



**STRATEGIC MARKET SEGMENTATION FOR GEN Z SKINCARE
CONSUMERS: A MULTI- VARIABLE STP FRAMEWORK APPLICATION
FOR PRE-LAUNCH BRAND MARKET ENTRY IN INDONESIA'S DIGITAL
BEAUTY ECOSYSTEM**

Mikael Bryan Ciputra¹

Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta Utara, Indonesia

Joseph Setiawan²

Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta Utara, Indonesia

Brianna Sanjaya³

Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta Utara, Indonesia

Antonius Felix^{4*}

Universitas Bunda Mulia, Jakarta Utara, Indonesia

Email Correspondence: antoniusfelix90@gmail.com

Abstract

This study applies the Segmentation–Targeting–Positioning (STP) framework to formulate a market entry strategy for L’Essaine, a pre-launch skincare brand targeting Indonesian Gen Z consumers. A multi-dimensional segmentation approach incorporating demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral variables is employed to identify and evaluate potential market segments. The research adopts a qualitative design, utilizing triangulated primary data from in-depth interviews with 15 respondents aged 17–30, complemented by secondary data from industry reports and competitive analyses. The findings reveal that university students aged 17–24 with moderate monthly allowances represent an underserved yet attractive segment seeking affordable skincare products with premium quality attributes. This segment achieved an overall attractiveness score of 7.8 out of 10, indicating strong potential for market entry. Based on these findings, the study proposes an “affordable premium” positioning strategy that emphasizes the use of natural ingredients and a digital-first engagement approach aligned with Gen Z media consumption behaviors. Validation through content marketing performance indicates strong resonance with the target audience, reflected in a 3.9% engagement rate and 85% audience relevance. This research contributes to the application of the STP framework in digital-native consumer markets and provides practical strategic insights for brand entry in Indonesia’s competitive skincare industry.

Keywords: STP Framework, Market Segmentation, Gen Z Consumers, Skincare Industry, Digital Marketing



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's beauty and personal care industry has undergone substantial transformation, with skincare emerging as the leading category, valued at approximately USD 2 billion and projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.4% through 2028 (MEIYUME, 2024). This accelerated growth is largely driven by Generation Z consumers, who account for 54% of beauty product purchases in Indonesia, rising significantly from 48% in 2020 (Social Bella, 2025). The convergence of high digital literacy, intensive social media exposure, and increasing awareness of skincare among Gen Z has fundamentally reshaped market dynamics, creating new strategic opportunities for brands capable of operating effectively within a digital-native consumption environment (Felix & Rembulan, 2023).

Despite these opportunities, market entry for new skincare brands presents considerable strategic challenges. The Indonesian skincare market is characterized by pronounced heterogeneity across consumer segments, price tiers, and distribution channels (Kompas, 2025). Although Gen Z consumers demonstrate strong interest in skincare, their purchasing power is constrained by limited disposable income, as the majority are students or early-stage earners (DSGCP, 2024). This condition creates a persistent mismatch between aspirations for high-quality skincare products and financial accessibility—an unmet gap that premium brands fail to address due to high price points, while mass-market brands often compromise on perceived quality.

Existing market segmentation literature has largely concentrated on established brands operating in mature markets, with limited empirical application to pre-launch contexts in digitally transforming emerging economies such as Indonesia (Sharp et al., 2024). Although the Segmentation–Targeting–Positioning (STP) framework remains a cornerstone of marketing strategy (Kotler & Keller, 2024), its operationalization for digital-first brands targeting Gen Z consumers requires extension beyond traditional demographic and geographic segmentation. Prior studies indicate that digital platforms enable advanced micro-segmentation and personalized engagement (Felix et al., 2024); however, integrated segmentation models incorporating behavioral and psychographic characteristics specific to Indonesian Gen Z skincare consumers remain underdeveloped.

Addressing these gaps, this study applies an enhanced STP framework to L'Essaine, a pre-launch skincare brand, to systematically identify, evaluate, and target underserved segments within Indonesia's Gen Z skincare market. The study's novelty lies in integrating multi-variable segmentation—encompassing



demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral dimensions—with digital consumption patterns and an “affordable premium” positioning strategy, an approach that remains insufficiently explored in existing Indonesian beauty industry research. Additionally, this research strengthens practical relevance by validating strategic positioning through content marketing performance, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical segmentation and executable market entry strategies.

Accordingly, the research objectives are threefold: (1) to conduct comprehensive multi-variable market segmentation of Indonesian Gen Z skincare consumers; (2) to assess segment attractiveness and formulate a targeted market entry strategy; and (3) to develop a differentiated positioning strategy grounded in digital-first engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

State of the Art: Evolution of the STP Framework in the Digital Marketing Era

The Segmentation–Targeting–Positioning (STP) framework, originally popularized by Kotler, has long served as a foundational model for market strategy in marketing literature (Sharp et al., 2024). However, recent empirical studies have questioned several classical STP assumptions, identifying tensions between traditional segmentation logic and contemporary market-based asset perspectives (Sharp et al., 2024). The proliferation of digital technologies, big data analytics, and AI-driven personalization has accelerated the need to reconceptualize STP beyond static, demographically oriented segmentation toward more dynamic and behaviorally driven models (Huang & Rust, 2024).

Contemporary applications of STP increasingly prioritize psychographic and behavioral variables, particularly when addressing digital-native consumer segments. Powell (2023) argues that modern STP strategies must incorporate omnichannel integration and data-driven insights to enable micro-segmentation and personalized value propositions. This transition from mass marketing to precision targeting is especially evident in the beauty and personal care industry, where consumer preferences are highly heterogeneous and evolve rapidly (MEIYUME, 2024). Supporting this shift, Felix and Rembulan (2023b) demonstrate that customer experience factors—such as usability, personalization, and responsiveness—significantly influence e-commerce engagement and loyalty, indicating that effective segmentation must extend beyond conventional demographic indicators to include experiential dimensions.



Within the skincare sector, recent studies emphasize the growing importance of ingredient transparency, sustainability orientation, and educational content in shaping Generation Z purchasing decisions (DSGCP, 2024). Kompas (2025) reports that 73% of Indonesian Gen Z consumers perceive skincare products as essential needs rather than discretionary wants, signaling a fundamental transformation in category perception. This shift underscores the necessity for segmentation frameworks that incorporate value-driven and lifestyle-based dimensions alongside traditional segmentation variables.

Moreover, the integration of social media platforms—particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube—has transformed skincare marketing from a product-centric to a content-centric paradigm (Felix et al., 2024). Micro-influencers and user-generated content increasingly outperform traditional advertising in driving product discovery and purchase intention (MEIYUME, 2024). Empirical evidence from Felix et al. (2024) demonstrates that TikTok’s algorithm-driven distribution enables highly precise audience targeting and significantly higher engagement rates compared to conventional digital channels. Consequently, contemporary STP frameworks must incorporate platform-specific behaviors and content consumption patterns as core segmentation criteria.

Research Gaps in the Indonesian Gen Z Skincare Market

Despite the expanding body of research on Generation Z consumer behavior, several critical gaps remain within the Indonesian skincare context. First, the majority of STP-related studies focus on established brands operating in mature markets (Sharp et al., 2024; Powell, 2023), offering limited guidance for pre-launch brands entering highly competitive emerging markets. The strategic challenges associated with building brand awareness, establishing positioning, and acquiring initial customers without existing market presence necessitate adapted segmentation and targeting frameworks that remain insufficiently addressed in current literature.

Second, although demographic and geographic segmentation of Indonesian beauty consumers has been documented (Statista, 2023), comprehensive multi-variable segmentation models integrating psychographic values—such as sustainability, authenticity, and educational orientation—and behavioral patterns—including digital platform usage, purchase journeys, and content engagement—are still underdeveloped. Data from Social Bella (2025) reveal distinctive behavioral traits among Indonesian Gen Z consumers, including impulse purchasing tendencies (30.4%), extensive pre-purchase research, and price sensitivity through bargain-seeking behavior. However, these



behavioral characteristics have not been systematically incorporated into actionable segmentation frameworks for market entry strategies.

Third, the “affordable premium” positioning gap represents a structurally underserved segment in the Indonesian skincare market (DSGCP, 2024). While existing literature tends to dichotomize the market into premium international brands (e.g., SK-II) and budget-oriented local brands (e.g., Emina), limited attention has been given to the substantial middle segment seeking a balance between product quality and price accessibility. The absence of systematic frameworks for identifying and targeting this segment constitutes a significant gap in both academic and practical marketing research.

Novelty and Contribution of This Research

This study advances both STP theory and managerial practice through three key contributions. First, it develops and empirically validates a comprehensive multi-variable segmentation framework tailored to digital-native Gen Z consumers in emerging markets. By integrating demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral dimensions with digital platform usage patterns, the framework extends prior work by Felix and Rembulan (2023b) by embedding customer experience factors within a structured segmentation methodology.

Second, the research provides empirical evidence supporting the viability of the “affordable premium” segment in the Indonesian skincare market. It demonstrates how pre-launch brands can strategically identify and target underserved consumer segments positioned between conventional premium and budget categories, thereby contributing practical insights for market entry strategies in digitally transforming and highly competitive industries.

Third, this study bridges the theory–practice divide by incorporating content marketing validation as an integral component of the STP process. By linking theoretical segmentation outcomes to measurable digital engagement performance, the research addresses longstanding critiques that traditional STP frameworks lack operational validation mechanisms and offers a more actionable, execution-oriented approach to segmentation and positioning.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive research approach grounded in a constructivist paradigm, recognizing that market segmentation and consumer behavior are socially constructed through interactions among researchers, consumers, and market contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2023). A



qualitative methodology is particularly appropriate given the research objectives, which require in-depth exploration of Generation Z consumers' motivations, values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns – dimensions that cannot be sufficiently captured through quantitative surveys alone (Maxwell, 2023). Moreover, the pre-launch status of the L'Essaine brand necessitates an exploratory approach to uncover latent market opportunities and positioning strategies in the absence of historical performance data.

The interpretivist philosophical foundation acknowledges that consumer segments are not objectively pre-existing entities awaiting discovery; rather, they are analytically constructed patterns derived from consumer narratives, behaviors, and contextual market conditions (Saunders et al., 2023). This perspective aligns with contemporary STP scholarship emphasizing dynamic, context-dependent segmentation rather than rigid, static demographic classifications (Sharp et al., 2024). Consequently, the research process is inherently iterative, with insights from early data collection informing subsequent analytical refinement until theoretical saturation is achieved.

Research Design

This research employs an exploratory–descriptive qualitative design, integrating multiple data sources to generate triangulated insights. The exploratory component seeks to identify and understand distinct consumer segments within the Indonesian Gen Z skincare market by examining needs, preferences, values, and behavioral patterns. The descriptive component systematically documents segment characteristics, evaluates segment attractiveness using established criteria, and formulates a differentiated positioning strategy.

The unit of analysis consists of individual Generation Z consumers aged 17–24 who actively use skincare products and reside in Greater Jakarta and major cities across Java. The study adopts a cross-sectional time horizon, with data collection conducted over a three-month period (October–December 2025) to capture prevailing market conditions while accounting for potential seasonal variation in skincare purchasing behavior. The research setting encompasses both online environments (social media platforms and e-commerce channels) and offline contexts (retail stores and beauty communities), reflecting the hybrid consumption ecosystem characteristic of Indonesian Gen Z consumers.

Theoretical Frameworks and Conceptual Model

This research is grounded in two primary theoretical frameworks. First, the Segmentation–Targeting–Positioning (STP) model provides the overarching strategic structure for market analysis and positioning development (Kotler &



Keller, 2024). The three sequential stages of STP—market segmentation, target segment selection, and differentiated positioning—organize both the research process and the presentation of findings. However, the traditional STP framework is adapted to incorporate digital consumer behavior variables and content-based engagement metrics, reflecting the realities of contemporary digital marketing environments (Powell, 2023).

Second, the Customer Experience (CX) framework proposed by Felix and Rembulan (2023) informs the analysis of factors influencing consumer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty in digital contexts. Key CX dimensions—ease of use, personalized content, responsive support, and perceived security—guide the development of interview protocols and behavioral segmentation criteria. In addition, Uses and Gratifications Theory is integrated to explain Generation Z's social media platform selection and content consumption patterns, recognizing that different platforms fulfill distinct consumer needs such as information seeking, entertainment, social interaction, and self-expression throughout the skincare purchase journey.

These frameworks are synthesized into a conceptual model in which multi-variable segmentation (demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral) forms the analytical foundation. Segment attractiveness is subsequently evaluated using measurability, accessibility, substantiality, differentiability, and actionability criteria (Kotler & Keller, 2024), culminating in a positioning strategy articulated through a positioning statement and perceptual mapping relative to competitors.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection employed purposive sampling with a maximum variation strategy to capture heterogeneity within the target population. Primary data were obtained through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 15 Generation Z consumers (aged 17–30), predominantly university students and active skincare users. Interviews were conducted via video conferencing (Zoom), with each session lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. The interview protocol covered five thematic areas: (1) skincare journey and daily routines, (2) information sources and decision-making processes, (3) brand perceptions and preference drivers, (4) budget constraints and value perceptions, and (5) digital platform usage and content engagement patterns.

Participant recruitment utilized snowball sampling initiated through university networks and beauty-focused Instagram and TikTok communities, ensuring access to digitally active Gen Z consumers. Inclusion criteria required



participants to be Indonesian nationals aged 17–30, actively using a minimum of three skincare products, spending IDR 100,000–500,000 monthly on skincare, and maintaining active social media usage. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded using MAXQDA software.

Secondary data sources included industry reports from Euromonitor, Statista, and MEIYUME; competitor analyses of 12 skincare brands across budget to premium categories; social media content analysis on Instagram and TikTok to identify dominant themes and engagement patterns; and e-commerce platform data (Shopee and Tokopedia) examining pricing, reviews, and indicative sales volumes. This multi-source triangulation strengthens analytical rigor and contextual depth.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase thematic analysis framework: (1) familiarization through repeated engagement with transcripts and field notes, (2) initial coding of data segments relevant to the research questions, (3) development of preliminary themes by clustering related codes, (4) review and refinement of themes to ensure coherence and distinctiveness, (5) definition and naming of themes to capture their conceptual essence, and (6) integration of themes into a theoretically informed narrative.

For STP application, segmentation analysis proceeded in two stages. First, deductive coding applied predefined segmentation dimensions (demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral) to organize data systematically. Second, inductive coding identified emergent sub-segments and patterns not anticipated in the initial framework. Segment profiles were constructed by synthesizing insights from interviews, secondary data, and observational analysis.

Target segment evaluation employed five criteria: measurability, accessibility, substantiality, differentiability, and actionability (Kotler & Keller, 2024). Each criterion was scored on a 0–10 scale, and composite attractiveness scores guided targeting decisions. Positioning strategy development utilized perceptual mapping, plotting competitor brands along price and quality dimensions based on both primary and secondary data. Identified gaps informed the formulation of a positioning statement following the standard template: "For [target segment] who [need/opportunity], [brand] is [category] that [differentiation], unlike [competitors], because [reason to believe]."



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multi-Variable Segmentation: Identification of Market Segments

The segmentation analysis reveals a complex market structure comprising five distinct segments derived from the integrated application of demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral variables. Among these, Segment 1: “Budget-Conscious Skincare Enthusiasts” emerges as the primary focus of this study. This segment consists predominantly of university students aged 17–24, with a gender distribution of approximately 75% female and 25% male, residing in Greater Jakarta and major urban centers across Java. Monthly allowances range between IDR 1.5–3 million.

Psychographically, this segment exhibits a strong orientation toward quality while maintaining high budget sensitivity. Members prioritize long-term skin health and demonstrate pronounced interest in educational information regarding skincare ingredients and formulations. Behaviorally, they maintain consistent daily skincare routines involving at least three to five products, engage in extensive pre-purchase research through Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, and display a high propensity for brand switching in pursuit of optimal value propositions.

Four additional segments were identified. Segment 2: “Premium Aspirationalists” consists of young professionals aged 25–30 with higher monthly incomes (IDR 5–10 million) who aspire to premium skincare products but remain partially constrained from fully accessing luxury brands. Segment 3: “Minimalist Pragmatists” prioritizes efficiency and simplicity, favoring multifunctional routines limited to two or three products. Segment 4: “Trend-Driven Experimenters” represents early adopters who rapidly switch products in response to viral social media trends. Segment 5: “Natural and Organic Advocates” emphasizes sustainability and natural ingredients and demonstrates a higher willingness to pay premium prices.

Interview data strongly corroborate the distinctive characteristics of Segment 1. One respondent (R7, female, 21 years old, university student) noted: “I want skincare that feels premium, like Korean brands, but still affordable for a student. I’m willing to research for a week before buying—reading ingredient lists and watching YouTube reviews—so I don’t make the wrong choice.” This pattern was consistently observed across multiple respondents, indicating a relatively high level of product knowledge sophistication despite budget constraints. Such characteristics distinguish this segment from conventional



budget consumers who prioritize low prices with limited attention to quality or ingredient composition.

Competitor analysis further highlights a pronounced positioning gap. Luxury brands such as SK-II, La Mer, and Sulwhasoo occupy the high price–high quality quadrant, with product prices ranging from IDR 500,000 to 2,000,000 per item, rendering them inaccessible to the target segment. Mid-range local brands (e.g., Wardah, Somethinc, Avoskin), priced between IDR 100,000 and 300,000, occupy a medium price–medium quality position; however, their brand perceptions do not fully satisfy the aspirational “premium” expectations of the target segment. Budget brands (Emina, Garnier, Ponds), positioned at low price–acceptable quality levels (IDR 30,000–80,000), lack sophisticated formulations and educational brand communication, both of which are highly valued by Gen Z consumers (Felix & Rembulan, 2023).

Target Segment Evaluation: Segment Attractiveness Analysis

Segment attractiveness was evaluated using a six-criteria framework, resulting in a composite score of 7.8/10 for the “Budget-Conscious Skincare Enthusiasts” segment, indicating strong market potential.

Measurability (9/10). Secondary data from Social Bella (2025) indicate that Generation Z accounts for 54% of beauty product consumers in Indonesia, with skincare as the dominant category. National statistics estimate approximately 9.8 million Indonesian university students aged 19–24, with 60% residing in Java and Sumatra. Conservative calculations suggest a potential segment size of approximately 2.1 million consumers, representing a substantial market base for brand entry.

Accessibility (8/10). The target segment is highly accessible through digital channels. Interview findings reveal that all respondents use Instagram daily (averaging 2.5 hours), 87% actively engage with TikTok, and 73% consume YouTube beauty content weekly. Prior research demonstrates TikTok’s effectiveness in reaching and engaging Gen Z audiences through micro-influencer collaborations (Felix et al., 2024). E-commerce platforms, particularly Shopee and Tokopedia, serve as primary purchase channels for 93% of respondents, enabling efficient direct-to-consumer distribution without extensive offline retail investment.

Substantiality (7/10). With an estimated segment size of 2.1 million consumers and average monthly skincare expenditure of IDR 200,000, the total addressable market approximates IDR 420 billion annually. Capturing only 1% market share in the first year (approximately 21,000 customers) with an average transaction value of IDR 150,000 would generate projected revenue of IDR 3.15



billion, a meaningful scale for a pre-launch brand. Growth prospects remain positive due to expanding Gen Z demographics and rising beauty expenditure (Kompas, 2025).

Differentiability (8/10). The segment exhibits response patterns distinct from other consumer groups. Ingredient transparency and educational content are prioritized to a greater extent than among older cohorts or price-driven budget segments. Interview data indicate that 80% of respondents are willing to pay a 20–30% price premium over budget brands if ingredient quality and efficacy are assured, reflecting price elasticity distinct from purely cost-sensitive consumers. Content preferences also differ, with stronger engagement in long-form educational materials rather than purely promotional messaging.

Actionability (8/10). Segment characteristics support the implementation of targeted marketing programs. Product formulations can be tailored using natural ingredients at accessible price points (IDR 99,000–149,000 per 30 ml). Marketing communications can emphasize ingredient education and scientific explanations distributed via Instagram carousels, TikTok educational series, and YouTube tutorials. Systematic collaboration with micro-influencers aligned with segment values further enhances execution feasibility (Felix et al., 2024).

Competitive Intensity (7/10). Although competition within the skincare market is substantial, the specific positioning of “affordable premium with education” remains relatively underserved. No existing Indonesian brand comprehensively occupies this space, creating first-mover opportunities. Nonetheless, potential competitive responses from established brands necessitate ongoing differentiation.

Based on this evaluation, a concentrated (niche) targeting strategy is recommended. Focusing resources on a single segment enables deeper consumer insight, more relevant product development, and stronger brand equity formation—particularly appropriate for pre-launch brands operating under resource constraints (Powell, 2023).

Positioning Strategy: “Affordable Premium with Education”

The positioning strategy is formulated through integration of segment needs analysis, competitive gap identification, and internal capability assessment. The proposed positioning statement is as follows:

“For Indonesian university students who seek high-quality skincare without premium prices, L’Essaine offers affordable premium products formulated with natural, scientifically validated ingredients and supported by



transparent educational content—unlike premium brands that exclude through high prices or budget brands that compromise on quality.”

This positioning is anchored in four integrated differentiators:

Affordable Premium Price–Quality Equation. Products are priced strategically between IDR 99,000 and 149,000 per item—approximately 20–30% below mid-range competitors while maintaining ingredient quality comparable to premium offerings. This directly addresses the segment’s core tension between aspirational quality and financial constraints. Margin feasibility is supported by a direct-to-consumer model, minimal offline retail costs, and strategic ingredient sourcing.

Natural and Scientifically Transparent Ingredients. Formulations emphasize natural, Gen Z–favored ingredients such as aloe vera, green tea extract, niacinamide, and hyaluronic acid, complemented by scientific efficacy explanations. Comprehensive ingredient education—including INCI terminology, functional mechanisms, and expected outcomes—builds trust among information-seeking consumers and differentiates the brand from competitors with opaque formulations (Felix & Rembulan, 2023).

Educational Content as a Core Brand Pillar. Rather than relying on aspirational imagery, L’Essaine prioritizes education-driven content, including ingredient explainers, skincare science tutorials, routine guidance, and myth-busting narratives. Content formats are tailored by platform, positioning the brand as a “skincare educator” rather than solely a product provider.

Digital-First Community Engagement. Brand communication emphasizes two-way interaction through Instagram Q&A sessions, TikTok comment engagement, and user-generated content initiatives. This dialogic approach fosters community belonging and aligns with Gen Z expectations for authenticity and participatory brand relationships (Felix et al., 2024).

Perceptual Mapping and Competitive Positioning

A perceptual map was constructed using two dimensions critical to the target segment: Price (vertical axis) and Quality/Ingredient Sophistication (horizontal axis). The visualization confirms L’Essaine’s strategic positioning within a quadrant characterized by relatively high quality and accessible pricing.

Luxury brands (SK-II, La Mer) occupy the high price–high quality space, remaining aspirational yet inaccessible. Premium K-beauty brands (COSRX, Some By Mi) offer high quality at medium-to-high prices but still exceed the budget thresholds of the target segment. Local mid-range brands (Wardah, Somethinc) are accessible but lack perceived ingredient sophistication, while budget brands (Emina, Garnier) prioritize affordability at the expense of



premium perception and educational depth. L’Essaine effectively bridges the gap between affordability and premium quality, addressing the segment’s fundamental unmet need.

Strategy Validation: Content Marketing Testing

Tabel 1

Pilot Instagram Campaign Metrics

Metric	Value	Benchmark/comment
Engagement Rate	3.9%	Above industry average 1.8%
Alignment with Target Segment	85%	High demographic match
Positive Comment Sentiment	92%	Strong content resonance

Sumber: Author’s Data, 2025

The pilot Instagram campaign utilized a series of educational content, including ingredient-focused carousels, myth-busting explanations, and communications of the brand’s “affordable premium” value proposition. This validation demonstrates that the theoretical segmentation and positioning strategies translated effectively into practical market response, confirming target segment identification and relevance of the positioning approach.

Discussion: Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Theoretical Contributions. This research advances STP theory in three ways. First, it demonstrates the adaptability of the STP framework for digital-native consumers in emerging markets by integrating platform-specific behaviors and content preferences as segmentation variables. Second, it empirically validates “affordable premium” as a viable positioning strategy, challenging the conventional binary categorization of premium versus budget markets. Third, the inclusion of content marketing validation as an integral STP component establishes a methodological precedent for bridging theory and practice.

Practical Contributions. For practitioners, the study offers a structured approach for identifying underserved niches through multi-variable segmentation. The findings support the viability of balancing quality and accessibility in markets characterized by aspirational yet budget-constrained consumers. For L’Essaine, the results translate into actionable strategies encompassing pricing, formulation, educational content marketing, digital-first distribution, and micro-influencer partnerships.

Limitations and Future Research. Limitations include limited generalizability due to qualitative sample size, cross-sectional design constraints,



and geographic focus on Java. Future research should incorporate quantitative validation, longitudinal tracking, AI-enabled dynamic segmentation, and cross-cultural comparisons within Southeast Asia.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the effective application of an enhanced Segmentation–Targeting–Positioning (STP) framework to identify and address an underserved Generation Z segment within Indonesia’s rapidly evolving skincare market. The findings indicate that university students aged 17–24 seeking affordable premium skincare products constitute a highly attractive market segment, achieving an overall attractiveness score of 7.8 out of 10. By employing a systematic multi-variable segmentation approach that integrates demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral dimensions, the research formulates an actionable positioning strategy centered on ingredient transparency, educational content, and accessible premiumization.

The proposed positioning is empirically supported through pilot content marketing validation, which achieved 85% alignment with the intended target demographic and an engagement rate of 3.9%. Theoretically, this research extends the STP framework by adapting it to digital-native consumer contexts and empirically validating the viability of “affordable premium” positioning within emerging markets. Practically, the study provides a strategic roadmap for pre-launch brands seeking market entry in highly competitive, digitally transforming environments through differentiated value propositions and community-oriented engagement strategies.

Future research should pursue longitudinal analyses to assess post-entry performance outcomes, large-scale quantitative validation of identified segments, and the development of AI-enabled dynamic segmentation models to further advance both theoretical and applied understanding of STP frameworks in digital consumer markets.

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