

The Role of Brand Image in the Mediation of TikTok Platforms and KOLs on Purchase Decisions on Brand Grace and Glow in Indonesian E-Commerce

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: : TikTok Platform; Key Opinion Leader (KOL); Brand Image; Purchase Decision; E-commerce.

Received : 27 May

Revised : 20 June

Accepted: 25 July

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ABSTRACT

The expanding usage of TikTok as a digital marketing platform and the increasing impact of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) on consumer behavior in Indonesia's e-commerce industry are the driving forces behind this study. The fierce competition in the beauty sector pushes businesses to develop a powerful brand identity in order to influence customers' decisions to buy. With a focus on the Grace and Glow brand, this study attempts to examine the direct and indirect effects of the TikTok Platform and Key Opinion Leaders on Purchase Decisions through the mediating role of Brand Image. 227 respondents who had seen Grace and Glow promotions on TikTok and completed purchases through e-commerce platforms were given questionnaires to complete as part of this study's quantitative methodology. The findings show that Brand Image and Purchase Decisions are positively and significantly impacted by both the TikTok Platform and Key Opinion Leaders. Furthermore, it was discovered that Purchase Decisions were positively and significantly impacted by Brand Image. According to the mediation research, Brand Image plays a substantial role in mediating the relationship between Key Opinion Leaders and Purchase Decisions, as well as between the TikTok Platform and Purchase Decisions. The results suggest that businesses should choose KOLs that are highly credible and consistent with the brand image in order to maximize TikTok marketing tactics through educational, interesting, and pertinent content. Consumer trust can be bolstered and lasting purchasing decisions encouraged by a favorable and consistent brand image.x

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed how people search for information and make purchases. Consumers nowadays take into account information from social media and digital media in addition to product quality and cost (Oancea, 2023). Kotler and Keller (2016) define a buying decision as the point at which customers decide which product to buy after determining their needs, gathering information, weighing their options, and making decisions. Because they show how well a marketing strategy is working, purchasing decisions are one of the key indications for businesses (Sofyan et al., 2021). Therefore, companies need to understand the factors that could influence consumers' purchasing decisions in the digital age.

The development of the beauty business, particularly in the areas of skincare and personal care goods, has been aided by the expansion of e-commerce in Indonesia (Nawiyah et al., 2023). Grace and Glow is one of the local companies that is expanding quickly. It uses social media and marketplaces to advertise its goods. In order to be competitive in the beauty industry, businesses must develop efficient digital marketing tactics. According to Kompas statistics from 2023, Grace and Glow holds the second spot in the personal care sector with a market share of 12.47%, demonstrating the fierce competition among brands to win over customers.

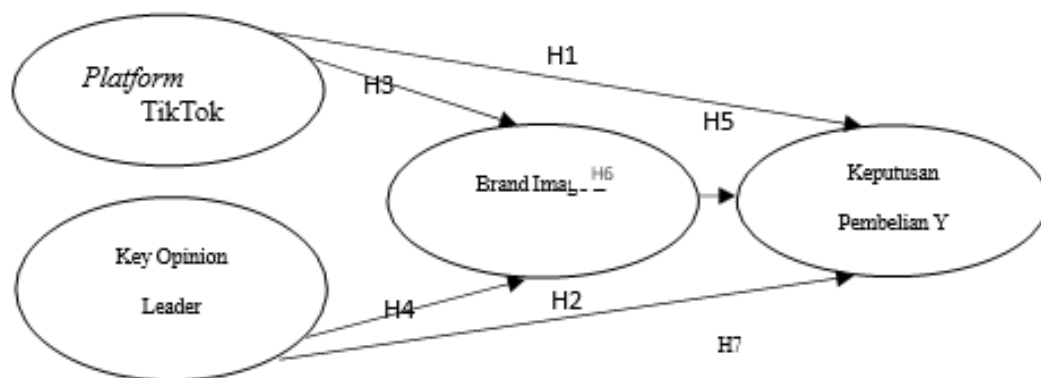
Using the TikTok platform is one of the digital marketing tactics that many businesses employ. Guarda et al. (2021) describe TikTok as an interactive social media platform that lets users produce and share short videos. TikTok has the capacity to generate significant levels of engagement, making it a useful tool for business marketing. According to Cheng et al. (2022), innovative and educational content on TikTok can draw customers' attention to products and affect their decision to buy. Businesses may strengthen their bonds with customers and raise brand awareness by using live shopping, product reviews, and promotional content.

The business employs Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) as a digital marketing tactic in addition to social media. Kotler and Keller (2016) define an opinion leader as a person who can use communication and suggestions to change the attitudes and actions of others. Because they are regarded as having experience, knowledge, and credibility for the items being sold, KOLs in the beauty sector are frequently used by consumers as sources of information and references (Permana et al., 2024). KOLs' recommendations have the power to boost customer confidence and sway judgments about what to buy.

The development of brand image is intimately linked to the impact of KOLs and TikTok in digital marketing. Kotler and Keller (2016) define brand image as a collection of associations, beliefs, and impressions that are retained in customers' recollections of a brand. Purchase decisions can be influenced by a positive brand image, which can boost customer loyalty and trust. Product user experience, marketing communications, and information gleaned from social media and KOL recommendations can all influence how consumers see a brand. Therefore, brand image may serve as a mediating factor in explaining how customer purchase decisions are impacted by digital marketing initiatives.

The impact of TikTok and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) on consumer buying decisions has been the subject of several earlier studies. Although the study did not examine actual purchase decisions, Ferdianto et al. (2024) discovered that TikTok content influences consumers' buy intentions. In the meantime, Ong et al. (2024) demonstrate that TikTok influences purchasing decisions, but they do not add brand image as a variable that helps explain how decisions are made. Therefore, further research is still needed to determine how TikTok's brand image influences consumers' decisions to buy. Rina Eka Widjayanti's research (2023) demonstrates that the Key Opinion Leader (KOL) variable influences consumers' decisions to buy beauty items. However, research by Dewi and Safitri (2023) demonstrates that customer trust can allow KOLs to have an impact on purchasing decisions. These findings demonstrate that there are still disagreements over how KOLs affect consumers' decisions to buy. Furthermore, there is currently no study on how brand image functions as a mediating factor in KOL connections and purchase decisions, particularly in Indonesia's cosmetics sector. Using brand image as a mediating variable in the Grace and Glow brand in Indonesian e-commerce, this study aims to examine the impact of the TikTok Platform and Key Opinion Leader on purchase decisions.

Based on this description, the purpose of this study is to examine how the TikTok Platform and Key Opinion Leader affect consumers' decisions to buy, using brand image as a mediating factor in the Grace and Glow brand in Indonesian e-commerce. It is anticipated that this research will contribute theoretically to the advancement of digital marketing studies and serve as useful information for businesses creating successful marketing campaigns.



Based on Figure 1. The hypotheses proposed in this study are formulated as follows:

- H1: Purchase decisions for the Grace and Glow brand are positively and significantly impacted by the TikTok platform.
- H2: Purchase decisions under the Grace and Glow brand are positively and significantly impacted by Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs).
- H3: Purchase decisions in the Grace and Glow brand are positively and significantly impacted by brand image.
- H4: The Grace and Glow brand's brand image is positively and significantly impacted by the TikTok platform.

- H5: The brand image of Grace and Glow is positively and significantly impacted by Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs).
- H6: The impact of the TikTok platform on purchase decisions in the Grace and Glow brand is substantially mediated by brand image.
- H7: The impact of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) on purchase decisions for the Grace and Glow brands is considerably mediated by brand image.

Research Novelty

This study is innovative because it examines how Brand Image functions as a mediating variable in the link between Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and the TikTok Platform on Purchase Decisions on the Grace and Glow brands. This study incorporates the two digital marketing factors into a single research model on the Indonesian beauty sector, in contrast to earlier studies that often solely examined the direct impact of social media or influencers on purchase decisions.

METHODS

This study employs an associative research design and a quantitative methodology. This study examines the connection between the TikTok Platform, Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Brand Image, and Purchase Decision on the Grace and Glow brand in Indonesian e-commerce.

The study population includes consumers or prospective consumers who are domiciled in the Greater Jakarta area and outside Greater Jakarta with the characteristics of actively using TikTok. Purposive sampling was employed in the sample process, and the respondents had to be female, between the ages of 17 and 35, actively use TikTok for at least three months, and had viewed promotional content from Grace and Glow via the company's official account or KOL. A minimum sample of 130 respondents was established by increasing the number of research indicators by 26 indicators by five times the number of indicators, in accordance with Hair et al.

An online survey via Google Form was used to collect data. The Likert scale, which ranges from 1 to 5, is used to gauge how much respondents agree with each research statement.

Categories	Score
Strongly Agree (SS)	5
Agree (S)	4
Neutral (N)	3
Disagree (TS)	2
Strongly Disagree (STS)	1

TikTok Platform, Key Opinion Leader, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision were the study's variables. Several dimensions and indicators that were modified from earlier studies were used to measure each variable. Following that, structural equation modeling based on partial least squares was used to analyze the data (SEM-PLS). Descriptive analysis, outer model, and inner model are the stages of analysis. The tendency of respondents' answers to each research indicator was ascertained by descriptive analysis. The following table displays the score interpretation criteria.

Average Score	Interpretation
1,0 – 1,5	Very Low
>1.5 – 2.5	Low
>2.5 – 3.5	Enough
>3.5 – 4.5	Height
>4.5	Very High

The construct's validity and reliability were tested by evaluating the outer model. The criterion of outer loading > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50 were used to evaluate convergent validity using outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Additionally, the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which states that the root value of AVE in each construct must be greater than the correlation between constructs, was used to test the validity of the discriminant. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite dependability are used to measure construct dependability, with a recommended value > 0.70 .

The links between the variables in the research model are tested by internal model evaluation. Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-Squared (ARS), and Average Adjusted R-Squared (AARS) values were used to conduct the test at a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$. Tenenhaus Goodness of Fit (GoF) and Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF) were also used to assess the model's viability.

The bootstrapping approach was used for hypothesis testing in order to get the path coefficient, t-statistics, and p-value values. The hypothesis is deemed acceptable if the p-value is less than 0.05, as this study used a 95% confidence level and a 5% significance level. The direct and indirect effects of the Brand Image mediation variable on the Purchase Decision were examined using this technique.

Using the SmartPLS 4 tool, this study employs the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. Because it can handle data that is not always normally distributed and may be applied to relatively small sample sizes, the PLS-SEM method was selected. Furthermore, the links between latent constructs as indicated by manifest indicators can be analyzed using this method. Through this approach, the relationship between TikTok Platform, Key Opinion Leader, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision can be comprehensively analyzed according to the research model built.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Collection Results

1) Respondent Characteristics

Age, place of residence, and exposure to Grace and Glow advertising on TikTok were the characteristics of the participants in this study. The following table provides specifics about the characteristics of the respondents.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

No.	Respondent Characteristics	Categories	Number (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Respondent Age	>18 years old	227	100%
2	Domicile Location	Jabodetabek	202	89,0%
		Outside Jabodetabek	25	11,0%
3	Grace and Glow Promotional Display on TikTok	Ever	214	94,3%
		Never	13	5,7%
Total Respondents			227	100%

Source: Primary data processed by researchers (2026)

According to the table, every respondent was older than eighteen. The majority of respondents are from the Greater Jakarta area and most of the respondents have also seen Grace and Glow promotions through TikTok.

2) Research Variable Description

To find out how respondents felt about the research variables – TikTok Platform, Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Brand Image, and Purchase Decision – descriptive analysis was used. The category that has been established is used to interpret the average value; a greater mean value denotes a respondent's increasingly favorable opinion of the variable being measured. Table X displays the findings of each variable's descriptive analysis.

Table 4. Research Variable Description

Variable	Variable Mean	Categories	Dimensions	Dimension Mean	Remarks
TikTok Platform (X1)	3,88	Height	Exposure	4,00	Exposure to TikTok content was rated good by respondents
			Commitment	3,51	User interaction with content
			Informativeness	4,06	Product information is easy to obtain and

					understand .
Key Opinion Leader (X2)	3,88	Height	Credibility	3,82	KOLs are considered quite credible in conveying informatio n.
			Attraction	3,92	KOLs have a good appeal to consumers.
			Compatibility	3,93	KOLs are assessed in accordance with the products being promoted.
Brand Image (W)	3,82	Height	Functional Image	3,89	The brand has good image power.
			Symbolic Image	3,62	Consumers have a positive perception of the brand.
			An Experiential Image	3,96	The uniqueness of the product is a strong brand image.
Purchas e Decisio n (Y)	3,92	Height	Need Recognition	3,90	Consumers recognize the need for the product.
			Post-Purchase Behavior	3,90	Consumers are actively looking for product

					informatio n.
			Alternative Evaluation	3,97	Consumers show a tendency to make purchases.

3) Data Analysis Results

a) Weight Factor Test (Outer Loading)

According to the test results, all indicators on the TikTok Platform variable, Key Opinion Leader (KOL), Brand Image, and Purchase Decision have p-values of 0.000 and an outer loading value over the minimal limit, indicating that they are all deemed valid and appropriate for use in the study. The findings of the outer loading value and the mean value, as displayed in the accompanying table, can be used to determine how respondents perceived the overall research variables based on each indicator.

Table 5. Respondents' Perception of Research Variables

Yes	Indicator	Questionnaire Statement	Outer Loading	Average (Mean)
1	TikTok Platform (X1)			
	X1.1	I found out about Grace and Glow products through TikTok.	0,804	4,08
	X1.2	I often see Grace and Glow content on TikTok.	0,83	3,82
	X1.3	I accidentally came across this product on TikTok.	0,744	4,1
	X1.4	I like to like or comment on Grace and Glow's content on TikTok.	0,956	3,52
	X1.5	I follow the official Grace and Glow account or the account that reviews it frequently.	0,954	3,5
	X1.6	TikTok content provides enough information about Grace and Glow products.	0,918	4,04

	X1.7	I feel that TikTok content helps me understand the benefits of Grace and Glow products.	0,907	4,07
2	Key Opinion Leader (X2)			
	X2.1	I believe in KOL reviews that discuss Grace and Glow products	0,931	3,78
	X2.2	The KOL who reviews the product looks honest and trustworthy.	0,935	3,81
	X2.3	I rely on KOL reviews to make a purchase decision	0,881	3,86
	X2.4	KOLs promoting products look attractive and fun.	0,914	3,93
	X2.5	KOL's appearance and lifestyle made me interested in trying the recommended products.	0,914	3,91
	X2.6	The KOL that promotes Grace and Glow fits the brand's image.	0,933	3,94
	X2.7	KOL's recommended products fit my needs.	0,926	3,93
3	Brand Image (W)			
	Z.1	Grace and Glow have good product quality.	0,943	3,89
	Z.2	Grace and Glow products are effective and live up to their claims.	0,936	3,88
	Z.3	Using Grace and Glow makes me feel confident.	0,93	3,72

	Z.4	I feel like Grace and Glow reflects my lifestyle.	0,914	3,53
	Z.5	I had a positive experience using Grace and Glow products.	0,923	3,92
	Z.6	I am satisfied with the service and packaging of Grace and Glow products.	0,92	4
4	Purchase Decision (Y)			
	Y.1	I realized the need for body care products like Grace and Glow	0,917	3,95
	Y.2	I realized the need for Grace and Glow products after seeing content on TikTok	0,914	3,84
	Y.3	I feel satisfied after purchasing and using Grace and Glow products	0,92	3,389
	Y.4	I feel satisfied with the results after using this product.	0,92	3,91
	Y.5	I considered several brands of similar products before choosing Grace and Glow	0,925	3,92
	Y.6	I considered several brands of similar products before choosing Grace and Glow	0,918	4,02

- TikTok Platform Variable (X1)

The outer loading value on the TikTok Platform variable is in the range of 0.535–0.834. The strongest indicator is found in the statement regarding the frequency of viewing Grace and Glow content on TikTok with a loading value of 0.834. Meanwhile, the lowest indicator is on the statement of accidentally finding

a product on TikTok with a value of 0.535, but still meeting the criteria of convergent validity.

- Key Opinion Leader Variable (X2)

The outer loading value of the Key Opinion Leader variable is in the range of 0.811–0.897. The strongest indicator is found in the statement that the KOL looks honest and trustworthy with a loading value of 0.897. All indicators have values above 0.70 so that they show excellent measurement quality

- Variable Brand Image (Z)

The Brand Image variable's outer loading value falls between 0.678 and 0.853. With a loading value of 0.853, the comment about the quality of Grace and Glow goods is the strongest signal. In the meantime, the brand appropriateness with lifestyle indicator has the lowest value (0.678), but the PLS analysis still finds it to be acceptable.

- Purchase Decision Variable (Y)

The Purchase Decision variable's outer loading value falls between 0.733 and 0.844. With a loading value of 0.844, the expression of pleasure with the product's outcomes is the strongest indicator. The factor that influences consumer purchasing decisions the most is appraisal and confidence after purchase.

4) Hypothesis Testing Results

a) Test Direct and Indirect Effect Models

The next step is hypothesis testing to ascertain the direct and indirect effects between the research variables after all indicators have been deemed valid and reliable. All of the associations between variables have a positive and significant direction, according to the data processing results using WarpPLS 7.0.

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Yes	Hypothesis	Variable Relationships	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Remarks
H1	TikTok Platform → Brand Image	$X1 \rightarrow Z$	0,59	< 0.01	Accepted
H2	KOL → Brand Image	$X2 \rightarrow Z$	0,21	< 0.01	Accepted
H3	Brand Image → Purchase Decision	$Z \rightarrow Y$	0,65	< 0.01	Accepted
H4	TikTok Platform → Purchase Decision	$X1 \rightarrow Y$	0,18	< 0.05	Accepted
H5	KOL → Purchase Decision	$X2 \rightarrow Y$	0,12	< 0.05	Accepted
H6	TikTok Platform → Purchase Decisions	$X1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	-	< 0.01	Accepted

	through Brand Image				
H7	KOL → Purchase Decisions through Brand Image	X2 → Z → Y	-	< 0.01	Accepted

Source: Data processed using WarpPLS 7.0 (2026)

The test results show that:

- TikTok Platform → Brand Image has a strong and favorable impact, with a p-value of less than 0.01 and a coefficient of about 0.59. This demonstrates how TikTok's features, exposure, and engagement may improve Grace and Glow products' brand image.
- KOL → Brand Image also had a substantial and favorable impact, with a p-value of less than 0.01 and a coefficient of about 0.21. Customers' perceptions of the brand might be strengthened by KOLs' attractiveness and credibility.
- Brand Image → Purchase Decision had the biggest impact, with a p-value of less than 0.01 and a coefficient of about 0.65. This indicates that the primary determinant of buying decisions is brand image.
- TikTok Platform → Purchase Decision shows a positive and significant effect with a p-value of less than 0.05 and a coefficient of about 0.18, indicating that TikTok not only enhances brand image but also directly influences purchase decisions.
- Although it was comparatively less than other linkages, KOL → Purchase Decision also had a favorable and significant impact.

With a p-value of less than 0.01, indirect impact testing revealed that Brand Image might mediate the association between TikTok Platform and KOL to Purchase Decision. Because the direct and indirect influences are equally important, the study paradigm is classified as partial mediation. This demonstrates how KOLs and the TikTok platform may either directly or indirectly affect consumer choices by enhancing brand perception.

5) R-Square Value

R-Square testing was conducted to see the model's ability to explain the dependent variables in the study.

Table 6. R-Square and Adjusted R-Square Values

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Brand Image (W)	0,415	0,410
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,618	0,613

According to the analysis's findings, the Brand Image variable had an R-square value of 0.415, meaning that the TikTok Platform and KOL could account for 41.5% of the Brand Image fluctuation, with the remaining portion being

influenced by variables not included in the study. This value falls into the moderate range. In contrast, the Purchase Decision variable's R-square value was 0.618, meaning that the variables in the study model could account for 61.8% of the variation in the Purchase Decision. The model is thought to have a decent ability to describe consumer buying decisions because this value falls into the strong category (substantial).

DISCUSSION

1) *Respondent Characteristics Analysis*

All of the constructs in this study have satisfied the requirements for validity and reliability, both in terms of convergent validity and discriminant validity, according to the results of the measurement model (outer model) test. This demonstrates that the indicators may effectively discriminate across constructs and appropriately represent the research variables. In order to go on to the structural model testing step (inner model), the measurement model is deemed practicable.

Furthermore, based on the results of structural model testing, it was found that the TikTok Platform variable affects the Brand Image. This shows that the content presented through TikTok, both in terms of creativity, relevance, and interactivity, is able to shape consumer perception of the Grace and Glow brand image. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the Key Opinion Leader (KOL) variable has an impact on brand image. This suggests that customers' perceptions of a brand can be strengthened by KOLs' credibility, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Additionally, the study's findings demonstrate that purchase decisions are influenced by brand image. This demonstrates that consumers are more likely to buy things when a positive brand image is developed.

Put differently, brand image plays a significant role in the decision-making process of consumers. It has been demonstrated that Brand Image can mediate the impact of the TikTok Platform on Purchase Decisions when it comes to testing the effect of mediation. This indicates that TikTok has an impact on purchasing decisions both directly and indirectly through the development of brand perception. Brand image serves as an intervening variable that amplifies the influence of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) on purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be said that in this research model, brand image plays a strategic role as a mediator.

Influence Between Variables

a) **The Influence of TikTok Platform (X1) on Brand Image (Z)**

The study's findings demonstrate that the TikTok platform improves brand image grace and glow. Exposure to informative and interesting product content on TikTok is able to increase consumer perception of quality and brand image. The more often consumers get product information through TikTok, the stronger the brand image that is formed in the minds of consumers.

b) **The influence of Key Opinion Leader (X2) on Brand Image (Z)**

It has been demonstrated that a key opinion leader improves brand

image. Consumer trust in Grace and Glow may rise as a result of KOLs' legitimacy, appeal, and product fit. Recommendations from KOLs make consumers view the brand more positively so as to strengthen the brand image.

- c) **The Influence of TikTok Platform (X1) on Purchase Decisions (Y)**
Purchase decisions are positively impacted by the TikTok platform. Consumer interest in making a purchase can be increased by easily accessible, educational, and entertaining content. TikTok not only serves as an entertainment medium, but also as a source of information that influences consumer purchasing behavior.
- d) **The influence of Key Opinion Leader (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y)**
Purchase decisions are positively impacted by Key Opinion Leaders. Before making a purchase, consumers frequently take KOL recommendations and evaluations into account. Trust in KOLs can reduce consumer uncertainty and drive purchasing decisions.
- e) **The Influence of Brand Image (Z) on Purchase Decisions (Y)**
Purchase decisions are positively impacted by brand image. Customers are more likely to buy Grace and Glow if they have a favorable opinion of the product's quality, advantages, and reputation. A strong brand image also increases loyalty as well as repurchase intent.
- f) **The influence of TikTok Platform (X1) on Purchase Decision (Y) through Brand Image (Z)**
It has been demonstrated that brand image mediates the impact of the TikTok platform on purchase decisions. Content exposure on TikTok not only directly drives purchases, but also forms a positive brand image, which ultimately improves consumer purchasing decisions.
- g) **The influence of Key Opinion Leader (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y) through Brand Image (Z)**
Additionally, the impact of Key Opinion Leaders on Purchase Decisions is mediated by Brand Image. Recommendations and reviews from KOL are able to strengthen the image of the Grace and Glow brand, so that consumers become more trusted and encouraged to make purchases.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the study's findings, consumers' decisions to buy Grace and Glow products in Indonesian e-commerce are influenced by the TikTok platform and Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). customer proximity to the brand can be increased via informative, interactive, and easily accessible TikTok content, and customer trust in the product can be increased by KOLs' appeal and credibility. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that brand image functions as a mediating factor that enhances the interaction between KOLs and the TikTok Platform regarding purchasing decisions. Customers are more comfortable making decisions to buy beauty goods on digital platforms when a business has a good reputation.

The findings of this study have theoretical and practical ramifications for the advancement of research on digital marketing. The idea that brand image plays a strategic role in bridging the influence of influencers and social media on customer behavior is theoretically strengthened by this research. Practically speaking, the study's findings can be taken into account by businesses when creating digital marketing plans using TikTok and KOLs that match the audience's traits. Companies also need to maintain the consistency of brand image through product quality, relevant marketing communication, and closer interaction with consumers in e-commerce and social media.

This research still has some limitations, such as the focus of research that is only conducted on the Grace and Glow brand and the use of questionnaire-based survey methods that depend on respondents' perceptions. Furthermore, the variables of TikTok Platform, KOL, brand image, and purchasing decisions were the only ones examined in this study; therefore, other factors like pricing, product quality, customer trust, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) might be developed in the subsequent study. In order to make the research findings more varied and thorough, it is also anticipated that future studies will broaden the research object and make use of additional social media sites.

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