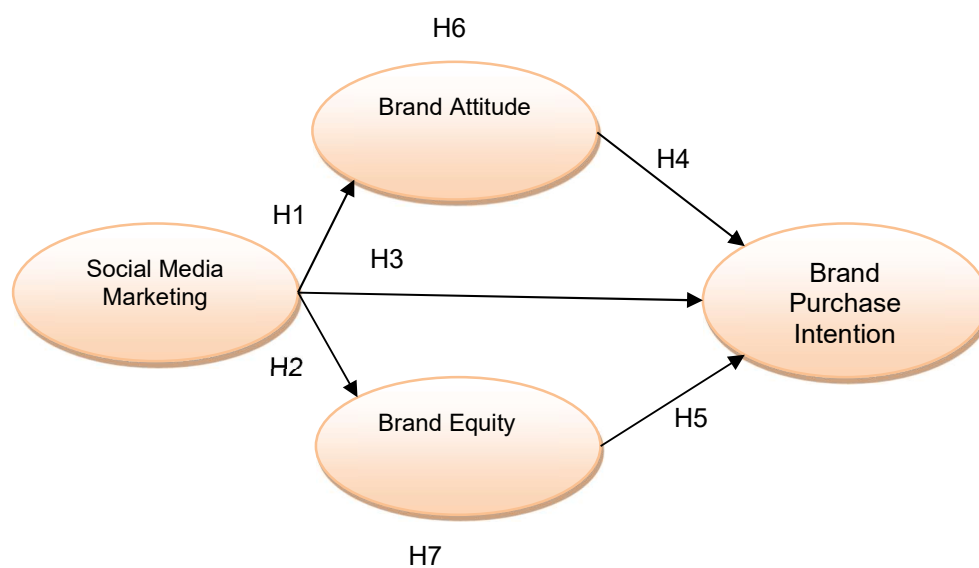
2.5 Research Model

Figure 3. Research Model
Source. Data Processed. 2024

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan responden merupakan This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the influence of marketing variables via social media, as an independent variable, on the interest in purchasing cosmetic products, as an endogenous variable, mediated by brand attitude and brand equity variables. The variable "marketing via social media" comprises five indicators, "interest in buying products" consists of two indicators, "brand attitude" includes three indicators, and "brand equity" encompasses three indicators. The research aims to test seven hypotheses, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The participants in this study are Generation Z women who are currently pursuing higher education at various Universities in Makassar City. The research population consists of Generation Z women who follow social media accounts managed by distributors or cosmetic companies in Makassar City. According to Lemshow, for an

unlimited population, the minimum research sample size should be 100 (rounded up) (Kuncoro, 2013).

Primary research data were collected using a non-probability sampling method employing convenience sampling techniques. Respondents meeting the criteria were invited to complete an online questionnaire using Google Form tools. Respondents evaluated questionnaire statements using a Likert meas+urement scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Data collection yielded 338 responses, but 50 respondents did not provide information on the cosmetic brands they followed, rendering their data unsuitable for processing. Thus, data from 288 respondents were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques with the assistance of AMOS 23 software. The research instrument used was a questionnaire containing indicators of the research variables. The research procedures included conducting goodness-of-fit calculations to assess the validity of the data and its suitability to the constructed model. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was performed using the SEM-AMOS procedure

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
4.1. Respondents Profile

Based on the primary data obtained, respondent profiles are described in Figure 4.
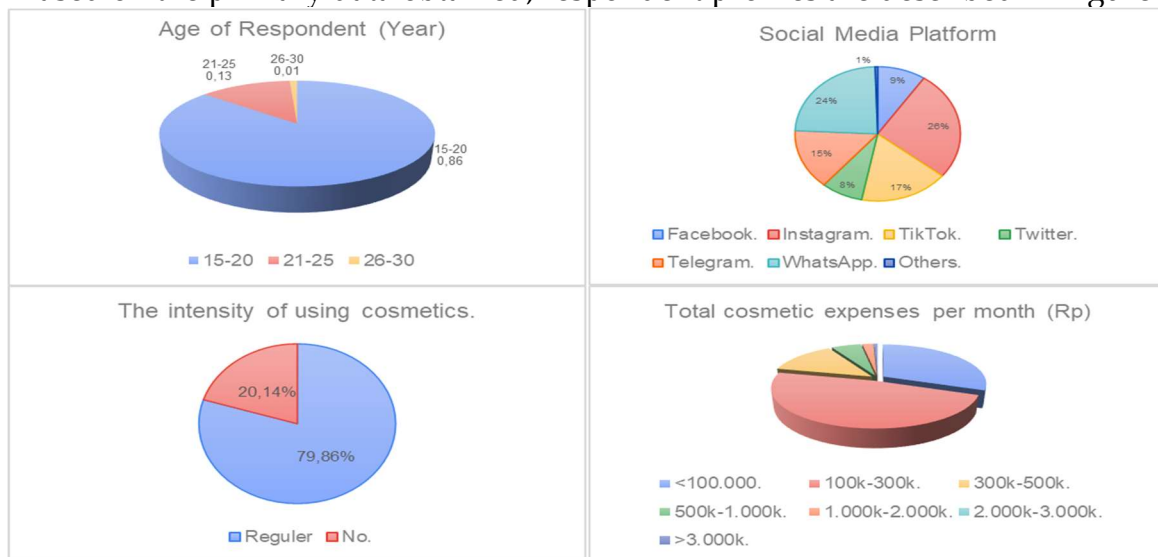

Figure 4. Characteristics of respondents
Source. Data processed. 2024

The primary data collection results reveal that the profile of the research respondents consists of 288 individuals, all of whom are students enrolled in various universities in Makassar City. The age distribution of the respondents indicates that 86.11% fall within the 15-20 age range, 12.85% are aged between 21-25 years, and 1.04% are aged 25-30 years. The majority of respondents primarily use Instagram (26.32%), followed by WhatsApp (23.73%), TikTok (17.38%), and other platforms.

Regarding the number of social media platforms utilized by Gen Z women, the majority use four or more platforms (50.69%), followed by three platforms (19.44%), two platforms (13.89%), with the remaining respondents using only one platform (15.97%). Additionally, a significant portion of respondents (79.86%) use cosmetics regularly, while the remaining respondents do not. In terms of monthly expenditure on cosmetics, nearly

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half allocate between Rp. 100,000 to Rp. 300,000 (47.92%), followed by less than Rp. 100,000 (30.56%), and between Rp. 300,000 to Rp. 500,000 (13.19%).

4.2. Instrument Procedures

The research instrument employs a questionnaire comprising four research variables: marketing via social media (SMM), brand attitude (BAT), brand equity (BEQ), and consumer buying interest (BPI). The marketing variable via social media includes five indicators, while the brand attitude and brand equity variables each consist of three indicators. The consumer buying interest variable comprises two indicators. The validity and reliability of the instrument are presented in Table 2

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Testing

	Items	Pearson Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Social Media Marketing	SMM1	0.732**	0,801	5
	SMM2	0.767**		
	SMM3	0.776**		
	SMM4	0.687**		
	SMM5	0.774**		
Brand Attitude	BAT1	0.789**	0,784	3
	BAT2	0.871**		
	BAT3	0.846**		
Brand Equity	BEQ1	0.804**	0,805	3
	BEQ2	0.898**		
	BEQ3	0.843**		
Brand Purchase Intention	BPI1	0.908*	0,782	2
	BPI2	0.904**		

Source. Data processed. 2024

Based on the results of the validity and reliability tests presented in Table 2, it is evident that the Pearson Correlation values for each research indicator exceed the critical r table value. Therefore, according to the statistical validity test data processing, all research items are deemed valid. Additionally, Table 2 demonstrates that the Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables of Social Media Marketing (SMM), Brand Attitude (BAT), Brand Equity (BEQ), and Brand Purchase Intention (BPI) are 0.801, 0.784, 0.805, and 0.782 respectively. Each of these variables exhibits a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7, indicating their reliability. Consequently, it can be concluded that the items utilized in the research are reliable, as asserted by Ferdinand. Augusty, (2014).

4.3. Goodness of Fit

After obtaining instrument test results that demonstrate the validity and reliability of the instrument, the subsequent step involves testing the research hypothesis based on the available data. Before testing the hypothesis using the Structural Equation Modeling method with AMOS 23 software, the accuracy of the data for the research model being constructed is assessed first. The adequacy of data measurement is evaluated using goodness-of-fit criteria. The results of the goodness-of-fit measurement in the research are presented in Table 3.

Upon calculating the goodness-of-fit criteria, it is evident that the results have met the specified standards. The probability value, with criteria >0.05, appears to comply, yielding a value of 0.102. Similarly, the RMSEA criteria, which indicate a value of 0.030 < 0.08, seem to satisfy the specified criteria. In assessing the GFI and IFI, with criteria > 0.9, the GFI yields results of 0.966 > 0.9, and the IFI is 0.993 > 0.9, thus meeting the specified fit criteria. The comprehensive calculation results can be observed in Table 3.

Table 3. Models godness of fit

Item	Criterion	Result
ChiSquare	kecil	66,438
Probabilitas	>0,05	0,102
RMSEA	<0,08	0,030
CMIN/DF	<2,0	1,254
GFI	>0,9	0,966
AGFI	>0,9	0,942
TLI	>0,95	0,990
CFI	>0,95	0,993
IFI	>0,9	0,993
NFI	>0,9	0,967

Source. Data processed. 2024

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

Following the calculation of the goodness-of-fit criteria, where the results indicate compliance with the criteria, the research hypotheses are subsequently tested. The outcomes of research hypothesis testing are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of linear regression

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Social Media Marketing ---> Brand_Attitude	0,706	0,084	8,363	***
Social Media Marketing ---> Brand_Equity	0,869	0,088	9,832	***
Social Media Marketing ---> Brand Purchase Intention	0,114	0,152	0,752	0,452
Brand_Equity ---> Brand Purchase Intention	-0,096	0,813	-0,118	0,906
Brand_Attitude ---> Brand Purchase Intention	1,173	0,877	1,337	0,181

Source. Data processed. 2024

Based on the results of linear regression calculations regarding the direct relationships between research variables, it is evident that the social media marketing variable partially exerts a significant influence on brand attitude, with a significance value (P) of 0.00 < 0.05. Similarly, the social media marketing variable also significantly affects the brand equity variable, with a significance value (P) of 0.00 < 0.05. Additionally, Table 4 illustrates a stronger influence value in the relationship between social media marketing and brand equity compared to the relationship between social media marketing and brand attitude, as indicated by the Critical Ratio (C.R.) value of 9.832 > 8.363.

However, the partial effect of the brand equity variable on brand purchase intention does not seem significant, with a P value of 0.906 > 0.05. Likewise, the brand attitude variable does not appear to significantly impact brand purchase intention, with a P value of 0.181 > 0.05. Similarly, the social media marketing variable does not exhibit a significant impact on brand purchase intention, with a P value of 0.452 > 0.05. Table 4

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presents information on Estimate values and S.E. values, which will be utilized in the Sobel test calculation to assess the indirect influence of social media marketing variables on brand purchasing intention through brand attitude and brand equity variables. The results of the Sobel test calculation are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5. Sobel test of indirect variables

Indirect Influence	Z Sobel	t table	Significance
SMM --> BAT --> BPI	1,320893	1,968352	Insignificant
SMM --> BEQ --> BPI	-0,11807	1,968352	Insignificant

Source. Data processed. 2024

Table 5 provides details on the indirect relationship between research variables. The computed results indicate that the z Sobel value for the relationship of the social media marketing variable with brand purchase intention through the brand attitude variable and the brand equity variable is smaller than the critical t-value. According to the Sobel test calculations, the indirect influence of social media marketing variables on brand purchase intention through the mediating variables of brand attitude and brand equity is not significant.

4.5. Discussions

Currently, the measurement and conceptualization of marketing variables via social media are still evolving (Ebrahim, 2020). The findings of this research offer several insights and contribute to knowledge regarding marketing activities via social media concerning the purchasing intentions of female Generation Z consumers. This study aims to explore how the relationship between these two variables is mediated by brand attitude and brand equity variables.

The research findings indicate that marketing via social media significantly influences attitudes towards products. This aligns with the research conducted by Folkvord et al. (2020), where continuous exposure through social media is shown to increase positive sentiments and trust in the product. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this research is accepted.

Furthermore, the results reveal that extensive marketing activities by cosmetic companies positively and significantly impact brand equity. This finding is consistent with the research outcomes of Haudi et al. (2022), which suggest that individuals who engage with social media regularly tend to form positive impressions and perceptions of the marketed products. Consequently, the second hypothesis is accepted.

However, marketing activities by cosmetic companies via social media do not significantly influence the purchasing intentions of female Gen Z consumers. This outcome contradicts the findings of Koay et al. (2021), which indicate a significant relationship between social media marketing activities and interest in university enrollment among Malaysian students. This disparity may arise because a majority of the research respondents (female Gen Z) fall within the age range of 15-20 years (86.87%), wherein they may not yet possess the autonomy to decide independently on the cosmetic brands they use. Consequently, marketing activities via social media by cosmetic

companies in Makassar may not substantially impact the purchasing intentions of Gen Z women. Thus, the third hypothesis is rejected.

Similarly, attitudes towards products do not significantly influence the intention to purchase cosmetic products among Gen Z women in Makassar. These results diverge from the findings of Lin et al. (2021) on products utilizing influencers in social media marketing activities. Through in-depth interviews conducted by researchers, it was observed that the response from social media managers for cosmetic products managed by companies or distributors is not sufficiently prompt or interactive when consumers seek information related to these products on social media platforms. This lack of responsiveness may lead to consumer dissatisfaction and a negative perception of the product, thereby reducing their intent to make purchases via digital platforms. Consequently, the fourth hypothesis is rejected.

A similar trend is evident in the relationship between brand equity and the intention to purchase cosmetic products, which shows an insignificant correlation. Interviews conducted by researchers revealed that suboptimal interactivity in social media management results in consumers not obtaining necessary product information. Consequently, they are unable to make informed comparisons to meet their needs, leading them to prefer making purchases directly to gather accurate product information. Therefore, the brand equity formed still does not significantly influence the intention to make purchases via existing social media platforms. These findings contrast with the research conducted by Isman et al., (2020), which suggests a significant relationship between marketing activities via social media and interest in visiting tourist attractions. Hence, the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

Moreover, the indirect influence of marketing variables via social media on the intention to purchase cosmetic products through attitudes towards the product shows insignificant results. These findings are inconsistent with the research conducted by Folkvord et al. (2020), which indicates that the attitude variable towards products effectively mediates the relationship between social media marketing and the intention to purchase products. Consequently, the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

Additionally, cosmetic product brand equity was found not to serve as a significant mediator of the relationship between marketing via social media and the intention to purchase cosmetic products among Gen Z women in Makassar. These results contrast with the findings of Majeed et al. (2021), which suggest that brand equity acts as an effective mediator between marketing via social media and product purchase intentions. Hence, the seventh hypothesis is rejected.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. Conclusion

In the contemporary era of digitalization, social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives, facilitating communication and relationship-building. It is hoped that companies can leverage this trend to bolster their product marketing efforts through digital platforms. Social media has emerged as a significant tool for companies to conduct marketing activities due to its cost-effectiveness, rapid dissemination, and extensive reach (Aji et al., 2020).

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This study reveals that Generation Z women represent a promising market segment for the cosmetics industry. Out of the 288 respondents, 79.86% reported regular use of cosmetics, with 69.44% spending more than Rp. 100,000 monthly on cosmetic purchases. Furthermore, 70.13% of female university students use three or more social media platforms, indicating their high integration with social media.

The research aims to explore the influence of social media marketing by cosmetic companies or distributors on the purchase intentions of Generation Z women in Makassar City. In addition to analyzing this relationship, the study incorporates brand attitude and brand equity variables as mediators, drawing from relevant indicators established in previous research.

The findings demonstrate that social media marketing conducted by cosmetic companies in Makassar City significantly impacts brand attitude and brand equity. However, it does not significantly influence the purchasing intentions of Gen Z women. Similarly, the brand attitude and brand equity formed do not significantly affect the purchasing intentions of Gen Z women for cosmetic products. The mediating variables, brand attitude, and brand equity are also ineffective in mediating the relationship between social media marketing and the intention to purchase cosmetic products.

5.2. Suggestion

Based on the research findings, cosmetic companies in Makassar City can enhance the interest of female Gen Z consumers in purchasing via social media by implementing enticing initiatives such as discount codes, promotional coupons, loyalty programs, and engaging activities like quizzes or games. Tailoring content to resonate with the lifestyles of female university students and ensuring regular updates is crucial when targeting this demographic. Additionally, leveraging various social media platforms can broaden the reach of the target market.

The study has limitations, primarily concerning the research sample, which comprises Generation Z women currently pursuing higher education in Makassar. Future research endeavors may consider including Gen Z women who are employed and have purchasing power. Exploring research settings in other major cities could provide insights into regional variations and the influence of competitive landscapes on research outcomes.

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