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How Scarlett Turns Online Word of Mouth Into Buying Desire Through The SOR Approach

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Abstract

Background: Consumer decisions to purchase cosmetic products in the digital era are increasingly influenced by electronic word of mouth (eWOM), rather than company promotions. However, limited research explains how eWOM shapes consumer perceptions into purchase intentions, primarily through psychological mechanisms in the context of products such as Scarlett, which carry strong personal and emotional values.

Purpose: This study aims to examine the effect of eWOM on purchase intention by testing the mediating role of perceived functional value and perceived emotional value within the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) approach.

Method: This study employs a quantitative approach, using data collected via an online survey. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings: The results show that eWOM significantly influences purchase intention, both directly and through the mediation of perceived functional and emotional value. The model explains over 66% of the variance in consumer purchase intentions.

Conclusions: Purchase decisions are formed by the interaction between external stimuli and the cognitive and emotional interpretation of personal values.

Research implication: Scarlett should strategically manage eWOM by encouraging authentic testimonials that are informative and emphasize the product's emotional appeal and functional value.

Keywords: emotional attachment, eWOM, purchase intention, perceived value, SOR Approach

JEL Classification: M31, D91, L86

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

We are passionate about understanding how social media and digital storytelling influence young people to connect with brands. We are driven to explore strategies that make marketing more humane, relevant, and truly impactful. In our research on how Scarlett turns online word of mouth into buying desire using the SOR approach, a key challenge was in capturing emotional and cognitive responses in fast-moving digital spaces, where consumer behavior shifts rapidly and is shaped by subtle psychological cues.



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1. Introduction

The advancement of digital technology enables brands to engage with customers through active value-creation processes. The three fundamental digital marketing components of content, promotion, and digital word-of-mouth (eWOM) influence consumer purchasing behavior according to Ismagilova et al. (2020).

The most crucial element among these three digital marketing components is eWOM. The sharing of consumer information and opinions through digital channels defines eWOM as a process. Research shows that eWOM has a substantial influence on customer purchase decisions (Ardyan & Sudyasjayanti, 2020). The beauty industry heavily relies on this method because customers trust authentic user feedback and genuine product reviews (Ngo et al., 2024).

The local brand Scarlett Whitening uses Instagram and TikTok to generate eWOM by asking users to post positive feedback and testimonials. The company uses Shopee Live and TikTok Live as interactive eWOM visibility tools to expand its eWOM strategy (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020).

Through TikTok Shop Live, customers can watch products in real time and ask questions to other buyers who share their purchasing experiences. The interactive nature of this format enables brands to establish emotional connections with their customers through personal relationships (Dua, 2024; Gu et al., 2023).

Through live streaming, brands establish direct connections with influencers and end users, thereby fostering social and emotional connections on digital platforms (Komari, 2023). Research conducted by Komari (2023) demonstrated that Scarlett product purchase intentions increased when consumers found the information source trustworthy, when they shared common characteristics (homophily), and when they received high-quality content.

The evolution of eWOM now includes both written reviews and real-time comments and questions during broadcast sessions. The company Scarlett used this growing trend by teaming up with influencers to show authentic customer feedback on social media platforms as part of its local Indonesian marketing approach.

The approach works well for attracting young consumers because they prefer user-generated content above traditional promotional methods (Maghraoui & Khrouf, 2025; Meliawati et al., 2023). Research by Ismagilova et al. (2020) and Khan et al. (2024) demonstrates that eWOM strongly affects how consumers decide to make purchases. Most current studies analyze eWOM through static, one-way content, such as e-commerce site reviews, yet they fail to examine the emotional and interactive elements of live-streaming content (Dua, 2024; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020).

Research about eWOM through live streaming of local Indonesian cosmetic products remains scarce. The study by Amilia et al. (2025) analyzed live commerce interactivity and value perception but failed to establish connections between these elements and emotional responses and local cosmetics through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework. The study by Zhang et al. (2024) evaluated the perceived value of live broadcasts but did not assess eWOM or the cosmetics industry. The research by Setiowati et al. (2024) applied SOR to study TikTok Live cosmetics promotions, but their focus centered on consumer participation instead of eWOM interaction. Rahmadini and Masnita (2024) studied live streaming shopping, but their research did not include eWOM or focus on local Indonesian brands.

Research on eWOM's impact on consumer behavior has proliferated, yet most studies focus on static written content that lacks interactive elements. The current research lacks understanding of how emotional and interactive eWOM elements in live broadcasts affect consumer perception and decision-making processes (Pham et al., 2024; Pratminingsih et al., 2024).

The SOR model starts with the stimulus (S), which represents the first point of contact between eWOM content shown in live streams. The consumer processes the stimulus affectively and cognitively as an organism (O), which produces a response (R) that manifests as purchase intention (Guo et al., 2021; Zou & Fu, 2024). The research design enables the investigation of how Scarlett uses live streaming for eWOM to affect product value perceptions in both practical and emotional ways. The research aims to develop a theoretical understanding and provide strategic recommendations for local brands to create authentic digital content that aligns with modern consumer behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR)

In the context of digital marketing, cosmetic products have several unique characteristics. Several studies have demonstrated the role of eWOM in influencing customer purchasing decisions. Although numerous studies on eWOM and purchasing decisions exist, there remain gaps in the literature. Some researchers have examined eWOM, but they have focused on traditional written content and have not addressed the importance of live eWOM for the cosmetics industry (Dua, 2024; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). While research by Amalia et al. (2025) examined the influence of interactivity, it did not specifically address beauty products and did not use the SOR framework to assess emotional factors.

Research by Zhang et al. (2024) explored Indonesian consumers' perceptions of the value of live broadcasts, but did not examine the effects of eWOM or specific product elements. Meanwhile, Setiowati et al. (2024) applied the SOR model to analyze TikTok Live as a cosmetics marketing strategy. However, research does not provide a comprehensive assessment of interactive eWOM. Other researchers, Rahmadini and Masnita (2024), used the SOR model to study shopping via live-streaming, but did not analyze eWOM and its relationship with the cosmetics industry.

The research investigates how live-streamed eWOM influences Indonesian buyers' purchase decisions for cosmetics. The SOR framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) explains how external stimuli create mental and emotional assessments that lead to behavioral outcomes (Mohapatra et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2024; Pratminingsih et al., 2024). The study treats live-streaming commerce as a stimulus that includes both the quantity and positive nature of online reviews, influencer trustworthiness, interactive platform capabilities, and real-time product demonstrations (Huang et al., 2025; Zou & Fu, 2024). The external stimulus of eWOM affects how consumers evaluate products. The evaluation process of consumers depends on online consumer communication through eWOM, which varies in intensity, opinion valence, and information richness (Mukherjee et al., 2022; Nasution et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

The "organism" part of the model represents the consumer's mental and emotional state, which processes these stimuli. The research focuses on two essential organism factors: perceived functional value and perceived emotional value. The assessment of cosmetic product functional value by consumers depends on Perceived Functional

Value, which evaluates the product's ability to fulfill practical needs, such as effectiveness, performance support, and achievement enhancement (Boldureanu et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024). The emotional benefits customers derive from product use define Perceived Emotional Value (PEV), which includes feelings of pleasure and enjoyment, as well as symbolic self-expression and emotional connection (Khan et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Mason et al., 2023; Tanrikulu, 2021).

The evaluation process leads to purchase intention as the final behavioral outcome. Purchase intention indicates the likelihood that consumers will take action, including buying the product, making product recommendations, selecting a brand, and acquiring product information (Mainardes et al., 2023; Meliawati et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024; Zulfa et al., 2023). The research combines live-stream eWOM with perceived functional and emotional value to create a comprehensive framework for studying consumer behavior during Scarlett's live-stream commerce.

2.2 Relationship Between eWOM and Perceived Functionality Value

Consumer perception evaluation through eWOM has become increasingly important, as the cosmetic industry relies on detailed, subjective product assessments. People use others' personal experiences to evaluate product usefulness because they need more than functional performance information. Online reviews, product discussions, and testimonials serve as direct alternatives to product trials, influencing consumers' assessments of product usefulness before purchase.

People who want to present themselves to the world base their choices on cosmetic product characteristics. People must rely on others' experiences because product effectiveness cannot be established through descriptions or technical details. The SOR model demonstrates that eWOM is a critical factor that shapes consumer perceptions of functionality, influencing their buying decisions and recommendation behaviors (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

User trust and credibility levels determine how eWOM affects their perception of product functionality. The research by Boldureanu et al. (2025) shows that trustworthy peer feedback about products enhances customers' understanding of product benefits, thereby reducing their uncertainty. Khan et al. (2024) found that social media-based eWOM functions as a link between perceived functional value and purchase decisions.

The risk-reduction theory shows that consumers use eWOM to assess product practicality before making a purchase. The development of methods for cosmetic brands to obtain authentic, positive customer reviews increases product usefulness perception, which in turn leads to higher purchase intentions.

H1: eWOM affects how customers assess the functional value of their products.

2.3 Relationship between eWOM and Perceived Emotional Value

The evaluation of perceived usefulness focuses on functional aspects, yet perceived emotional value examines affective and symbolic elements, which matter most in the cosmetics market. The cosmetics industry offers products that serve functional needs while also enabling personal self-expression, beauty standards, and emotional contentment. Consumers' perceptions of themselves are influenced by eWOM, which affects their assessments of product usefulness and their emotional connection to themselves.

According to Pino et al. (2020), consumers develop their cosmetics engagement through their appreciation of beauty, sensory experiences, self-perception, and risk perception. Online reviews that show personal transformation results and emotional satisfaction experiences create a substantial positive impact on emotional value perception. The sense of control and stable outcomes in product experiences leads to reduced emotional insecurity, which strengthens both trust and emotional connection with the product (Ülker & Karamustafa, 2024).

The social proof function of eWOM creates emotional connections with potential customers by validating their purchasing decisions. The shared experiences and sentiments between reviewers become visible when they use stories and visuals that match consumer aspirations and concerns. The emotional aspect of perceived value stands out as the main factor in this situation.

The research by Kurniawan et al. (2024) demonstrates that eWOM influences purchase intentions by affecting perceived emotional value. Khan et al. (2024) found that emotional and symbolic value elements, derived from peer feedback and community discussions, lead to greater buying confidence and lasting brand loyalty. Marketing strategies that use emotionally powerful eWOM content through influencer endorsements and customer narratives become an effective promotional method. The emotional connection between products and consumers leads to better perceived value and customer loyalty.

H2: eWOM influences perceived emotional value.

2.4 Relationship between Perceived Functional Value and Purchase Intention

The cosmetics industry relies on Perceived Functional Value (PFV) to predict consumer purchase intentions, as product assessments in this field remain subjective and experience-based. The subjective nature of cosmetics requires consumers to evaluate their perceived utility, as these products directly affect their self-image, personal care needs, and aesthetic preferences.

The degree to which a cosmetic product meets its advertised functions, including moisturizing, anti-aging, skin brightening, and acne reduction, determines its perceived usefulness. Product expectations form through product claims and peer-generated information, such as online reviews, influencer recommendations, and beauty forum discussions.

The SOR model shows that eWOM serves as a trigger that prompts consumers to assess the usefulness of cosmetic products based on other users' experiences (Kurniawan et al., 2025). The evaluation process directly affects purchasing decisions because customers cannot physically test products in online shopping environments. The digital platforms Shopee and Instagram enable consumers to substitute for a PUV by providing a direct product experience, as they rely heavily on visual content and user testimonials.

The research by Khan et al. (2024) demonstrates that eWOM functional value is a key factor linking product credibility to purchase intention. Users report positive results from product use through statements about improved skin texture within two weeks, which directly demonstrate how well the product works. The delivery of promised results by a product increases consumer willingness to purchase.

Khan et al. (2024) examined green beauty products and found that emotional and functional values, including product efficacy, determine both first-time and subsequent purchase decisions. The assurance that a product functions as intended (perceived usefulness) serves as the foundation for long-term brand loyalty and customer recommendations in the cosmetics industry.

The relationship between PFV and risk perception exists in the market. According to Boldureanu et al. (2025), consumers who find a product useful tend to feel less concerned about risks when purchasing from new or unfamiliar cosmetic brands. Risk-reduction theory supports this finding because products applied to the skin benefit from high perceived usefulness, which reduces cognitive dissonance and boosts buying confidence.

Digital commerce requires cosmetic brands to establish perceived usefulness through open information sharing, real product demonstrations, and genuine customer feedback because this approach helps build brand trust. The combination of real-time product demonstrations through live commerce on platforms, according to Yang et al. (2024), enhances perceptions of product usefulness, leading to higher purchase intentions in appearance-focused product categories such as skincare and makeup.

H3: Perceived functional value influences purchase intention.

2.5 Relationship between Perceived Emotional Value and Purchase Intention

The value that consumers derive from products and services stems from their ability to evoke feelings and emotional responses (Mason et al., 2023). The two criteria for emotional value apply to cosmetics because consumers find pleasure in using these products and services (Tanrikulu, 2021). The act of choosing cosmetics leads consumers to feel they support environmental protection, which adds more emotional value to their selection (Tan et al., 2024). Natural food products cause no environmental damage, according to Muhamed et al. (2019). People who choose environmentally friendly products experience satisfaction, which leads to emotional value from their consumption (Mawardi et al., 2024). The connection between emotional value and purchase intention stems from the fact that emotional value drives purchasing decisions (Tanrikulu, 2021).

H4: Perceived emotional value influences purchase intention.

2.6 Relationship between eWOM and Purchase Intention

Online consumer reviews about airline e-ticket purchases generate eWOM according to Tuan et al. (2024). The research shows that eWOM depends on three elements: information quality, credibility, and information attitude adoption. The study demonstrates that reliable, trustworthy online information enables consumers to form purchasing intentions by fostering trust in its credibility (Sajid et al., 2022). Customers who shop online want information that is easily accessible, while they depend on trusted influencers for their purchasing decisions. Customers' purchasing decisions depend directly on the quality and credibility of consumer-generated content on eWOM platforms. The research found that eWOM adoption leads customers to show greater interest in buying airline e-tickets. The research demonstrates that airlines can increase e-ticket sales by effectively managing reviews and implementing successful viral marketing strategies for their online ticket sales. According to Liu et al. (2022) and Qi et al. (2025), purchase intention results from interactive elements that build trust and emotional connections during live-streaming sessions. Organizations should

develop digital platforms that integrate educational content with interactive features and trustworthy elements to enhance purchase intentions.

Digital environment purchase intentions depend heavily on the marketing platform's user experience, social engagement, information quality, and source credibility. The digital world depends on eWOM because customer testimonials and peer reviews prove more effective than conventional advertising methods. The platform displays genuine customer feedback, providing social proof and sharing actual customer experiences that shape trust development and expectation formation. According to Phung et al. (2020), consumers base their product adoption decisions on social influence together with peer-generated content.

The indirect impact of eWOM on purchase intention arises because it first builds brand image and trust, which serve as essential elements in making buying decisions (Tafolli et al., 2025). The positive effects of TikTok social media marketing on purchase intentions emerge from user engagement and content-sharing activities when customers believe products have high-quality standards (Meliawati et al., 2023). The success of eWOM messages depends on their content quality and their ability to establish trust and influence brand perceptions.

H5: eWOM influences purchase intention.

3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework illustrating the interaction between eWOM, perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, and purchase intention. This model addresses a gap in the literature on how Scarlett Whitening's interactive, real-time digital strategies influence consumer behavior in e-commerce. The SOR approach underpins this framework, allowing examination of the direct influence of eWOM on purchase intention. In addition, perceived functional value and perceived emotional value are assumed to influence purchase intention directly. Sales promotion is also assumed to influence live streaming and purchase intention directly. Furthermore, this model examines the relationships among the main concepts of eWOM, perceived functional value, perceived emotional value, and purchase intention.

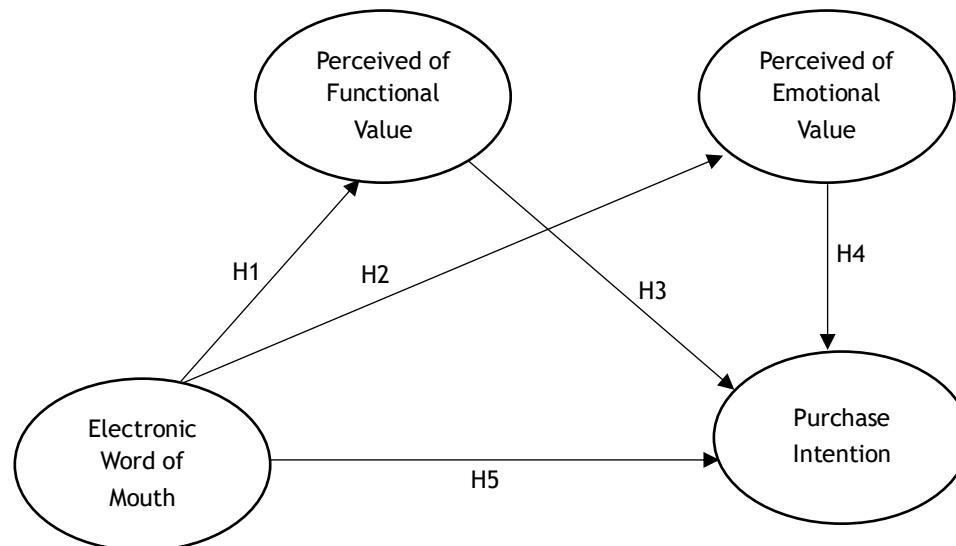


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the influence of eWOM, perceived usefulness, and perceived emotional on purchase intention

The hypotheses of this research are as follows:

- H1: eWOM influences perceived functionality value.
- H2: eWOM influences perceived emotional value.
- H3: Perceived functional value influences purchase intention.
- H4: Perceived emotional value influences purchase intention.
- H5: eWOM influences purchase intention.

4. Methods

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to analyze the impact of eWOM on purchase intention, with perceived functional value and perceived emotional value as mediating factors. The research was conducted in Indonesia, focusing on active social media users who viewed Scarlett Whitening's live streaming promotions.

4.2 Sampling

This research used purposive sampling to select participants who met three criteria: being between 17 and 35 years old, using social media and e-commerce platforms, and watching Scarlett Whitening live-streaming promotions. The researchers obtained 511 responses from participants. The study used a sufficient sample size because Hair et al. (2021) established that PLS-SEM requires at least ten times the maximum number of paths leading to any construct, and this study exceeded that threshold.

The study collected 511 valid responses, exceeding the PLS-SEM requirement of 10 times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any construct (Hair et al., 2021), thereby ensuring a sufficient sample size. The study's findings about the local cosmetic brand and young digital consumers remain specific to this particular brand and demographic because the research focused exclusively on them. The model needs to be tested across different age groups, product types, and streaming platforms to improve external validity in future studies.

4.3 Measurement

The study used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure each variable. All constructs met reliability thresholds (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70) and validity criteria ($AVE > 0.50$). The instruments and indicators were adapted from validated scales in prior studies. The operationalization of constructs and indicators is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operational definition and indicators

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicators
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM / WM) (Mukherjee et al., 2022; Nasution et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024)	Online consumer communication that influences purchase decisions by providing information, opinions, and recommendations shared through digital platforms.	1) WM1 (Intensity): I can easily find various online reviews about Scarlett. 2) WM2 (Valence of Opinion): I feel that the majority of online opinions about Scarlett are positive.

Table 1. Operational definition and indicators (Continue)

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicators
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM / WM) (Mukherjee et al., 2022; Nasution et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024)	Online consumer communication that influences purchase decisions by providing information, opinions, and recommendations shared through digital platforms.	3) WM3 (Information Content): Online reviews of Scarlett provide valuable insights. 4) WM4 (Subjective Norm): People around me pay attention to online reviews before making purchase decisions. 5) WM5 (Valence): I have read many positive reviews about Scarlett online. 6) WM6 (Information Content - Intention): I intend to use information from online reviews to decide on purchasing this product.
Perceived Functionality Value (PF) (Kurniawan et al., 2025; Boldureanu et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024)	The consumer's perception of the extent to which a cosmetic product is useful in fulfilling its intended functions and meeting personal expectations.	1) PF1 (Support): In my opinion, Scarlett fulfills my functional requirements. 2) PF2 (Effectiveness): This product (Scarlett) works effectively according to its claims. 3) PF3 (Enhancement): Using Scarlett improves the performance/quality of my personal care. 4) PF4 (Achievement): Scarlett fulfills my goals in using cosmetics. 5) PF6 (Practicality): Scarlett is easy to use in my daily routine.
Perceived Emotional Value (PE) (Tanrikulu, 2021; Mason et al., 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024)	The emotional benefit a consumer derives from a product through feelings such as pleasure, enjoyment, self-expression, and symbolic attachment.	1) PE5 (Pleasure): I feel happy when using Scarlett. 2) PE6 (Enjoyment): The experience of using Scarlett is enjoyable. 3) PE7 (Self-image): Scarlett reflects my self-image. 4) PE8 (Attachment): I feel emotionally attached to Scarlett.

Table 1. Operational definition and indicators (Continue)

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicators
Purchase Intention (PI) (Mainardes et al., 2023; Meliawati et al., 2023; Zulfa et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024)	The likelihood that a consumer will buy a particular product is manifested through different forms of behavioral intention.	1) IP1 (Transactional Intention): I intend to purchase Scarlett in the near future. 2) IP2 (Transactional Intention): I feel encouraged to make an immediate purchase of Scarlett. 3) IP3 (Transactional Intention): I have a strong desire to make a purchase transaction of Scarlett. 4) IP7 (Preferential Intention): Scarlett becomes my main choice when considering a purchase.

4.4 Data Collection

The research employed purposive sampling as its data collection method. The research team distributed questionnaires via Instagram, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The research participants consisted of internet users who watched or engaged with Scarlett Whitening's livestream promotional content.

The research follows Scarlett's digital marketing approach, which combines social media platforms with e-commerce and livestreaming to boost customer engagement and sales (Nisa & Roostika, 2024). The pilot test involving 30 participants confirmed that all survey components were clear to participants, followed a coherent order, and directly supported the research goals. The participants joined the study after receiving complete information about the research goals and privacy protections.

The survey began with a screening question that introduced participants to Scarlett's brand and digital marketing approach. Participants provided their digital consent after reading about the research goals, their right to remain anonymous, assurances of confidentiality, and their free will to participate. The study did not offer any payment to its participants. Participants had the right to withdraw from the research study at any time.

4.5 Data Analysis

After data collection, data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4. The analysis began by evaluating the indicators' ability to measure each variable through standard validity and reliability tests. Following validation of the measurement model, direct and indirect relationships between variables were tested.

Table 2 presents the Convergent Validity of the Outer Model, which shows that all outer loadings exceed the threshold of 0.60, thereby meeting the convergent validity criteria (Hair et al., 2021). This indicates that each indicator consistently represents its construct.

Data processing and calculations indicate that all t-statistics exceed 1.96, with p-values of 0.000. This indicates significance at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, all indicators are deemed valid for further structural model analysis, with item loadings exceeding 0.70, composite reliabilities above 0.80, and AVEs exceeding 0.50 (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 2. Convergent validity of the outer model

Variables	Indicators	Outer Loading	Result
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1 ← PI	0.827	Valid
	PI2 ← PI	0.712	Valid
	PI3 ← PI	0.717	Valid
	PI7 ← PI	0.719	Valid
Perceived Emotional Value (PE)	PE5 ← PE	0.802	Valid
	PE6 ← PE	0.801	Valid
	PE7 ← PE	0.849	Valid
	PE8 ← PE	0.739	Valid
Perceived Functionality Value (PF)	PF1 ← PF	0.650	Valid
	PF2 ← PF	0.772	Valid
	PF3 ← PF	0.731	Valid
	PF4 ← PF	0.775	Valid
Electronic Word of Mouth (WM)	PF6 ← PF	0.645	Valid
	WM1 ← WM	0.732	Valid
	WM2 ← WM	0.680	Valid
	WM3 ← WM	0.793	Valid
	WM4 ← WM	0.641	Valid
	WM5 ← WM	0.797	Valid
	WM6 ← WM	0.778	Valid

To ensure that each construct in the model did not overlap, a discriminant validity test was conducted using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio using SmartPLS. The goal was to determine whether each variable was measuring something different. General guidelines state that a good HTMT value is below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015; Hair et al., 2021).

The results showed that all HTMT values ranged from 0.652 to 0.721. For example, the correlation between purchase intention and other variables: 0.711 with perceived emotional value, 0.669 with perceived functionality value, and 0.721 with electronic word of mouth. All of these values were below the 0.85 threshold, indicating that these constructs had good discriminant validity.

The model variables show sufficient differentiation from one another, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015) and Hair et al. (2021). All constructs meet the minimum reliability criteria according to Table 3. The Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables surpass the 0.70 threshold. The research instrument demonstrates strong reliability, with eWOM at 0.878, PE at 0.875, PF at 0.840, and PI at 0.833. The indicators demonstrate reliable measurement of their corresponding constructs according to these results. The research instrument demonstrates strong measurement accuracy for its intended constructs because Cronbach's Alpha values match Composite Reliability values.

Table 3. Reliability test: Cronbach's Alpha composite reliability conclusion

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_{a})	Composite Reliability (ρ_{c})	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Conclusion
Electronic WOM (eWOM)	0.832	0.840	0.878	0.546	Reliable
Perceived Emotional Value (PE)	0.810	0.812	0.875	0.638	Reliable
Perceived Functionality Value (PF)	0.761	0.768	0.840	0.514	Reliable
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.735	0.757	0.833	0.555	Reliable

5. Findings

The demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 4. The study participants consisted mainly of young female students aged 17-20 who spent less than IDR 2,000,000 per month (71.6% of students and 44.6% of participants). The survey results showed that Instagram (51.5%) and TikTok (39.5%) were the most popular social media platforms among respondents, while Shopee (83.8%) emerged as their preferred shopping platform.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics and digital behavior of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Districs		
Depok	27	5.3
Bekasi	67	13.1
Tangerang	31	6.1
Jakarta-Selatan	142	27.8
Jakarta-Barat	49	9.6
Jakarta-Utara	32	6.3
Jakarta-Timur	63	12.3
Jakarta-Pusat	61	11.9
Bogor	39	7.6
Gender		
Male	74	14.5
Female	437	85.5
Age		
17-20 years	429	84
21-24 years	33	6.5
24-27 years	25	4.9
28-31 years	6	1.2
32 -35 years	18	3.5
Education		
< SMA	4	0.8
SMA	219	42.9
S1	286	56
S2	2	0.4

Table 4. Demographic characteristics and digital behavior of respondents (Continue)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Job		
Unemployee	3	0.6
Student	366	71.6
Self-employed	36	7
Private employees	106	20.7
Spending/Month		
< IDR 2,000,000	228	44.6
IDR 2,000,000 - IDR 3,000,000	90	17.6
IDR 3,000,0001 - IDR 4,000,000	55	10.8
IDR 4,000,000 - IDR 5,000,000	51	10
IDR 5,000,000	87	17
The Most Social Media Used		
TikTok	202	39.5
Instagram	263	51.5
Facebook	6	1.2
X	27	5.3
Youtube	12	2.3
LinkedIn	1	0.2
The Most E-Commerce Used		
Shopee	428	83.8
Tokopedia	50	9.8
Zalora	15	2.9
Lazada	15	2.9
BliBli	3	0.6

The data demonstrates that Scarlett's target audience consists of digital-native consumers who spend most of their time on online platforms and respond strongly to emotional experiences and interactive content. The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model indicates that this group has reached the organism stage. The way people perceive the functional and emotional value of eWOM determines their trust in and psychological bond with the brand. The company uses digital interactions to elicit strong emotional responses that build trust and drive customer engagement, leading to product purchases.

5.1 PLS Algorithm Results

The model fit assessment produces suitable results. According to Henseler et al. (2015), the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) values for the saturated model (0.082) and estimated model (0.083) meet the recommended threshold of ≤ 0.10 , indicating an acceptable model-data fit. Although the Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.832, below the ideal benchmark of 0.90, its importance is limited in PLS-SEM due to the method's prediction-oriented focus (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 5 shows the validity, reliability, and predictive power of the PLS-SEM model. The VIF values ranged from 1.301 to 2.156. This indicates that the data do not exhibit multicollinearity, as they are below the 3.3 threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2021). Similarly, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) demonstrated discriminant validity, as all values were below 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 5. Summary of PLS-SEM model evaluation

Evaluation Aspect	Result / Value	Interpretation / Source
Model Fit (SRMR)	Saturated = 0.082; Estimated = 0.083	Acceptable (≤ 0.10 ; Henseler et al., 2015)
Model Fit (NFI)	0.832	Below the ideal threshold (0.90), but less critical in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2021)
Multicollinearity (VIF)	1.301-2.156	No multicollinearity concerns (< 3.3 ; Hair et al., 2021)
Discriminant Validity (HTMT)	All values < 0.85	Satisfies construct distinctiveness (Henseler et al., 2015)
Explained Variance (R^2)	0.656	65.6% of the variance in Purchase Intention is explained
Predictive Relevance (Q^2)	0.421	Indicates predictive relevance (> 0 ; Hair et al., 2021)
Effect Size (f^2)	eWOM \rightarrow Emotional Value = 0.746 (large) eWOM \rightarrow Functional Value = 0.567 (large) Others = medium/small	Large to medium effects (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2021)
Conclusion	eWOM influences Purchase Intention through perceived value constructs	The model is valid, reliable, and informative in the live-streaming commerce context

This model demonstrated high explanatory power, with purchase intention accounting for 65.6% of the variance explained by eWOM, perceived functional value, and perceived emotional value. The Q^2 value of 0.421 exceeded zero, confirming its predictive relevance, as per Hair et al. (2021).

Meanwhile, the effect size results indicate that eWOM significantly influences perceived emotional value ($f^2 = 0.746$) and Perceived Functional Value ($f^2 = 0.567$). In contrast, other relationships indicate moderate to small effects according to Cohen (1988) and Hair et al. (2021).

The findings of this study confirm the influence of eWOM on purchase intention through its effects on perceived functional value and perceived emotional value, as predicted by the proposed model. This means that the research design, with a detailed diagnostic evaluation, produces reliable results and validates consumer behavior patterns on live-streaming commerce platforms.

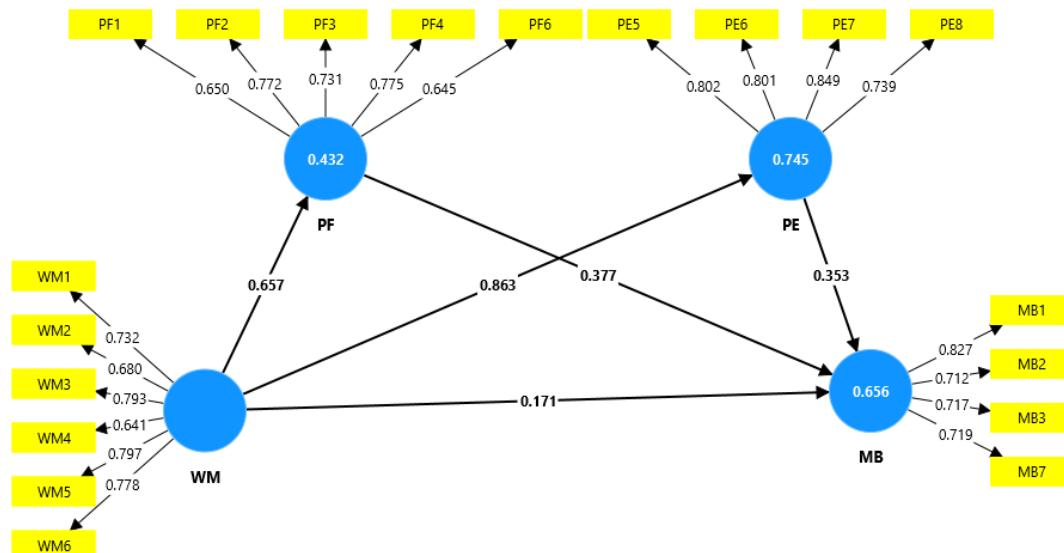


Figure 2. Structural model (inner model) PLS algorithm results

5.2 Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The outer model evaluation assessed the validity and reliability of the constructs. Results indicated that all indicators had outer loadings above 0.70 after removing weak indicators. All constructs exhibited composite reliability values above 0.80 and AVEs above 0.50, meeting the criteria for convergent validity. It indicates that the content marketing, sales promotion, eWOM, live streaming, and purchase intention constructs have good internal reliability and validity.

5.3 Structural Model

Table 6 presents the results of a path analysis examining the influence of eWOM, perceived functional value, and perceived emotional value on purchase intention. Table 6 presents the results of the direct, indirect, and total effect analysis related to Purchase Intention within the live streaming commerce context. All hypothesized pathways were statistically significant, supporting the proposed research model.

Table 6. Result of a path analysis

Effect Type	Pathway	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Conclusion
Direct Effect	WM → PF	0.657	21.418	0.000	Significant
	WM → PE	0.863	51.106	0.000	Highly Significant
	WM → PI	0.171	2.280	0.023	Significant
	PF → PI	0.377	8.514	0.000	Significant
Indirect Effect	PE → PI	0.353	4.153	0.000	Significant
	WM → PF → PI	0.248	8.566	0.000	Significant
	WM → PE → PI	0.304	4.120	0.000	Significant
Total Effect	WM → PI (Total Effect)	0.552	8.459	0.000	Significant
	WM → PI (Total Effect)	0.723	28.955	0.000	Highly Significant

Note: WM = Electronic Word of Mouth; PF = Perceived Functional Value; PE = Perceived Emotional Value; PI = Purchase Intention. Significance level: $p < 0.05$

For direct effects, eWOM significantly influences both perceived functional value (PF) ($\beta = 0.657$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived emotional value (PE) ($\beta = 0.863$, $p < 0.001$),

indicating that positive eWOM communications enhance both cognitive and affective consumer evaluations.

Furthermore, WM also has a significant direct effect on purchase intention (PI) ($\beta = 0.171$, $p = 0.023$), though its magnitude is smaller than its effects on perceived value constructs. Both PF ($\beta = 0.377$, $p < 0.001$) and PE ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.001$) also significantly affect PI, confirming their mediating roles.

The analysis of indirect effects reveals that eWOM indirectly affects PI through both PF and PE. The indirect effect through PF is $\beta = 0.248$ ($p < 0.001$), and through PE is $\beta = 0.304$ ($p < 0.001$), yielding a total indirect effect of $\beta = 0.552$ ($p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the mediating role of perceived value in amplifying the impact of eWOM on purchase intention.

Finally, the total effect of WM on PI, combining both direct and indirect pathways, is $\beta = 0.723$ ($p < 0.001$), indicating a strong overall influence of eWOM on consumer purchase decisions in live streaming environments. The results emphasize that, while eWOM directly influences purchase intention, its indirect effects via perceived value are more substantial, underscoring the importance of both emotional and functional value perceptions in consumer decision-making processes.

6. Discussion

6.1 Effect of eWOM on Perceived Functionality Value

The research through the SOR Approach" demonstrates that eWOM directly affects perceived functional value (PF) as predicted by Hypothesis H1. The five main indicators of eWOM consist of review search intensity, opinion valence, content richness, social norms, and review impact on purchasing choices. The five elements of functional value include product functionality, performance, self-care quality, cosmetic results, and user-friendly design.

The product usefulness of Scarlett's products emerges from online consumer reviews, comments, and discussions, which serve as fundamental information sources that influence customer perceptions. People now seek peer feedback for both technical details and authentic personal stories because they trust these narratives more than personal experiences.

The research by Mukherjee et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2024) confirms that eWOM exerts powerful social influence. Nasution et al. (2024) demonstrate that product evaluation depends on the combination of positive or negative valence, the spread intensity, and the detailed content of reviews.

The information consumers find about Scarlett's effects on skin health and beauty routines shapes their mental images of expected results, which in turn inform their functional value perception. The credibility of peer-generated content depends on its authenticity and unbiased nature, according to Boldureanu et al. (2025).

The SOR model shows eWOM as a stimulus that activates internal evaluations, perceptions, and beliefs, leading to purchase or recommendation behaviors. The research by Kurniawan et al. (2024) demonstrates that consumer choices depend heavily on their perceptions of functional value.

Scarlett needs to develop eWOM by creating meaningful experiences that deliver tangible results to users. Real, relatable outcomes in product experiences lead to greater functional value, strengthening brand trust and driving higher purchase intentions.

6.2 Effect of eWOM on Perceived Emotional Value

The research shows eWOM directly impacts customer perceptions of product functional value according to the SOR model. The research validates that eWOM directly influences perceived functional value (PF) as predicted by Hypothesis H1. The five core indicators of eWOM consist of review search intensity, opinion valence, content richness, social norms, and review impact on purchasing choices. The five elements of functional value include product functionality, performance, self-care quality, cosmetic results, and user-friendly design.

Online consumer reviews, comments, and discussions about Scarlett's products serve as essential information sources that drive customer perceptions about product usefulness. People now rely on peer feedback for both technical information and genuine personal accounts because they find these stories more trustworthy than their own personal experiences.

The research conducted by Mukherjee et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2024) establishes eWOM as a strong social influence mechanism. Nasution et al. (2024) show that product assessment emerges from the combination of review valence, review spread intensity, and detailed content. The information consumers discover about Scarlett's effects on skin health and beauty routines shapes their mental images of expected results, which in turn shapes their functional value perception. Boldureanu et al. (2025) state that peer-generated content credibility depends on its authentic and unbiased nature.

The SOR model demonstrates that eWOM acts as a trigger, setting off internal assessments and beliefs that lead to buying decisions or recommendation actions. The research conducted by Kurniawan et al. (2024) shows that consumer decisions heavily rely on their assessment of functional value. Scarlett must establish eWOM by delivering meaningful experiences that produce concrete outcomes for users. Real and relatable product experiences create higher functional value, which builds brand trust and leads to increased purchase intentions.

6.3 Effect of Perceived Functionality Value on Purchase Intention

The research study presents a hypothesis that perceived product usefulness, known as functional value (PF), drives customer purchasing decisions. The research data confirms that PF directly affects purchase intention, which validates H3. The research confirms that perceived usefulness is a vital factor in consumer choices, as the cosmetics market heavily depends on individual expectations and personal experiences (Kurniawan et al., 2024). The product functionality Scarlett perceives includes both specific active ingredients and general product functions that help users reach their beauty targets while preserving their self-image. The cosmetic industry provides tools for skincare but also functions as a means to help people build self-assurance and reach personal contentment (Khan et al., 2024).

The digital environment requires consumers to trust others' product experiences because they cannot physically test products. The platform enables users to share genuine visual content about their experiences. Story-based narratives function as

triggers that modify how potential customers view product functionality, according to Saputra et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2024).

People who trust the visible outcomes of a product tend to. The perceived functional value (PFV) drives both preference-based and recommendation-based purchase intentions, leading to repeat buying and spreading the word to others, thereby enhancing an active brand community (Khan et al., 2024).

The perceived functional value (PFV) helps customers feel more comfortable with unfamiliar products by building their confidence in product performance. Risk reduction theory supports this finding because people who perceive greater benefits are more secure in their purchasing decisions. The effectiveness of a product reduces consumer doubts about buying new brands and creates a sense of security, thereby reducing cognitive dissonance during decision-making (Boldureanu et al., 2025).

The digital platform of Scarlett delivers meaningful product information while enabling users to share their experiences, which proves their products deliver the promised results. According to Yang et al. (2024), the interactive features of live commerce create direct visual experiences that enhance functional perceptions and increase purchase intentions for appearance-focused products, including skincare.

The SOR model shows that perceived product functionality acts as an internal mechanism (organism) that connects external stimuli (eWOM) to consumer final decisions. The company has achieved success through its effective product development and successful user-generated content strategy which demonstrates product functionality. The current consumption environment shows that genuine consumer stories hold greater influence than single-sided marketing statements.

6.4 Effect of Perceived Emotional Value on Purchase Intention

The research verifies that perceived emotional value (PE) directly affects purchase intention (PI), as predicted, through buying needs, future purchasing plans, transaction speed, and preference for Scarlett as the brand.

The research demonstrates Hypothesis H4. The measurement of purchase intention includes four indicators that assess both the immediate reasons people choose cosmetics for their functional advantages and the emotional responses they experience while using these products. The emotional aspects of beauty products play a vital role for Scarlett because they connect to personal identity, self-expression, and overall wellness.

Scarlett holds a unique position to create experiences that boost customer satisfaction, self-esteem, and emotional bonding. The research by Tanrikulu (2021) and Mason et al. (2023) supports the theory that emotional value emerges from positive feelings that bring satisfaction to customers. The brand attachment grows stronger when consumers experience positive feelings, as they develop a personal connection with the brand, making them more likely to recommend it (Khan et al., 2024).

The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model shows that emotional value emerges from internal organismic responses, which result from external stimuli, including eWOM. Reviews and user stories create emotional connections with potential buyers through their pre-purchase experiences, helping them feel confident about the product before they experience it firsthand. Scarlett's digital strategy creates an environment that enables users to share their genuine personal changes.

Kurniawan et al. (2025) establish that emotional value serves as the essential link connecting online product exposure to actual customer purchasing actions. People require more than product information because they want to experience emotional benefits, which include self-assurance, happiness, and alignment with beauty standards.

Scarlett achieves success by recognizing that customers purchase skincare products to experience the feelings they create. Real-life stories about confidence, happiness, and transformation have proven vital for building emotional value, which generates sustained purchase enthusiasm among customers.

6.5 Effect of eWOM on Purchase Intention

The research shows that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has a substantial effect on purchase intention, thereby supporting H5. The direct impact of eWOM on consumer choices remains important for Scarlett brand decisions, although it produces smaller results than its influence on functional and emotional value.

The direct influence of consumer reviews, testimonials, and comments showing real-life results leads people to buy products even when they do not undergo extensive perceptual processing. The digital age has made eWOM a vital social-validation mechanism, as people tend to trust their peers more than advertisers.

Research by Mukherjee et al. (2022) and Nasution et al. (2024) demonstrates that eWOM effectiveness depends on both its credibility and intensity level. Authentic content that feels trustworthy and emotional leads people to take immediate action. The SOR model views eWOM as a direct stimulus that elicits behavioral responses without requiring complex cognitive evaluation.

Scarlett uses Instagram and TikTok to let users create their own content through before-and-after images and emotional storytelling. The emotional connection between current users and potential buyers strengthens the persuasive effect of eWOM through this content strategy.

The research by Tafolli et al. (2025) shows that eWOM produces better results through indirect channels, which build brand trust and value perception, leading to higher purchase intentions. The direct effect of eWOM remains substantial in Scarlett's market because users trust peer-shared content when making purchasing decisions.

The delivery methods of eWOM content, including visual elements, narrative structure, and emotional impact, determine its overall effect on users. Users who share their transformation stories and feelings of confidence and satisfaction create more than just information; they motivate others. The company uses eWOM as its fundamental approach to build consumer desire and social bonding between users. The brand transforms collective user experiences into emotional stimuli that activate buying behavior.

6.6 Managerial Implication

The research provides practical recommendations for Scarlett Whitening and other local Indonesian cosmetic brands to enhance their eWOM and live-streaming strategies to increase purchase intention. Beauty consumers in Indonesia make purchasing decisions based on both product functionality and emotional aspects, including

confidence, self-expression, and social identity. Brands should showcase both concrete product advantages and emotional narratives by using genuine reviews from micro-influencers and actual customers. The method proves more cost-effective for local brands operating with limited budgets.

The Indonesian cosmetic market faces intense competition from domestic and international companies, serving a diverse consumer base, including price-conscious segments. To stand out, local brands must create emotional and community-based eWOM content that showcases Indonesia's diverse beauty standards. Including testimonials from different regions and skin tones will enhance both inclusivity and customer engagement.

The digital inclusion gap continues to affect individuals living outside major urban centers. The popularity of TikTok Live and Shopee Live does not overcome the challenge of restricted internet access. Brands should combine live-streaming with short videos and written reviews to reach broader audiences. The research demonstrates that smaller and underrepresented brands can use SOR-driven eWOM approaches to compete effectively. Purchase intention depends on authentic consumer voices and emotionally engaging content, regardless of available resources. These findings highlight the necessity for Indonesian cosmetic brands to use emotional value and inclusivity in their digital marketing strategies.

6.7 Theoretical Contribution

This study provides important theoretical contributions to understanding the role of eWOM in driving purchase intention through the SOR approach. By examining the mediating roles of perceived functional and emotional value, it demonstrates that eWOM directly and indirectly influences consumer behaviour through consumers' perceptions of product benefits and emotional significance. This approach enriches the literature on digital consumer behavior, especially in the beauty industry, which is highly influenced by subjective and social experiences. The results also confirm that the purchase decision-making process is multidimensional, requiring external stimuli to be transformed into personal meaning before producing behavioral responses. This underscores the SOR model's relevance in explaining today's consumer behavior.

6.8 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the data were collected through a cross-sectional, perception-based survey, which cannot capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Second, the study focused on one cosmetic brand, Scarlett, which has specific positioning and target market, so generalizing the findings to other brands should be conducted carefully. Third, although the SOR approach explains the influence flow from stimulus to response, it does not fully capture other external factors such as price, competitors, or cultural trends that may also influence purchase intentions.

7. Conclusions

This study addresses the important question of how Scarlett transforms the power of eWOM into actual purchase desire using the SOR approach. The results show that eWOM directly influences purchase intention and serves as a strong trigger for the formation of both functional and emotional value perceptions. These perceptions act as important bridges, connecting digital information to consumers' purchase decisions.

Perceived functional value signals that the product effectively meets consumer needs, while perceived emotional value fosters confidence, satisfaction, and emotional attachment to the brand. When both values are present, consumer purchase intention increases significantly. These findings reinforce that Scarlett's success depends not only on product quality but also on creating social experiences that feel authentic, relevant, and emotionally engaging. By understanding this consumer psychological process, Scarlett can further strengthen its digital market position, leveraging consumer voice as the main driver of perceptions and purchase desires, authentically and sustainably.

8. Recommendation

Based on the study's limitations, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, since this study used a cross-sectional survey, Scarlett is advised to establish an ongoing monitoring system, such as longitudinal analysis of eWOM content. This approach will enable the company to better understand changes in consumer perceptions and emotional values and respond adaptively.

Second, since this study focused only on one cosmetic brand with specific characteristics, this recommendation is context-specific. Scarlett can leverage its target market by fostering authentic digital spaces, such as platforms for consumers to share reviews, transformation videos, and personal testimonials. This strategy is important because Scarlett consumers have strong emotional attachments, and content based on real experiences can strengthen perceived emotional value.

Third, since the SOR model does not fully account for external factors such as price, competition, and cultural trends, Scarlett can complement its eWOM strategy with campaigns that emphasize the symbolic and emotional meanings of cosmetic use, such as narratives about self-confidence or simple happiness. Furthermore, Scarlett should not rely solely on organic eWOM growth but also curate content, collaborate with credible micro-influencers, and create educational materials that address consumer needs while considering competitive dynamics and market trends. Further research could employ longitudinal methods and incorporate additional variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior.

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