

The Influence of Country of Origin, Celebrity Endorser, and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions for Innisfree Korean Skincare Products

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of Country of Origin, Celebrity Endorser, and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on the purchasing decisions of Innisfree skincare products among university students. Utilizing a quantitative approach with purposive sampling, the study involved 293 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique to evaluate the relationships among variables. The results reveal that Country of Origin, Celebrity Endorser, and E-WOM significantly and positively affect purchasing decisions. The study's implications provide insights for consumers to understand how factors such as Country of Origin, Celebrity Endorser, and E-WOM can shape their purchasing decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has intensified competition, driving companies, particularly in the beauty sector, to innovate in order to maintain their competitive edge (Yanti & Idayanti, 2022). The beauty industry, especially in the field of skincare and skin treatment, has now become one of the fastest-growing sectors globally (Nawiyah et al., 2023). Significant growth has been observed in the Asian region, where North Asia holds a position equivalent to North America in the global cosmetics market, with a market share of 29% (Petruzzi, 2024).

One of the Asian countries experiencing significant advancements in the beauty industry is South Korea, which has become an icon for beauty and skincare in the region (Salim & Lahindah, 2023). South Korea's cosmetic exports in the first half of 2024 reached \$4.82 billion (approximately 6.7 trillion won), marking an 18.1% increase compared to the same period in 2023 (Seon Ah, 2024). One of the South Korean skincare products available in the Indonesian market is Innisfree.

According to data released by Compass.co.id in 2022, Innisfree ranked first in sales of Korean skincare products in Indonesia, with average sales reaching 8,100 pieces per product type, followed by other brands such as COSRX, The Saem, Some By Mi, and Nacific. However, overall sales data for Innisfree products indicate a decline (Fatimah, 2024). The figure below illustrates Innisfree's global sales data.

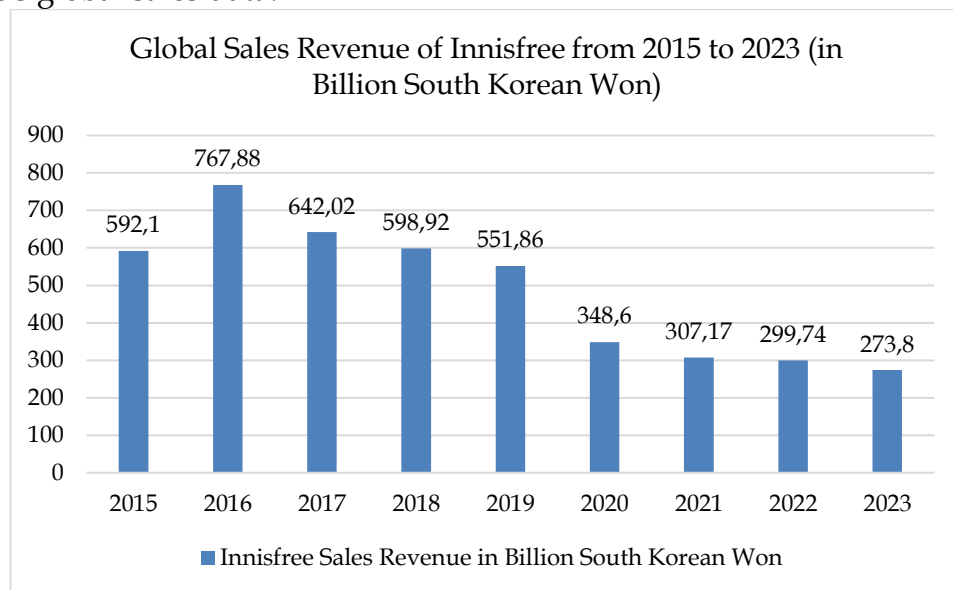


Figure 1. Innisfree Sales Revenue from 2015 to 2023

Source: statista.com (2024)

Innisfree has experienced a consistent decline in sales from 2016 to 2023. According to data, the brand's annual revenue dropped from KRW 299.74 billion in 2022 to KRW 273.8 billion in 2023. This decline in revenue began between 2016 and 2017 and has continued in subsequent years, with sales revenue steadily decreasing over time (Jobst, 2024). In this situation, it is important for Innisfree to reformulate its business strategy to regain competitiveness and maintain its existing market share.

Purchase decisions are a crucial factor determining the success of a business, especially in the skincare and beauty industry. According to Kotler and

Keller (2016), during the purchasing decision process, consumers go through an evaluation stage where they form preferences for various available brands, which may lead to an intention to purchase their preferred brand. Several factors can influence purchasing decisions. The first is COO, based on research by Septiani et al. (2020), COO can influence consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions. The second is celebrity endorser, according to Ristauli Hutagaol and Safrin, (2022), the better a celebrity endorser is at influencing consumers and the more famous they are, the more interested consumers will be in making purchasing decisions for the promoted product. The third is E-WOM, which plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions, building trust, and influencing purchasing decisions (Siregar, 2024)

The first factor is COO, which refers to an individual's mental associations and beliefs about a product influenced by the country where the product originates (Kotler & Keller, 2016). COO serves as a significant cue that consumers use to evaluate product quality and make more informed purchasing decisions (Hanna & Chasanah, 2024). This concept aligns with the cognitive theory described by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), which states that consumer knowledge and perceptions are formed through a combination of direct experiences with the attitude object and information received from various sources. Research by Rizma nasution et al. (2023) and Habiburrahman et al. (2020) also shows that COO influences purchasing decisions. However, a study by Salim and Lahindah (2023) found that COO does not affect purchasing decisions.

The second factor, celebrity endorser, refers to a well-known individual who acts as a message conveyer to promote a product (Suyar et al., 2023). The expertise of celebrity endorsers positively impacts the purchasing decisions of Korean skincare products, as consumers are more likely to trust products endorsed by credible celebrities in the beauty industry (Sari et al., 2021). This aligns with the cognitive theory described by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), which highlights that celebrity endorsers provide additional information to consumers, enhancing their confidence, shaping positive perceptions of the product, and influencing purchasing decisions. This is supported by studies conducted by Ningsih and Putri (2020), Septiani et al. (2020) and also Rachmaningtyas and Surianto (2022) which found that celebrity endorsers significantly influence purchasing decisions. However, research by Novianti (2020) revealed that celebrity endorsers do not affect purchasing decisions.

The third factor is E-WOM, according to Thureau et.al (2014) Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to online statements, either positive or negative, shared by potential, current, or past customers regarding a product or company (Fraya, 2023). Based on the cognitive theory proposed by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), reviews and consumer experiences shared through social media and online platforms serve as sources of information that shape perceptions and knowledge, which in turn influence purchasing decisions. Research by Hidayah et al. (2021), Budiono and Slamet (2022) and Lestari and Widjanarko (2023) revealed that E-WOM has a positive and significant impact on purchasing

decisions. These findings contrast with the study by Purba and Susilowati (2022), which indicated that E-WOM does not influence purchasing decisions.

This study builds upon the research conducted by Septiani et al. (2020), which examined the impact of COO and Celebrity Endorser on purchasing decisions, with the addition of the E-WOM variable that was previously explored by Yulindasari and Fikriyah (2022). Based on the above phenomenon, differences and inconsistencies in the results of previous studies are obtained which indicate that there are research gaps, therefore further studies are needed to clarify the influence of these variables whether they have an influence or not. This is what encourages researchers to analyze the effect of country of origin, celebrity endorsers, and electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions for innisfree Korean skincare.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive Theory

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), the cognitive components consist of various cognitions, such as knowledge and perceptions, which are formed through a combination of direct experiences with attitude objects and information from various sources. This theory relates to the variables of country of origin (COO), celebrity endorser, and electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), as all three influence consumer knowledge and perceptions. influences consumer judgments through the perception of the country's image and shaping how consumers evaluate products based on their origin, celebrity endorsers increase trust in the product, and E-WOM provides references from other consumer opinions. This external information contributes to forming attitudes and purchase decisions.

Purchase Decision

Based on the opinion of Kotler and Keller (2016), in the purchase decision process, consumers go through an evaluation stage where they form preferences towards various available brands, which may lead to an intention to purchase the brand they prefer. The purchase decision process can generally be divided into three main stages: pre-purchase, consumption, and post-purchase evaluation (Tjiptono, 2015). Purchase decisions are triggered by problem recognition, which can arise from both internal and external factors. The stronger the need felt by an individual, the greater their motivation to fulfill that need, and they will begin to seek information about the product they need, including details about the company providing the product (Manggalania & Soesanto, 2021).

Country Of Origin

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), COO refers to an individual's mental associations and beliefs about a product, which are shaped by the country where the product is manufactured. Products from countries with a positive image tend to be valued more by consumers than products from countries with a more negative image (Suh et al., 2016 in Handoyo & Nugraha, 2020). Products from

countries with a good reputation are generally perceived as more trustworthy and valued higher by consumers.

Research shows that purchase decisions are significantly influenced by COO (Rizma nasution et al., 2023). COO serves as a heuristic for consumers, simplifying the complexity of the purchase decision (Harjanti et al., 2020). Findings by Mahri et al. (2024) show that COO significantly influences the purchase decision of Korean skincare products. This aligns with studies conducted by Septiani et al. (2020), Purba and Susilowati (2022), as well as Susanti and Saputra, (2022) which also show that COO positively and significantly influences purchase decisions.

H1: Country Of Origin has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

Celebrity Endorser

A Celebrity Endorser refers to the use of a celebrity as the face of advertisements across various media platforms, including print, social media, and television (Andrews & Shimp, 2018). The expertise of a Celebrity Endorser positively affects the purchase decisions of skincare products, as consumers are more inclined to trust and purchase products endorsed by celebrities who are perceived as knowledgeable and credible in the beauty industry (Sari et al., 2021). This finding aligns with the research conducted by Leonita (2023), which revealed that celebrity testimonials enhance consumer perceptions of purchase decisions for skincare products, making the endorser appear more credible and relevant. Further support comes from studies by Rachmaningtyas and Surianto (2022), Novianti (2020), and Ningsih and Putri (2020) which show that Celebrity Endorser positively and significantly influences purchase decisions.

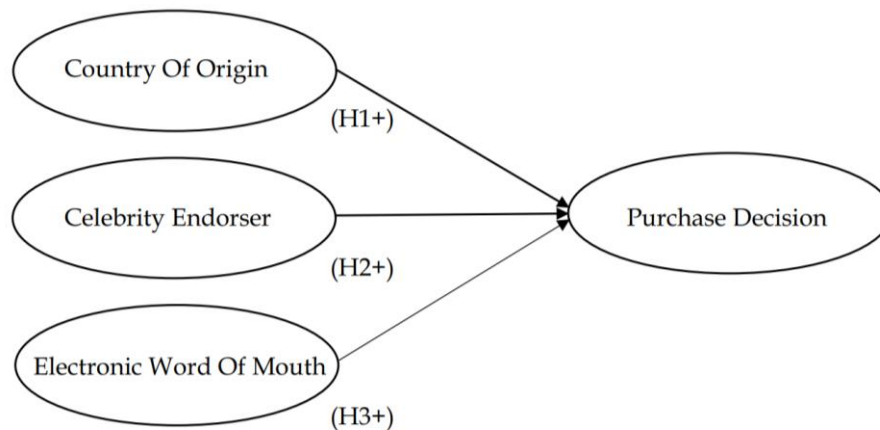
H2: Celebrity Endorser has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) refers to the positive or negative comments made by current, potential, or former customers (Yulindasari & Fikriyah, 2022). E-WOM refers to reviews or opinions shared by current, potential, or past customers about a product or company, which are accessible online to a broad audience, including institutions (Rumondang et al., 2020 in Fina et al., 2023). This communication can be either positive or negative from consumers with knowledge, honesty, or experience using the product or service.

E-WOM plays a key role in boosting sales for companies (Valentina et al., 2024). Positive comments and feedback from consumers via electronic media can attract more people to purchase the products offered. E-WOM has now become a main element in marketing strategies due to its significant impact on purchase decisions (Adawiyah, 2024). Research by Purba and Susilowati (2022), Wulandari and Panasea (2024), and Fraya (2023) shows that E-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions.

H3: Electronic Word Of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.



Source: Data Processed (2024)

Figure 2. Conceptual Model

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative approach was implemented with a limited scope, specifically targeting students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto who have used and purchased Innisfree skincare products. The population for this study consists of students who have purchased Innisfree products. Respondents were selected using non-probability purposive sampling techniques, based on specific criteria. The sample size was determined to ensure representativeness based on the estimated population and the research focus. The criteria for determining the sample were:

1. Active UMP students.
2. Have purchased Innisfree skincare products in the last six months.
3. Have seen a celebrity promoting Innisfree products.

The sample size for this study was calculated using the ten times rule formula, which stipulates a minimum sample size of ten times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2018). Data were gathered through a questionnaire featuring closed-ended statements, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale to measure levels of agreement, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." After data collection, the SEM-PLS method was employed to analyze the correlations between the variables.

RESEARCH RESULT

Respondent Characteristics

The analysis of respondent characteristics provides a detailed demographic overview of the 293 respondents, offering better insights into their backgrounds. The respondent characteristics are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Respondent Description

Characteristic	Category	Amount	Percentage
Age	18-20 years	150	51,2%
	21-23 years	136	46,4%
	24-26 years	7	2,4%
Gender	Female	237	80,9%
	Male	56	19,1%
Faculty	Faculty of Islamic Studies	11	3,8%

	Faculty of Economics and Business	41	14%
	Faculty of Pharmacy	17	5,8%
	Faculty of Law	12	4,1%
	Faculty of Humanities and Communication	6	2%
	Faculty of Health Sciences	42	14,3%
	Faculty of Medicine	6	2%
	Faculty of Teacher Training and Education	98	33,4%
	Faculty of Agriculture and Fisheries	14	4,8%
	Faculty of Psychology	20	6,8%
	Faculty of Engineering and Science	25	8,5%
	Postgraduate Program	1	0,3%
Allowance	< Rp 1.000.000	147	50,2%
	Rp 1.000.000 – Rp 2.000.000	127	43,3%
	> Rp 2.000 000	19	6,5%

The analysis of respondent characteristics reveals that the majority of participants in this study are between the ages of 18 and 20, representing Generation Z. This age group is highly influenced by trends and dynamic lifestyles and tends to actively seek product information through the internet and social media. They are also more open to the influence of celebrities or influencers in their purchasing decisions (Khairunnisa et al., 2024). The predominance of female respondents (80.9%) highlights a larger market potential among women, particularly in the context of skincare product purchases. Women are generally more aware of the importance of maintaining skin health and beauty (Inayatul Hayya et al., 2024).

The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education recorded the highest number of respondents, totaling 98 (33.4%), as it is the faculty with the largest student population at Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto. This provides insights into the educational background of respondents, which can influence their purchasing decisions. Most respondents reported having a monthly allowance of less than Rp 1,000,000, indicating the need to consider marketing strategies tailored to this group's purchasing power. According to Pusporini et al. (2022), marketing strategies are essential in shaping consumer purchasing decisions.

Evaluation of Measurement Model Validity Test

Convergent Validity is used to assess the validity of the indicators employed in measuring the variables. According to the general rule (rule of thumb), an indicator's loading factor (LF) value of ≥ 0.7 is considered valid. However, in the development of new models or indicators, LF values ranging from 0.5 to 0.6 are still deemed acceptable (Haryono, 2016). Outer loading refers to the value that represents the relationship (correlation) between an indicator and its latent variable. The outer loading results are presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Variables, Indicators, Factor Loadings Running 1, Factor Loadings Running 2, and Factor Loadings Running 3

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading Running 1	Factor Loading Running 2	Factor Loading Running 3
Country Of Origin (X1) (Mohd et al., 2007)	Brand X country of origin is innovative in manufacturing	0,724	0,739	0,738
	Brand X country of origin has high technological advancement	0,643	0,641	
	Brand X country of origin excels in design	0,664	0,674	0,674
	Brand X country of origin is creative in execution	0,642	0,644	0,674
	Brand X country of origin has high craftsmanship quality	0,590		
	Brand X country of origin is prestigious	0,674	0,670	0,697
	Brand X has an image of a developed country	0,762	0,766	0,769
Celebrity Endorser (X2) (Shimp, 2007)	Trustworthiness	0,679	0,733	0,723
	Expertise	0,701	0,704	0,693
	Physical Attractiveness	0,570		
	Respect	0,754	0,759	0,770
	Similiarity	0,720	0,720	0,728
Electronic Word Of Mouth (X3) (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011)	General persuasiveness	0,696	0,702	0,714
		0,700	0,696	0,724
	General credibility	0,697	0,699	0,715
		0,719	0,719	0,738
	Susceptibility to online product reviews	0,644	0,648	
Purchase Decision (Y) (Salem, 2018)	Identification	0,693	0,618	
		0,526		
	Attention	0,644	0,685	0,707
		0,715	0,746	0,778
	Comunication	0,726	0,742	0,760
		0,686	0,677	0,676
	Impact on attitudes	0,624	0,651	0,694
	0,424			

In the first round, some values did not meet the criteria, and the loading factor was <0.6 , indicating that the indicators had a low correlation with the latent variables. Therefore, a second round was conducted by eliminating the indicators (X1.5, X2.3, Y.2, and Y.8). In the third round, the indicators (X1.2, X3.5, and Y.1) were also eliminated to improve the average variance extracted. After the third round, the results showed that all indicators in this model were valid.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability
Country Of Origin	0,506	0,836
Celebrity Endorser	0,531	0,819
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0,508	0,838
Purchase Decision	0,524	0,846

The calculation of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) shows that the AVE values for all variables in this study COO (0.506), Celebrity Endorser (0.531), E-WOM (0.508), and Purchase Decision (0.524) exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5. This indicates that each latent variable explains more than 50% of the variance in its respective indicators.

Discriminant validity assesses whether each latent variable is conceptually distinct from others. A model demonstrates good discriminant validity when the correlation between a construct and its own measurement items is higher than its correlation with other constructs. The output from SmartPLS for the Fornell-Larcker values in the third round is presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	Country Of Origin	Celebrity Endorser	Electronic Word Of Mouth	Purchase Decision
Country Of Origin	0,711			
Celebrity Endorser	0,553	0,729		
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0,582	0,579	0,713	
Purchase Decision	0,463	0,474	0,565	0,724

The discriminant validity test, conducted using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, shows that the correlation of each latent variable with itself is higher than its correlation with other latent variables. This result confirms that the model satisfies the criteria for good discriminant validity.

Reliability Test

The evaluation of construct reliability is determined using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability values. For a construct to be considered reliable, the Cronbach’s Alpha value must meet or exceed 0.7. (Haryono, 2016).

Table 5. Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability
Country Of Origin	0,755	0,836
Celebrity Endorser	0,706	0,819
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0,758	0,838
Purchase Decision	0,772	0,846

Table 5 shows that the Cronbach’s Alpha values for all constructs are greater than 0.7, which allows us to conclude that the indicators are consistent in measuring their respective constructs.

Structural Model Test

The structural model, depicting the relationships among latent variables, is known as the inner model (Haryono, 2016). This evaluation involves R Square (R²) and direct effects. R Square measures the predictive accuracy of the regression model in explaining the variance of the dependent variable.

Table 6. R Square and F Square

	F Square	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Country Of Origin	0,020		
Celebrity Endorser	0,028		
Eelectronic Word Of Mouth	0,128		
Purchase Decision		0,364	0,357

Based on Table 6, the coefficient of determination (R²) for purchase decision (Y) is 0.364, indicating that 36.4% of the variance in purchase decisions is explained by the Country of Origin (COO), Celebrity Endorser, and E-WOM variables. The remaining 63.6% is attributable to other factors not included in this study. Referring to Haryono (2016), F-Square values are classified as small (≥ 0.02), medium (≥ 0.15), and large (≥ 0.35). The F-Square values reveal a small effect of COO (0.020), Celebrity Endorser (0.028), and E-WOM (0.128) on purchase decisions.

Hypothesis Testing

The t-statistics and p-values obtained through bootstrapping analysis are used to test the hypotheses. The criteria applied are t-statistics > 1.96 and p-value

< 0.05(Haryono, 2016). The SmartPLS output for the hypothesis testing bootstrapping analysis is presented in Table 7:

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Keterangan
<i>Country Of Origin -> Purchase Decision</i>	0,146	2,093	0,037	H1 accepted
<i>Celebrity Endorser -> Purchase Decision</i>	0,173	2,437	0,015	H2 accepted
<i>Eeectronic Word Of Mouth -> Purchase Decision</i>	0,380	5,561	0,000	H3 accepted

From Table 7, the hypotheses supported by the data are as follows: H1 is accepted with a t-statistic of 2.093, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.037, indicating statistical significance. Similarly, H2 is accepted with a t-statistic of 2.437 and a p-value of 0.015, meeting the criteria for significance. Lastly, H3 is confirmed with a t-statistic of 5.561 and a p-value of 0.000, demonstrating a highly significant result.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis results, several indicators did not show a strong correlation with the main variables in this study. In the COO variable, technological advancement and product quality from the brand's country of origin did not show significant correlations. This indicates that respondents' perceptions of factors such as advanced technology from South Korea and the high-quality standards of the country did not strongly influence their overall view of the COO. Next, in the celebrity endorser variable, the physical attractiveness of the celebrity also did not have a strong correlation. This suggests that the physical appearance of the celebrity is not the main factor influencing consumer evaluations, but rather factors such as the celebrity's trustworthiness and expertise had a greater impact.

In the e-WOM variable, consumers' concerns about missing online product reviews also did not show a strong correlation. Although consumers rely on information and reviews from other consumers, they did not feel concerned about missing out on reading online reviews before making a purchase decision. Furthermore, in the purchase decision variable, the influence of the brand name, product information availability, and product benefits on purchase decisions did not show a strong correlation. This indicates that these factors are not as influential as expected in affecting consumers' purchase decisions regarding the product under study.

The results of the testing revealed that COO positively and significantly influences the purchase decision of Innisfree products. This proves that the COO of Innisfree products, which are associated with high quality and innovation, has a positive effect. When consumers know that Innisfree products come from South

Korea, a country known for being advanced and creative in beauty products, they become more confident and assured in making their purchase decisions. According to the cognitive theory proposed by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), consumer perceptions and knowledge about a product are influenced by information obtained from direct experiences as well as external information sources, such as the reputation of the product's country of origin. In this case, the positive perception of consumers toward South Korean products plays a crucial role in shaping their knowledge about Innisfree products and affecting their purchase decisions. This finding is supported by Hidayat et al. (2024), who revealed that COO positively and significantly impacts consumers purchase decisions.

The results of the testing revealed that celebrity endorsers positively and significantly influence purchase decisions. This indicates that celebrity endorsers play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust in a product. According to the cognitive theory by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), consumer knowledge and perceptions of a product can be influenced by external information sources, such as the credibility and expertise of the celebrity endorser. This finding is supported by research Fadhila and Nurtantiono (2024), which also found that consumer purchase decisions are positively and significantly influenced by celebrity endorsers.

Based on the research findings, E-WOM positively and significantly influences purchase decisions. This result indicates that reviews and experiences shared by consumers through online platforms can impact their decision to purchase a product. According to the cognitive theory by Schiffman and Kanuk (2008), consumer knowledge and perceptions are formed through information obtained from various sources, including E-WOM, which serves as an external information source influencing attitude formation and purchase decisions. This finding is supported by Apriliani and Setyawati (2023), who revealed that E-WOM has an impact on purchase decisions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results and discussion conclude that Country of Origin (COO), celebrity endorsers, and E-WOM have a positive impact on consumer purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that perceptions of a product's origin, the credibility of celebrity endorsers, and the influence of information shared through E-WOM are pivotal in shaping consumers' decisions, especially regarding Innisfree products.

Considering the limitations of this study, it is recommended for future research to explicitly mention the celebrity endorsers used by Innisfree and to identify the E-WOM platforms utilized by respondents. Additionally, future studies should involve a more diverse sample to improve the generalization of the results. Further research could also explore other factors influencing purchase decisions, given the low R-squared, and expand the analysis to examine the impact of variables not discussed in this study.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the study does not explicitly mention which celebrity endorser of Innisfree is being referred to. Second, the E-WOM platforms used by the respondents in this study are not specified. Third, the sample used is homogeneous, consisting of university students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Fourth, the low R-squared value (36.4%) indicates that only a small portion of the variation in purchase decisions can be explained by the variables studied, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors not discussed in this research.

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