

ABSTRACT

The growth of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia is influenced by the increasing demand for beauty products. One of the factors contributing to this trend is the common issue faced by women, especially Gen Z, which is dull skin. One of the most purchased beauty products by Gen Z is facial serum. The aim of this research is to examine the influence of negative electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and variety seeking on brand switching behavior, with customer engagement as an intervening variable for Scarlett facial serum among Gen Z consumers.

This study employs a quantitative approach with descriptive and causal research methods. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling. Data collection is done through a questionnaire survey with 300 respondents who use Scarlett facial serum in Indonesia. Considering the respondents, the questionnaire distribution is conducted online. The collected data will be processed through tests of validity, reliability, model fit, and hypothesis testing. The data analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS for research data analysis.

The research findings indicate that: (1) negative E-WOM has a positive influence on brand switching behavior, (2) negative E-WOM has a negative influence on customer engagement, (3) variety seeking has a negative influence on customer engagement, (4) variety seeking has a positive influence on brand switching behavior, (5) customer engagement has a negative influence on brand switching behavior, (6) Variety seeking on brand switching behavior through customer engagement as an intervening variable has a positive influence, (7) negative E-WOM on brand switching behavior through customer engagement as an intervening variable also has a positive influence.

This research has implications for companies, including the need for Scarlett to enhance their brand image in response to negative E-WOM. This can be achieved by increasing positive online platform presence. The company should also continue to innovate by improving product quality and uniqueness. Additionally, understanding customer preferences and market trends is crucial for competition in a market with many similar products. Maintaining customer interactions can also keep Scarlett top of mind among customers, preventing them from switching to other brands. These actions are necessary to retain customer loyalty and prevent brand switching.

Keyword: *Negative E-WOM, Variety seeking, Customer Engagement, Brand Switching Behavior*