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The Influence of Overclaim, Product Quality Perception, and Influencers on Customer Trust in the Marketing of Local Skincare Products

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Abstract

The practice of overclaim in the marketing of local skincare products has intensified alongside increased social media promotion and influencer involvement, potentially undermining customer trust. This study analyzes the effects of overclaim, product quality perception, and the role of influencers on customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. An associative quantitative design was employed in 2025 in Medan, North Sumatra, with a purposive sample of 100 users of local skincare products. Data were collected via a closed-ended questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression with SPSS. Results indicate that overclaim exerts a significant negative effect on customer trust, while product quality perception and the role of influencers exert significant positive effects. Simultaneously, the three variables significantly explain variation in customer trust, with the role of influencers emerging as the most dominant predictor. The study's novelty lies in integrating overclaim, product quality perception, and influencers into a single empirical model within the context of local skincare products affected by viral social media dynamics. Practical implications include the need for producers to reduce overclaim and strengthen empirical evidence of product quality in promotional activities, for regulators to tighten oversight of advertising claims, and for future research to examine mediation or moderation mechanisms such as influencer credibility and consumer characteristics.

Keywords: *Overclaim; Product Quality Perception; Influencer; Customer Trust; Local Skincare*

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Introduction

Data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) indicate that Indonesia's domestic skincare industry subsector has experienced notable growth in recent years, driven by rising demand for personal care products, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, reports from Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan (BPOM) show an annual increase in local cosmetic product notifications, which reflects the growing number of market entrants in the national skincare sector. This expansion is visible in the emergence of numerous local brands offering diverse product innovations, making competition in the skincare industry increasingly intense (BPOM RI, 2023; BPS RI, 2023).

Heightened competition has prompted local skincare producers to adopt various marketing strategies to capture consumer attention. One frequently used tactic is overclaim, marketing assertions that exaggerate a product's benefits or that are not fully consistent with the product's actual properties and functions (Harahap et al., 2023). Such strategies are typically employed to shape positive perceptions and stimulate purchase intent, especially through social media promotions and collaborations with influencers. However, overclaims that lack scientific backing can erode customer trust over the long term.

The overclaim phenomenon affects not only consumers' perceptions of individual brands but can also undermine public trust in the overall quality of local skincare products. In recent years the number of firms in the cosmetics industry rose sharply, with reports indicating growth of dozens of percent between 2021 and 2023, reflecting an influx of new brands and intensified market competition (BPS RI, 2023). This growth is also mirrored by an increase in cosmetic product notifications processed by regulatory authorities, resulting in more products and novel marketing claims circulating on online platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Public debates and independent reviews (for example, educational TikTok content that examines the consistency between promotional claims and scientific evidence) illustrate how promotional claims may spark controversy and raise questions about the alignment between product claims and real-world outcomes (Sofia, 2024).

From a normative perspective, marketing practices that include exaggerated claims contravene the principles of honesty and transparency enshrined in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection. That legislation affirms consumers' rights to accurate, clear, and honest information about goods and services and imposes obligations on businesses to avoid misleading information (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 1999 tentang Perlindungan Konsumen, 1999). Consequently, regulation and oversight of product claims are essential instruments for protecting consumers from potentially harmful marketing practices. In the cosmetics sector, the regulatory authority regularly issues reports and takes enforcement actions against products or claims that violate applicable rules (BPOM RI, 2023).

Laboratory tests and independent reviews shared via social media have indicated that a number of local skincare products appear to engage in overclaim. Brands that have previously attracted scrutiny include Daviena Skincare, Sella Saukia (SS Skin), Maryame, DRL (Tomato White), Azharine, Elshe Skin, Glafidsya, AEF Beauty, and MH Cosmetic (Isabella et al., 2025). These findings reinforce the perception that not all manufacturer claims are fully trustworthy. A well-known example is Daviena Skincare, which was

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promoted heavily on social media with assertions of dramatic skin improvements in just a few days (Amelia et al., 2022). That product's marketing relied on endorsements, displays of affluence (*flexing*), and personal influencer content to boost brand visibility, yet some users reported outcomes that did not match the claims and even experienced side effects such as irritation and breakouts.

Despite clearly articulated regulations for cosmetic products in Indonesia—both under the Consumer Protection Law and various BPOM rules—excessive marketing claims remain prevalent, suggesting gaps in regulatory enforcement (Sari & Nugroho, 2023). On the other hand, several local skincare brands have been found not to engage in overclaiming based on laboratory tests and independent reviews; examples include Scarlett Whitening, Wardah, Hanasui, Somethinc, Emina, Avoskin, Whitelab, N'Pure, Ms Glow, The Originote, Viva Cosmetic, and Purbasari. The existence of these brands demonstrates that honest, quality-oriented marketing can still build sustainable consumer trust.

Table 1. Examples of Local Skincare Products Based on Overclaim Findings

Category	Brand
Indicated as Overclaim	Daviena, SS Skin, Maryame, DRL, Elshe Skin
Not Indicated as Overclaim	Wardah, Somethinc, Avoskin, Whitelab, Emina

Source: *Processed from Dokter Detektif reviews (2024).*
Link: *https://goodstats.id/article/dokter-detektif-tiktok-bongkar-klaim-kandungan-skincare-yang-berlebihan-ooNZc*

In the era of social media, consumer evaluations of products no longer rely solely on brand image, but are increasingly shaped by perceptions of product quality, other users' experiences, and the credibility of influencers who disseminate information. Product quality serves as a primary determinant of consumer trust because it is directly associated with perceived usage outcomes. Companies are therefore required to carefully understand consumer needs and expectations not merely through promotional narratives, but through consistent and verifiable demonstrations of product quality. Social media plays a strategic role in exposing discrepancies between marketing claims and actual product performance, particularly when content becomes viral and attracts widespread public attention (Husniyah et al., 2025).

Within the domain of digital marketing, customer trust represents a central element determining the success of skincare products in the marketplace. Trust is not formed solely through brand image, but is also influenced by the quality of information conveyed, the credibility of promotional sources, and the congruence between marketing claims and the actual condition of the product. Numerous studies have demonstrated that influencers occupy a strategic position in building trust and stimulating purchase intentions through credibility, expertise, and honesty in product communication (Saima & Khan, 2021; Weismueller et al., 2020). Influencers perceived as highly credible are also able to strengthen emotional bonds with their audiences, thereby contributing to increased loyalty and more favorable purchase decisions (Alcántara-Pilar et al., 2024).

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Nevertheless, the effectiveness of influencer-based promotion is highly contingent upon transparency and the accuracy of claims communicated to the public. Marketing activities involving overclaim practices may weaken consumer trust and generate skepticism, particularly when such claims are not supported by scientific evidence or accountable laboratory testing results (Awalin & Hutabarat, 2021). Previous research further indicates that exaggerated claims in skincare products not only affect consumer perceptions of product quality but also pose risks of economic loss and adverse health effects (Amina & Tarina, 2025).

Beyond promotional factors, consumers' perceptions of product quality function as a fundamental component in the development of trust. Evaluations of quality are generally formed through direct usage experience, perceived safety of product ingredients, and the consistency of benefits obtained over time. When products demonstrate stable quality and align with consumer expectations, trust in the brand tends to increase sustainably. Conversely, when product quality fails to correspond with claims promoted by influencers, customer trust declines significantly (Sesar et al., 2022). Accordingly, the integration of transparent claims, reliable product quality, and credible influencer involvement is essential for fostering long-term customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products.

Previous studies have identified several determinants influencing consumer trust and purchasing decisions. Aslami et al. (2022) found that trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, although under certain conditions it does not consistently function as a mediating variable between perceived ease of use and perceived risk (Aslami et al., 2022). Other findings reveal that overclaim practices in skincare products contribute to declining levels of consumer trust and conflict with consumer protection principles (Sari & Nugroho, 2023). Furthermore, the use of skincare products not registered with the national regulatory authority is perceived as risky, negatively affecting consumer trust due to concerns regarding product safety (Amelia et al., 2022).

Studies focusing on product quality and influencer involvement demonstrate relatively consistent patterns in explaining consumer behavior within the skincare industry. Edji and Tambunan (2025) reported that product characteristics, including quality and perceived safety, exert a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. These findings align with Adawiyah et al. (2022), who emphasized that product quality and the use of celebrity endorsers significantly contribute to skincare purchase decisions (Adawiyah et al., 2022; Edji & Tambunan, 2025). Moreover, the presence of educational influencers has been shown to enhance consumer trust through the delivery of credible, objective, and knowledge-based information. Additional studies further reinforce that product quality strongly affects purchase intention and consumer satisfaction, which ultimately play a role in the formation of long-term trust (Nurbaiti & Nasution, 2024; Pangestika et al., 2023).

Despite the substantial contributions of prior research addressing product quality, influencer involvement, and consumer trust, several research gaps remain. First, studies examining overclaim practices in the skincare industry are predominantly normative and legal in nature, while quantitative investigations measuring the impact of overclaim on customer trust, particularly within the context of local skincare products, remain limited. Second, previous research tends to examine overclaim, product quality, and influencer

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variables separately, thereby failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of their interrelationships within a single empirical model. Third, most prior studies focus on international brands and do not fully incorporate viral social media phenomena, such as the role of educational influencers in exposing problematic products, as a critical context within contemporary digital culture. Additionally, few studies explicitly address the negative effects of overclaim on customer trust while linking these effects to regulatory perspectives and consumer protection frameworks.

Based on these issues and identified research gaps, the present study aims to examine the interrelationships among overclaim practices, consumer evaluations of product quality, and the role of influencers in shaping customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. Conceptually, this study is expected to enrich the marketing and consumer behavior literature by integrating marketing communication perspectives with consumer protection regulation. From an applied standpoint, the findings are anticipated to serve as a reference for producers in formulating more ethical and quality-oriented marketing critically evaluating product claims and to provide insights for regulators in strengthening oversight mechanisms for skincare marketing practices in Indonesia.

Literature Review

Customer Trust

In marketing scholarship, customer trust is regarded as a fundamental element, especially in sectors directly related to consumer health and safety, such as the skincare industry. Trust reflects consumers' confidence that a product or brand will deliver benefits consistent with expectations while minimizing potential harms. According to philip kotler and gary armstrong (2021), consumer trust forms through an ongoing evaluative process that compares perceived product performance to initial expectations: when performance meets or exceeds those expectations, trust tends to rise; conversely, discrepancies between marketing claims and actual outcomes can erode trust (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012).

Several studies demonstrate that trust plays a crucial role in driving purchase behavior. nuri aslami et al. (2022) report that high trust levels contribute positively and significantly to purchase intention. Consumers who trust a product are more likely to repurchase, recommend the product to others, and display stronger loyalty. In the context of skincare—where products are applied directly to the skin and may cause adverse effects if claims or safety standards are not met, the role of trust is especially critical (Aslami et al., 2022). Therefore, customer trust is built not only on emotional factors but also on rational considerations such as product safety, transparency of information, and regulatory compliance.

Overclaim in Skincare Marketing

Overclaim in marketing refers to communications that exaggerate a product's benefits or that are not fully supported by verifiable facts. The term denotes promotional claims that exceed the available empirical evidence and thus have the potential to mislead consumers. Linguistically, a claim is an assertion about a fact; overclaim therefore represents a disproportionate or unbalanced presentation between promotional statements and the product's factual reality. In other words, overclaim describes product benefit assertions that

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are inconsistent with the product's actual condition (Maguire, 2023; Sitompul & Soemitra, 2022).

In the skincare industry, overclaim often appears as promises of instant effect, for example, assertions of dramatic skin improvement within an implausibly short time frame, without adequate scientific support. Sari and Nugroho (2023) argue that such promotions can mislead consumers and contravene the principles of consumer protection embodied in Law No. 8 of 1999. When stated claims diverge from actual user outcomes, consumer trust tends to decline. Amelia et al. (2022) further reinforce that using unregistered skincare products or products accompanied by exaggerated claims can weaken consumer trust and increase risks to health and finances. In the long term, overclaim practices can threaten brand sustainability as consumers become more critical and selective (Amelia et al., 2022; Sari & Nugroho, 2023; Widyawati & Widodo, 2025).

Product Quality Perception

Product quality is a central determinant of consumer perception and trust, particularly for health-related items like skincare. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) define quality as a product's ability to perform expected functions, including durability, reliability, precision, and ease of use. For skincare, quality assessment extends beyond efficacy to include ingredient safety, consistency of results, and user comfort. wahdiyat moko (2021) describes quality as the set of product features that satisfy consumer needs and preferences, yielding functional satisfaction (Moko, 2021). Harinie (2023) reinforces this view, noting that quality concerns the fit between product specifications and buyer expectations; when user experience meets or exceeds expectations, consumer trust is likely to grow (Harinie, 2023).

Empirical studies consistently support a strong relationship between product quality and purchase intention as well as consumer satisfaction. Findings by Widya Pangestika et al. (2023) and Nurbaiti (2024) indicate a significant effect of product quality on purchase decisions and satisfaction. Harahap et al. (2023) also report that quality contributes to satisfaction, which in turn strengthens loyalty and customer trust. Thus, perceived quality functions as a key foundation for long-term relationships between skincare producers and consumers (Harahap et al., 2023; Nurbaiti & Nasution, 2024; Pangestika et al., 2023).

Influencers in Skincare Marketing

The rise of social media has substantially altered marketing communication, notably through influencer roles. andrew brown and nicholas hayes (2008) explain that influencers can affect consumer attitudes and behaviors because of their emotional proximity to audiences and the trust those audiences place in them. In the skincare sector, influencers are often primary reference points for consumers prior to purchase, particularly via online product reviews (Brown & Hayes, 2008).

Amanda and Aslami (2023) note that influencers play a vital role in communicating product merits and building consumer belief in offered benefits. isabella et al. (2025) add that educational influencers, especially those with scientific or professional backgrounds, can boost consumer trust by delivering objective, knowledge-based information. Nevertheless, influencer promotion carries risks when influencers endorse products with exaggerated claims without adequate verification (Isabella et al., 2025; Sufa & Aslami, 2023). In this context, influencers function not only as purchase triggers but also as trust-shaping agents:

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their credibility, honesty, and consistency determine whether their influence enhances or undermines customer trust.

Prior Studies: Overclaim, Product Quality Perception, and Influencer Effects on Customer Trust

A body of empirical research provides a solid foundation for the present study. Harahap et al. (2023) found that overclaim practices in social-media cosmetic promotions significantly reduce consumer trust, particularly when claims lack scientific evidence. Amelia et al. (2022) similarly report that unregistered products and exaggerated claims heighten perceived risk and lower repurchase intention. Aslami et al. (2022) underscore product quality as a strong predictor of trust and loyalty; high product quality can mitigate the negative effects of overclaim. Research on influencers yields nuanced results: Pangestika et al. (2023) and Isabella et al. (2025) show that an influencer's credibility and professional background determine whether their influence reinforces or weakens trust. Finally, Nurbaiti and Nasution (2024) demonstrate quantitatively that models integrating overclaim, perceived quality, and influencer roles explain a greater proportion of variance in customer trust than single-variable models. In summary, prior literature underscores the importance of testing these three variables simultaneously and considering influencer credibility and product-evidence as potential moderators or mediators.

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative correlational design aimed at testing relationships among variables. The independent variables were Overclaim (X1), product quality perception (X2), and the role of influencers (X3), while the dependent variable was customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products (Y). A quantitative approach was selected because it permits systematic numerical analysis of associations and possible causal linkages among variables (Arikunto, 2012; Etikan et al., 2016).

The research instrument was a structured, closed-ended questionnaire developed to measure four primary constructs: overclaim, product quality perception, influencer role, and customer trust. Each construct was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with items adapted and modified from prior studies (Likert, 1986). To ensure content validity, the questionnaire underwent expert judgment by two marketing academics and one cosmetics-regulation practitioner; items were revised according to their recommendations (Lynn, 1986).

A pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents from a comparable population to evaluate instrument reliability and factor structure. hinkin (1995). Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (Cronhbach, 1951). An alpha value of ≥ .70 was adopted as the acceptable threshold for basic research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Construct validity was examined through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to inspect item loadings on each dimension (Hair et al., 2019). All data pre-processing procedures, including normality tests and classical assumption checks, were performed in SPSS prior to the main analyses. These steps ensure that the instrument is fit for purpose and that measurement outcomes are reliable for hypothesis testing.

Because the total population of local skincare users is unknown and heterogeneous, the sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for unknown populations. cochran The formula used is:

$$N = \frac{z^2.p.q}{e^2} = \frac{(1,96)^2(0,5)(0,5)}{(0,1)^2} = 96,04$$

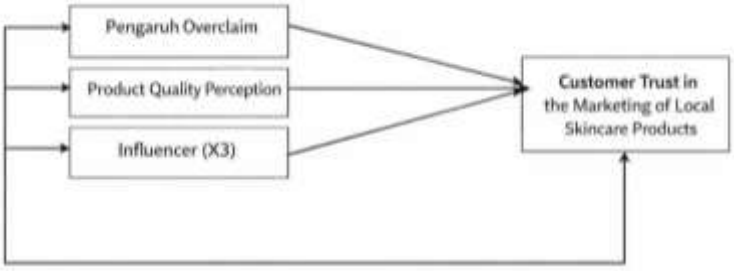
Where:

- N = initial sample size for a large or unknown population
- Z^2 = score corresponding to the chosen confidence level (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence)
- $Q = 1 - P$ = estimated proportion of the attribute in the population (use 0.5 when unknown to maximize sample size)
- e = desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion; e.g., 0.10 for ±10%)

Thus, Cochran's calculation yielded an initial requirement of 96.04 respondents (Cochran, 1977). To accommodate field conditions, anticipate non-response, and improve statistical power, the sample size was rounded up to 100 respondents (Hulley et al., 2013). Respondents were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique, i.e., selection based on inclusion criteria relevant to the study objectives. etikan et al. (2016). The inclusion criteria were: (1) age 18–50 years; (2) having used local skincare products actively for at least the past 3 months; (3) using the product at least once per week; and (4) active use of social media (as an information and promotion channel). These criteria ensured that respondents had sufficient real-world experience for their questionnaire responses to reflect authentic perceptions of product claims, quality, and influencer roles. Applying purposive sampling along with a modest upward rounding of sample size increases the likelihood of obtaining representative data for the phenomenon under study and helps to reduce selection bias inherent to non-probability designs.

The study's conceptual framework was formulated as a model that describes the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Overclaim, product quality perception, and influencer role were positioned as factors influencing customer trust in local skincare marketing. The model rests on the assumption that exaggerated marketing claims tend to reduce consumer trust, whereas positive product quality perceptions and credible influencer involvement tend to enhance trust. This framework underpinned hypothesis development and empirical testing via multiple linear regression analysis, enabling objective assessment of each independent variable's contribution to the formation of customer trust.

Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model



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The conceptual model depicts the causal relationships between three independent variables, Overclaim, Product Quality Perception, and Influencer Role, and the dependent variable, Customer Trust in local skincare marketing. Overclaim is hypothesized to exert a negative effect on customer trust due to mismatches between promotional promises and actual product outcomes. Product quality perception is expected to have a positive effect because perceived quality reflects a product's ability to meet expectations and reduce usage risk. The influencer role functions as a marketing communication channel that may either strengthen or weaken trust depending on the influencer's credibility, honesty, and competence in communicating product information. The model asserts that all three independent variables have direct effects, both individually (partial effects) and jointly (simultaneous effects), on customer trust and therefore serves as the basis for hypothesis specification and empirical testing using multiple linear regression.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the research data analysis and discusses the empirical findings derived from processing the questionnaire data. The discussion focuses on examining the effects of overclaim, product quality perception, and the role of influencers on customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. Prior to hypothesis testing, respondents' demographic characteristics are presented to provide a general overview of the profile of local skincare users who constitute the study sample. The analysis then proceeds with tests of instrument validity and reliability, classical assumption testing, and hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression (Hinkin, 1995).

The study involved 100 respondents who are users of local skincare products and reside in Medan City. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the productive age range of 18–30 years, reflecting a consumer group that is highly active in skincare usage and social media engagement. Regarding gender, the sample is dominated by female respondents, which is consistent with the characteristics of the skincare market, where women constitute the primary user base. From the perspective of usage frequency, most respondents reported using local skincare products at least once per week, indicating sufficient experience to evaluate product claims, perceived quality, and the influence of influencers in promotional activities. Moreover, all respondents are active social media users, particularly on Instagram and TikTok, which serve as the main platforms for skincare marketing. These characteristics indicate that the respondents are relevant and adequately representative for explaining the phenomenon under investigation.

Effect of Overclaim on Customer Trust

Validity and Reliability Test Results-Overclaim Variable

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the instrument used to measure the Overclaim variable was first examined for validity and reliability to ensure the appropriateness of the measurement tool. A summary of the validity test results is presented in Table 2. Based on the test results, all statement items measuring the Overclaim variable have calculated correlation coefficients (r observed) that exceed the critical r value (0.195). Therefore, all items are declared valid and suitable for use in subsequent analyses. These findings indicate

that the statement items are able to measure the Overclaim construct accurately and consistently.

Table 2. Validity Test Results for the Overclaim Variable (X1)

Statement Item	r critical (r table)	r observed (r)	Remark
X1.1	0.195	0.697	Valid
X1.2	0.195	0.772	Valid
X1.3	0.195	0.627	Valid
X1.4	0.195	0.703	Valid

Source: *SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).*

As shown in Table 2, each item has an r observed value greater than the r critical value (0.195). This condition indicates that all Overclaim indicators adequately represent the intended construct and are therefore considered valid for further analysis.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results for the Overclaim Variable (X1)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.658	4

Source: *SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).*

Next, a reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. The results show that Cronbach's Alpha was 0.658 (Table 3), indicating an acceptable level of reliability. With this value, the instrument measuring the Overclaim variable is considered sufficiently reliable and appropriate for use in subsequent stages of statistical analysis.

Regression and t-Test Results for the Overclaim Variable

The effect of Overclaim on customer trust was examined using multiple linear regression analysis. Partially, the influence of the Overclaim variable was tested through a t-test, and a summary of the statistical results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Partial Regression Test Results of Overclaim (X1) on Customer Trust

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	Sig.
Overclaim (X1)	−0.175	−2.101	0.038

Source: SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).

Based on Table 4, the Overclaim variable shows a negative regression coefficient of −0.175 with a significance level of 0.038, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This finding indicates a significant negative effect of overclaim practices on customer trust. In other words, an increase in the intensity of exaggerated claims in the marketing of local skincare products tends to reduce customer trust in those products.

Validity and Reliability Test Results for the Product Quality Perception Variable

Before analyzing the effect of product quality perception on customer trust, the research instrument was first evaluated through validity and reliability tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurements. A summary of the validity test results for the product quality perception variable is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Validity Test Results for the Product Quality Perception Variable (X2)

Statement Item	r critical (r table)	r observed (r)	Remark
X2.1	0.195	0.689	Valid
X2.2	0.195	0.625	Valid
X2.3	0.195	0.660	Valid
X2.4	0.195	0.813	Valid

Source: *SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).*

Based on Table 5, all statement items for the product quality perception variable show r observed values that exceed the r critical value of 0.195. These findings indicate that each indicator adequately represents the product quality perception construct; therefore, all items are declared valid and suitable for use as measurement instruments in this study.

The next step involved reliability testing to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability test results presented in Table 6 show a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.648. This value exceeds the minimum required threshold, indicating that the product quality perception instrument demonstrates an adequate level of reliability and is appropriate for use in subsequent statistical analyses.

Table 6. Reliability Test Results for the Product Quality Perception Variable (X2)

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.648	4

Source: *SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).*

Regression and t-Test Results for the Product Quality Perception Variable

The effect of product quality perception on customer trust was analyzed using multiple linear regression, and the partial test (t-test) for this variable is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Partial Regression Test Results of Product Quality Perception on Customer Trust

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-value	Sig.
Product Quality Perception (X2)	0.182	2.249	0.027

Source: *SPSS 26.0 output, processed (2025).*

The analysis results indicate a regression coefficient of 0.182, with a t-value of 2.249 and a significance level of 0.027 ($p < 0.05$). These findings suggest that product quality perception has a positive and significant effect on customer trust. In other words, the more favorable consumers' evaluations of local skincare product quality, the higher their tendency to place trust in those products.

Effect of Overclaim on Customer Trust

The Effect of Overclaim on Customer Trust

The findings of this study indicate that the practice of exaggerated claims (overclaim) has a negative and significant effect on customer trust. This result suggests that the higher the level of overclaim perceived by consumers, the lower their trust in local skincare products.

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This condition reflects an increasing tendency among consumers to critically evaluate the consistency between promotional claims and the actual outcomes experienced during product use. When marketing claims are not empirically substantiated, consumers are more likely to experience dissatisfaction, which ultimately leads to a decline in trust toward both the brand and the promoted product.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding is consistent with the framework proposed by Kotler and Armstrong (2012), which asserts that discrepancies between expectations formed through promotional messages and perceived product performance may trigger dissatisfaction and erode consumer trust (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). In the context of skincare products, claims of instant benefits that are not supported by adequate scientific evidence have the potential to create excessively high expectations. When these expectations are not fulfilled, customer trust in both the product and the brand is eroded (Widya et al., 2022).

The findings of this study are also consistent with the empirical evidence reported by Sari and Nugroho (2023), who demonstrate that overclaim practices in skincare marketing contradict consumer protection principles and negatively affect brand credibility. Damzuri and Mulyana (2024) further emphasize that the growing number of viral overclaim cases on social media, including educational content disseminated by accounts such as Dokter Detektif, has heightened public vigilance toward misleading product claims. This condition strengthens consumer awareness and discourages the uncritical acceptance of promotional messages, thereby increasing the likelihood that overclaim practices will significantly undermine customer trust (Damzuri & Mulyana, 2024; Isabella et al., 2025; Sari & Nugroho, 2023).

Based on the statistical test results and the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that marketing strategies relying on exaggerated claims are not only ineffective but also pose a risk to long-term relationships between producers and consumers. Accordingly, local skincare producers are advised to prioritize transparency and the alignment of marketing claims with empirical evidence as key strategies for maintaining and enhancing customer trust.

The Effect of Product Quality Perception on Customer Trust

The findings of this study indicate that product quality perception plays a crucial role in shaping customer trust in local skincare products. Consumers tend to place higher levels of trust in products that are perceived as safe in terms of composition, consistent in delivering results, and comfortable to use. Such perceptions are formed through direct usage experience, information regarding product ingredients, and reviews from other users, which collectively help consumers assess a product's reliability.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding is consistent with the view of Kotler and Armstrong (2012), who argue that product quality reflects a product's ability to perform its functions in accordance with consumer expectations. When a product meets or exceeds these expectations, consumer trust in the product is likely to increase. This perspective is further supported by Harinie (2023) and Moko (2021), who emphasize that alignment between product quality and buyer expectations constitutes the foundation for trust formation in the relationship between consumers and producers.

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The present findings are also consistent with prior empirical studies demonstrating a positive effect of product quality on customer trust. Harahap et al. (2023) found that product quality contributes significantly to increased consumer trust and loyalty. Similar conclusions were reported by Nurbaiti and Nasution (2024), who identified perceived quality as a dominant factor in building trust, even amid intense promotional competition. In addition, Pangestika et al. (2023) emphasize that product quality can enhance the effectiveness of marketing communication in fostering consumer trust in skincare products. Furthermore, other studies suggest that product quality perception not only has a direct effect on trust but also serves to reduce perceived uncertainty and consumer risk. Aslami et al. (2022) note that positively perceived product quality enhances consumers' sense of security and strengthens brand confidence, particularly for health-related and personal care products. The findings of Widya et al. (2022) similarly indicate that congruence between product quality and communicated claims simultaneously increases consumer trust and satisfaction.

Nevertheless, the results of this study also suggest that product quality perception does not operate in isolation. In marketing practice, other factors, such as exaggerated promotional claims, influencer credibility, and brand reputation, may either reinforce or undermine customer trust. Therefore, efforts to maintain and improve product quality should be accompanied by honest, transparent, and accountable communication to ensure that customer trust is sustained and developed over the long term.

Effect of Influencers on Customer Trust

The empirical analysis demonstrates that the Influencer variable has a positive and significant effect on customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. This is reflected in a regression coefficient of 0.364 with a significance level of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold. Compared with the other independent variables, the influence of Influencers is the strongest, indicating that Influencers serve as the dominant factor in enhancing consumer trust.

These findings reflect contemporary digital marketing dynamics, in which Influencers function not merely as promotional agents but also as opinion leaders who shape consumer beliefs and attitudes. In practice, many users of local skincare products rely heavily on Influencer content as a primary reference before making product usage decisions. Information conveyed through social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram is often perceived as more authentic and persuasive than conventional advertising, as it is grounded in personal experience and supported by emotional proximity between Influencers and their followers (Cahyana et al., 2024).

The results of this study are consistent with the perspective of Brown and Hayes (2008), who argue that the effectiveness of Influencers lies in their ability to establish emotional connections and trust with audiences. These findings also support the work of Amanda and Aslami (2023), which emphasizes the strategic role of Influencers in promotional processes and consumer decision-making. Furthermore, Isabella et al. (2025) demonstrate that Influencers who adopt an educational approach and communicate information based on

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facts and knowledge can significantly enhance consumer trust. Thus, Influencers function not only as conveyors of marketing messages but also as information sources that help consumers understand product safety and effectiveness.

Nevertheless, the influence of Influencers on customer trust is not absolute. Trust levels are strongly shaped by the credibility of the Influencers themselves. Influencers who are found to promote problematic products or disseminate exaggerated claims tend to lose the trust of their followers (Cahyana et al., 2024). This condition indicates that consumers are becoming increasingly critical and selective in evaluating promotional information and are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages.

Based on these findings, the present study confirms that Influencers play a very strong role in shaping customer trust toward local skincare products. Therefore, producers should be more selective in choosing Influencers who possess integrity, sufficient product knowledge, and alignment with brand values, so that customer trust can be built and maintained sustainably.

Simultaneous Effects of Overclaim, Product Quality Perception, and Influencers on Customer Trust

The results of the simultaneous testing reveal that overclaim practices, product quality perception, and the role of Influencers collectively exert a significant effect on customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. This finding indicates that consumer trust is not shaped by a single factor but rather emerges from the interaction of multiple marketing elements operating concurrently.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.226 indicates that the combined effect of the three independent variables explains 22.6% of the variance in customer trust. The remaining 77.4% is influenced by other factors not included in this research model, such as product pricing, brand image strength, prior usage experience, social environmental influences, and consumer psychological aspects. Thus, although overclaim, product quality perception, and Influencers play significant roles, customer trust formation in the skincare industry remains multidimensional and shaped by broader external dynamics.

On a partial basis, the findings show that Influencers contribute the most to customer trust formation, followed by product quality perception, while overclaim acts as a trust-inhibiting factor. This result suggests that local skincare marketing strategies that overemphasize promotion without being supported by product quality and information transparency may ultimately undermine customer trust. Sari and Nugroho (2023) emphasize that marketing practices that violate consumer protection principles can reduce trust and lead to legal consequences.

Empirically, the findings confirm that the formation of customer trust cannot rely solely on popularity or virality. Sustainable trust requires genuinely perceived product quality, accurate and honest claims, and the involvement of Influencers who possess credibility and moral responsibility in conveying information (Amalia & Darmawan, 2023). In other words,

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customer trust is built through consistency between marketing promises and actual consumer experiences. This conclusion reinforces the view of Kotler and Armstrong (2016), who stress that long-term relationships between firms and consumers can only be achieved when companies consistently meet consumer expectations over time.

Accordingly, the results of this study underscore that effective local skincare marketing strategies must integrate three key aspects: avoiding overclaim practices, continuously improving product quality, and leveraging Influencers with high credibility. The integration of these three factors has been shown to be essential in building and sustaining customer trust amid increasingly intense competition in the skincare industry.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that overclaim practices have a negative and significant effect on customer trust in the marketing of local skincare products. In contrast, product quality perception and the role of influencers exert positive and significant effects on customer trust. Among the three variables examined, the role of influencers emerges as the most dominant factor in shaping trust, followed by product quality perception, while overclaim functions as a trust-inhibiting factor. Simultaneously, overclaim, product quality perception, and influencers are proven to jointly influence customer trust.

The implications of these findings suggest that consumer trust cannot be built solely through promotional activities. Instead, it requires consistent and tangible product quality, transparency and accuracy in communicating claims, and the involvement of credible and responsible influencers. Therefore, local skincare producers should avoid marketing strategies that rely on exaggerated claims, continuously maintain and improve product quality, and be more selective in choosing influencers who demonstrate integrity and adequate product knowledge, so that customer trust can be established and sustained over the long term.

This study has several limitations, including the use of purposive sampling with a relatively limited number of respondents confined to the Medan City area, as well as a cross-sectional research design. As a result, the generalizability of the findings should be approached with caution. Future research is encouraged to expand geographic coverage and sample size, apply probability sampling techniques, and examine additional variables that may influence customer trust, such as influencer credibility, brand reputation, and scientific product evidence, to achieve a more comprehensive understanding.

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