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The Influence of Affiliate Marketing, Online Reviews, and Product Knowledge on Skincare Purchase Decisions on TikTok Shop

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Abstract

The intensifying competition within the skincare industry has encouraged businesses to optimize digital marketing strategies in order to attract consumer attention and influence purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms. TikTok Shop, as a rapidly growing digital marketplace, provides a relevant context for examining contemporary consumer behavior. This study aims to analyze the effects of affiliate marketing, online customer reviews, and product knowledge on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop. A quantitative approach was employed using purposive sampling, involving 100 respondents identified using the Lemeshow formula. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, and hypotheses were tested through t-tests. The findings reveal that affiliate marketing does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. In contrast, online customer reviews and product knowledge demonstrate positive and statistically significant influences. These results emphasize that the credibility of online reviews and consumers' understanding of product attributes are critical determinants in shaping purchasing decisions within competitive digital commerce environments.

Keywords

Affiliate Marketing, Online Customer Reviews, Product Knowledge, Purchasing Decisions.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed business practices and patterns of consumer interaction, prompting companies to implement digital marketing strategies to improve operational efficiency and overall productivity. Digital marketing covering the utilization of the internet, websites, and social media platforms has emerged as a vital tool for broadening market reach, strengthening brand awareness, and increasing sales performance (Parwati et al., 2025). Among the rapidly expanding platforms, TikTok Shop has demonstrated remarkable growth. In 2024, Indonesia recorded the highest number of TikTok users globally, totaling approximately 157.6 million users, with e-commerce transactions reaching up to IDR 100 trillion. These figures highlight the considerable potential of TikTok Shop as a strategic channel for marketing and commercial activities in the digital economy (Kompas.com, 2024).

Various digital marketing media, such as email marketing, online advertising, social media marketing, and mobile marketing, have been proven to positively influence online purchasing decisions. Purchasing decisions refer to the consumer process of recognizing needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, and ultimately determining purchase choices (Gunarsih et al., 2021). In the online context, purchasing decisions can be reflected through channel selection, product categories, budget allocation, and purchase frequency. Two digital marketing components frequently examined in relation to online purchasing decisions are affiliate marketing (Izumi & Nengsih, 2024; Salim & Yusrin, 2025) and online customer reviews (Rosniati et al., 2023; Sukirman et al., 2023).

Affiliate marketing is a marketing method that involves content creators promoting products in exchange for commissions (Nursal et al., 2022). This strategy is considered effective because it appears more natural and personal, is capable of building trust and enhancing consumer loyalty, and can be measured through informativeness, discount offerings, and customer trust (Husnayetti et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2024; Poetri et al., 2024). Several studies have demonstrated that affiliate marketing significantly influences online purchasing decisions (Sapitri et al., 2025). However, contrasting findings suggest that this strategy may not have a significant effect due to low consumer trust in affiliates (Rahmawati, 2023).

In addition, online customer reviews play an important role as a source of information from previous users' experiences (Sudirjo et al., 2023; Tonda et al., 2024) and serve as a reference for consumers before purchasing products (Rahmawati, 2022). Online customer reviews have been shown to influence online purchasing decisions, particularly when reviews are perceived as honest and free from manipulation (Shafwah et al., 2024; Patimah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, other studies indicate that reviews do not always influence purchasing decisions when consumers place greater trust in brand reputation and affiliate marketing promotions (Sari & Rokhmat, 2024).

Beyond marketing strategies, product knowledge is also a factor influencing purchasing decisions (Suparwi & Fitriyani, 2020; Andita & Hermawan, 2023). Consumers with strong product knowledge are better able to evaluate and select products according to their needs, which is developed through accurate information and prior experience (Fauziah & Amin, 2021; Akbar et al., 2025). Although product knowledge is generally found to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, some studies reveal insignificant effects when consumers prioritize brand personality and brand image instead (Saepudin et al., 2022).

The phenomenon of increasing online purchasing behavior in Indonesia, where 88.1% of internet users have utilized e-commerce platforms to purchase products. Kandemir et al. (2019), highlight the importance of examining consumer behavior on platforms such as TikTok Shop. This study is designed to examine how affiliate

marketing, online customer reviews, and product knowledge impact consumers' decisions to purchase skincare products on TikTok Shop.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. The Effect of Affiliate Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

Affiliate marketing refers to a digital marketing approach in which individuals or external partners promote a company's products or services via digital platforms and earn commissions based on successful transactions or specific actions generated through the affiliate links they share (Pinky, 2022). This strategy enables companies to broaden their promotional reach efficiently, as compensation is typically tied to measurable performance outcomes. Affiliate marketing is strongly linked to online advertising activities, particularly through content creation that integrates website or product links designed to direct potential customers toward making purchases (Abdelhady et al., 2020). By leveraging performance-based partnerships, affiliate marketing also allows firms to minimize promotional risk while simultaneously optimizing marketing efficiency and audience targeting.

Research findings show that affiliate marketing exerts a positive and significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions. Promotional content presented in a creative, engaging, and persuasive manner by affiliates can increase consumer interest and motivate them to complete transactions through the embedded links (Shiddiqy & Faradila, 2024). In addition, affiliate marketing contributes substantially through product recommendations and promotional communications delivered by affiliates, which enhance credibility and influence consumer evaluations (Brilianita & Sulistyowati, 2023). The key dimensions commonly used to assess affiliate marketing effectiveness include informativeness, incentives, ease of discovery, and trust, all of which shape consumer purchase intentions and actual buying behavior. These dimensions collectively demonstrate how affiliate-driven interactions can bridge informational gaps between brands and consumers, ultimately strengthening decision-making confidence in online purchasing environments.

H1: Affiliate marketing has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

2.2. The Effect of Online Customer Reviews on Purchasing Decisions

Online customer reviews are consumers' evaluations shared on digital platforms about their experiences with a product or service, expressed as positive or negative feedback. These reviews typically address aspects such as product quality, perceived benefits, performance, and overall customer satisfaction (Nuraeni & Irawati, 2021). As a form of electronic word-of-mouth, online customer reviews function as an important reference for prospective buyers seeking reliable information before making purchasing decisions. In digital commerce environments where direct product inspection is limited, such reviews serve as a substitute for interpersonal recommendations and experiential verification.

Previous studies indicate that positive online customer reviews significantly increase other consumers' intentions and tendencies to purchase a product (Mahendra & Edastama, 2022). Favorable evaluations not only strengthen consumer trust but also reduce perceived risk in online transactions. Moreover, online customer reviews provide detailed insights into product quality, user experiences, and satisfaction levels, allowing consumers to evaluate advantages and disadvantages more comprehensively (Ardianti & Widiartanto, 2019; Cahyono & Wibawani, 2022; Adriana & Syaefulloh, 2023). Through these reviews, consumers are able to compare similar products carefully, assess their suitability to personal needs, and make more informed and rational purchasing decisions in the digital marketplace. Consequently, the credibility and volume of reviews become critical

determinants that shape consumer perceptions and ultimately influence purchasing behavior in online retail settings.

H2: Online customer reviews have a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

2.3. The Effect of Product Knowledge on Purchasing Decisions

Product knowledge can be defined as the level of understanding and perception that consumers have regarding a specific product, which is shaped by their prior experiences in using or interacting with it (Hertita, 2022). This concept also includes consumers’ comprehension of various types of product-related information, such as pricing, attributes, specifications, and distinctive features offered in the market (Ubaidi & Batu, 2020). Therefore, product knowledge reflects the extent to which consumers are able to recognize, interpret, and evaluate relevant information when considering a purchase.

Research demonstrates that product knowledge covering awareness of product benefits, attributes, characteristics, and advantages significantly influences purchasing decisions (Suparwi & Fitriyani, 2020; Susanto et al., 2024). Consumers with a deeper understanding of these aspects are generally more confident and systematic in selecting products. In addition, knowledge concerning product safety, composition, and halal certification has been found to exert a direct and significant effect on purchasing decisions, especially in contexts where safety standards and religious values are important considerations (Akbar et al., 2025; Rusyda et al., 2025). Consumers who possess higher levels of product knowledge tend to show stronger purchasing decisions because they are better able to evaluate alternatives, reduce uncertainty, and make well-informed choices (Santy & Atika, 2020).

H3: Product knowledge has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

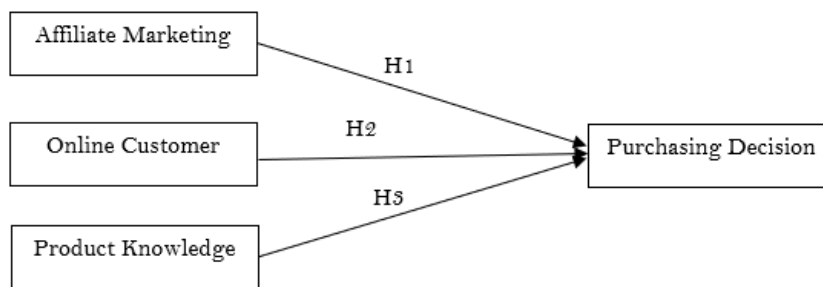


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study that examines the influence of three independent variables on one dependent variable. These independent variables affiliate marketing, online customer, and product knowledge, each of which is assumed to influence purchasing decisions. The arrows connecting each independent variable to the dependent variable indicate the direction of the tested influence, with H1, H2, and H3 representing the hypotheses for each relationship. Thus, this framework illustrates how marketing strategy, online customer reviews, and product knowledge are expected to influence consumer purchasing decisions.

3. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design, which emphasizes the use of numerical data to test hypotheses and examine relationships among variables in a

systematic, objective, and structured manner. The quantitative approach was deemed appropriate because the primary objective of the research was to measure and empirically test the effects of affiliate marketing, online customer reviews, and product knowledge on purchasing decisions. Through statistical procedures, this design enables the researcher to quantify variable relationships, assess the magnitude of influence, and generate conclusions grounded in empirical evidence rather than subjective interpretation.

The population in this study was categorized as infinite, as the exact number of skincare consumers who purchase products through TikTok Shop cannot be precisely identified or limited. Given this condition, a non-probability sampling technique was utilized, specifically purposive sampling. This sampling method allows respondents to be selected based on specific criteria that align with the research objectives by Purwanza (2022) and Subhaktiyasa (2024). The established criteria required respondents to be at least 17 years old, to have purchased skincare products on TikTok Shop at least once within the last three months, and to possess familiarity with affiliate marketing programs related to skincare products. According to Sugiyono (2016), the Lemeshow formula was used to determine the sample size was determined to be 100 respondents.

Data were collected through the distribution of a structured questionnaire, with each statement measured using a five-point Likert scale to capture respondents' levels of agreement. The variables examined in this study included affiliate marketing, online customer reviews, product knowledge, and purchasing decisions. The questionnaire was designed to ensure clarity and consistency so that respondents could accurately express their perceptions and experiences related to each research variable. After data collection, statistical analysis was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the relationships among the research variables. The data analysis process was carried out using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) as the primary analytical tool. Several analytical techniques were employed, including validity testing and reliability testing to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instruments. Furthermore, classical assumption tests were performed prior to hypothesis testing. The analysis also included Multiple Linear Regression Test Results, t-tests to examine partial effects, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the explanatory power of the research model.

4. Results

The empirical results of this study, which are based on information collected from respondents, are presented in this section. To ensure that each questionnaire item reliably measures the target variables, namely affiliate marketing (X1), online customer review (X2), product knowledge (X3), and purchasing decision (Y), the analysis begins with a validity test of the research instrument. Table 1 provides a summary of the validity test results, which are used to evaluate whether the measurement items are appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	r count	r table	Significant	Description
Affiliate Marketing (X1)	X1.1	0.815	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X1.2	0.692	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X1.3	0.812	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X1.4	0.771	0.1966	0.000	Valid
Online Customer Review (X2)	X2.1	0.746	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X2.2	0.769	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X2.3	0.749	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X2.4	0.811	0.1966	0.000	Valid

Variable	Item	r count	r table	Significant	Description
Product Knowledge (X3)	X3.1	0.766	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X3.2	0.717	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X3.3	0.737	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X3.4	0.821	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X3.5	0.794	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	X3.6	0.780	0.1966	0.000	Valid
Purchasing Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.782	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	Y.2	0.836	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	Y.3	0.797	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	Y.4	0.636	0.1966	0.000	Valid
	Y.5	0.791	0.1966	0.000	Valid

Based on Table 1, the validity test results indicate that all questionnaire items measuring the variables of affiliate marketing (X1), online customer review (X2), product knowledge (X3), and purchasing decision (Y) are declared valid. This is evidenced by the fact that all r-count values for each item exceed the r-table value of 0.1966. In addition, all items have significance values of 0.000, which are below the 0.05 threshold. These findings confirm that each statement item has a strong correlation with its corresponding variable and is appropriate for measuring the constructs under study. Therefore, the entire set of research instruments meets the validity requirements and can be utilized for further data analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Test Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Critical Value	Description
Affiliate Marketing (X1)	0.775	0.60	Reliable
Online Customer Review (X2)	0.770	0.60	Reliable
Product Knowledge (X3)	0.858	0.60	Reliable
Purchasing Decision (Y)	0.814	0.60	Reliable

Based on Table 2, the reliability test results show that all research variables meet the reliability criteria. This is indicated by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the critical value of 0.60 for each variable. Specifically, affiliate marketing (X1) has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.775, online customer review (X2) 0.770, product knowledge (X3) 0.858, and purchasing decision (Y) 0.814. Since all values exceed 0.60, the measurement instruments for each variable are reliable and show good internal consistency, making them suitable for further analysis.

Table 3. Normality Test Result

Test	Unstandardized Residual
N	100
Mean	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	2.23410632
Absolute	0.068
Positive	0.044
Negative	-0.068
Test Statistic	0.068
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200 ^{c,d}

Based on Table 3, the results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test show that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. With a total sample size of 100 and a test statistic of 0.068, these findings indicate that the unstandardized residuals are normally distributed.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the data meet the normality assumption and are appropriate for further parametric statistical analysis.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Result

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Affiliate Marketing	0.481	2.078
Online Customer Review	0.500	1.999
Product Knowledge	0.465	2.152

According to Table 4, the multicollinearity test results indicate that all independent variables have tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10. Specifically, affiliate marketing has a tolerance of 0.481 and a VIF of 2.078, online customer review shows a tolerance of 0.500 and a VIF of 1.999, and product knowledge has a tolerance of 0.465 with a VIF of 2.152. These results demonstrate that there are no strong correlations among the independent variables. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model is free from multicollinearity issues and suitable for further analysis.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Result

Variable	Significance (Sig.)
Affiliate Marketing	0.835
Online Customer Review	0.190
Product Knowledge	0.091

Based on Table 5, the heteroscedasticity test results show that the significance values for affiliate marketing (0.835), online customer review (0.190), and product knowledge (0.091) are all greater than 0.05. These findings indicate that none of the independent variables have a significant effect on the absolute residuals. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model does not exhibit heteroscedasticity, meaning the assumption of homoscedasticity has been satisfied.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Variable	Unst. Coeff. B	Unst. Coeff. Std. Error	Stand. Coeff. Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.643	1.684	—	3.944	0.000
Affiliate Marketing	0.068	0.135	0.055	0.505	0.614
Online Customer Review	0.502	0.127	0.418	3.939	0.000
Product Knowledge	0.232	0.091	0.279	2.536	0.013

Table 6 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis. The constant term is 6.643 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that when affiliate marketing, online customer reviews, and product knowledge are set to 0, the purchasing decision variable has a baseline value of 6.643 and is statistically significant.

The affiliate marketing variable has an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.068, with a p-value of 0.614 ($p > 0.05$). Although the coefficient is positive, the effect is not statistically significant. In contrast, online customer reviews have a coefficient of 0.502 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Likewise, product knowledge has a coefficient of 0.232 with a significance value of 0.013 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a positive

and statistically significant effect. These findings confirm that online customer reviews and product knowledge play a significant role in shaping purchasing decisions, whereas affiliate marketing does not show a meaningful impact.

Table 7. t-Test Results (Partial Test)

Model	t-statistic	Sig.	criteria	Conclusion
X ₁ → Y	0.505	0.614	p > 0.05	H ₁ rejected
X ₂ → Y	3.939	0.000	p < 0.05	H ₂ accepted
X ₃ → Y	2.536	0.013	p < 0.05	H ₃ accepted

Based on Table 7, Hypothesis 1, which examined the effect of affiliate marketing on purchasing decisions, shows a calculated t-value of 0.505, which is lower than the t-table value of 1.661, with a significance value of 0.614 ($\rho > 0.05$). These findings indicate that H₀₁ is accepted and H₁ is rejected, meaning that affiliate marketing does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop.

In contrast, Hypothesis 2, which tested the effect of online customer reviews on purchasing decisions, produced a calculated t-value of 3.939, exceeding the t-table value of 1.661, with a significance value of 0.000 ($\rho < 0.05$). This finding shows that H₀₂ is rejected while H₂ is accepted, indicating that online customer reviews exert a positive and statistically significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop.

Furthermore, the testing of Hypothesis 3 revealed a calculated t-value of 2.536, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.661, with a significance value of 0.013 ($\rho < 0.05$). These results show that H₀₃ is rejected and H₃ is accepted, indicating that product knowledge has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop.

Table 8. Test Result R²

Test	Value
R	0.677 ^a
R Square	0.455
Adjusted Square	0.441
Std. Error of the Estimate	2.269

Table 8 shows the results of the coefficient of determination (R²) test. The R value is 0.677, indicating a moderate correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R-squared value of 0.455 suggests that 45.5% of the variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by affiliate marketing, online customer reviews, and product knowledge. After adjustment, the Adjusted R Square is 0.441, indicating that 44.1% of the variance is accounted for by the model, while the remaining 55.9% is influenced by other factors not included in the study. The standard error of the estimate is 2.269, reflecting the average deviation of observed values from the regression line.

5. Discussion

The results of the first hypothesis test indicate that affiliate marketing does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop. This finding suggests that marketing strategies implemented through affiliators are not the primary determining factor in encouraging consumers to purchase skincare products. One possible explanation for this phenomenon lies in the characteristics of skincare products, which highly depend on compatibility with each consumer’s skin condition. Therefore, although affiliate promotions may be

intensive and persuasive, they do not directly influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, consumers are aware that affiliators have economic interests in the form of commissions, leading the information provided to be perceived as subjective. This condition encourages consumers to seek alternative and more independent sources of information, such as customer reviews, independent evaluations, or recommendations from beauty experts (Setyarti et al., 2025). Thus, affiliate marketing has not yet become a decisive factor in consumers' purchasing decision-making processes for skincare products (Rahmawati, 2023).

The findings of the second hypothesis test demonstrate that online customer reviews have a positive and statistically significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop. This result implies that customer reviews function as a vital and trustworthy source of information, offering evaluations of product quality, benefits, and real user experiences that influence consumers in making purchasing decisions. Online customer reviews provide a more objective representation compared to commercial promotional messages, thereby increasing consumer trust in a product. The descriptive analysis shows that detailed, honest reviews containing direct user experiences are key factors driving purchasing decisions. Online customer reviews function as a risk mitigation tool, enabling consumers to evaluate product safety and effectiveness before making a purchase. Relevant and informative reviews help consumers reduce uncertainty and make more accurate decisions when shopping through TikTok Shop. These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that online customer reviews significantly enhance purchasing decisions for skincare products (Sukirman et al., 2023; Shafwah et al., 2024).

The findings of the third hypothesis test demonstrate that product knowledge has a positive and statistically significant influence on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop. This implies that as consumers' level of understanding about a product such as its ingredients, functions, benefits, and proper usage increases, their likelihood of making a purchase also becomes higher. In the skincare product category, product knowledge plays a critical role because consumers must ensure that the selected product matches their skin type and condition. Product knowledge not only increases consumers' confidence in selecting products but also reduces uncertainty and the risk of product incompatibility that may lead to negative outcomes. Therefore, product knowledge can serve as an effective strategy in influencing purchasing decisions, particularly when product information is presented clearly, comprehensively, and educationally. These findings support previous studies indicating that product knowledge significantly influences purchasing decisions (Sanita et al., 2019; Suparwi & Fitriyani, 2020).

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that affiliate marketing does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for skincare products on TikTok Shop, indicating that it is not a primary determinant in influencing consumers' buying decisions. Despite the widespread use of affiliate marketing as a digital promotional strategy, the results suggest that mere exposure to affiliate links or promotions may not be sufficient to drive actual purchases in this particular context. In contrast, online customer reviews are proven to have a positive and significant effect, highlighting their role as credible and useful sources of information that enhance consumers' purchase intentions. Reviews provide consumers with insights regarding product performance, quality, and satisfaction levels experienced by other users, thereby reducing perceived risks associated with online transactions. Similarly, product knowledge shows a positive and significant influence, demonstrating that a higher level of consumer understanding regarding product ingredients, benefits, and usage contributes to stronger purchasing decisions.

These findings imply that businesses should prioritize strategies that strengthen authentic customer reviews and improve consumer education about product attributes rather than relying solely on affiliate promotions. However, this study has several limitations, including the relatively small sample size of 100 respondents and the focus limited to skincare products on TikTok Shop, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, include additional variables such as brand image, price perception, or trust, and examine different product categories or digital platforms. Expanding the research model in these ways may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing online purchasing decisions and offer practical insights for digital marketing strategies across various sectors.

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