BEYOND VIRAL VISIBILITY: DIGITAL PERSUASION DRIVERS OF BEAUTY CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Bangun Prajadi Cipto Utomo [1*], Bella Mahdalena[2], Sharina Osman[3]
Magister Management Study Program, Faculty of Pascasarjana, Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta, Indonesia[1], Management Study Program, Faculty of Law and Business[2], Universitas Duta Bangsa Surakarta, Indonesia, Universiti Kualalumpur Business School, Malaysia[3]
*Correspondence Email: bangun_prajadi@udb.ac.id,; 220414044@mhs.udb.ac.id; sharina@unikl.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Short-video social commerce has compressed product discovery, peer evaluation, and purchase consideration into a single interface. This study examines how content marketing, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth shape purchase intention for local beauty-care products among users of a short-video shopping platform in Surakarta, Indonesia. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was administered to purposively selected users who had encountered or purchased the focal product through the platform. The instrument measured perceived content quality, brand salience, review-based social influence, and purchase intention. Multiple linear regression was applied after evaluating instrument quality and classical assumptions. The findings show that all three predictors exert positive and significant effects on purchase intention. Brand awareness is the strongest predictor, followed by content marketing and electronic word of mouth. The evidence indicates that social-commerce persuasion is not generated by entertaining content alone; it emerges when informative communication is reinforced by memorable brand cues and credible peer evaluations. The study extends social-commerce evidence from an emerging-market city and offers practical direction for beauty-care firms seeking to convert platform visibility into informed consumer interest.

KEYWORDS

social commerce; content marketing; brand awareness; electronic word of mouth; purchase intention

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

INTRODUCTION

Short-video social commerce has changed the architecture of consumer decision-making. Product discovery, entertainment, brand communication, peer evaluation, and transaction now occur inside the same scrolling environment. This compression reduces the distance between attention and action, yet purchase intention still depends on several persuasive signals operating together. Recent evidence shows that usefulness, ease of comprehension, entertainment, shared value, and trust can move short-video users toward purchase (Shen & Wang, 2024; Luo et al., 2025). Livestream studies likewise indicate that continued viewing and buying intention emerge from both cognitive evaluation and experience, not from exposure alone (Li et al., 2025; Zou & Fu, 2024).

Beauty-care products make this process especially demanding because consumers cannot fully verify suitability, texture, or performance from a screen. The category requires a bridge between what a seller communicates, what consumers remember, and what other users report. Studies of beauty vloggers show that expertise, credibility, parasocial interaction, and audience-brand congruence affect behavioural intention when the information is perceived as trustworthy and useful (Garg & Bakshi, 2024a, 2024b). Social-commerce effectiveness therefore cannot be explained by creator popularity or entertainment value alone.

Content marketing represents the brand-controlled part of that bridge. Effective content must present relevant, accurate, valuable, and intelligible product information rather than merely attract views. Argument quality, interactivity, perceived usefulness, and enjoyment can reinforce purchase intention, whereas intrusive or weakly substantiated communication can reduce it (Selem et al., 2023). Design cues can also trigger cognitive and affective responses that culminate in purchase intention (Wang et al., 2024). Brand awareness operates through another route: recognizable and recallable cues lower search costs and keep a product inside the consideration set. Consistent brand identity and social-media activity can strengthen brand equity and future behavioural intentions (Acar et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2024; K & Menon, 2026).

Electronic word of mouth supplies the consumer-generated side of persuasion. Reviews, comments, recommendations, demonstrations, and negative warnings provide social evidence that may reduce ambiguity and reveal usage experiences. Studies of digital recommendation networks show that value, satisfaction, and relational context shape how consumers create and use e-WOM (Meenakshy et al., 2024). In beauty-influencer settings, source credibility and argument quality also determine perceived information credibility, attitudes, and purchase intention (Javed et al., 2024). Peer communication should therefore matter not only because opinions are available, but because consumers regard them as diagnostic.

The recent literature remains fragmented. Some studies emphasize influencer authenticity, credibility, homophily, engagement, or impulse buying (Gu & Duan, 2024; Liu & Zheng, 2024; Shamim & Azam, 2024). Others focus on information seeking, social satisfaction, youth consumption, and expertise-based trust (Ali et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025; Yao et al., 2025; Thanh et al., 2026). These perspectives explain important psychological mechanisms, but they do not establish the relative contribution of three basic persuasion assets within a single parsimonious model: owned content, brand memory, and peer communication.

The present study addresses that gap among users of a short-video shopping platform in Surakarta, an emerging Indonesian city. A leading local skincare brand served as the focal stimulus in the original survey; its commercial identity is omitted from the title and narrative to maintain a non-promotional analytical focus. Content marketing is treated

as an informational cue, brand awareness as cognitive availability, and e-WOM as social validation. Purchase intention captures the stated tendency to try, recommend, prefer, or seek further information about the focal product. The framework tests the independent and joint effects of the three predictors and compares their standardized contributions.

H1: Content marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
H2: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
H3: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.
H4: Content marketing, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth jointly have a significant effect on purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHOD

A quantitative cross-sectional design was used to estimate the effects of three digital-marketing variables on purchase intention. The target population comprised short-video platform users living in Surakarta who had seen promotional content for, knew, or had purchased the focal local skincare product through the platform's shopping feature. The population covered the five districts of Laweyan, Serengan, Pasar Kliwon, Jebres, and Banjarsari. Because the population size was unknown, the Lemeshow formula was applied at a ninety-five percent confidence level, with a conservative population proportion and a ten percent margin of error. The calculation produced a minimum of ninety-six respondents and was rounded to one hundred usable responses.

Non-probability purposive sampling was applied. Eligible respondents had to live in Surakarta and be familiar with, or have purchased, the focal product through the short-video shopping platform. Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Content marketing was measured through perceived relevance, clarity and accuracy, usefulness, and ease of understanding. Brand awareness covered recall, recognition, purchase consideration, and perceived suitability. Electronic word of mouth captured review-search intensity, informational value, positive opinions, and consideration of negative opinions. Purchase intention covered transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory tendencies.

Data analysis was conducted with SPSS Statistics 25. The procedure comprised respondent profiling, descriptive statistics, item-total validity testing, internal-consistency assessment, normality testing, multicollinearity diagnostics, the Glejser test for heteroskedasticity, multiple linear regression, partial t-tests, the simultaneous F-test, and the coefficient of determination. Statistical significance was evaluated at the five percent level. The analysis reports the regression constant directly from the SPSS coefficient table and uses the construct mean shown in the descriptive table; this resolves numerical inconsistencies found in the longer thesis narrative without altering the underlying dataset.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The sample was strongly concentrated among young digital consumers. Women represented eighty-one percent of respondents, the eighteen-to-twenty-two age group represented sixty-nine percent, and students represented seventy-five percent. The largest district group came from Banjarsari, while almost half of respondents reported monthly income below two million rupiah. This profile is consistent with a beauty-care and short-video context, but it also narrows the population to which the estimates can be generalized.

Table 1. Respondent profile and construct diagnostics

Indicator	Category / construct	Value	Interpretation
Gender	Female	81%	Dominant group
Age	18-22 years	69%	Dominant group
Occupation	Student	75%	Dominant group
Income	Below IDR 2 million	46%	Largest group
Content marketing	Mean / alpha	4.29 / .641	Very high / moderate
Brand awareness	Mean / alpha	4.20 / .650	Very high / moderate
Electronic word of mouth	Mean / alpha	4.32 / .677	Very high / moderate
Purchase intention	Mean / alpha	4.21 / .651	Very high / moderate

Note. All item-total correlations exceeded .1966 and were significant at p < .001. Alpha values above .60 are interpreted as acceptable for exploratory analysis, but they also signal a need for scale refinement in subsequent studies.

The construct means ranged from 4.20 to 4.32, indicating consistently favourable perceptions. Electronic word of mouth recorded the highest descriptive mean, followed by content marketing, purchase intention, and brand awareness. The descriptive pattern suggests that respondents actively consulted reviews and perceived the focal content as useful. Nevertheless, the internal-consistency coefficients ranged only from .641 to .677. These values are usable for an exploratory model with short four-item scales, but they do not justify claims of strong reliability. A future international study should expand the item pools, conduct confirmatory factor analysis, and examine convergent and discriminant validity before testing structural relationships.

Table 2. Classical-assumption diagnostics

Diagnostic	Content marketing	Brand awareness	Electronic word of mouth
Tolerance	.610	.638	.789
VIF	1.640	1.568	1.268
Glejser p-value	.351	.359	.071

Note. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov residual test was non-significant (p = .176). All tolerance values exceeded .10, all VIF values were below 10, and all Glejser probabilities exceeded .05.

The diagnostic tests support the use of ordinary least squares regression. Residuals met the normality criterion, the predictors did not display problematic multicollinearity, and the Glejser results did not indicate heteroskedasticity. The e-WOM Glejser probability was comparatively close to the threshold, but it remained above the stated significance level. These results allow the regression coefficients to be interpreted without evidence of major classical-assumption violations.

Table 3. Multiple regression and hypothesis tests

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p	Decision
Constant	2.587	1.727	-	1.499	.137	-
Content marketing	.262	.111	.231	2.357	.020	H1 supported
Brand awareness	.359	.093	.370	3.862	<.001	H2 supported
Electronic word of mouth	.216	.089	.210	2.438	.017	H3 supported

Note. $F(3, 96) = 24.791$, $p < .001$; $R = .661$; $R^2 = .437$; adjusted $R^2 = .419$; standard error of the estimate = 1.492. H4 was supported.

The overall model was statistically significant and explained 43.7 percent of the variance in purchase intention. This level of explanatory power is meaningful for a compact behavioural model because it combines only three predictors. At the same time, the unexplained 56.3 percent confirms that price, perceived product quality, trust, influencer

credibility, platform convenience, risk, and prior experience remain important omitted mechanisms. The result should therefore be interpreted as evidence of substantial contribution rather than a complete explanation of buying intention.

Content marketing had a positive effect on purchase intention (B = .262, beta = .231, p = .020), supporting H1. Respondents were more willing to consider the product when platform content was relevant, accurate, useful, and easy to understand. The finding is consistent with the view that argument quality and perceived usefulness reduce uncertainty in digital environments (Selem et al., 2023). It also supports recent short-video evidence showing that useful, accessible, and entertaining content affects purchase intention directly and indirectly through trust (Luo et al., 2025). Shen and Wang (2024) similarly show that short-video perception creates purchase intention through shared value, while Wang et al. (2024) demonstrate that carefully designed product cues can trigger cognitive and affective responses. Content is therefore most persuasive when it helps consumers evaluate the product, not merely when it maximizes exposure.

Brand awareness produced the largest standardized effect (B = .359, beta = .370, p < .001), supporting H2. This result identifies mental availability as the strongest of the three persuasion assets. Consistent brand cues appear to make the focal product easier to recall, recognize, and include in the purchase consideration set. The finding aligns with research linking brand identity and satisfaction to future behavioural intention (Acar et al., 2024) and with evidence that social-media marketing activities build brand equity and subsequent reuse intention (Lin et al., 2024). K and Menon (2026) further show that social media and brand recall strengthen the path from brand recognition to consumer attitude and buying behaviour. The practical implication is clear: frequent content without stable brand codes may create views but fail to create memory.

Electronic word of mouth also had a positive effect (B = .216, beta = .210, p = .017), supporting H3. Reviews and comments supplied social validation and helped respondents judge claims that could not be verified directly online. The finding is compatible with e-WOM research showing that value, satisfaction, and network context motivate digital recommendation behaviour (Meenakshy et al., 2024). It also agrees with Javed et al. (2024), who found that source credibility and argument quality increase perceived information credibility, favourable attitudes, and purchase intention in a beauty-influencer setting. The lower standardized coefficient relative to brand awareness does not mean that reviews are unimportant. Rather, it suggests that peer communication works most effectively after the brand has become cognitively accessible.

The simultaneous effect supports H4 and reveals a layered persuasion process. Content explains the product, brand awareness keeps the option mentally available, and e-WOM legitimizes the option through other consumers' experiences. This interpretation extends influencer-focused findings. Liu and Zheng (2024) show that informative value, authenticity, and homophily shape brand credibility and purchase intention through parasocial relationships. Garg and Bakshi (2024a, 2024b) demonstrate that beauty-vlogger interaction, expertise, attractiveness, trust, and audience congruence influence behavioural outcomes. Gu and Duan (2024) emphasize engagement motives, while Shamim and Azam (2024) show that communication credibility builds trust and can stimulate impulsive buying. The present model indicates that brands still need basic informational and memory structures even when influencer communication is prominent.

The evidence also contributes to emerging-market research by showing that young consumers in a secondary Indonesian city respond to the same broad mechanisms identified internationally, but with brand awareness occupying the leading position. Wang et al. (2025) explain that platform visibility and engagement affordances encourage information seeking and affective relationship building, which then support purchase intention. Yao et

al. (2025) highlight the mediating role of social satisfaction and the importance of product knowledge. Ali et al. (2025) show that authenticity and self-expansion shape brand attitudes among young consumers, whereas Thanh et al. (2026) find that expertise and trustworthiness matter more than superficial attractiveness. Together, these studies reinforce a human-centred conclusion: consumers are not passive recipients of viral communication; they compare information, memory, credibility, and personal relevance before expressing purchase intention.

Managerially, the coefficient hierarchy suggests a sequenced strategy. First, establish distinctive brand assets that remain stable across videos, creator collaborations, captions, packaging views, and shopping pages. Second, produce content that answers concrete consumer questions about ingredients, suitability, usage, benefits, and limitations. Third, cultivate authentic e-WOM by facilitating verified reviews, responding transparently to criticism, and avoiding scripts that make peer communication appear manufactured. The goal is not to eliminate entertainment, but to connect entertainment to useful information, recognizable brand codes, and credible user experience.

CONCLUSION

Digital persuasion in short-video social commerce operates through a combination of owned communication, brand memory, and peer-generated evidence. Content marketing, brand awareness, and electronic word of mouth each had a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, and the three variables jointly produced a significant model. Brand awareness was the strongest predictor, followed by content marketing and electronic word of mouth. The central scientific finding is therefore not simply that digital marketing matters, but that mental availability provides the most powerful conversion mechanism when informative content and credible social evidence are considered simultaneously.

The findings support a practical shift from a view-centred strategy to a memory-and-evidence strategy. Beauty-care firms should maintain distinctive brand cues, create useful and comprehensible product communication, and protect the authenticity of consumer reviews. Viral reach has limited value when audiences cannot remember the brand, understand the offer, or trust the surrounding conversation.

Several limitations require caution. The study used a cross-sectional purposive sample of one hundred respondents from one city, with a heavy concentration of women, students, and young adults. The four-item scales produced moderate rather than strong internal consistency, and the model did not include trust, price, product quality, influencer credibility, or platform affordances. Future research should use probability-based or multi-city samples, refine the measurement scales through confirmatory analysis, examine mediation and moderation, and compare different product categories and national contexts. Longitudinal or experimental designs would also clarify whether purchase intention generated by short-video exposure becomes actual purchasing behaviour.

REFERENCES

Acar, A., Büyükdağ, N., Türten, B., Diker, E., & Çalışır, G. (2024). The role of brand identity, brand lifestyle congruence, and brand satisfaction on repurchase intention: A multi-group structural equation model. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1102. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03618-w

Ali, S., Yawar, R. B., Ali, S., Saif, N., Goh, G. G. G., & Khan, F. (2025). From memes to motivation: Understanding how social media influencers drive youth consumption.

Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12, Article 1907. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-06166-z

Garg, M., & Bakshi, A. (2024a). Exploring the effects of audience and strategies used by beauty vloggers on behavioural intention towards endorsed brands. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 621. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03133-y

Garg, M., & Bakshi, A. (2024b). Exploring the impact of beauty vloggers' credible attributes, parasocial interaction, and trust on consumer purchase intention in influencer marketing. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 235. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02760-9

Gu, C., & Duan, Q. (2024). Exploring the dynamics of consumer engagement in social media influencer marketing: From the self-determination theory perspective. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 587. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03127-w

Javed, S., Rashidin, M. S., & Jian, W. (2024). Effects of heuristic and systematic cues on perceived content credibility of Sina Weibo influencers: The moderating role of involvement. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1635. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04107-w

K, A., & Menon, R. B. (2026). Brand recognition and consumer buying behaviour of FMCG in cause-related marketing: Social media and brand recall as moderators. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-026-07284-y

Li, P., Spence, C., & Wu, C. (2025). What motivate consumers' purchase intention and the intention to continue watching in livestream shopping. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12*, Article 1061. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-05363-0

Lin, X., Al Mamun, A., Masukujjaman, M., & Yang, Q. (2024). Unveiling the effect of social media marketing activities on logistics brand equity and reuse intention. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1474. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04022-0

Liu, X., & Zheng, X. (2024). The persuasive power of social media influencers in brand credibility and purchase intention. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 15. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02512-1

Luo, C., Hasan, N. A. M., Ahmad, A. M. Z. B., & Lei, G. (2025). Influence of short video content on consumers purchase intentions on social media platforms with trust as a mediator. *Scientific Reports, 15*, Article 16605. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-94994-z

Meenakshy, M., Prasad, K. D. V., Bolar, K., & Shyamsunder, C. (2024). Electronic word-of-mouth intentions in personal and public networks: A domestic tourist perspective. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1226. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03753-4

Selem, K. M., Shoukat, M. H., Shah, S. A., & de Brito Silva, M. J. (2023). The dual effect of digital communication reinforcement drivers on purchase intention in the social commerce environment. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 10*, Article 47. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01539-8

Shamim, K., & Azam, M. (2024). The power of social media influencers: Unveiling the impact on consumers' impulse buying behaviour. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1461. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03796-7

Shen, X., & Wang, J. (2024). How short video marketing influences purchase intention in social commerce: The role of users' persona perception, shared values, and

individual-level factors. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 290. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02808-w

Thanh, N. N. D., Nhung, N. N. M., Tran, T. N. B., Vy, C. N. P., Nhi, N. H. Y., & Thu, L. A. (2026). Substance over superficiality: How influencer credibility attributes drive social commerce purchase intentions of Vietnamese youth. *Scientific Reports, 16*, Article 20920. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-026-52043-3

Wang, F., Wang, K., Han, Y., & Cho, J. H. (2024). Influences of design-driven FMCG on consumers' purchase intentions: A test of the S-O-R model. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 852. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03362-1

Wang, R., Chan-Olmsted, S., & Zhou, Q. (2025). Information seeking and affective relationship building in influencer marketing: The role of social media affordances. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 12*, Article 557. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-025-04882-0

Yao, Y., Meng, D., & Wei, X. (2025). Empirical analysis of influencer attributes and social satisfaction effects on purchase intentions in Chinese social media. *Scientific Reports, 15*, Article 18860. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-03336-6

Zou, J., & Fu, X. (2024). Understanding purchase intention in live streaming from the perspective of social image. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 11*, Article 1500. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-04054-6