

Gen-Z's Dual-Route Message Processing on Tik Tok Through the Heuristic-Systematic Model

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ABSTRACT

This article examined the role of influencer credibility and information on the Tik Tok platform in shaping purchase intentions. The prevalence of overclaim practices in the skincare industry intensified Gen-Z's consumers' demand for credible and reliable information. Previous studies generally examined influencer credibility and information separately, highlighting the importance of analyzing both simultaneously on the Tik Tok platform, particularly through the @dokterdetektif account, which presented skincare reviews based on laboratory test results. This study aimed to investigate how Gen-Z's processed messages through the heuristic and systematic routes of the Heuristic Systematic Model and their influence on purchase intention. Data were collected from 400 Gen-Z's followers using purposive sampling and analyzed with multiple linear regression using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software version 26. The results indicated that both message-processing routes had a significant effect on purchase intention, demonstrating an additive effect in which both routes contributed equally to the formation of trust and decision-making. The study concluded that strengthening both influencer credibility and informational quality on Tik Tok content was essential in influencing audience behavior, particularly among Gen-Z's consumers.

Keywords:

Influencer Credibility, Information, Purchase Intention, Skincare Marketing, Social Media Persuasion

1. INTRODUCTION

Advancements in communication and information technology have given rise to Tik Tok as a dominant digital marketing platform within the beauty industry. Tik Tok provides brands with accessible and efficient means for promoting products while simultaneously expanding consumer access to diverse information (Gursoy, 2019). In the context of skincare marketing, Tik Tok has become a highly strategic medium, particularly as the beauty and personal care category continues to experience significant growth in public interest. The Tik Tok Report 2023 shows that skincare-related content has continued to rise, indicated by the #skincare hashtag reaching millions – if not billions – of views (Carrara, 2023). This trend has led 55.5% of brands to select Tik Tok as their primary marketing platform (Influency, 2024). Furthermore, consumer behavior among Gen Z has shifted, with 58% reporting that they have purchased skincare products due to exposure to content on Tik Tok (Smith, 2025). Accordingly, Tik Tok has evolved into a fast-moving and influential marketing ecosystem capable of shaping consumer preferences, particularly within the skincare category.

However, the rapid growth of skincare content on Tik Tok has introduced new challenges. Increasing market competition has driven brands to employ exaggerated claims in an effort to attract consumers. This phenomenon has contributed to the proliferation of overclaim practices, defined as assertions of product benefits that lack scientific substantiation (Hayati, 2024). Overclaim commonly appears in overstated statements regarding a product's efficacy and safety, creating unrealistic expectations among consumers (Labrecque et al., 2021). Within the Tik Tok environment, the dissemination of misleading claims becomes especially concerning due to the platform's short-form video format and viral dynamics, which facilitate the rapid acceptance of inaccurate information by audiences. As a result, consumers face not only potential financial loss from products that fail to deliver on their claims, but also increased risks to their health and emotional well-being (Kuncoro & Syamsudin, 2024). This issue is

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particularly salient for Gen-Z's, who are heavily exposed to skincare content and require adequate information-processing capabilities to critically evaluate the messages they encounter.

As the age cohort dominating Indonesia's population (BPS, 2021), Gen-Z's represents the most active group of Tik Tok users and frequently relies on the platform to obtain information, including seeking product reviews and recommendations (We are social, 2024; Bur et al., 2023). Their strong interest in skincare, coupled with a growing demand for safe, effective, and environmentally conscious products (Zap Beauty, 2024; Fyp Media, 2024), positions them as an audience deeply engaged in the process of evaluating product information. Nevertheless, trust among Gen Z toward recommendations made by influencers perceived as credible remains relatively high (Nguyen et al., 2024), which suggests that they may process information through both pathways outlined in message processing models – via quick, heuristic cues as well as more deliberate, systematic evaluation. Their digital fluency, critical awareness of online information, and significant purchasing influence in the skincare market make Gen-Z's a highly relevant group for examination, particularly in the context of message processing when exposed to potentially misleading skincare claims on Tik Tok.

Response to the increasing prevalence of overclaim practices, Tik Tok has witnessed the emergence of accounts that provide evidence-based skincare reviews. Unlike typical influencers who offer assessments grounded in personal experience or paid endorsements, these accounts evaluate active ingredients, claim validity, and formulation accuracy using laboratory testing. This evidence-driven approach produces more objective and verifiable content, offering consumers a credible alternative amid widespread skincare misinformation. From a systematic perspective, the availability of laboratory-derived data prompts deeper message processing, whereas heuristically, the credibility of a medical skincare professional is shaped by visual authority cues, educational background, and relevant professional expertise. This aligns with the Heuristic-Systematic Model (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994), which posits that individuals may engage both processing routes simultaneously under certain conditions (Son et al., 2020). Accordingly, the presence of such Tik Tok accounts functions not only as a response to the proliferation of overclaim practices but also creates conditions that activate dual processing in evaluating skincare-related information on the platform.

Heuristic standpoint, this study operationalizes influencer credibility using three core attributes attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness as simplified cues for message processing. Numerous studies have demonstrated that influencer credibility significantly shapes consumers' purchase intentions across various social media platforms. Findings by Al Farraj et al. (2021), Shailza & Sarkar (2024), and Selezneva (2024) show that credible influencers enhance consumer trust and consequently drive purchase intentions, including within the beauty product context. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2024) and Sitorus et al. (2024) reinforce this pattern, indicating that perceptions of influencer credibility are constructed through dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and advocacy. Collectively, this empirical evidence confirms that purchase intention is influenced by influencer credibility as a fast, heuristic channel. However, prior studies predominantly focus on the direct effect of influencer credibility on purchase intention. Therefore, this study examines how both message-processing routes in the Heuristic-Systematic Model operate simultaneously, particularly within the context of skincare overclaim on Tik Tok, by incorporating information quality variables into review content based on laboratory testing.

Systematic perspective, this study measures information quality, quantity, and credibility within laboratory-based skincare review content, and examines how these elements influence evaluation and purchase intention among Generation Z. Findings by Sinambela et al. (2024) and Indrawati et al. (2023) indicate that the quality, quantity, and credibility of information disseminated on Tik Tok significantly affect purchase intention. Similarly, several e-WOM studies demonstrate that these three informational attributes drive message adoption and ultimately purchase intention (Leong et al., 2022; Erkan & Evans, 2018; Zhou et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies underscore information as a critical factor shaping consumer purchase decisions. Accordingly, this research adopts these three characteristics to assess information embedded in laboratory-based skincare review content as the systematic route.

In this context, the Heuristic-Systematic Model serves as a relevant theoretical framework to explain how Gen-Z processes skincare-related messages on Tik Tok. The model asserts that individuals may engage in rapid cue, based processing (heuristic) while simultaneously performing more elaborate, data driven evaluation (systematic) when

interpreting information (Son et al., 2020). A number of studies have applied this model in digital media settings. For example, Rosillo-Díaz et al., (2024) investigated streamer credibility and information overload in e-commerce environments; Shailza & Sarkar, (2024) examined influencer credibility characteristics on YouTube and their impact on cosmetic product purchase intentions; and Al-Al-Abdallah et al., (2024) analyzed Tik Tok influencer credibility factors influencing beauty product purchase intention in Iraq. Despite these contributions, applications of the Heuristic Systematic Model on Tik Tok that simultaneously incorporate source credibility and scientifically grounded information remain limited. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of examining both processing paths concurrently within a unified analytical framework, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Gen-Z's constructs evaluations and purchase intentions for skincare products amid widespread overclaim practices.

Building on the above discussion, this study aims to analyze how Gen-Z's processes messages in skincare review content grounded in laboratory test results on Tik Tok through dual pathways in shaping purchase intention. The heuristic route reflects the influence of influencer credibility, whereas the systematic route involves the evaluation of information quality. These mechanisms are examined both individually and simultaneously, leading to the following hypotheses:

- H1: The credibility of beauty doctor influencers on Tik Tok significantly affects purchase intention.
- H2: Laboratory test-based information presented on Tik Tok significantly affects purchase intention.
- H3: Influencer credibility and laboratory test-based information on Tik Tok simultaneously and significantly affect purchase intention.

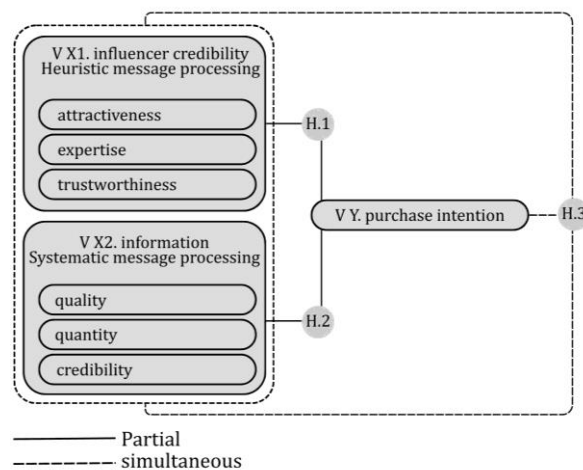


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

This study provides theoretical contributions by integrating influencer credibility and information within the Heuristic-Systematic Model in the context of Tik Tok, an area that has received limited attention in prior literature. Practically, the findings of this research may be utilized by brands, policymakers, and influencers to enhance credibility and improve information quality, particularly in mitigating overclaim practices. For Gen-Z's consumers, this study offers insights into the importance of critically engaging both heuristic and systematic processing routes to minimize the risk of poor decision-making, including skincare purchase intentions.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach to analyze the influence of two or more variables and to establish strong empirical relationships (Stockemer, 2018). The research method used was a questionnaire survey as the data collection instrument, distributed to selected samples to measure respondents' attitudes and behaviors (Kriyantono, 2020). The type of survey used was explanatory, which aimed to explain causal factors behind a particular phenomenon or condition (Kriyantono, 2020). The sampling technique applied was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method, as this study specifically examined

Gen-Z's individuals who follow the TikTok account @dokterdetektif and are exposed to laboratory-based content reviews. Therefore, not all members of the population had an equal chance of becoming respondents (Kriyantono, 2020). The research sample consisted of 400 respondents who met the following criteria: (1) followers of the TikTok account @dokterdetektif, (2) aged 18-28 years old, and (3) had accessed laboratory-based skincare content from the account. The research instrument measured three variables influencer credibility (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness), information (quality, quantity, credibility), and purchase intention using 1-4 Likert scale.

Before the analysis was conducted, all questionnaire items were tested for validity and reliability to ensure the instrument's feasibility. The validity test employed the Corrected Item, total Correlation in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software version 26, comparing the calculated r-value of each item against the r-table 0.362, 5% significance level (n = 30). An item was deemed valid if the calculated r-value exceeded the r-table. Reliability was subsequently tested using Cronbach's Alpha, where a variable was considered reliable if the Alpha value was greater than 0.6. The results showed that all items fulfilled the criteria for both validity and reliability, indicating that the instrument was suitable for further analysis.

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the assistance of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software version 26 to examine the influence of the independent variable's influencer credibility and information on purchase intention based on the Heuristic Systematic Model framework. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were performed, including (1) a normality test to ensure normally distributed residuals, (2) a multicollinearity test to detect strong correlations among independent variables, and (3) a heteroscedasticity test to confirm equal residual variances. Once the model met the assumptions, hypothesis testing was conducted using the partial (t) test to assess the influence of each independent variable, the simultaneous (F) test to examine combined effects, and the coefficient of determination (R²) to measure the explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2016).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Total of 400 respondents have answered the questions presented in the questionnaire with the following profiles:

Table 1. Respondent Profile n (400)

Measure	Item	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	119	29,8%
	Female	281	70,3%
Age	18-24 years old	186	46,5%
	25-28 years old	214	53,5%
Education	SMA/SMK	63	15,8%
	Diploma	39	9,8%
	S1	282	70,5%
	S2	16	4%
Occupation	Students	131	32,8%
	Freelancer	69	17,3%
	Housewife	8	2%
	Employee BUMN	4	1%
	Civi Servant (PNS)	9	2,2%
	Private Employee	142	35,5%
	Expert/Professional	2	0,5%
	Enterpreneur	12	3%
	Other	22	5,4%
Income	< Rp 3.000.00	182	45,5%
	Rp 3.000.000-Rp 5.000.000	173	43,25%
	Rp 5.000.000-Rp 10.000.000	41	10,25%
	>Rp 10.000.000	4	1%
	Everyday	393	98,3%

Access	A few times a week	4	1%
frequency	A few times a month	3	0,7%

The majority of respondents are female, and most are aged 25-28 years old. 70.5% of them hold a bachelor's degree, and 35.5% work as private employees. 45.5% of them earn less than Rp. 3,000,000, and almost all of them access the Tik Tok platform daily. In general, the respondents in this study are dominated by early adult-aged women with a bachelor's level education, lower middle income, and a high intensity of Tik Tok usage.

Table 2. Validity Test of Statement Items for the Variables of Influencer Credibility, Information, and Purchase Intention.

Variable	Instrument	r-calculate	r-table	Description
Heuristic: Influencer Credibility				
X1.1 Attractiveness	I am interested in following the Tik Tok account because of the influencer's unique and distinctive appearance.	.921**	0,361	Valid
	I appreciate the way the influencer conveys information in a systematic and assertive manner.	.775**	0,361	Valid
	I feel that I share a similar perspective with the influencer regarding the importance of choosing skincare that is safe and effective based on scientific evidence.	.887**	0,361	Valid
X1.2 Expertise	The influencer's understanding of formulations and skincare benefits is supported by their education.	.946**	0,361	Valid
	I am confident in the influencer, considering their profession as a cosmetic doctor, which is relevant to the topic of skincare, particularly skincare products.	.750**	0,361	Valid
	The influencer conveys information in a logical and convincing manner as someone who is well-versed in the world of skincare.	.907**	0,361	Valid
X1.3 Trustworthiness	I consider that influencers provide information on lab test results in an objective manner, without favoritism toward any brand or ownership.	.907**	0,361	Valid
	I trust that influencers convey information accurately and based on scientific facts.	.929**	0,361	Valid
	I feel that influencers can be relied upon to provide information related to skincare.	.929**	0,361	Valid
X2 Systematic: Information				
X2.1 Quality	The information in the skincare review content on the Tik Tok account is accurate according to laboratory test results.	.914**	0,361	Valid
		.817**	0,361	Valid

	The information in the skincare review content on the Tik Tok account is relevant amid the popularity of skincare and the widespread practice of overclaiming in skincare.	.948**	0,361	Valid
	The information in the skincare review content on the Tik Tok account is presented clearly, making it easy to understand.			
X2.2 Quantity	Tik Tok accounts provide information on the formulation, benefits, and risks of many popular products, both local and international brands.	.573**	0,361	Valid
	Each product review content from Tik Tok accounts offers extensive information regarding the formulation, benefits, and associated risks.	.894**	0,361	Valid
	I often access Tik Tok accounts to find safe skincare information before making a purchase.	.865**	0,361	Valid
X2.3 Credibility	The information in skincare review content on Tik Tok accounts is accurate based on scientific evidence from laboratory test results.	.932**	0,361	Valid
	The information in skincare review content on Tik Tok accounts can be trusted because it is supported by scientific evidence from laboratory test results.	.961**	0,361	Valid
	The information presented in skincare review content on Tik Tok accounts can be used as a reference for evaluating products during the purchasing process.	.909**	0,361	Valid
Y. Purchase Intention				
Y.1	I am interested in seeking information related to skincare products that are safe to use on Tik Tok accounts.	.772**	0,361	Valid
Searching Information	I want find more detailed information regarding the formulations of the skincare products used before deciding on a purchase on Tik Tok.	.858**	0,361	Valid
Y.2	I am curious about skincare products that are safe based on reviews from Tik Tok accounts grounded in lab test results.	.667**	0,361	Valid
Learning Products	The information in the skincare review content from Tik Tok accounts prompted me to delve deeper into the products.	.755**	0,361	Valid

Y.3 Trying Products	I want to try using the product after seeing skincare reviews based on scientific evidence from lab tests.	.789**	0,361	Valid
	I want to verify the effectiveness of the product after seeing skincare reviews based on scientific evidence from lab tests.	.892**	0,361	Valid
Y.4 Considering Purchase	I am considering buying skincare products after seeing skincare reviews based on lab test results presented by a beauty doctor.	.791**	0,361	Valid
	I save lab test-based skincare review content as a reference before purchasing products.	.855**	0,361	Valid
Y.5 Purchase Intention	I am most likely to purchase skincare products that have been proven safe based on reviews grounded in lab test results.	.796**	0,361	Valid
	I intend to purchase skincare products that have been proven safe based on reviews grounded in lab test results.	.815**	0,361	Valid

Based on the validity test administered to 30 respondents at a 5% significance level, all instruments in variables X1 (influencer credibility), X2 (information), and Y (purchase intention) produced r-calculated values greater than the r-table value of 0.361. The obtained r-calculated values ranged from 0.573 to 0.961, indicating that all items demonstrated strong validity. Therefore, all items were declared valid and suitable for use in the subsequent analytical stages of this study.

Table 3. Reliability Test of Influencer Credibility, Information, and Purchase Intention Variables.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items	Description
Influencer Credibility	.960	9	Reliabel
Information	.961	9	Reliabel
Purchase Intention	.937	10	Reliabel

The results of the reliability test indicated that all variables had a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60, demonstrating satisfactory instrument consistency.

Table 4. Normality Test

Regression model	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	P value	Decision
Influencer Credibility Information Purchase Intention	400	0,0000000	2,32745263	0,254	Normal

The p-value indicates a figure of 0.254 (>0.05), which shows that the residual data do not deviate and are normally distributed.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Regression model	Std.Error	P value	Toleranc e	VIF	Decision
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Influencer Credibility Information	0,077	0,008	0,420	2,382	There is no multicollinearity
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All tolerance values are greater than 0.10, so it can be concluded that there is no strong correlation or relationship between the independent variables, namely influencer credibility and information. In addition, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which are below 10, further reinforce the conclusion that the regression model is free from multicollinearity issues.

Table 6. Heteroskedasticity Test

Regression model	Std.Error	P value	Decision
Influencer Credibility Information	0,043	0,915	There is no heteroskedasticity

The p-value for the variables of influencer credibility and information shows a figure greater than 0.05. This indicates that there is no sign of heteroscedasticity, so the residual variance in the regression model is constant and the assumption of homoscedasticity is met.

Table 7. ANOVA Test of Influencer Credibility

Variable	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Influencer Credibility	3	325,884	51,620	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention
 b. Predictors: (Constant), attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness

Table 8. Test of Influencer Credibility Coefficient

Indicator of Influencer Credibility	Regression Coefficients	Std.Error	t	Sig
Attractiveness	0,313	0,140	6,404	0,000
Expertise	0,119	0,141	2,438	0,015
Trustworthiness	0,227	0,151	4,290	0,000

Based on the results of the simultaneous (F) test in Table.7 show the significance value is 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that influencer credibility has a significant effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, the results of the partial (t) test in Table.8 show that all indicators of influencer credibility, namely attractiveness, expertise, and trust, each have a value of <0.05. Thus, influencer credibility as a heuristic route significantly affects purchase intention, so Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Table 9. Information ANOVA Test

Variable	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Information	3	393,285	71,079	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention
 b. Predictors: (Constant), quality, quantity, credibility

Table 10. Information Coefficient Test

Indicator of Information	Regression Coefficients	Std.Error	t	Sig
Quality	0,179	0,154	3,608	0,000
Quantity	0,310	0,116	6,962	0,000
Credibility	0,286	0,148	5,491	0,000

The results of the simultaneous (F) test in Table.9 show a significance value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that the information variable has a significant effect on purchase intention.

Furthermore, the results of the partial (t) test in Table.10 show that the information indicators, namely quality, quantity, and credibility, each have a significance value of <0.05. Therefore, information as a systematic pathway has a significant effect on purchase intention, and Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Table 11. ANOVA Test on Influencer Credibility and Information

Variable	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Influencer Credibility Information	2	604,770	111,083	0,000

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Influencer Credibility, Information

Table 12. Test of Influencer Credibility Coefficient and Information

Variable	Regression Coefficients	Std.Error	t	Sig
Influencer Credibility	0,164	0,077	2,645	0,000
Information	0,465	0,077	7,490	0,000

The significance value in Table.11 is 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that both message processing pathways have a significant effect on purchase intention. Meanwhile, the results of the test in Table.12 show that both variables have a significance value of <0.05. These findings are consistent with the acceptance of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. Therefore, both the heuristic pathway through influencer credibility and the systematic pathway through information simultaneously affect purchase intention, thus Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

Table 13. Test of Determination Coefficient (R²) for Influencer Credibility and Information

Variable	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std.Error
Influencer Credibility Information	0,599	0,359	0,356	2,33331

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention
b. Predictor: (Constant), Influencer Credibility, Information

The results of the determination coefficient (R²) test show an Adjusted R Square value of 0.356. This means that the two independent variables, message processing through heuristic credibility of influencers and systematic information processing, are able to explain 0.356 or 35.6% of the variation in the dependent variable of Gen-Z consumer purchase intention. Meanwhile, the remaining 64.4% is influenced by other factors outside the variables used in this study. These findings indicate that message processing through both pathways in the Heuristic-Systematic Model contributes quite significantly to the formation of consumer purchase intentions.

Discussion

This study aims to examine how Gen-Z’s processes messages within evidence-based skincare review content on Tik Tok through dual message processing heuristic and systematic and how these routes influence purchase intention. Multiple linear regression analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 26 reveals that both message processing routes, operationalized through influencer credibility and information quality in laboratory test-based review content, significantly influence Gen Z’s skincare purchase intention. These findings confirm the assumptions of the Heuristic Systematic Model, which posits that individuals may draw upon both processing routes simultaneously under certain conditions (Son et al., 2020), particularly when consumers are confronted with widespread overclaim practices within the skincare industry that elevate the need for credible and evidence-based information sources.

The heuristic route in this study is operationalized through influencer credibility, which encompasses attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. The findings indicate that influencer credibility significantly influences Gen Z’s skincare purchase intention, suggesting the use of mental shortcuts in message evaluation. Within the Tik Tok environment

characterized by rapid information flows distinct visual appeal, systematic and assertive communication styles, and value congruence with audiences play key roles in capturing initial attention. Medical expertise serves as a competence cue for assessing product claims, particularly amid the prevalence of skincare overclaim practices. Meanwhile, the influencer's objective attitude in delivering data-driven and reliable information reinforces audience trust. These findings align with Al Farraj et al. (2021), Shailza & Sarkar (2024) and Al-Abdallah et al. (2024) who confirm that influencer credibility comprising attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness significantly affects purchasing decisions through simplified evaluative processes. This result is also consistent with the heuristic mechanism, which asserts that under conditions of limited time and cognitive capacity, Gen-Z's tends to rely on source credibility as a primary cue shaping purchase intention, in line with the assumptions of the Heuristic Systematic Model (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013).

Gen-Z also demonstrates the influence of systematic message processing within evidence-based skincare review content. Content presented on the basis of laboratory testing related to active ingredients, safety, and product effectiveness encourages audiences to engage in deeper evaluation by considering the quality, quantity, and credibility of the information before forming purchase intentions. Information quality is perceived through accuracy, relevance, and clarity of explanation, making fact supported content more persuasive than mere influencer opinions. In addition, information quantity, reflected in the number of products reviewed, the density of explanations, and the frequency of exposure to content on Tik Tok, broadens the evaluative space for audiences to compare alternative skincare products. The aspects of truthfulness, trust, and message reliability further strengthen perceptions of information credibility. These findings are consistent with Indrawati et al. (2023), Pranata et al. (2024) and Sinambela et al. (2024), who affirm that quality, quantity, and credibility are primary characteristics in information assessment within social media platforms such as Tik Tok, shaping message acceptance and purchase intention. This outcome also aligns with the systematic route of the Heuristic Systematic Model, which emphasizes deep information evaluation through cognitive elaboration (Zhang et al., 2014), triggered by information quality, completeness, and credibility.

This study demonstrates that the two message processing routes heuristic and systematic do not function as substitutes or complements, but rather operate simultaneously in influencing Gen-Z's skincare purchase intention. Both influencer credibility and information embedded in laboratory-test-based skincare review content on Tik Tok contribute equally to shaping evaluations and purchase decisions. These findings indicate an additive effect within the Heuristic Systematic Model, whereby both routes work in tandem to influence decision-making. The results support Chauhan & Gupta (2024), who revealed that the simultaneous additive effect of both processing routes leads to convergent outcomes and enhances confidence in the information presented. Accordingly, this study expands the understanding of the Heuristic Systematic Model within digital marketing contexts, particularly on Tik Tok, which integrates personal authority through influencer credibility and scientific authority through empirical evidence. This aligns with the assumptions of the Heuristic-Systematic Model, which asserts that dual processing occurs when individuals perceive information as important, relevant, and high stakes (Son et al., 2020). As demographically conscious group concerned with skincare safety and efficacy, Gen-Z's not only relies on influencer credibility but also actively engages in deep processing of message substance before forming purchase intentions.

The adjusted R-squared value of 0.356 (35.6%) indicates that although influencer credibility and information quality are significant, Gen-Z's skincare purchase intention cannot be fully explained by these two variables alone. This finding suggests the presence of additional factors influencing purchase intention that were beyond the scope of this study. It also highlights the complex and contextual nature of Gen-Z's consumer behavior, particularly within dynamic social media environments such as Tik Tok. Therefore, while the Heuristic-Systematic Model provides a robust explanation of core message processing mechanisms, a more comprehensive understanding of Gen-Z's purchase intention requires integrating additional contributing factors.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Gen-Z's processes messages in evidence-based skincare review content on Tik Tok through the two routes of the Heuristic Systematic Model, operating simultaneously in shaping purchase intentions. Influencer credibility comprising

attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness serves as a heuristic cue that facilitates rapid evaluation, while the quality, quantity, and credibility of information derived from laboratory-based product testing stimulate systematic processing. These findings confirm the relevance of the Heuristic Systematic Model within digital marketing communication, particularly on Tik Tok, a platform characterized by rapid information consumption and heightened risk of misinformation. The study further highlights that amidst the prevalence of exaggerated skincare claims, Gen Z exhibits more selective and rational behavior by combining trust in the source with evaluation of message substance.

Moreover, the results reveal an additive effect of the dual processing messages routes, whereby personal authority and scientific evidence contribute relatively equally to shaping trust and purchase intention. These findings reinforce core assumptions of the Heuristic Systematic Model regarding the possibility of dual processing and extend its application to digital marketing contexts on Tik Tok, where personal credibility and empirical authority intersect. Practically, the study suggests that skincare brands and influencers prioritize the delivery of evidence-based information to strengthen consumer trust, while policymakers may utilize these insights to enhance regulatory standards related to skincare product claims on social media. The results also imply that effective digital marketing communication requires not only credible influencers but also objective, accurate, and verifiable information. However, the moderate coefficient of determination indicates that Gen-Z's purchase intentions are shaped by additional factors beyond influencer credibility and information quality. Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior on social media requires integrating the Heuristic Systematic Model with other contextual variables. These findings provide opportunities for future research to develop more holistic models for explaining consumer decision-making in the digital era.

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