

The Influence Of Electronic Word Of Mouth And Brand Ambassadors On Brand Image And Purchasing Decisions On Local Skincare Products

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Abstract:

The increasingly rapid development of skincare in the world today makes manufacturers compete more fiercely to dominate the market. This research aims to analyze the influence of electronic word of mouth and brand ambassadors on brand image and purchasing decisions for local skincare products among Jember University students. The sampling method used confidence sampling of 140 respondents. The data used in this research is primary data obtained from distributing questionnaires and the analysis method used is path analysis with the SPSS 21 program and the t test which the results the variables Electronic Word Of Mouth, Brand Ambassador and Brand Image as mediating variables have a significant effect on buying decision.

Keyword: *Electronic Word Of Mouth, Brand Ambassador Brand Image and Purchase Decisions*

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I. Introduction

Economic, technological and cultural developments in the current era of globalization have resulted in increasingly developing human needs, one of which is personal needs. One of the personal needs is maintaining your appearance through beauty treatments such as skincare. Skincare is a secondary need to beautify oneself to support one's appearance. Skincare is a product that is no longer foreign to young people, including students at the University of Jember. Jember University is one of the State Universities which has the largest number of students in Jember Regency, in the odd semester 2022/2023 it is 39,677 (unej.ac.id, 2023). Seeing the large number of students, indirectly the use of skincare has also increased.

In the current era, various kinds of local skincare are still an option. According to Populix survey results, Indonesian consumers' preference for local brand cosmetics is quite high, 90% of people use local beauty brands (Fimela, 2023). Among the various skincare brands spread, there are several local skincare brands that are most popular in the April 2023 period, such as the Wardah brand with 26% users, MS.Glow 7%, Scarlett Whitening 7%, Emina 5% (Statista, 2024). Nowadays it is easy to find fake skincare products, which are no less circulating as if they want to compete with the original products themselves. As many as 18.4% of respondents who bought skincare products at unofficial online stores admitted that they had been sent fake products (databoks, 2023). BPOM also said that 23% of cosmetic promotional advertisements did not meet the requirements. This indirectly has a bad influence on the company and causes losses, which are caused by the actions of irresponsible parties.

What can lead to purchasing decisions is the influence of positive or negative information on electronic media, or what is called electronic word of mouth. According to Kotler and Keller (2016: 135) electronic word of mouth is a marketing technique that uses the internet to create a word of mouth news effect to support business and marketing goals, thereby creating a brand image for the company.

Brand ambassadors are expected to be advertisers and spokespersons who help reflect a brand in the minds of consumers, so that they can create a sense of interest in consumers in making purchasing decisions. The appearance of a local skincare brand ambassador with a beautiful and handsome face, and having smooth skin in the advertisement can be an attraction for consumers to try the product being promoted and will build a brand image that has an impact on purchasing decisions. .

Brand image is also very important in the business world because it can influence consumers to buy and use the products offered by the company. This is the reason why a company, especially a local skincare company, is able to create a brand that is attractive, positive, and firmly embedded in the minds of consumers by providing benefits to the product according to consumer desires, thus creating a positive perception that encourages consumers to make purchasing decisions.

II. Literature Review

Consumer behavior is the study of how individuals or groups are involved in selecting and purchasing goods and services that consumers expect to satisfy their needs and desires. Based on this theory, consumer behavior has a close relationship with the purchasing decision process. What can lead to purchasing decisions is the influence of positive or negative information on electronic media, or what is called electronic word of mouth.

According to Henning-Thurau et al, in Hutami Permita Sari (2014:35) defines Electronic Word Of Mouth as a positive or negative statement made by customers, actual or former customers about a product or company, which is made to many people and institutions through internet.. Electronic word of mouth is permanent in the form of writing and has unlimited geographical reach in the form of comments, reviews and comments. Comments, reviews and negative reviews will also have an impact on brand image and purchasing decisions.

Marketing strategies are currently increasingly varied and developing, companies are competing to find effective formulas to attract consumers. Brand ambassadors can be said to be part of a company's creative strategy, which is carried out to attract consumer purchasing decisions. According to Lea-Greenwood (2012:88) brand ambassadors are tools used by companies to communicate with the public which is a marketing strategy to improve brand image, so that they can have a good image and are more easily recognized or remembered by the public, so that they can Indirectly, this can influence purchasing decisions.

Brand image is a consumer's description of a product, according to what they know and use or consume. Consumers will be more interested if they recognize and remember the product, for example from the logo, slogan, color, image, product packaging or other specific things. Having good experiences and preferences makes it easier for consumers to decide to buy a product, thereby forming a strong brand image in the minds of consumers. This plays a role in a person's decision to consume the product.

III. Conceptual Framework

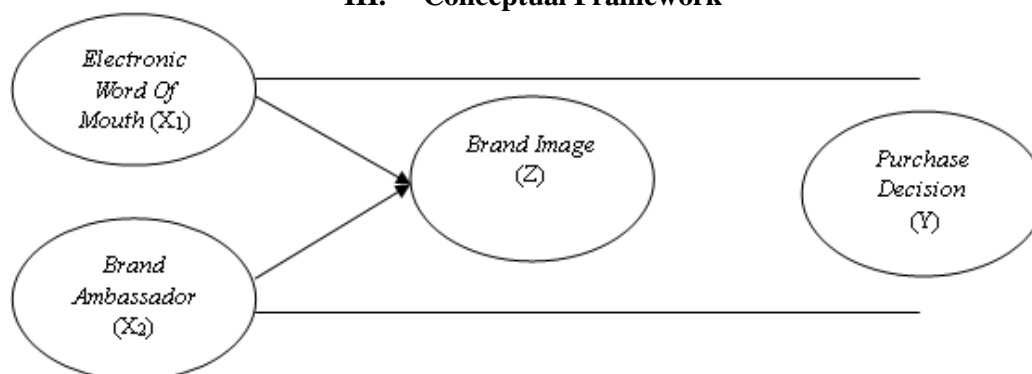


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

IV. Hypothesis

The partial influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and brand ambassadors on brand image

Electronic word of mouth is a very important message for fellow consumers when they want to know information about the quality of a product and will serve as a reference before making a decision. The better electronic word of mouth that occurs between consumer interactions on online platforms, the better the brand image formed in consumers' minds will be. This explanation is supported by research which states that electronic word of mouth has an effect on brand image, namely Wayan and Ni Nyoman (2019), Febriani (2020), and Erika and Ce Gunawan (2021) that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on brands image.

Brand ambassadors are one of the important things because the more famous the brand ambassador is, the more well-known the product being advertised is to the public or creates an impression that is able to form a brand image in the minds of consumers. Brand ambassadors will help create a stronger emotional connection between a brand/company and consumers so that it will indirectly build a brand image (product image) which has an impact on purchasing decisions and product use. This explanation is supported by several studies which state that brand ambassadors influence brand image. Sisca et. al (2021), Fatdilla et. al (2022) stated that brand ambassadors have a significant positive influence on brand image. Based on theory and previous research, a hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and brand ambassadors have a significant effect on brand image

Partial influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors and brand image on purchasing decisions

According to Kotler and Keller (2009: 512), electronic word of mouth is marketing activities through person-to-person intermediaries either verbally, in writing, or through electronic communication tools related to the experience of purchasing services or the experience of using products or services. When information is exchanged through electronic word of mouth, consumers will evaluate the product first before deciding to buy a product. One of the characteristics of electronic word of mouth is that it can positively influence consumers in their decision-making process in making purchasing decisions. In line with research conducted by Saraswati and Giantari (2021), Tessa & Felix (2021) stated that Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions.

Brand ambassadors will help create a stronger emotional connection between a brand/company and consumers so that it will indirectly build a product image that has an impact on purchasing decisions and product use (Royan, 2004: 8). According to the research results of Erlita (2020), Sari Dewi et.al (2020), in their research stated that brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions

Through brand image, consumers can recognize products, evaluate quality, reduce purchase risk, and gain certain experiences and obtain certain satisfaction from a product (Kotler, 2010). Brand image is an important aspect that is related to goods and services, which consumers will pay attention to when making a decision. Brand image is also one of the variables that has statement items that influence purchasing decisions. According to Ahmad Rifa'i, et.al (2018), Nur Rohmatun et.al (2019), Dwiki, et.al (2019), brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. The hypothesis in this research refers to theory and previous research:

H2: electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors and brand image partially have a significant effect on purchasing decisions

The influence of brand image is able to mediate electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassador on Purchasing Decisions

Brand image is "Consumer associations or perceptions based on their memories of a product" Kotler and Keller (2016). Through brand image, consumers can recognize products, evaluate quality, reduce purchase risk, and gain certain experiences and obtain certain satisfaction from a product (Kotler, 2010). Brand image is an important aspect that is related to goods and services, which consumers will pay attention to when making a decision. Before buying, someone will see electronic word of mouth and brand ambassadors for a product which creates a brand image that will influence purchasing decisions. Research states that brand image mediation influences purchasing decisions. Research by Nur Rohmatun et.al (2019), Dwiki, et.al (2019), shows that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Based on the theory and empirical evidence above, the research hypothesis can be said to be:

H3: Brand image is able to mediate electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions

V. Research Methods

This research is explanatory research with a quantitative approach, namely explaining the position of each variable, as well as the relationship between the variables. The measurement scale for this research is quoted from Kadoya and Khan (2018:4) with the measurement scale giving one point for each selected answer option, not adding points for answers that are not selected. According to Jalilvand & Samiei (2012), indicators of electronic word of mouth are reading other consumer reviews about products online, consulting online with other consumers, trusting online consumer reviews when purchasing. Prawira et al. (2012) stated that there are brand ambassador indicators known as VisCAP: Visibility (popularity), Credibility (credibility), Attraction (attractiveness), Power (strength). Simamora (2008:33) Brand image indicators are the image of the maker (Corporate Image), the image of the product (Product Image), the image of the user (User Image). Kotler and Armstrong (2008:181), there are four indicators in purchasing decisions, namely confidence in buying after knowing product information, deciding to buy because it is the most preferred brand, buying because of recommendations from other people. Quantitative data type, because the data obtained will be in the form of numbers. The data is analyzed further through statistical calculations. The data source in this research is primary data. Primary data was obtained directly from informants, namely Jember University students who used local skincare products. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire distributed directly to respondents via Google Form.

The population used in this research were Jember University students who used local skincare products. The number of samples used in this research refers to the theory of Hair, et.al (2014: 100) which is calculated based on the number of indicators multiplied by between 5 and 10. This resulted in 140 respondents. The sampling method uses non-probability sampling, convenience sampling technique. This research uses data

analysis techniques with path analysis. Before carrying out path analysis, it is necessary to carry out a classic assumption test consisting of a normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test and heteroscedasticity test.

VI. Results

Validity and Reliability test

Table 1. Validity and reliability test results

Indicator	Validity	Reliability
X1.1	0,000	0,744
X1.2	0,000	
X1.3	0,000	
X2.1	0,000	0,805
X2.2	0,000	
X2.3	0,000	
X2.4	0,000	
Z1	0,000	0,691
Z2	0,000	
Z3	0,000	
Y1	0,000	0,638
Y2	0,000	
Y3	0,000	

Source : Primary Data

It can be seen that the correlation between each indicator and the total construct score of each variable shows valid results because $\alpha > \text{Sig.}$ so it can be concluded that all statement items are declared valid and the results of the reliability test show that all variables have sufficient alpha coefficients, namely $\alpha > 0.60$ or meet the criteria.

Classic Assumption Test

Normality test

The normality test aims to test whether in the regression model the confounding or residual variables have a normal distribution or not. Statistical tests can use the Kolmogorov Smirnov test, which is as follows:

Table 2. Normality test results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		140
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.07775312
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.106
	Positive	.029
	Negative	-.106
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.838
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.433
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		

Source : Primary Data

Based on this table, it is known that the significance value of Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) of 0.433 is greater than 0.05. So in accordance with the basis of purchasing decisions in the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test above, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed. Thus, the assumptions or prerequisites for normality in the regression model have been fulfilled. Next, the normality test is carried out by observing the distribution of data on the diagonal axis of the graph by looking at the histogram and normal plot.

Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test aims to test whether the regression model finds any correlation between the independent variables. A good regression model should have no correlation between independent variables. If independent variables are correlated with each other, then these variables are not orthogonal. Orthogonal

variables are independent variables equal to zero. The results of the multicollinearity test can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Multicollinearity test results

Variabel	Collinearity Statistic	
	Tolerance	VIF
X ₁ → Z	0,579	2,001
X ₂ → Z	0,599	1,101
X ₁ → Y	0,876	2,325
X ₂ → Z	0,727	2,208
Z → Y	0,809	2,336

Source : Primary Data

From the test results above, it can be seen that there is no multicollinearity between all influences between variables. This is because there is a VIF value < 10 and a tolerance value > 0.1.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 4. Heteroscedasticity test results

Variabel	Sig
X ₁ → Z	0,370
X ₂ → Z	0,163
X ₁ → Y	0,864
X ₂ → Y	0,409
Z → Y	0,660

Source : Primary Data

The significant value of the influence of each variable is greater than 0.05. It can be concluded that heteroscedasticity does not occur in the regression model tested

T Test

Table 5. T test results

Variables	Coefficient	Sig
X ₁ → Z	.352	.006
X ₂ → Z	.443	.001
X ₁ → Y	.239	.005
X ₂ → Y	.410	.000
Z → Y	.320	.002

Source : Primary Data

Shows that electronic word of mouth and brand ambassadors influence brand image, electronic word of mouth, brand ambassadors and brand image influence purchasing decisions

Path Analysis

Table 6. Heteroscedasticity test results

Path	Coefficient
X ₁ → Z	0,352
X ₂ → Z	0,443
X ₁ → Y	0,239
X ₂ → Y	0,410
Z → Y	0,320

Source : Primary Data

Based on table 6, namely the path coefficient output results, the following is a picture of the path coefficient: $\rho_{X_1.Y} = 0,239$

VII. Discussion

The partial influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and brand ambassadors on brand image

Electronic word of mouth is a very important message for fellow consumers when they want to know information about the quality of a product and will serve as a reference before making a decision. The better electronic word of mouth that occurs between consumer interactions on online platforms, the better the brand image formed in consumers' minds will be. Brand ambassadors are one of the important things because the more famous the brand ambassador is, the more well-known the product being advertised is to the public or creates an impression that is able to form a brand image in the minds of consumers. Brand ambassadors will help create a

stronger emotional connection between a brand/company and consumers so that it will indirectly build a brand image (product image) which has an impact on purchasing decisions and product use. This explanation is supported by several studies which state that brand ambassadors influence brand image.

H1: Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) and brand ambassadors have a significant effect on brand image

The partial influence of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) brand ambassadors and brand image on purchasing decisions

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H2: electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors and brand image partially have a significant effect on purchasing decisions

Brand image is able to mediate electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions

Brand image is "Consumer associations or perceptions based on their memories of a product" Kotler and Keller (2016). Through brand image, consumers can recognize products, evaluate quality, reduce purchase risk, and gain certain experiences and obtain certain satisfaction from a product (Kotler, 2010). Brand image is an important aspect that is related to goods and services, which consumers will pay attention to when making a decision. Before buying, someone will see electronic word of mouth and brand ambassadors for a product which creates a brand image that will influence purchasing decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the indirect influence is stronger than the direct influence so that brand image is able to mediate electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions.

H3: Brand image is able to mediate electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions.

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