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THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON BRAND IMAGE AND PURCHASE INTENTION OF E-COMMERCE COSMETIC PRODUCTS

Ismed Jayadi[1], Agung Wahyu[2], Sumardin[3]
[1,2,3]Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Ibnu Sina, Batam
E-mail: [1)]eezmade@gmail.com, [2)]agungwahyu01a@gmail.com, [3)]sumardin@uis.ac.id

Abstract

In the digital age, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media platforms have dramatically transformed consumer behavior and marketing strategies. This study explores the impact of eWOM and social media marketing on brand image and consumer purchase intentions within the e-commerce cosmetic market in Indonesia. The study aims to understand the mechanisms through which these digital marketing strategies affect consumer perceptions and behaviors in a local cultural context. Using a quantitative causality research approach, the study sampled 260 respondents through purposive sampling and employed SEM-PLS for data analysis. The findings reveal that both eWOM and social media marketing significantly enhance brand image, which in turn positively influences purchase intentions. However, social media marketing alone did not show a significant direct effect on purchase intentions, highlighting the mediating role of brand image. This research provides valuable insights for marketers to optimize digital strategies, enhance consumer engagement, and build a competitive edge in the e-commerce cosmetic market.

Keywords: **Electronic Word of Mouth, Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Purchase Intention.**

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the landscape of consumer behavior and marketing strategies has been significantly reshaped by the advent of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media platforms. These platforms have become pivotal in influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, particularly within the burgeoning e-commerce sector, such as the market for cosmetic products in Indonesia. This study investigates how eWOM and social media marketing strategies employed by e-commerce brands impact both brand image formation and consumer purchase intentions in this specific urban setting.

With a growing population of tech-savvy consumers and increasing internet penetration rates, Indonesia represents a microcosm of broader digital marketing trends in Southeast Asia. Understanding how eWOM and social media marketing efforts interact with local consumer preferences and cultural contexts is crucial for both academics and practitioners in developing effective marketing strategies.

The influence of eWOM, defined as any positive or negative statement regarding a product, a service or a company shared via the internet by potential, actual or former customers, which became available to many people and institutions (Al-Dmour, 2022), has garnered substantial scholarly attention due to its rapid dissemination and perceived credibility among consumers. In the realm of cosmetic products, where trust and product efficacy are paramount, eWOM plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions of brands and their offerings. Consequently, exploring how positive or negative eWOM impacts brand image and subsequently influences purchase intentions is essential for comprehending consumer decision-making processes.

Social media platforms have emerged as indispensable tools for marketers seeking to engage with consumers directly and cultivate brand loyalty. Bismoaziiz (2021) defined social media marketing as using existing social media platforms to increase brand awareness among consumers on online platforms through the use of the principles of word-of-mouth. The interactive nature of

platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok allows brands to create immersive brand experiences, disseminate targeted promotional content, and facilitate consumer interactions in real time. Such engagement not only enhances brand visibility but also fosters a sense of community among consumers, potentially translating into heightened purchase intentions and brand advocacy.

The concept of brand image encompasses the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes consumers associate with a particular brand. Brand image is a perception about a brand which is a reflection of consumers' memory of their association with the brand (Asnawati, 2022). For e-commerce cosmetic products in Indonesia, building a positive brand image is crucial for establishing competitive advantage amidst a saturated market. A favorable brand image not only influences initial purchase decisions but also fosters long-term customer loyalty and advocacy. Understanding how eWOM and social media strategies contribute to shaping brand image is therefore instrumental in formulating effective marketing campaigns tailored to local consumer preferences.

According to Tania et al. (2023), purchase intention is a consumer behavior that has the desire to buy or take action related to purchasing a particular product. In the context of e-commerce cosmetic products, factors such as perceived product quality, brand reputation, pricing strategies, and social influence exert considerable influence on purchase decisions. By examining the interplay between eWOM, social media marketing tactics, brand image, and purchase intention, this study seeks to unravel the underlying mechanisms driving consumer behavior in Indonesia's e-commerce cosmetic market.

From the description above, the author conducted research on the role of brand image as mediating the effect of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and social media marketing on purchase intention of e-commerce cosmetics which is a replication of previous research conducted by Jayad et al. (2023). In this research, the authors limit the research only to examine the effect of electronic word of mouth and social media marketing with brand image as the intervening variable on the purchase intention of e-commerce cosmetic products. With this background, researchers are interested in conducting a study entitled “The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing on Brand Image and Purchase Intention of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products".

This research contributes to the existing literature by offering empirical insights into the specific dynamics of eWOM and social media marketing within the context of e-commerce cosmetic products in Indonesia. By identifying the factors that influence brand image formation and purchase intentions, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for marketers aiming to optimize their digital marketing strategies and enhance consumer engagement in this evolving marketplace.

Based on the background description, the formulation of the problem to be studied is as follows:

1. Is there any influence of eWOM on the brand image of ecommerce cosmetic products in Indonesia?
2. Is there any influence of eWOM on the purchase intention of ecommerce cosmetic products in Indonesia?
3. Is there any influence of social media marketing on the brand image of ecommerce cosmetic products in Indonesia?
4. Is there any influence of social media marketing on the purchase intention of ecommerce cosmetic products in Indonesia?
5. Is there any influence of brand image on the purchase intention of ecommerce cosmetic products in Indonesia?

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The following is the conceptual framework in this study regarding the influence of electronic word of mouth and social media marketing on brand image and purchase intention is as follows.

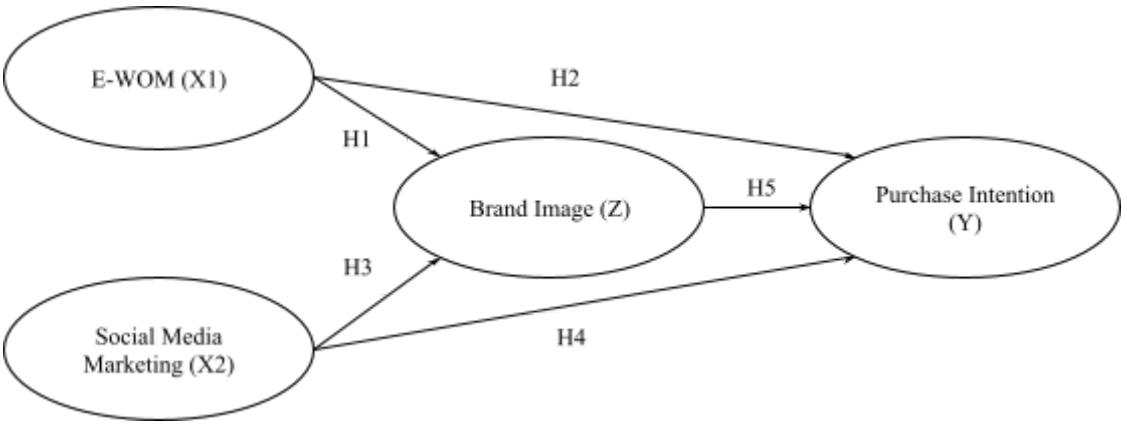

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Where:

X_1 : E-WOM
X_2 : Social Media Marketing
Z : Brand Image
Y : Purchase Intention

Based on the research analysis model above, the following research hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: E-WOM affects the Brand Image of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products
H2: E-WOM affects the Purchase Intention of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products
H3: Social Media Marketing affects the Brand Image of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products
H4: Social Media Marketing affects the Purchase Intention of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products
H5: Brand Image affects the Purchase Intention of E-Commerce Cosmetic Products

The identification and operational definition of research variables are as follows:

1. E-WOM (X1). Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) is an online phenomenon where potential, current, or former customers share positive or negative statements about products, services, or companies. These statements, disseminated widely through the internet, including social media and brand websites, become accessible to a broad audience. eWOM serves as a powerful tool in shaping public perception and influencing consumer behavior due to its widespread availability and the trust consumers place in peer reviews. The indicators used (Ellison and Boyd, 2013) are recommendations from friends on social media, consultations from friends on social media, and experiences from friends on social media. Then the measurement scale used is the Likert scale.
2. Social Media Marketing (X2). Social Media Marketing is a strategic approach that leverages existing social media platforms to enhance brand awareness and engage consumers. By creating relevant and valuable content, companies can increase consumer recognition of branded posts and foster engagement in online social locations where consumers naturally spend time. This marketing practice often incorporates principles of word-of-mouth to further amplify brand reach and impact. The indicators used (Fahmi, 2020) are be active, be

interesting, be humble, be unprofessional, and be honest. Then the measurement scale used is the Likert scale.

3. Brand Image (Z). Brand image is the perception held by consumers about a brand, shaped by their memories and associations with it. It encompasses the way consumers view a company's products or services and the emotional experiences businesses create to engage and touch consumers. This perception is a critical aspect of how a brand is remembered and recognized in the market. The indicators used according to (Fahmi, 2020) are attributes, benefits, and attitudes. Then the measurement scale used is the Likert scale.
4. Purchase Intention (Y). Purchase intention is the consumer's subjective judgment and desire to buy a product or service, influenced by their interest and the perceived possibility of making the purchase. It encompasses the decision-making process where consumers evaluate their likelihood of buying and taking action towards purchasing a particular product. The indicators used according to (Tania et al., 2020) are transactional interest, referential interest, preferential interest, and explorative interest.

The type of this research is quantitative causality research. The approach used is a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is used to determine the effect of electronic word of mouth and social media marketing with brand image as an intervening variable on the purchase intention of cosmetic products. The population of this study is all Indonesian citizens who are interested in buying and using cosmetics through ecommerce and already have income. The sampling technique in this study is the non-probability sampling method. Researchers chose to use this method because they did not know the identity and number of members of the study population. The type of sample used is purposive sampling which selects respondents for certain relevant characteristics that describe the dimensions (proportions) of the population. The number of samples required at least 5 times the number of indicators (Hair (2019). Ghozali (2021) also explained that. This research is using quantitative methods with descriptive methods through questionnaire media as the main research tool in data collection. The distribution of this questionnaire is carried out online, namely through Google Form. This research uses SEM-PLS. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a combination of two separate statistical methods, namely factor analysis developed in psychology and psychometrics and simultaneous equation modeling developed in econometrics (Ghozali, 2021).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents in this study can be grouped into several aspects, namely gender, age, education level, and job. The description of each respondent's characteristics can be described as follows:

1. By gender

Based on gender, respondents to this study can be described as follows:

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents by gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage
Man	8	4.0
Woman	192	96.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Source: Processed primary data, 2023

From the table above, it is known that male respondents in this study were 8 respondents or 4.0% while female respondents were 192 or 96.0% of the total respondents (200), so there were more female respondents than men in this study.

2. By age

Based on age, respondents of this study can be described as follows:

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents by age

Age	Amount	Percentage
< 25 year	89	44.5
26 – 35 year	53	26.5
36 – 46 year	23	11.5
46- 55 year	24	12.0
> 55 year	11	5.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Source: Processed primary data, 2023

From the table above, it can be seen that the respondents in this study were mostly aged < 25 years with a total of 89 respondents or 44.5% of the total respondents.

3. By the level of education

Based on the level of education, the respondents of this study can be described as follows:

Table 3. Characteristics of respondents based on education level

Education Level	Amount	Percentage
High School	84	42.0
Diploma	12	6.0
Bachelor (S1)	79	39.5
Master (S2)	23	11.5
Doctor (S3)	2	1.0
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Source: Processed primary data, 2023

From the table above, it is known that most of respondents in this study had high school education with a percentage of 42.0% or 84 respondents, while the least were the respondents with the S3 (doctoral) education, which is 1.0% of the total respondents.

4. By job

Based on job, the respondents of this study can be described as follows:

Table 4. Characteristics of respondents by occupation

Occupation	Amount	Percentage
Teacher	5	2.5
Dentist	1	0.5
Lecturer	2	1.0
Freelancer	5	2.5
Honorary Employee of Province Government	1	0.5
Housewife	37	18.5
Undergraduate/Graduate Student	69	34.5
Employee of Government/PNS/ASN	3	1.5
Private Employee	48	24.0
Entrepreneur	16	8.0
Professionals	12	6.0
Unemployed	1	0.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**

Source: Processed primary data, 2023

From the table above, it is known that most of respondents in this study were undergraduate/graduate students with a percentage of 34.5%, or as many as 69 respondents out of a total of 200 respondents.

Data Analysis

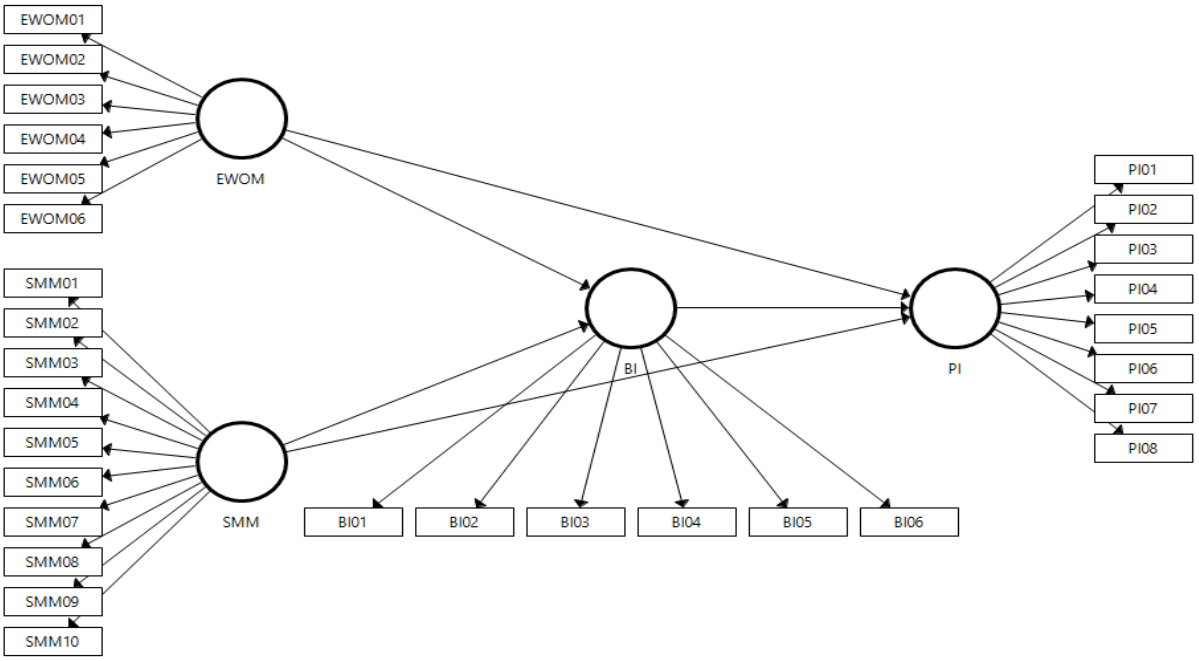

Figure 2. Initial Model

Discriminant validity of reflexive indicators can be seen from the root that AVE must be greater than the correlation between constructs or seen from cross-loading where the correlation of a variable's construct with its indicator must be higher than the correlation of the indicator with other constructs (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 5. Cross Loadings, Final Iteration

	BI	EWOM	PI	SMM
BI01	0.806	0.519	0.612	0.337
BI02	0.825	0.470	0.672	0.275
BI03	0.847	0.549	0.712	0.261
BI05	0.747	0.526	0.634	0.207
BI06	0.725	0.395	0.623	0.232
EWOM01	0.548	0.834	0.543	0.027

EWOM02	0.522	0.846	0.545	0.066
EWOM03	0.416	0.825	0.455	-0.040
EWOM04	0.495	0.798	0.515	0.065
EWOM05	0.609	0.891	0.607	0.067
EWOM06	0.525	0.838	0.544	0.081
PI01	0.691	0.519	0.812	0.292
PI02	0.638	0.575	0.800	0.174
PI03	0.666	0.523	0.858	0.209
PI04	0.652	0.522	0.851	0.146
PI05	0.714	0.547	0.853	0.162
PI06	0.743	0.577	0.864	0.225
PI07	0.725	0.564	0.847	0.235
PI08	0.679	0.466	0.817	0.238
SMM03	0.273	0.056	0.200	0.818
SMM05	0.310	0.015	0.233	0.903
SMM06	0.310	0.051	0.220	0.897
SMM07	0.290	0.051	0.251	0.905
SMM08	0.324	0.105	0.243	0.904
SMM10	0.167	-0.019	0.116	0.724

Source: SmartPLS, 2023

From the above table, it can be seen that the correlation of all variable constructs with their indicators are higher than the correlation of these indicators with other constructs (cross loading). Thus, the discriminant validity requirements of the indicator have been fulfilled.

Discriminant validity of the constructs can be done by looking at the AVE value. A good model is required if the AVE value of each construct is greater than 0.50 (Ghozali 2021).

In the following table, it can be seen that in this research, all AVE values were above 0.50 so that all constructs met the discriminant validity requirements. All composite reliabilities and Cronbach's Alpha are greater than 0.70, so that the reliability requirements for all constructs are met. Thus it can be concluded that all variables used are valid and reliable.

Table 6. Construct Reliability and Validity, Final Iteration

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
BI	0.850	0.854	0.893	0.626
EWOM	0.916	0.921	0.935	0.704
PI	0.939	0.940	0.950	0.702
SMM	0.930	0.946	0.945	0.742

Source: SmartPLS, 2023

Hypothesis Testing

The final analysis of the full model to test the hypotheses was conducted by running PLS Algorithm and Bootstrapping. The analysis had produced the following results:

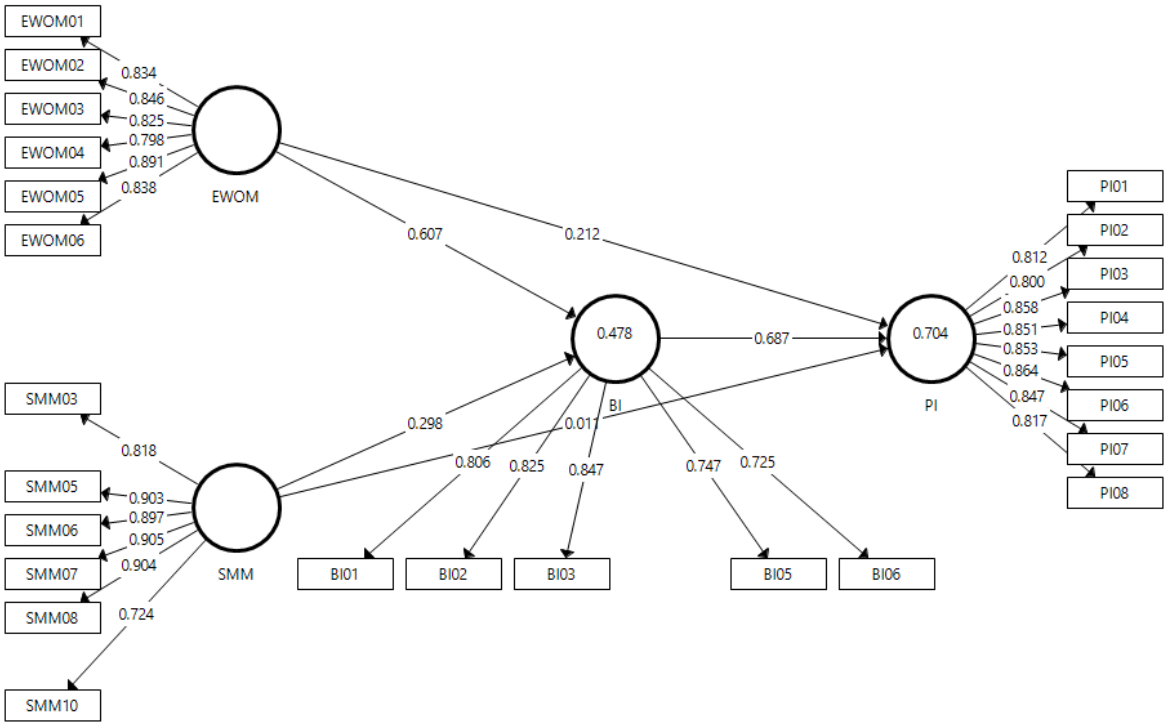

Figure 3. Path Coefficient, Final Iteration

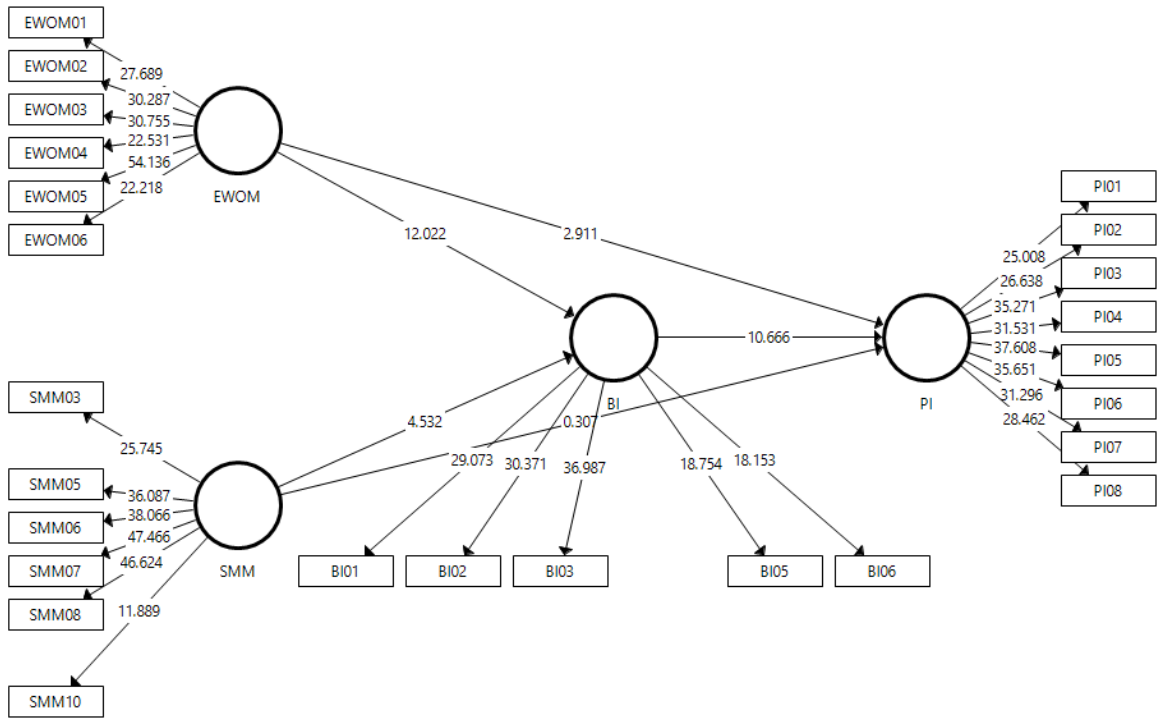

Figure 4. t Values, Final Iteration

Table 7. Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values of Final Iteration

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
BI -> PI	0.687	0.685	0.064	10.666	0.000
EWOM -> BI	0.607	0.610	0.051	12.022	0.000
EWOM -> PI	0.212	0.216	0.073	2.911	0.004
SMM -> BI	0.298	0.297	0.066	4.532	0.000
SMM -> PI	0.011	0.015	0.037	0.307	0.759

Source: SmartPLS (2013)

The results of hypothesis testing can be seen by looking at the t-value, i.e. T Statistics (|O/STDEV|) values and probability value (P Values) of the data processing results. The direction of the relationship between variables can be seen from the estimate value (Original Sample), if the estimate value is positive then the relationship between variables is positive, while if the estimate value is negative then the relationship is negative. Furthermore, if the test results show a t-value above 1.96 and a probability value (P) below 0.05 or 5%, the relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables is significant. In detail, testing the research hypotheses will be discussed according to the hypotheses that have been proposed. The results of the analysis in the table above show that:

1. EWOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image (BI). These results are evidenced by a positive estimate value, t-statistic value above 1.96 and P-Value below 0.05. Thus, H1 in this study is supported.
2. EWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (PI). These results are evidenced by a positive estimate value, t-statistic value above 1.96 and P-Value below 0.05. Thus, H2 in this study is supported.

3. Social media marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on brand image (BI). These results are evidenced by a positive estimate value, t-statistic value above 1.96 and P-Value below 0.05. Thus, H3 in this study is supported.
4. Social media marketing (SMM) has a positive but not significant effect on purchase intention (PI). These results are evidenced by a positive estimate value, a t-statistic value below 1.96 and a P-Value value above 0.05. Thus, H4 in this study is not supported.
5. Brand Image (BI) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (PI). These results are evidenced by a positive estimate value, statistical value above 1.96 and P-Value below 0.05. Thus, H5 in this study is supported.

Discussion

1. The Influence of EWOM on Brand Image
   The first hypothesis in this study posits that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly impacts the brand image of e-commerce cosmetic products. The analysis results confirm this hypothesis, demonstrating that an increase in eWOM positively and significantly enhances brand image. This finding aligns with several previous studies, including those by Torlak et al. (2014), Hidayatullah and Dirgantara (2018), Janah and Suswardji (2021), and Eriza (2017). These studies collectively reinforce the notion that effective eWOM strategies in cosmetic e-commerce marketing can substantially elevate a company's brand image. Thus, the empirical evidence from this study underscores the critical role of eWOM in shaping consumer perceptions and fortifying brand reputation in the competitive e-commerce landscape.
2. The Effect of EWOM on Purchase Intention
   The second hypothesis in this study posits that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly influences the purchase intention of e-commerce cosmetic products. The analysis results affirm this hypothesis, revealing that effective eWOM can significantly boost consumer purchase intentions. These findings are consistent with several previous studies, including those by Hidayatullah and Dirgantara (2018), Balakrishnan et al. (2014), Janah and Suswardji (2021), and Eriza (2017), which also highlight the positive impact of eWOM on purchase behavior. Consequently, the evidence suggests that if cosmetic e-commerce managers aim to enhance consumer purchase intentions, they should focus on strengthening their eWOM strategies. By fostering positive online reviews and encouraging consumer testimonials, companies can effectively drive higher purchase rates and achieve greater market success.
3. The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Image
   The third hypothesis in this study asserts that social media marketing significantly impacts the brand image of e-commerce cosmetic products. The analysis results confirm this hypothesis, indicating that enhanced social media marketing efforts lead to a substantial improvement in brand image. This finding aligns with previous studies by Fahmi et al. (2020), which similarly highlight the positive effects of social media marketing on brand perception. Social media marketing involves various strategies, such as engaging with consumers through timely responses to inquiries, utilizing polite and professional language, and providing valuable content that resonates with the target audience. For instance, Fahmi et al. (2020) demonstrated that such practices significantly improve the brand image of fast-food restaurants. Applying this to e-commerce cosmetic products, it can be inferred that brands that actively interact with their audience, offer personalized experiences, and maintain a consistent and appealing online presence can greatly enhance their brand image. This underscores the importance for cosmetic e-commerce managers to invest in robust

social media marketing strategies to build and maintain a positive brand image in a competitive market.

4. The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention
The fourth hypothesis in this study proposes that social media marketing significantly influences the purchase intention of e-commerce cosmetic products. However, the analysis results do not support this hypothesis, indicating that while social media marketing has a positive effect, it is not statistically significant in increasing purchase intention. This finding contrasts with several previous studies, including those by Hidayatullah and Dirgantara (2018), and Balakrishnan et al. (2014), which reported significant positive effects. On the other hand, the results are consistent with studies by Ahmed and Zahid (2014), who also found that social media marketing did not have a significant impact on purchase intention. These studies emphasize that factors such as customer relationship management, which includes caring for consumers and building emotional connections, play a more critical role in influencing purchase decisions. Lim et al. (2017) further analyzed various aspects of social media marketing and found that not all components significantly affect purchase intention. For instance, the credibility aspect of social media marketing was not found to significantly impact consumer purchase intention. This suggests that while social media marketing is an essential tool for brand engagement and visibility, its direct impact on purchase intention may be limited. E-commerce cosmetic brands should therefore focus on enhancing customer relationships and emotional connections alongside their social media efforts to drive purchase intentions effectively.

5. The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Intention
The fifth hypothesis in this study posits that brand image significantly affects the purchase intention of e-commerce cosmetic products. The analysis results support this hypothesis, demonstrating that an enhanced brand image substantially increases purchase intention among cosmetic e-commerce consumers. This finding is corroborated by several previous studies, including those by Janah and Suswardji (2021), and Eriza (2017), which similarly highlight the critical role of brand image in influencing consumer behavior. The results of this analysis underscore the importance for e-commerce managers to prioritize brand image enhancement as a strategic approach to boost consumer purchase intention. Brand image encompasses the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes that consumers hold about a brand. A positive brand image fosters consumer trust, loyalty, and a greater likelihood of purchase. Therefore, it is imperative for e-commerce cosmetic brands to develop and maintain a strong, positive brand image. This can be achieved through consistent and authentic brand messaging, high-quality product offerings, excellent customer service, and engaging marketing campaigns that resonate with the target audience. By focusing on these areas, e-commerce managers can effectively influence consumer perceptions and drive higher purchase intentions, thereby achieving greater market success.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzes four variables related to the influence of EWOM and the role of social media (SMM) on brand image (BI) and purchase intention, this study also discusses brand image (BI) analysis of purchase intention (PI) of consumers of e-commerce cosmetic products. The analysis in this study was carried out using the Partial Least Squared - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method using SmartPLS software. This study analyzed 5 hypotheses and from the 5 hypotheses analyzed, H1, H2, H3 and H5 were supported while H4 was not supported, in detail it was found that:

1. EWOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image (BI). Thus, H1 in this study is supported. This shows that the better EWOM is implemented in cosmetic e-commerce marketing, the company's brand image will increase, and become an important factor in forming and developing brand image.

2. EWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (PI). Thus, H2 in this study is supported. This shows that if cosmetic e-commerce managers want to increase consumer purchase intention, it can be done through increasing EWOM, because consumers are more easily influenced by reviews from previous users.
3. Social media marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on brand image (BI). Thus, H3 in this study is supported. Social media is the right place for companies to expand market share and strengthen relationships between companies and consumers.
4. Social media marketing (SMM) has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intention (PI). Thus, H4 in this study is not supported. This is because cosmetic consumers trust reviews and experiences from others more than advertisements on social media.
5. Brand Image (BI) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (PI). Thus, H5 in this study is supported. This shows that when a brand has a good image, it will be easier for consumers to buy the products in future and by utilizing this visual information can increase the overall understanding of product benefits.

Suggestion

For further research, it is recommended to expand the scope of research by adding other variables to improve the company's brand image and increase public purchase intention in e-commerce cosmetics and carried out in several regions in Indonesia with a wider reach. Future research is also expected to be able to combine analytical methods, namely using mixed methods by completing quantitative findings with qualitative findings.

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