

The Effect of Online Advertising and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention through Brand Image as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract: Due to the rapid advancement of information technology, consumers can exchange information in person and over the internet. This study aimed to examine the effect of Online Advertising and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Brand Image, which in turn had an impact on Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia. A questionnaire was distributed to 210 respondents who had been chosen using a purposive sampling technique. Subsequently, the data were analyzed employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 26 software. The primary finding in this research was that Online Advertising and E-WOM had a positive effect on Brand Image and Purchase Intention. In addition, Brand Image had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention and played a significant mediating role in Online Advertising and E-WOM.

Keywords: Online Advertising; E-WOM; Brand Image; Purchase Intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital world is rapidly evolving in the globalization era. Thus, various activities, such as digital marketing or buying and selling goods and services, can be carried out on the internet. According to an APJII survey conducted in 2022, there are 210.7 million internet users in Indonesia, accounting for 77.2% of the total population. Their reasons for using the internet include 1) accessing social media sites such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube*, 2) accessing public services, 3) making online transactions, 4) accessing information or news, and 5) working or studying from home. According to the survey results, social media can introduce new communication approaches in everyday life, which is critical for optimizing marketing strategies.

The expansion of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia is currently attracting attention. In 2021, the cosmetics market, including the pharmaceutical, chemical, and traditional medicine industries, grew by 9.61% (BPS, 2021), indicating that it remains one of the most promising. This growth phenomenon is driven by the increasing awareness of Indonesian people, who regard make-up and self-care as a way of life. In this context, an increasingly complex lifestyle implies that cosmetics are thought to boost self-confidence, particularly in women. The competition to increase market share is undoubtedly becoming more difficult as the cosmetic industry grows. As a result, in order to compete, local businesses must grow and innovate by developing the most effective marketing strategies.

Because the growth of online advertising cannot be limited or stopped, optimizing its effectiveness has become a challenge for companies (Chung *et al.*, 2016). Hence, they use online advertising to promote their products and brands. According to Stephen (2016), advertising is critical for product marketing, in which enterprises use it to persuade people

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to buy their products. Adequate online advertising methods can assist businesses in attracting customer attention and purchase intention, increasing product or brand recognition, intensifying consumer perceived value, and lowering risk.

Aside from online advertising, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) is also essential in influencing customers' purchase intention. According to Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), as technology advances, more people use the internet to research goods and businesses, which results in reviews or E-WOM. It builds brand image and increases consumer purchase intention. As a result, posting positive E-WOM information about products and brands on social media can boost brand image and purchase intention (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). E-WOM reviews can increase individuals' trust in purchasing products because feedback from previous customers can boost their confidence in evaluating purchasing decisions.

Several studies found that online advertising and E-WOM had a positive effect on purchase intention (Hidayat & Astuti, 2019; Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, other investigations found that advertising had no effect on purchase intention (Dewi & Hartono, 2019). Furthermore, Febriyantoro (2020) confirmed that brand image had no effect on purchase intention. Given the various discussions about the effects of online advertising, E-WOM, and brand image on purchase intention, the present research was deemed relevant in this context. However, the necessary empirical evidence was still lacking, prompting researchers to focus on several new dimensions, including the effect of online advertising and E-WOM on purchase intention in Indonesia, as mediated by the brand image of local cosmetic products.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online Advertising and Brand Image

Online advertising is a marketing strategy that utilizes the internet to generate website traffic as well as target and deliver marketing messages to the appropriate consumers (Emery, 1996). It is advantageous because it is not limited by location or time, allowing customers to view it at any time or location (Robas, 2012). The effect of advertising on brand image evolves into a process that refers to the consumer's immediate reaction to the advertising elements displayed. As a result, appropriate consumer responses are anticipated to maintain the brand image (Akaka & Alden, 2013). Anggun *et al.*, (2019) found that online advertising could enhance brand image in consumers' minds. Considering the above findings, the present study proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Online Advertising has an effect on the Brand Image of local cosmetic products in Indonesia

2.2 Online Advertising and Purchase Intention

One of the most common places for online advertising to appear is on social media. Since internet access has become widely available, it has become a powerful commercial communication tool (Cabigting *et al.*, 2022). Customers' purchase intention benefits from social media marketing components such as perceptual and rational advertising appeals (Latif & Calicioglu, 2020). Consumers will be interested in purchasing products or services based on their prior experience, preferences, and the external environment, which includes advertising (Yang, 2009). Similarly, Jerome *et al.*, (2016) discovered a positive effect of online advertising on consumer response to purchasing the products featured in the advertisement. As a result of these discoveries, researchers formulated the following hypothesis:

H2: Online Advertising has an effect on the Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia

2.3 Electronic Word of Mouth and Brand Image

A positive or negative review of a product or service by potential, current, or even regular customers is called Electronic Word of Mouth. Many people can access it via the internet on various platforms (Hennig *et al.*, 2004). Meanwhile, Brand Image is a competitive advantage for generating rationality and increasing trust to build and maintain brand value (Kala & Chaubey, 2018). E-WOM is a dominant brand feature because it is an effective marketing strategy for managing sales. In this regard, social media is an example of an E-WOM platform (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Based on these findings, researchers proposed the following hypothesis:

H3: Electronic Word of Mouth has an effect on the Brand Image of local cosmetic products in Indonesia

2.4 Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention

Marketers must consider E-WOM to increase brand popularity and consumer purchase intention (Kala & Chaubey, 2018). E-WOM improves brand recognition, customer perception, purchase decision, and brand loyalty (Fergusson, 2008). Consumers frequently look for information about the product or service they want to purchase, one of which is through related reviews or comments (Abubakar *et al.*, 2016). Hence, suggestions or comments from other customers on platforms and communities can have an impact on purchase intention (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). It is supported by prior research, which discovered that E-WOM had a significant effect on purchase intention (Stubkjaer, 2015; Alwashdeh, 2019). Therefore, based on these results, researchers formulated the following hypothesis:

H4: Electronic Word of Mouth has an effect on Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia

2.5 Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image can influence client purchasing behavior, which can improve company performance (Malik *et al.*, 2013). A strong brand image necessitates a marketing strategy that weaves together solid, partial, and detailed plans (Kotler & Keller, 2016). It can potentially increase customer loyalty, trust, and purchase intention (Aaker & Keller, 2012). Purchase intention investigates the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a product. As a result, higher purchase intention reflects a significant willingness to purchase a product (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2018). Previous research demonstrated that brand image had a positive effect on purchase intention (Lien *et al.*, 2015; Godey *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated in this study:

H5: Brand Image has an effect on the Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia

H6: Brand Image mediates Online Advertising and Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia

H7: Brand Image mediates Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Measurements

Research data collection was carried out using a questionnaire involving a 5-Point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Online Advertising was measured using 8 items from 4 indicators (informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and irritation) by Kheng-Chieh Yang *et al.*, (2017). Electronic Word of Mouth was examined using 6 items from 3 indicators (quality, quantity, and sender’s expertise) adapted from Wu *et al.*, (2013). Brand Image was determined using 6 items from 3 indicators (uniqueness, strength, and benefit) by Kotler & Keller (2016) and Yuksel (2016). Purchase Intention was measured using 8 items from 4 indicators (transactional, referential, preferential, and explorative) by Ling (2010).

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The present survey involved 210 respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique. The samples involved were customers of a local cosmetic product in Indonesia named Make Over. The sampling locations were various cities in Indonesia, such as Pontianak, Jakarta, Bandung, Bali, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Medan, and various other areas chosen by online questionnaires.

3.3 Data Analysis

This investigation utilized SEM with AMOS 26 software. Through SEM, three kinds of analysis could be carried out simultaneously: confirming the instrument’s validity and reliability (confirmatory factor analysis), testing the model of the relationship between variables (measurement model), and obtaining the appropriate model for prediction (structural model analysis). The overall model fit was measured by Chi-Square (χ^2), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Root Mean Squared Residual (RMR), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

The demographic characteristics listed below were used to analyze the profiles of respondents.

Table-1: Respondent Characteristics

Category	Item	F	%
Gender	Female	210	100%
Age	18 – 19 years	25	12
	20 – 29 years	139	66
	30 – 39 years	32	15
	Over 50 years	14	7
	Total	210	100
Domicile	Jakarta	30	14
	Pontianak	48	23
	Bandung	28	13
	Bekasi	22	11
	Bali	26	12
	Yogyakarta	20	10
	Surabaya	17	8
	Medan	12	6
	Palembang	7	3
	Total	210	100
Occupation	Student	17	8
	College Student	45	22

Category	Item	F	%
	State Civil Apparatus	65	31
	Indonesian National Police/Indonesian National Armed Forces	22	10
	Entrepreneur	33	16
	Private Sector Employee	28	13
	Total	210	100
Purchase intensity of cosmetic products in 1 month	1 time	42	20
	2 times	81	38
	3 times	54	26
	More than 3 times	33	16
	Total	210	100
The average purchase of cosmetic products in 1 month	Less than IDR 100,000	31	13
	IDR 100,000 - IDR 200,000	53	23
	IDR 201,000 - IDR 300,000	88	37
	IDR 301,000 - IDR 400,000	38	16
	More than IDR 500,000	26	11
Total	210	100	
Social media as a source of information on purchasing cosmetic products	Instagram	59	28
	Facebook	15	7
	Twitter	35	17
	TikTok	47	22
	YouTube	23	11
	Online Platforms	31	15
Total	210	100	

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were female with an age range of 20-29 years, 139 people or 66%; the domicile was dominated by Pontianak, 48 people or 23%; most respondents worked as State Civil Apparatus, 65 people or 31%; the intensity of purchasing cosmetic products was up to 2 times within a month, 81 people or 31%; an average purchase was IDR 201,000 – IDR 300,000 within a month, 88 people or 37%; the source of information for purchasing cosmetic products was dominated by Instagram, 59 people or 28%.

4.2 Measurement and Structural Models

The results of Goodness of Fit, validity, and reliability tests are presented as follow.

Table-2: Measurement Model Results

Variables	Indicators	Items	SFL	AVE	CR
Online Advertising	Informativeness	OA1	0.608	0.790	0.797
		OA2	0.801		
	Entertainment	OA3	0.819		
		OA4	0.891		
	Credibility	OA5	0.857		
		OA6	0.821		
	Irritation	OA7	0.817		
		OA8	0.757		
E-WOM	Quality	EM1	0.762	0.815	0.802
		EM2	0.766		
	Quantity	EM3	0.839		
		EM4	0.746		
	Sender's Expertise	EM5	0.835		
		EM6	0.861		
Brand Image	Uniqueness	BI1	0.706	0.749	0.739
		BI2	0.774		
	Strength	BI3	0.810		
		BI4	0.711		
	Benefit	BI5	0.736		
		BI6	0.699		
Purchase Intention	Transactional	PI1	0.799	0.816	0.814
		PI2	0.785		

Variables	Indicators	Items	SFL	AVE	CR
	Referential	PI3	0.859		
		PI4	0.848		
	Preferential	PI5	0.823		
		PI6	0.826		
	Explorative	PI7	0.796		
		PI8	0.774		

Table 2 displays the results of the overall model validity and reliability tests. Standardized Factor Loading (SFL) values for all variable indicators in the full model were above 0.50. It indicated that all indicators were declared valid and able to measure the construct of the full model. The reliability test also obtained appropriate results. Thus, all instruments were declared reliable to measure the full model construct consistently. It was shown from the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all instrument indicators, which obtained a value of ≥ 0.50 , as well as a Construct Reliability (CR) value of ≥ 0.70 .

Table 3: Goodness of Fit Index

Goodness of Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Results
CMIN/DF	≤ 3.00	2.962
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.903
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.912
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.911

Based on the Goodness of Fit measurement results in Table 3, the model suitability requirements were accepted and declared fit. More specifically, four measurements showed the degree of good fit. Hair *et al.*, (2014) state that a research model construct can be declared fit and accepted if three to four measurements obtain a degree of good fit or above the cut-off value. CMIN/DF value = 2.962 (≤ 3.00) met the predetermined criteria. In addition, TLI = 0.903, IFI = 0.912, and CFI = 0.911 were also above 0.90, making it possible to state that a model fit was accepted and appropriate.

Hypotheses Testing

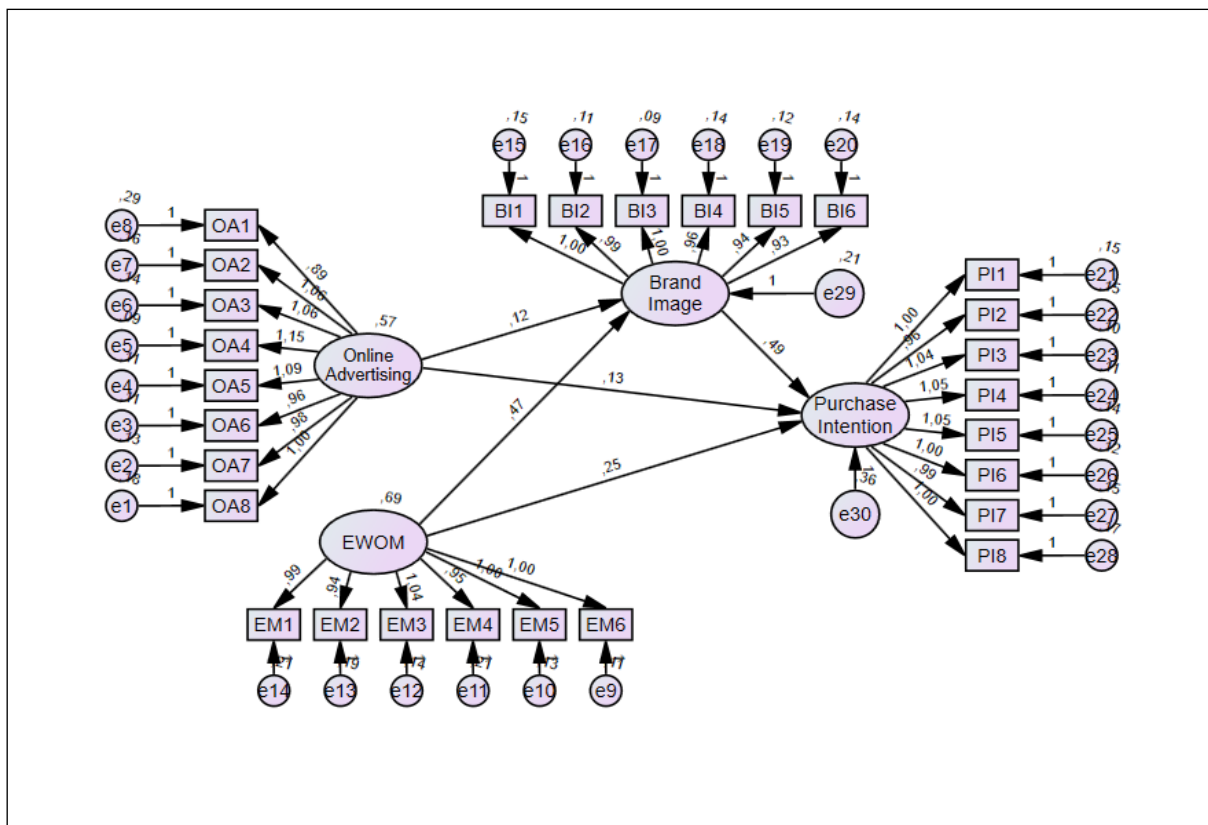


Fig 1: Full Structural Model Test

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing

Item	Std Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-values	Description
OA ---> BI	0.117	0.045	2.578	0.010	Accepted
OA ---> PI	0.130	0.059	2.219	0.026	Accepted
E-WOM --> BI	0.470	0.047	9.932	***	Accepted
E-WOM ---> PI	0.247	0.072	3.424	***	Accepted
BI ---> PI	0.487	0.103	4.729	***	Accepted

Based on Table 4, the t-score of the first hypothesis regarding the effect of Online Advertising on Brand Image was 2.578, greater than the t-table (1.96). Likewise, the p-value obtained was less than 0.001, below 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$). Thus, Online Advertising had a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. For the second hypothesis, the t-score of the effect of Online Advertising on Purchase Intention was 2.219, with a p-value less than 0.001. It proved that Online Advertising had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. For the third hypothesis, the t-score of the effect of E-WOM on Brand Image was 9.932, with a p-value less than 0.001. It demonstrated that E-WOM had a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. For the fourth hypothesis, the t-score of the effect of E-WOM on Purchase Intention was 3.424, with a p-value less than 0.001. Thus, researchers concluded that E-WOM had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. For the fifth hypothesis, the t-score of the effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention was 4.729, with a p-value less than 0.001. Thus, Brand Image had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention.

Furthermore, the indirect effect of the mediating variable is presented in Table 5, which contains the Sobel test results.

Table 5: Sobel Test – Significance of Mediation

Item	Sobel test statistic	Two-tailed probability	Description
OA ---> BI ---> PI	2.27	0.022	Accepted
E-WOM ---> BI ---> PI	3.24	0.001	Accepted

Table 5 illustrates that the value obtained from the Sobel test results was 2.27, greater than the t-table (1.96), with a p-value of 0.022, less than 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$). It confirmed that there was a significant indirect effect of Online Advertising on Purchase Intention mediated through Brand Image. The corresponding results were also obtained for E-WOM, in which the Sobel test statistical value was 3.24, greater than 1.96, with a p-value of 0.001, less than 0.05 ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, E-WOM had a significant indirect effect on Purchase Intention mediated through Brand Image.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between variables by creating a new model regarding the effect of Online Advertising, E-WOM, and Brand Image on Purchase Intention. Online Advertising had a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. Informative advertising can provide pleasure while strengthening consumer perceptions of brands, products, or services. According to Firat (2019), memorable and fun advertisements could properly introduce the products offered. The more internet advertising a product receives, the better its brand image. The present study's findings confirmed previous relevant studies that indicated that online advertising could improve the brand image (Sari *et al.*, 2021; Kharisma *et al.*, 2022).

Online Advertising had a good and significant effect on Purchase Intention. In this regard, advertising provided information about products and services, allowing consumers to make the best purchasing decisions (Murillo *et al.*, 2016). Thus, the better online advertising, the higher the consumer's purchasing power. This finding was consistent with previous research revealing that Online Advertising had a positive correlation with Purchase Intention, implying that Online Advertising affected people's loyalty and decisions to repurchase a product (Cabigting *et al.*, 2022; Mustafi & Hosain, 2020; Hidayat & Astuti, 2019).

E-WOM had a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. E-WOM was considered essential for customers when they wanted to learn about the quality of goods, services, and brand image to help them make decisions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). It demonstrated that consumers evaluated information related to E-WOM reviews, which subsequently formed a brand image in their minds. Thus, the better the communication related to E-WOM, the better the brand image created. These results were in line with previous studies uncovering that E-WOM positively correlated with Brand Image (Saraswati & Giantari, 2022; Triani & Nurcaya, 2020; Yohana *et al.*, 2020).

E-WOM had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Consumers typically purchase a product based on criteria tailored to their needs, such as the degree to which the information provided is easy to understand, clear, and useful (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). It means the better the consumer's review of the product, which is obtained through reviews related to E-WOM, the higher the purchase intention. This finding corroborated the previous research

concluding that E-WOM positively correlated with Purchase Intention (Bhat & Bhat, 2020; Putera & Warmika, 2020; Sulthana & Vasantha, 2019).

Brand Image had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. Furthermore, it was essential in influencing consumers' purchase decisions. The stronger the brand image, the greater the consumer's desire to rely on the brand based on beliefs or expectations resulting from the brand's credibility, benevolence, and performance (Chen, 2010). These results were consistent with previous studies stating that Brand Image had a positive and significant correlation with Purchase Intention (Savitria *et al.*, 2022; Benhardy *et al.*, 2020).

Brand Image mediated the effect of Online Advertising on Purchase Intention. Online marketing communications, especially E-WOM and online advertising, were effective in promoting brand loyalty and product purchase intention through company websites and social media (Balakrishnan *et al.*, 2014). This condition was supported by Martinez *et al.*, (2014), who found that a good brand image in an advertisement was essential when consumers wanted to purchase a product. Furthermore, Brand Image also mediated the effect of E-WOM on Purchase Intention. Building a good brand image through E-WOM can undoubtedly affect purchase intentions as a good move to attract customer attention and trust, which can subsequently increase sales and competitive advantage. The results of this study corroborated previous research finding that Brand Image could mediate the effect of E-WOM on Purchase Intention (Pham & Ngo, 2017; Al-Dmour *et al.*, 2022).

6. CONCLUSION

This study found that Online Advertising and E-WOM had an effect on Brand Image and affected Purchase Intention for local cosmetic products in Indonesia. Building a positive brand image through online advertising and E-WOM increased purchase intention, sales, and competitive advantage. Businesses, particularly those with specific brands, must constantly improve their capabilities in developing marketing strategies that leverage social media platforms to promote brand image and consumer purchase intention. Correspondingly, the company must provide accurate information to its target customers, as well as introduce the product's value, in order for the company's brand to be better recognized. Target customers may notice, appreciate, and remember its benefits and features if the company is successful. As a result, company management should consider emphasizing online advertising and E-WOM in introducing products to users or the target market for local cosmetic brands in Indonesia.

7. Limitation and Recommendation for Future Research

This study had several limitations that future researchers should address. First, the sample size of 210 respondents was deemed insufficient to represent the Indonesian population. As a result, extensive research with a larger sample size is suggested. Second, this study focused solely on the local cosmetics industry in Indonesia, including online advertising, electronic word of mouth, and brand image. To increase generalization, future studies can consider industry, country, and other variables concerning their effects on brand image. However, the findings were expected to support the literature review and references used by researchers to develop more in-depth and comprehensive research on purchase intention.

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