

## **The Influence of Influencer Marketing, Customer Reviews, and Customer Ratings on Buying Interest in the Perspective of Human Resources (Study on Garnier Skincare Consumers in Dau District, Malang Regency)**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine the influence of beauty influencers, customer reviews, and customer ratings on purchase intention toward Garnier skincare products. The research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. Data were collected from 100 consumers of Garnier skincare products in Dau District, Malang Regency, selected through purposive sampling. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire measured with a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression supported by classical assumption tests. The results indicate that beauty influencers, customer reviews, and customer ratings simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Partially, customer reviews and customer ratings have a positive and significant influence on purchase intention, while beauty influencers do not show a significant effect. Among the independent variables, customer ratings exhibit the strongest influence on purchase intention. These findings suggest that consumer-generated information plays a more crucial role than influencer endorsement in shaping purchase intention for skincare products.

**Keywords:** Beauty Influencer, Customer Review, Customer Rating, Purchase Intention, Skincare

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped human lifestyles, particularly in how individuals construct self-image and social identity. In contemporary society, personal appearance is no longer perceived merely as a private matter but has become a form of social expression that reflects confidence, professionalism, and social belonging. This phenomenon occurs not only in urban environments but also in semi-urban and rural areas, where the use of cosmetics and skincare products has become increasingly common across different social groups.

Alongside this transformation, the beauty and skincare industry has experienced rapid growth, driven by rising awareness of self-care, health, and aesthetic appearance. Skincare products are no longer viewed as luxury items but as essential daily needs, particularly among young adults. This shift has intensified competition among brands, encouraging companies to adopt innovative marketing strategies to influence consumer purchase intention.

In the digital era, traditional marketing approaches are increasingly complemented by digital marketing strategies that emphasize interaction, engagement, and trust (Kotler et al., 2021). Social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become dominant channels for beauty brands to communicate with consumers. Through these platforms, consumers are exposed to various forms of persuasive communication, including influencer endorsements, customer reviews, and rating systems, all of which play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions.

One of the most prominent strategies in digital marketing is influencer marketing, particularly through beauty influencers. Beauty influencers are individuals who possess expertise, credibility, and social attractiveness in the beauty domain and actively share product-

related content through social media. Their recommendations often include tutorials, product reviews, and personal experiences, which are perceived as more authentic and relatable than traditional advertisements (Lou & Yuan, 2019). As a result, beauty influencers are considered effective opinion leaders capable of influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

From a theoretical perspective, the influence of beauty influencers can be explained through source credibility theory and social learning theory. Consumers tend to trust information delivered by sources they perceive as knowledgeable and trustworthy, and they may imitate behaviors demonstrated by admired figures. However, recent studies indicate that the impact of beauty influencers is not always consistent. Some research suggests that excessive commercial endorsements may reduce perceived authenticity, thereby weakening the influencer's persuasive power (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This inconsistency highlights the need for further empirical investigation into the actual role of beauty influencers in shaping purchase intention, particularly in the skincare industry.

Beyond influencer marketing, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has become a critical factor in online consumer decision-making. Customer reviews represent one of the most influential forms of e-WOM, as they provide evaluations based on real user experiences. In online shopping environments, consumers rely heavily on customer reviews to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, especially for products such as skincare that cannot be physically examined prior to purchase (Fileri et al., 2021).

Customer reviews offer detailed information regarding product quality, effectiveness, safety, and suitability for different skin types. The credibility and quality of these reviews significantly affect consumer trust and purchase intention. Positive, informative, and credible reviews tend to strengthen consumer confidence, while negative reviews may discourage purchasing decisions, regardless of brand reputation (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Consequently, customer reviews play a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions in digital marketplaces.

In addition to textual reviews, customer ratings have emerged as a powerful evaluative tool in e-commerce platforms. Customer ratings, usually expressed in the form of star symbols, provide a quick and easily interpretable summary of overall consumer satisfaction. Due to information overload in online shopping environments, consumers often rely on ratings as heuristic cues to assess product quality and seller reliability without reading extensive reviews (Lackermair et al., 2019).

Empirical evidence shows that higher customer ratings are positively associated with purchase intention, as they signal reliability and reduce perceived risk (Zhang et al., 2020). In the context of skincare products, where concerns related to safety and effectiveness are prominent, customer ratings become particularly influential. Products with higher ratings are generally perceived as more trustworthy and are more likely to be selected by consumers.

The skincare industry in Indonesia has experienced significant expansion in recent years, supported by increased digital adoption and the growth of e-commerce platforms. Among various skincare brands, Garnier has established itself as a widely recognized and accessible brand, particularly among young consumers. Garnier positions its products as affordable, effective, and suitable for diverse skin types, making them appealing to a broad market segment. Garnier's marketing strategy heavily utilizes digital platforms, incorporating influencer collaborations, customer reviews, and rating systems to enhance brand visibility and consumer trust. However, despite the extensive use of these strategies, empirical findings regarding their effectiveness in influencing purchase intention remain mixed. Some studies report that beauty influencers significantly affect purchase intention, while others suggest that consumers place greater trust in peer-generated information such as reviews and ratings.

Previous research examining the influence of beauty influencers, customer reviews, and customer ratings on purchase intention has produced inconsistent results. While influencer marketing is often found to enhance brand awareness and engagement, its direct impact on purchase intention may depend on factors such as credibility, authenticity, and consumer skepticism (Jin et al., 2019; Sokolova & Perez, 2021). In contrast, customer reviews and ratings are generally considered more reliable sources of information due to their experiential nature.

From a consumer behavior perspective, purchase intention is shaped by cognitive evaluation, emotional response, and perceived risk. Consumers assess available information, compare alternatives, and form intentions based on perceived benefits and trustworthiness. Therefore, examining beauty influencers, customer reviews, and customer ratings simultaneously provides a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of purchase intention in digital markets.

In the Indonesian local context, particularly in Kecamatan Dau, Kabupaten Malang, empirical studies focusing on skincare products remain limited. Consumer behavior in this area may differ from that in major urban centers due to variations in socio-economic background, digital literacy, and cultural norms. Consequently, findings from national or international studies may not fully capture local consumer dynamics.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the influence of beauty influencers, customer reviews, and customer ratings on purchase intention toward Garnier skincare products. By focusing on consumers in Kecamatan Dau, Kabupaten Malang, this research seeks to fill existing research gaps and provide empirical evidence relevant to local market conditions.

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on influencer marketing and e-WOM in emerging markets. Practically, it provides insights for marketers and brand managers in designing effective digital marketing strategies by understanding which factors most strongly influence consumer purchase intention in the skincare industry.

## **METHODS**

This study uses an explanatory quantitative approach that aims to test the influence of independent variables (Beauty Influencer, Customer Review, Customer Rating) on dependent variables (Buying Interest) in consumers of Garnier skincare products in Dau District, Malang Regency. The research statement and framework refer to a cross-sectional survey design that collects primary data through a structured questionnaire.

The study population is skincare consumers (especially Garnier users) who are in the study area. The sample was determined using purposive sampling, namely the selection of respondents who met certain criteria (age  $\geq 17$  years, have/actively purchased Garnier products online/offline) according to the purpose of obtaining informants who are rich in information related to the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling remains often used in quantitative field studies when the focus is on high-informative cases and data collection efficiency. Final sampling of 100 respondents, following practical calculations and sample size considerations for correlational studies as described in the literature on sample size planning for correlation/regression.

The instrument used was a closed questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree to 5=S Measurement of indicators on each variable (beauty influencer: reliability, knowledge, helpfulness, confidence, articulation; customer review: perceived usefulness, source credibility, argument quality, valence, volume; customer rating: service, product, operational, seller response; buying interest: transaction, reference, preference, exploration). The use of the Likert scale and the construct of indicators follow common practice

in quantitative consumer research. For online surveys, questionnaires are distributed through Google Forms to reach respondents in a wide geographic area while meeting data collection efficiency.

Before full data collection, instrument tests were carried out including item validity tests (item-total correlation) and reliabiach's alpha). The alpha interpretation and test procedure follow modern measurement guidelines: Cronbach's alpha  $\geq 0.60$  is considered acceptable for applied exploratory/quantitative research. To ensure the quality of the instrument, initial analysis and revision of items are carried out when necessary.

Data collection was carried out online during the research period with ethical procedures: respondents were informed of the research objectives, data confidentiality, and consent to participation. Online survey collection best practices such as pre-contact, reminders, and short questionnaire design are followed to improve response rates and response quality. Meta studies and virtual data protocol guidelines recommend these measures to reduce non-response bias and improve external validity.

Data analysis includes: (1) descriptive analysis to describe respondent profiles; (2) test classical assumptions (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, autocorrelation) to ensure the data meets the regression requirements; and (3) multiple linear regression analysis to test the partial and simultaneous influence of independent variables on buying interest (model:  $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$ ). The choice of analysis techniques is supported by the quantitative methodology literature for the study of the relationship between variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Overview of Descriptive Data and Statistics

In this study, the final sample of 100 respondents was selected using purposive sampling technique, the majority were aged 23-28 years (68%) and the dominance of female respondents was 91%. The composition of respondents' jobs is diverse, with 50% of private employees and 28% of students. This demographic distribution is important because demographic characteristics (specifically age and gender) often influence exposure to digital content and attitudes toward beauty products. Complete demographic data is listed in the research document.

The descriptive analysis showed the mean value of each variable: Beauty Influencer mean =21.01 (SD=1,467), Customer Review (mean=21.14 (SD=1,627), Customer Rating mean =17.10 (SD=1,307), and Buying Interest mean=16.94 (SD =1,293). These values indicate that respondents tend to express a fairly high level of agreement with measurement indicators on all four variables, with relatively reasonable internal variations for a sample size of 100.

Before testing the hypothesis, the validity test showed that all items had r-count > r-table (0.1946), so it was declared valid. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test for all four variables also showed a > value of 0.60 ( $X_1 = 0.631$ ;  $X_2 = 0.673$ ;  $X_3 = 0.600$ ;  $Y = 0.684$ ), so that the instrument can be considered reliable for this study.

### Classic Assumption Test and Model Feasibility

Before performing multiple regressions, the study tested classical assumptions: normality (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov,  $p = 0.066$ ), multicollinearity (VIF of all variables < 10;  $X_1 = 1,639$ ;  $X_2 = 2,246$ ;  $X_3 = 1.869$ ), heteroscedasticity (not occurring all sig > 0.05), and autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson = 1.812, located in the acceptable range). The results of this test show that the data meet the basic requirements for multiple linear regression analysis so that the model can be trusted for the interpretation of relationships between variables.

### Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The regression models tested were:

$$Y = 1.965 + 0.098 X_1 + 0.272 X_2 + 0.418 X_3 + e.$$

Key findings:

1. Coefficient of determination ( $R$ ) = 0.773;  $R^2 = 0.597$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.584$ . This means that 59.7% of the variation in Buying Interest can be explained simultaneously by the combination of Beauty Influencer, Customer Review, and Customer Rating. The remaining 40.3% is explained by other variables outside the model.
2. Simultaneous F test shows F count=47.417;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , which means that the independent variables together have a significant effect on Buying Interest.
3. Partial t-test:
  - a. Beauty Influencer:  $B = 0.098$ ;  $t = 1.341$ ;  $p = 0.183 \rightarrow$  not partially significant.
  - b. Customer Review:  $B = 0.272$ ;  $t = 3.528$ ;  $p = 0.001 \rightarrow$  significantly positive partially.
  - c. Customer Rating:  $B = 0.418$ ;  $t = 4.772$ ;  $p = 0.000 \rightarrow$  significantly positive partially.

### Classic Assumption Test

This test is carried out to find out whether in a regression model, both independent variables and dependent variables or both have normal distributions or not. To test whether the data is normal or not using *One Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov*. If the significance value  $> 0.05$ , then the data has a normal distribution.

Table 1.  
 Normality Test Results  
 One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	.82107753
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.086
	Positive	.086
	Negative	.086
Test Statistic		.086
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.066 <sup>c</sup>

Source: Primary Data processed

Based on the table above, the results of the normality test can be found out the value of sig. By 0.066 greater than the significant level used, which is (0.05), it can be concluded that the data is distributed normally, so the *cosmologrov smirnov test* sample shows that the variable that is the normal calculation is acceptable and reasonable.

### Multicollinearity Test

This test is carried out to find out and test whether a regression model finds a correlation between independent variables. The results of a good regression test should be free from the problem of multicollinearity. If the *Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) value is  $< 10$ , then there is no multicollinearity problem (the regression model is good). If the value of *the Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF) is  $> 10$ , then there is a multicollinearity problem.

Table. 2  
 Test Result Multicollinearity

Variabel	Tolerance	VIF	Description
<i>Beauty Influencer</i> (X <sub>1</sub> )	0,610	1,639	Not Happening Multikolinearitas
<i>Customer Review</i> (X <sub>2</sub> )	0,445	2,246	Not Happening Multikolinearitas
<i>Customer Rating</i> (X <sub>3</sub> )	0,535	1,869	Not Happening Multikolinearitas

Source: Primary Data processed

The multicollinearity test table is used to determine the VIF of the *variables Beauty Influencer, Customer Review, Customer Rating* has a VIF value of < 10, so it can be said that Multicollinearity does not occur. So that the regression model is feasible and good to be used in research.

### Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity testing is used to test whether regression models occur of variance inequality from residual of one observation to another. A good model is one that does not have heteroscedasticity. If the significance value is > 0.05, heteroscedasticity does not occur. Conversely, heteroscedasticity occurs if the significance value is < 0.05.

Table. 2  
 Test Result Heteroskedastisitas

Variabel	t	Sig	Description
<i>Beauty Influencer</i> (X <sub>1</sub> )	1,009	0,316	Not Happening Heteroscedasticity
<i>Customer Review</i> (X <sub>2</sub> )	- 0,283	0,778	Not Happening Heteroscedasticity
<i>Customer Rating</i> (X <sub>3</sub> )	0,661	0,510	Not Happening Heteroscedasticity

Source: Primary Data processed

From the table above, it shows that the results of the Heteroscedasticity test of the *Beauty Influencer, Customer Review, Customer Rating* variables have a sig value of > 0.05, so it can be said that heteroscedasticity does not occur. So that the regression model is feasible and good to be used in research

### Interpretation of Results: Influence of Independent Variables

#### Beauty Influencer to Buying Interest

Although the descriptive score for the Beauty Influencer variable was relatively high (mean ≈ 21.01), regression analysis showed that beauty influencers had no significant effect on partial buying interest (p = 0.183). These findings indicate that, in a sample of Garnier consumers in Dau District, the role of beauty influencers may be less determinant in driving purchase intent when compared to experiential indications and evidence (reviews and ratings) from other consumers.

This phenomenon is in line with the findings of several studies that show that the effectiveness of influencers depends on moderation factors such as perceived authenticity, perceived commercial intent, and the relevance of influencers to the target audience. When audiences are suspicious of paid endorsements or consider content too commercial, influencers' credibility decreases and their impact on purchase intent weakens (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). In addition, in the context of skincare products which are related to skin health consumers tend to rely on evidence of real experience and other recommendations other than just endorsements (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

In the local context (Dau District), some of the possible causes of this insignificance include: (1) the level of consumer skepticism towards influencer content that is perceived to be less relevant or too aspirational; (2) demographic roles (the majority of respondents are young

but may be more critical of commercial endorsements); and (3) a strong preference for user experience evidence (reviews & ratings) in the purchase decision of skin care products. Studies in Indonesia also show that the influence of endorsements can be masked by trust on local consumer reviews and other consumer evidence (Pramudita, 2024).

### **Customer Review against Buying Interest**

Customer Reviews showed a significant influence on Buying Interest ( $B = 0.272$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). This shows that consumer reviews (e-WOM) play an important role in building trust and reducing the uncertainty of purchasing skincare products. The more informative, credible, and valuable (perceived usefulness, source credibility, argument quality, valence, volume), the more likely it is that potential consumers will decide to buy.

These findings are consistent with the meta-analysis literature that shows that online reviews generally have an effect on intention, and review valence (positive/negative) is the main predictor of this influence (Qiu, 2024). Detailed reviews such as skin type, duration of use, and side effects provide much-needed experiential evidence for skincare shoppers who are worried about skin reactions. In addition, reviews also affect the cognitive and affective aspects of consumers: positive reviews reinforce expectations of product success and encourage positive attitudes towards purchases (Fileri et al., 2021).

In a practical context, these results imply the importance of a review management strategy for Garnier marketers: (a) facilitating the emergence of honest reviews with ethical incentives, (b) proactively responding to negative reviews to improve perception, and (c) displaying informative reviews on product pages to make it easier for potential buyers.

### **Customer Rating against Buying Interest**

Customer Rating has the largest coefficient ( $B = 0.418$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), which indicates that rating (heuristic cue) is a strong predictor of buying interest for Garnier products in this sample. Ratings serve as an aggregate signal of previous user satisfaction and provide a shortcut to product quality assessment without having to read all reviews. In a marketplace environment full of choices, high ratings reduce perceived risk and shorten the decision-making process.

These results are in line with studies showing that high ratings tend to increase purchase conversions due to ease of interpretation and aggregation effects (Zhang et al.) in the skincare category where safety, compatibility, and real results are the main concerns.

### **Theoretical & Practical Discussion**

Theoretically, the findings of this study support the idea that evidence-based (customer reviews & ratings) often play more role in the purchase of risk-salient products such as skincare, rather than simply endorsements from opinion leaders. Source credibility and social learning theories explain the role of influencers, but in practice influencer credibility must be supported by evidence of consumer experience in order to have a significant effect on purchase intent (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Sokolova & Kathy, 2020).

#### **From the managerial side, several key implications can be drawn:**

1. Prioritize review & rating management. Given the strong role of ratings and reviews, marketing teams should focus their efforts on collecting quality reviews (e.g., how-to guides, before-after photos, detailed testimonials) and keeping product ratings at a high level. A verified buyer verification system and proactive response to negative comments can strengthen the platform's credibility.
2. Choose influencers who are authentic & relevant not just outreach. The result that influencers are not partially significant shows that simply working with popular influencers is not enough.

Brands need to choose influencers with high engagement levels and whose audiences are demographically/psychographically relevant, as well as encourage more educational and transparent content (e.g. usage demos, composition discussions). Studies show that authenticity and the lack of perceived commercial intent are the keys to influencer effectiveness (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

3. Integration tactics: influencer and user generated content (UGC). The optimal strategy is to combine influencer endorsements with real evidence from consumers: influencers can direct audiences to see other users' reviews or invite communities to share experiences (UGC), so that influencers are amplified by credible reviews/ratings.

### **Research Limitations and Advanced Research Suggestions**

This research provides practical insights but has some limitations that need to be noted:

1. Local sample & sample size: The sample was only 100 respondents in Dau District, which limits the generalization of findings to major cities or other demographic segments. Follow-up research is recommended to expand the sample geographically and in size to test the consistency of results.
2. Cross sectional design: The study is cross-sectional so it cannot explain the long-term causal relationship. Longitudinal studies can test how changes in ratings/reviews affect purchasing behavior over time.
3. Moderation & mediation variables have not been tested: Factors such as perceived authenticity of influencers, trust, brand image, or perceived risk can mediate or moderate fluency/review/rating with purchase intention. Further research can incorporate these constraints to map more detailed mechanisms.

Nature of self-reported data: Measurements through questionnaires are susceptible to self-report bias. The combination of survey data and transaction data (actual purchase) will strengthen external validity.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on statistical analysis and theoretical interpretation:

1. Partially, the Beauty Influencer variable did not have a positive and significant effect on buying interest. These findings indicate that the existence of beauty influencers does not necessarily directly encourage consumers to buy skincare products. Consumers tend to be more critical of endorsement content, especially when influencers are perceived as overly commercial or under-represent the real experience of using the product.
2. The Customer Review variable has been proven to have a positive and significant influence on buying interest. Consumer reviews that contain real experiences, beneficial information, and product quality assessments can increase trust and reduce consumer uncertainty in making purchasing decisions. This emphasizes the importance of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) as the main source of information in purchasing skincare products.
3. The Customer Rating variable also has a positive and significant effect on buying interest, even becoming the variable with the strongest influence among other independent variables. Product ratings function as an aggregate quality and consumer satisfaction signal that is easy to understand, making it easier for consumers to evaluate and choose products amid the many alternatives in the market.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that Garnier's skincare consumers' buying interest is more influenced by evidence of other consumers' experiences (reviews and ratings) than by promotions through beauty influencers. Therefore, companies are advised to prioritize managing consumer reviews and ratings strategically, accompanied by the selection of authentic and relevant influencers so that digital marketing strategies can run more effectively

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