

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING, BRAND ENGAGEMENT, AND PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARD SOMETHINC AMONG YOUNG TIKTOK USERS

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ABSTRAK

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This study examines how Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) on TikTok influence Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) and Purchase Intention toward Somethinc, a leading Indonesian beauty brand. It also investigates whether Brand Trust moderates the relationship between CBE and Purchase Intention. The study focuses on TikTok users aged 18-30 years in Greater Jakarta who follow Somethinc and have previously interacted with its content. Data were collected through an online survey using purposive sampling, yielding 150 valid responses. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that all four SMMAS dimensions; entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and electronic word-of-mouth, significantly enhance Consumer Brand Engagement. In turn, CBE has a strong positive effect on Purchase Intention, while Brand Trust also positively influences Purchase Intention but does not moderate the CBE-Purchase Intention relationship. This study contributes to digital marketing literature by demonstrating the central role of engagement in driving purchase intention among young social-media users, while offering practical insights for beauty brands seeking to optimise TikTok-based marketing strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Social media has transformed how consumers discover, evaluate, and interact with brands. Short-form video platforms, particularly TikTok, have become central to youth culture and digital consumption. According to the *Digital 2024: Indonesia* report, the country recorded more than 126 million adult TikTok users, placing Indonesia among the platform's largest global markets (DataReportal, 2024). Urban regions such as Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) exhibit some of the highest levels of digital connectivity and social media participation.



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Beyond entertainment, TikTok has also emerged as a powerful social commerce channel. Features such as short-form video, live streaming, and creator-led promotion have reshaped how younger consumers discover and purchase products online. Reports further indicate that Indonesian consumers increasingly rely on influencer content, product reviews, and peer recommendations when evaluating brands, reinforcing the growing influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in digital purchase journeys ((Statista, 2024).

Within this context, Somethinc, an Indonesian skincare brand founded in 2019, has actively leveraged TikTok to strengthen brand presence and drive consumer engagement. Empirical evidence shows that marketing content posted through the official TikTok account @somethincofficial positively influences consumer purchase decisions ((Stefani et al., 2023). Digital commerce analyses also report that Somethinc's TikTok livestreaming campaigns have generated millions of impressions and contributed substantially to product sales on online platforms (Permata et al., 2024). These developments highlight TikTok's strategic importance for the brand, particularly among young urban consumers.

In response to the growth of social commerce, brands increasingly design Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs), including entertaining content, interactive engagement, trend relevance, and social proof, to attract and involve consumers. The SMMA framework has been widely applied in contemporary marketing research and shown to influence consumer attitudes and behavioural outcomes (Hanaysha, 2022). A growing body of literature further emphasises the role of Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) as a key psychological mechanism through which digital marketing stimuli shape purchasing behaviour (Ma et al., 2022; Lou & Xie, 2021). Engagement reflects cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement with brands, all of which are highly relevant within TikTok's

interactive and entertainment-driven ecosystem and are clearly observable in Somethinc's content strategy.

At the same time, Brand Trust remains critical in digital commerce environments. Prior studies demonstrate that trust reduces perceived uncertainty and strengthens the extent to which engagement translates into purchase intention, particularly among young consumers (Islam & Rahman, 2016; Hanaysha, 2022). This is especially pertinent in Indonesia, where concerns about product authenticity and transaction security remain salient. However, despite growing scholarly attention, empirical studies that jointly examine SMMAs, Consumer Brand Engagement, Purchase Intention, and Brand Trust specifically within the TikTok environment among Indonesian youth remain limited. Much prior work focuses on Instagram, brand communities, or general e-commerce platforms, whereas TikTok's algorithm-driven, entertainment-centric, and creator-led environment may trigger distinct engagement dynamics.

Accordingly, the present study addresses this gap by examining TikTok users aged 18–30 in Jabodetabek who follow and interact with Somethinc's TikTok content. Therefore, this study aims to 1) analyse the influence of Social Media Marketing Activities (entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and eWOM) on Consumer Brand Engagement, 2) examine the effect of Consumer Brand Engagement on Purchase Intention, and 3) test the moderating role of Brand Trust in the relationship between Consumer Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention among TikTok users aged 18–30 in Jabodetabek.

This research contributes to the digital marketing and consumer-brand relationship literature in emerging markets and offers managerial implications for TikTok-based youth marketing strategies in the skincare industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAAs)

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAAs) describe how brands design and deliver value through social media in order to stimulate consumer interaction and relational outcomes. The construct is commonly operationalised through four dimensions: entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Hediana & Astuti, 2025; Alalwan et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Entertainment refers to the extent to which social media content is enjoyable and emotionally appealing; interactivity reflects two-way communication and reciprocal dialogue between consumers and brands; trendiness captures the perceived relevance of content to current digital trends; and eWOM denotes the sharing of opinions and experiences within social networks.

Prior studies show that SMMAAs significantly shape consumer perceptions and engagement behaviours. For instance, perceived interactivity and eWOM have been found to positively influence consumer engagement and brand-related outcomes in social media contexts (Alalwan et al., 2017; Zhu & Chen, 2015). Entertainment value also enhances emotional responses and favourable brand attitudes (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). TikTok's short-form, algorithm-driven environment amplifies the salience of these SMMA dimensions, particularly among digitally native youth (Brodie et al., 2011).

Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE)

Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) refers to the level of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement consumers exhibit toward a brand through digital interactions (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Vivek et al., 2014). Engagement extends beyond passive exposure to include active participation such as commenting, sharing, reacting, and co-creating content. Prior studies demonstrate that higher levels of engagement predict stronger brand attachment, loyalty, and behavioural intentions (Harmeling et al., 2017; Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). For

example, found that interactive social media content increases emotional and cognitive involvement with brands (Chen et al., 2020).

TikTok's participatory features including duets, challenges, and livestreaming, facilitate deeper engagement, particularly among younger users who tend to respond strongly to entertaining, creator-driven, and peer-generated content.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's conscious willingness or likelihood to buy a particular product or brand in the future. In digital environments, intention is influenced by brand perceptions, emotional responses, engagement, and eWOM (Erkan & Evans, 2018); Wang & Yu, 2017). Social media content that evokes positive feelings and peer endorsement is likely to strengthen purchase motivation (Erkan & Evans, 2018). Engagement behaviours are associated with purchase intention and customer acquisition in online retail contexts, indicating that behavioural involvement enhances the willingness to buy (Zheng et al., 2022).

Brand Trust

Brand Trust refers to the belief that a brand is reliable, honest, and acts in the consumer's best interest (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In social commerce environments, trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, increasing the likelihood that engagement results in purchase behaviour (Kim & Peterson, 2017; Gefen et al., 2003). Prior research also indicates that trust strengthens the relationship between engagement and behavioural outcomes such as loyalty and purchase intention (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Schivinski & Dąbrowski, 2016).

SMMA's and Consumer Brand Engagement

Exposure to enjoyable, interactive, trend-relevant, and socially endorsed brand content can stimulate meaningful engagement by encouraging emotional

involvement, participatory interaction, and social validation (Alalwan et al., 2017; Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Structural-equation studies show that entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and eWOM are key antecedents of CBE in social media environments (Alalwan et al., 2017; Ashley & Tuten, 2015; Zhu & Chen, 2015). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Entertainment positively influences Consumer Brand Engagement.

H2: Interactivity positively influences Consumer Brand Engagement.

H3: Trendiness positively influences Consumer Brand Engagement.

H4: eWOM positively influences Consumer Brand Engagement.

Consumer Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention

Consumer Brand Engagement has been consistently found to enhance purchase intention by strengthening emotional attachment and behavioural involvement (Vivek et al., 2014; Brodie et al., 2011; Zheng et al., 2022). Engaged consumers are therefore more likely to translate online involvement into purchase willingness.

H5: Consumer Brand Engagement positively influences Purchase Intention.

The Moderating Role of Brand Trust

Trust is believed to strengthen the link between engagement and purchase intention, as trusted brands reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, thereby supporting conversion from engagement to purchase (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005; Kim & Peterson, 2017; Schivinski & Dąbrowski, 2016). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Brand Trust positively moderates the effect of Consumer Brand Engagement on Purchase Intention, such that the relationship is stronger when Brand Trust is high.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, explanatory research design to examine how Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) on TikTok influence Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) and Purchase Intention (PI) toward Somethinc, a leading Indonesian beauty brand. The study does not only describe consumer perceptions, but also tests the causal relationships between digital brand communication and consumer responses. TikTok represents an important empirical setting because it is one of the most dominant social media platforms among young Indonesian consumers, and Somethinc actively utilises TikTok as a key marketing channel. Therefore, the platform provides a relevant context for examining social-commerce consumer behaviour. To test the research model, this study employed Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is appropriate for prediction-oriented models, non-normally distributed data, reflective constructs, and moderate sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019).

Population and Sample

Target Population

The target population consists of TikTok users aged 18–30 years who reside in Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) and follow Somethinc’s official TikTok account. This age range is selected for two main reasons. First, global and Indonesian digital reports consistently show that TikTok usage is concentrated among younger demographics, particularly late teenagers and young adults (DataReportal, 2024; Statista, 2024). Users within the 18–30 segment are among the most active in consuming and interacting with short-form video content, following brands, and participating in social media trends.

Second, individuals aged 18–30 generally possess higher purchasing autonomy, as many are university students or early-career professionals. They

therefore have greater financial independence compared with under-18 users, making them more relevant for measuring Purchase Intention as a behavioural outcome (Lou & Xie, 2021). This age segment is also a primary target for digital marketing and influencer-based campaigns due to its responsiveness to social content and peer recommendations (Hanaysha, 2022).

Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling technique is employed with the following inclusion criteria, 1) Aged between 18 and 30 years, 2) Currently residing in Jabodetabek, 3) Uses TikTok at least several times per week, 4) Follows at least one commercial brand account on TikTok, 5) Has interacted with brand content on TikTok (e.g., likes, comments, shares, saves, watches live streams, or clicks product links). These criteria are implemented through screening questions at the beginning of the online questionnaire to ensure that respondents match the study's context and can meaningfully answer questions about TikTok-based brand activities.

Sample Size

Sample size adequacy in PLS-SEM is often evaluated using a combination of rules-of-thumb and power considerations. A common guideline is the "10-times rule", which recommends that the minimum sample size should be ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any latent construct in the model (Hair et al., 2019). In this study Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) receives four structural paths (from entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and eWOM), and Purchase Intention receives two paths (from CBE and the interaction term $CBE \times$ Brand Trust). Based on the 10-times rule, the minimum sample size would be $10 \times 4 = 40$ respondents, which represents an absolute lower bound. However, more recent simulation-based recommendations suggest using larger sample sizes (≥ 100 –150) to achieve adequate statistical power, particularly when testing moderation and indirect effects (Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2019). Considering model complexity and

the inclusion of a moderating effect of Brand Trust, this study targets a minimum of 150 valid responses, with an ideal range of 150–200 respondents to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the findings.

Data Collection Procedure

Data will be collected using an online self-administered questionnaire distributed via social media channels (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other messaging platforms). Respondents will first view an informed consent page explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. Only respondents who agree to participate and pass the screening questions will proceed to the main questionnaire.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), with SmartPLS as the primary analysis tool. PLS-SEM is suitable for predictive, theory-building research and is robust when working with relatively small samples and complex models involving latent variables and interaction effects (Hair et al., 2019).

The moderating effect of Brand Trust on the relationship between Consumer Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention (H6) was tested using an interaction term (CBE × BT) in SmartPLS. A significant positive interaction coefficient indicates that higher levels of Brand Trust strengthen the effect of CBE on Purchase Intention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Most respondents were female young adults aged 18–25, consistent with typical skincare user demographics. They reported daily TikTok usage averaging 1–2 hours per day, and beauty brands were among the most-followed categories. This

shows TikTok is not only an entertainment platform, but also a social-commerce environment where brand discovery and interaction occur organically.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Reliability and Convergent Validity

The reliability and convergent validity of the reflective constructs were first assessed before proceeding to the structural analysis. All indicators demonstrated outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each item contributed meaningfully to the construct it was intended to measure. Internal consistency reliability was also confirmed, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70 across all constructs. Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.887 to 0.935, suggesting that the indicators within each construct were highly consistent in representing the same underlying concept.

Table 1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

| Construct | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Brand Trust | 0.914 | 0.935 | 0.742 |
| Customer Brand Engagement | 0.891 | 0.920 | 0.697 |
| EWOM | 0.899 | 0.929 | 0.767 |
| Entertainment | 0.863 | 0.907 | 0.709 |
| Interactivity | 0.890 | 0.924 | 0.752 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.830 | 0.887 | 0.663 |
| Trendiness | 0.897 | 0.928 | 0.764 |

Convergent validity was further established through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All AVE values were greater than 0.50, ranging from 0.663 to 0.767, which indicates that each construct was able to explain more than half of the variance in its respective indicators. Taken together, these results confirm that the measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and convergent validity,

allowing confidence in the accuracy and consistency of the constructs used in this study.

Discriminant Validity

Fornell-Larcker results confirmed that the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations, indicating strong discriminant validity.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| Construct | BT | CBE | EWOM | ENT | INT | PI | TRN |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Brand Trust | 0.862 | | | | | | |
| Cust. Brand Engagement | 0.306 | 0.835 | | | | | |
| EWOM | 0.309 | 0.586 | 0.876 | | | | |
| Entertainment | 0.229 | 0.645 | 0.479 | 0.842 | | | |
| Interactivity | 0.218 | 0.597 | 0.505 | 0.526 | 0.867 | | |
| Purchase Intention | 0.375 | 0.632 | 0.558 | 0.507 | 0.537 | 0.814 | |
| Trendiness | 0.182 | 0.610 | 0.452 | 0.520 | 0.511 | 0.550 | 0.874 |

Discriminant validity was then assessed to ensure that each construct in the model was empirically distinct from the others. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied, whereby the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct must be greater than the correlations between that construct and all other constructs. The results indicate that this requirement was fully satisfied, as the square root of AVE for every construct exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients.

These findings confirm that respondents were able to clearly differentiate between the constructs measured in this study, such as distinguishing perceptions of entertainment value, interactivity, trend relevance, and electronic word-of-mouth from broader relational constructs such as customer brand engagement, brand trust, and purchase intention. In other words, although the constructs are theoretically

related, they do not overlap empirically. Therefore, the model can be regarded as possessing strong discriminant validity, allowing further structural analysis to proceed with confidence.

Structural Model Evaluation

After confirming that the constructs satisfied all reliability and validity requirements, the next step was to evaluate the structural model in order to examine the predictive ability of the research framework and to test the proposed hypotheses. The results indicate that the model demonstrates moderate to strong explanatory power. Social Media Marketing Activities account for 59.8% of the variance in Customer Brand Engagement ($R^2 = 0.598$), suggesting that engagement is largely shaped by consumers' perceptions of entertaining, interactive, trend-relevant content and the extent of social conversations surrounding the brand. Furthermore, Customer Brand Engagement explains 54.3% of the variance in Brand Trust ($R^2 = 0.543$), while Customer Brand Engagement together with Brand Trust explains 44.1% of the variance in Purchase Intention ($R^2 = 0.441$). These R^2 values imply that the model possesses substantial predictive relevance in the context of digital consumer behaviour.

The results of the path analysis further reveal that all four dimensions of Social Media Marketing Activities exert a positive and statistically significant effect on Customer Brand Engagement. Among these predictors, entertainment emerged as the strongest driver of engagement, followed by trendiness, electronic word-of-mouth, and interactivity. This suggests that TikTok content which is enjoyable to watch, aligned with current trends, socially validated through peer discussion, and allows users to participate meaningfully is more likely to foster a sense of connection between consumers and the brand.

Customer Brand Engagement was also found to exert a strong and significant influence on Purchase Intention, confirming its pivotal role as a psychological

mechanism that translates social-media exposure into behavioural intention. In addition, Brand Trust significantly predicts Purchase Intention, although its effect size is relatively smaller compared with that of engagement. However, the moderating effect of Brand Trust on the relationship between Customer Brand Engagement and Purchase Intention was not significant. This indicates that while trust remains an important evaluative factor, engagement itself is already sufficiently powerful in encouraging purchase intention, regardless of the level of trust perceived by consumers.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that engagement is not incidental, it is carefully built through meaningful digital brand experiences. Content that is entertaining, conversational, trend-savvy, and socially validated creates an “engagement climate” around Somethinc. Most importantly Engagement is the strongest predictor of purchase intention. Trust supports intention, but engagement activates it. This pattern reflects Gen-Z psychology, where identity, expression, belonging, and emotional resonance strongly shape decisions.

There are several managerial implications i.e. 1) Treat engagement as a conversion driver, not a vanity metric, 2) Use human, authentic, creator-style content, 3) Maintain two-way dialogue, not one-way broadcasting, 4) Stay culturally current and trend-aligned, 5) Encourage UGC and peer conversation, 6) Strengthen trust through transparency, but build engagement first.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study concludes that Social Media Marketing Activities on TikTok significantly enhance Customer Brand Engagement, which in turn serves as the primary pathway driving Purchase Intention toward Somethinc. Brand Trust also predicts Purchase Intention, although to a lesser degree, and does not moderate the effect of engagement. Overall, the findings reveal that in social-commerce

environments, consumers do not simply buy products, they buy into relationships and meaning.

The study is bounded by a single geographic region (Jabodetabek), a cross-sectional design, self-reported perceptions and analysis of one brand only. Therefore, the future research directions may work may explore cross-brand or cross-platform comparisons, longitudinal or experimental approaches, deeper emotional constructs such as brand love or intimacy, segmentation effects across demographics or psychographics and analysis of content types and creators. Such expansions would further enrich the understanding of digital-engagement psychology.

At its core, this research reminds us that marketing remains a human discipline. TikTok simply provides a new context for timeless needs, belonging, recognition, enjoyment, and connection. When brands meet these needs meaningfully, purchase intention emerges naturally, not as persuasion, but as relationship.

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