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Decoding consumer decisions: How e-WOM, brand image, and trust shape purchase intentions in the digital era

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Abstract

This study investigates the interplay of e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth), brand image, and brand trust on purchase decisions among ERHA cosmetics users in Pekalongan City, with purchase intention posited as an intervening variable. A purposive sampling technique was employed, collecting data from 100 respondents via Google Forms distributed through Instagram and WhatsApp. The analytical model utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. Key findings indicate that while e-WOM showed a positive, albeit insignificant, effect on purchase decisions, brand image surprisingly had a negative, insignificant impact. Conversely, brand trust demonstrated a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Regarding purchase intention, e-WOM and brand trust both exerted a positive and significant effect, whereas brand image's effect was positive but insignificant. Notably, purchase intention significantly and positively influenced purchase decisions. However, purchase intention did not mediate the relationships between e-WOM and purchase decisions, nor between brand image and purchase decisions. Importantly, purchase intention successfully mediated the relationship between brand trust and purchase decisions. This highlights the crucial role of brand trust in driving purchase decisions through the formation of purchase intention.

Keywords

Brand trust, E-WOM, Brand image, Purchase decision, Purchase intention

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Introduction

The beauty industry is currently booming in Indonesia, where almost all Indonesian people use skincare, especially women (1). This makes the development of this beauty product make beauty business actors increasingly develop the quality of their products to expand the market (2). Beauty business actors compete in branding their products so that consumers are interested and decide to buy their products. A purchase decision is a state of a person considering various factors when buying a product or service for personal consumption (3), which then the product can provide self-satisfaction and is

willing to accept the risk that may occur due to the inconsistency of the product or service received with consumer expectations. Decision-making is a process of problems that consumers will recognize, search for information about brands or products, and evaluate whether each alternative can handle the problems that are directed at purchase decisions (4).

Decision making in the current era is closely related to electronic word of mouth (E-WOM). E-WOM may spread rapidly and is a comparatively simple marketing tool (5). E-WOM is a type of online communication between customers and sellers that takes the shape of different answers that provide details and customer experiences following the purchase and use of goods or services (4).

The public's opinion of a business or product is known as its brand image (6). A company must have a strong brand image since it will influence consumer perception and leave a favourable impression. A strong brand image will also help a business plan survive in an era of growing competition (7). A brand's name, symbol, word, or symbol, design, colour, or a collection of other characteristics that might give it personality and set it apart from competing goods is known as its brand image (8). Customers are more likely to accept products with a positive brand image. The attitude of trust in a product is linked to its image. Positive perceptions increase the likelihood that customers will make purchases (9). The advantages of a positive product image include the development of a new product and the utilisation of the favourable perception that has been established for previous items (10).

With over 20 years of experience in promoting skin health in Indonesia, ERHA is a well-known skincare and cosmetics company there (11). Research & Development clinical trials have validated the efficacy and safety of Erha products. ERHA currently has 105 locations in more than 50 Indonesian cities, and about 90 different kinds of skincare products are sold through Erha Networks, e-commerce sites, pharmacies, and cosmetic shops located all across the country.

Hypothesis Development

The influence of e-WOM on ERHA product purchase decisions

After a sale and purchase transaction, sellers and buyers can communicate electronically through a variety of responses or responses that provide information and customer experiences (12). Furthermore, E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, according to researchers; the more responses and E-WOM there is, the better the purchase decision will turn out (13). According to (14, 15, 16, 17, 18) E-WOM significantly and favourably influences purchase decisions. Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H1: e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions

The influence of brand image on ERHA product purchase decisions

A positive or negative brand image is necessary for the development of a brand image that emerges from consumer perception (19). Customers will have a favourable perception of the brand if it has a positive reputation (20). Customers' perceptions of a brand are shaped by their knowledge and interactions with the company. The information that consumers have learnt about a brand is part of its image (21).

Gaining a competitive edge is just one of the many advantages that a strong brand reputation will provide to the business. Customer impressions, ideas, and attitudes about a specific brand make up its brand image (6). Because consumer opinions of quality and service are reflected in brand image, a successful business will be able to draw in or convince clients. If a product has a good reputation, the majority of buyers will decide to buy it, and this influence increases according to the information source. The following hypothesis is put forth because it is consistent with the findings of (22, 23, 24, 25) that brand image significantly and favourably influences purchase decisions, so the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H2: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions

The influence of brand trust on consumer purchase decisions

A sequence of prior experiences that witness the evolution of consumer brands and their portrayal as a process of perception and occasional customer learning experiences constitute brand trust (26). Furthermore, brand reliability, which is founded on customer confidence that the product can satisfy and meet their demands, is one of the two reflections that brand trust offers. Additionally, there is brand intensity (also known as brand intention), which is the degree to which consumers believe the brand can put their needs first in the event of a dispute. The most crucial factor in both buying and selling is brand trust since consumers won't make a purchase if they don't already believe in the brand or product being offered (27).

Customers' perception that a brand puts their needs ahead of its own is the foundation of trust. To satisfy clients by preserving their faith in the brand so they will continue to rely on it and by offering them good values that motivate them to make purchases. The following hypothesis is put forth in light of the findings of studies (24, 28, 29), which indicated that brand trust significantly and favourably influences purchase decisions:

H3: Brand trust has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase decisions.

The influence of e-WOM on ERHA product purchase intention

E-WOM is a development of word of mouth, a form of communication in the form of positive or negative statements from a brand that is distributed to consumers one by one on the internet. E-WOM is a way for consumers to communicate by word of mouth to share recommendations or suggestions, both individually and in groups, about a product (30).

Electronic word of mouth is a marketing strategy carried out by other consumers by providing an explanation of the experience when using a product or service by utilising digital media (31). The positive information provided can increase trust in the brand, thus allowing the purchasing process to occur. Consumers realise that there are still many who recommend to people close to them who need information about the products being sold. The e-WOM provided is something that consumers want in talking about products, recommending to others and encouragement from friends or relationships. In line with (32, 33, 34) stated that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention so the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H4: e-WOM has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

The influence of brand image on ERHA product purchase intention

Brand image is a concept expressed from the overall perception of a brand and is formed from information about past experiences with the brand. Brand image is able to increase consumer buying interest by providing an identity for the brand (35). This identity is the excellence, quality, service and commitment of the business actor.

If a brand has a positive image and is able to give a good impression to customers, it allows customers to make purchases. Conversely, if the image given tends to be negative, customers will avoid and not buy the product. The brand image is already attached to the minds of consumers and cannot be imitated so that it will form a positive image that becomes a reference for consumer assessment of products or services. Research by (36, 37, 38) state that the brand image variable has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention, so the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H5: Brand image has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention.

The influence of brand trust on ERHA product purchase intention

Brand trust is considered an important factor in generating consumer buying interest because brand trust is the average consumer's willingness to rely on the brand's ability to perform the functions set by (39). Brand trust is considered that after consumers appreciate a company's products, when the company talks about the safety, integrity, and credibility of its brand to consumers, the brand's credibility will increase.

Customers will feel more involved and develop a sense of empathy, trust, happiness, and security as well as be able to form strong relationships with the product when emotionally charged interactions are more prevalent. Brand trust has an effort to achieve satisfaction by growing and maintaining customer trust to continue to rely on a brand by providing positive values (40, 41, 42) stated that brand trust has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention, so the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H6: Brand trust has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention.

The influence of purchase intention on ERHA product purchase decisions

Purchase intention is another element that affects decisions to buy. After evaluating whether a product meets one's needs and desires prior to making a purchase, purchase intention results from a desire for the product. Consumers interested in buying must have received information about the desired product (43). Then consumers tend to decide to buy the product according to their wants. Purchase decisions are a process in which consumers evaluate various choices and choose one or several alternatives that are needed based on certain considerations.

An intervening variable that lies between the stimulus and response variables is purchase intention. Customers will not follow the stimulus variable if they have strong opinions and attitudes about the products and services being offered. Research by (44, 45, 46) stated that consumer purchase intention has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. If purchase intention increases, the level of customer confidence in purchase decisions will also increase, so the expected hypothesis is as follows.

H7: Purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions

The influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions mediated by purchase intention

Due to the fact that it is a kind of positive consumer connection via online media, which was developed for numerous individuals and businesses, it is one of the most successful campaigns. According to (47), E-WOM is a comment that has already been posted on the website. Word-of-mouth advertising has grown to be a crucial aspect of conducting company. Personal experiences, opinions, conversations, and user suggestions are examples of information that is shared on social media by one individual to another. E-WOM has emerged as a crucial marketing tool that businesses utilise to advertise and grow their market share (48).

According to a number of studies, E-WOM is thought to be more successful than offline since it is more accessible. Customers can directly share their opinions regarding products online. By mediating buying interest, customer recommendations and favourable evaluations disseminated via e-WOM can affect purchase decisions. The following hypothesis is put forth in light of (49) assertion that buying interest can moderate the relationship between the influence of E-WOM on purchase decisions:

H8: e-WOM mediated by purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

The influence of brand image on purchase decisions mediated by purchase intention

When making selections about what to buy, consumers should consider the brand image, which is a significant component of the product (24). Customers will be more likely to recall a business actor with a great reputation. When consumers lack prior product purchasing experience, brand image becomes a factor in their decision-making.

A company's promises to offer advantages, privileges, and services to customers are contained in its brand.

Customers have a positive perception of the brand; the more they trust the brand, the more likely they are to stick with it, which can help the business make more money. When it comes to boosting consumer interest in buying things, brand image is crucial. Customers will be interested in purchasing the product if they perceive that the brand is well-known and of high quality. The following hypothesis is put forth in light of (49) assertion that purchase intention can mediate the impact of brand image on purchasing decisions:

H9: Brand image mediated by purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

The influence of brand trust on purchase decisions mediated by purchase intention

Trust is another element that might affect decisions about what to buy. In environments characterized by unpredictability, the efficacy of a transaction is often contingent upon the relationship between the involved parties. Specifically, an individual's capacity to engage in a transaction that aligns with their expectations and preferences can be critically evaluated through the lens of trust. Since trust has a positive value across all things sold, it is a significant component to take into account when making a purchase.

Brand trust is predicated on the consumer's expectation that the brand will consistently act in alignment with their needs and desires (50). Trust is an assessment of product expertise from the consumer's perspective that culminates in a transaction or interaction stage that is realised by achieving satisfaction and fulfilling product performance expectations.

Customer trust is a form of customer support from efforts made to obtain something desired, with customer trust providing support for purchase decisions. Building trust is very important in running a business. The more trust arises from an intense relationship, the more interest will increase, which then influences consumer behaviour (51) stated that the purchase intention variable can mediate the influence of brand trust on purchase decisions positively and significantly, so that the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

H10: Purchase decisions are positively and significantly impacted by brand trust, which is mediated by purchase intention.

Method

This study employs a causal research design, which aims to establish and examine the causal relationships between several independent variables and a dependent variable. The target population for this study comprises all consumers of ERHA cosmetic products. Given that the precise number of ERHA cosmetic product consumers in

Pekalongan is unknown, the sample size for this study will be determined using the Margin of Error (MOE) formula. The formula for MOE is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{4(moe)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1{,}96^2}{4(0{,}1)^2}$$

$$n = 96{,}4$$

Therefore, the number of samples in this study is 96 respondents, which is then rounded up to 100 respondents.

The sampling methodology employed in this study utilized a purposive sampling technique, adhering to specific inclusion criteria. Participants were selected if they were women aged 15 to 30 years old and resided in Pekalongan City, having previously purchased ERHA cosmetic products. Data collection was primarily conducted through questionnaires, supplemented by a literature review. For data analysis, Structural Equation Modelling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) was chosen due to its suitability for studies with a limited sample size but a complex model structure. The sample size requirement for SEM-PLS was met by ensuring it was at least five times the number of indicator variables.

A total of 120 survey instruments were distributed. Of these, 112 were returned, indicating a robust initial response. Following a meticulous verification process, 100 questionnaires were deemed usable for analysis, while 12 were excluded due to unsuitability. The disclosure level (response rate) of the survey was calculated at 93.33%, which is well within acceptable limits, surpassing the typical 60% threshold. This rate was determined by dividing the number of usable questionnaires (100) by the total number distributed (120). Furthermore, the usable response rate for the study's questionnaires was 83.33%. This figure, exceeding 76.7%, positions the questionnaires in a category generally considered "dubious" by some metrics, highlighting the importance of robust initial screening.

Results

A total of 100 people have contributed as research respondents; they are consumers of ERHA cosmetic products in Pekalongan City. The analysis in this study uses Partial Least Squares, which is one of the analysis methods that does not require many assumptions, and PLS can be used to confirm the research theory. Figure 1 is a picture of the empirical model of the study. The independent variables in this study are e-WOM, brand image, and brand trust, while the dependent variable is the purchase decision with purchase intention as an intervening variable.

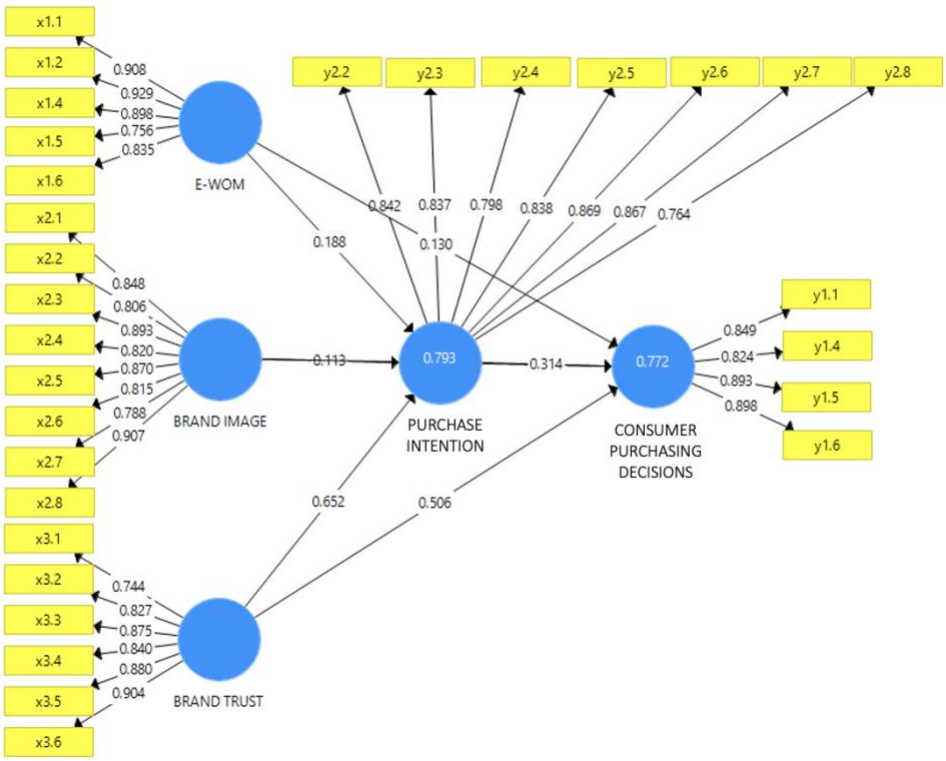


Figure 1. Empirical research model

Validity and reliability testing

The measurement model employed in this study underwent rigorous validation through tests for both discriminant validity and reliability. The results of the validity test consistently demonstrated that all individual variable loadings were higher than their cross-loadings with other variables. This outcome confirms that each construct is sufficiently distinct from the others, thereby fulfilling the criteria for discriminant validity. Consequently, the data model is deemed robust and suitable for proceeding to subsequent analytical stages.

The reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. As presented in the table above, all variables exhibited values exceeding the generally accepted threshold of 0.70 for both metrics. These findings indicate strong internal consistency reliability across all variables within the study.

For constructs employing reflective indicators, composite reliability serves as a primary measure of internal consistency. Conversely, for constructs utilizing formative indicators, multicollinearity was evaluated by examining the VIF. All VIF values were found to be below 5, confirming the absence of significant multicollinearity among the formative indicators.

R-square testing

The analysis of this study reveals a substantial explanatory power of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Specifically, the purchase decision variable exhibited an R-squared value of 0.752. This indicates that E-WOM, brand image, and brand trust collectively account for 75.2% of the variance in purchase decisions. The

remaining 24.8% of the variance is attributable to other unexamined factors not included in this research.

Similarly, for the purchase intention variable, an R-squared value of 0.793 was observed. This finding suggests that E-WOM, brand image, and brand trust together explain 79.3% of the variability in consumers' purchase intentions. Consequently, 20.7% of the variance in purchase intention is influenced by external variables not incorporated into the present study's model. These results underscore the significant combined influence of E-WOM, brand image, and brand trust on both purchase decisions and purchase intentions.

Model fit testing

The fit model test is used to see whether or not the model and data are feasible to test the influence of the variables. The requirement is SRMR < 0.10; the SRMR value obtained is 0.066, less than 0.10. These results indicate that the research model has met the criteria and is feasible so that the next testing stage can be carried out.

Hypothesis testing

Direct effect

1. Hypothesis H1 is rejected. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.130, a p-value of 0.197, and a t-statistic of 1.293 (<1.96), and a p-value of 0.197 (>0.05), which states that there is no significant influence between E-WOM and purchase decisions.
2. Hypothesis H2 is rejected. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of -0.016, a p-value of 0.914, and a t-statistic of 0.108 (<1.96), and a p-value of 0.914 (>0.05), which states that there is no significant influence between brand image and purchase decisions.
3. Hypothesis H3 is accepted. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.506, a p-value of 0.00, a t-statistic of 4.080 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.00 (< 0.05), which states that there is a significant influence between brand trust and purchase decisions. This can be interpreted that the increasing brand trust will increase purchase decisions.
4. Hypothesis H4 is accepted. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.188, a p-value of 0.007, a t-statistic of 2.692 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.007 (< 0.05), which states that there is a significant influence between E-WOM and purchase intention. This can be interpreted that the increasing E-WOM will increase purchase intention.
5. Hypothesis H5 is rejected. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.113, a p-value of 0.287, and a t-statistic of 1.065 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.287 (> 0.05,) which states that there is no significant influence between brand image and purchase intention.

6. Hypothesis H6 is accepted. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.652, a p-value of 0.000, a t-statistic of 7.839 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), which states that there is a significant influence between brand trust and purchase intention. This can be interpreted as the higher the brand trust, the higher the purchase intention.
7. Hypothesis H7 is accepted. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.314, a p-value of 0.012, a t-statistic of 2.522 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.012 (< 0.05), which states that there is a significant influence between purchase intention and purchase decisions. This can be interpreted that the increasing purchase intention will increase the purchase decision.

Indirect effect

1. Hypothesis H8 is rejected. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.059, a p-value of 0.052, and a t-statistic of 1.945 (<1.96), and a p-value of 0.052 (>0.05), which states that there is no significant influence between electronic word of mouth and purchase decisions.
2. Hypothesis H9 is rejected. This can be seen from the original sample value, which shows a value of 0.035, a p-value of 0.358, and a t-statistic of 0.920 (<1.96) and a p-value of 0.358 (>0.05), which states that there is no significant influence between brand image and purchase decisions.
3. Hypothesis 10 is accepted. This can be seen from the original sample value,, which shows a value of 0.204, a p-value of 0.022, and a t-statistic of 2.289 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.022 (<0.05), which states that there is a significant influence between brand trust and purchase decisions. Based on the calculation, the role of purchase intention in mediating the indirect influence of brand trust on purchase decisions at the structural level is relatively low because the upsilon value (v) is 0.042 < 0.75.

Discussion

H1 is rejected, which states that there is no influence from the tested variables, seen in the respondents' answers to the questionnaire, which means that not all consumers implement reading product reviews before purchasing, not all consumers consult online, not all consumers collect information about ERHA products, some consumers do not feel worried if consumers have not read reviews, and product reviews from other consumers do not affect the confidence of some consumers in purchasing ERHA products. The results of the study which produced an insignificant positive effect are in line with the research of (24, 52, 53) which stated that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase decisions because the influence of E-WOM with the use of social media triggers between the information provider and the information recipient not to meet face to face with only limited to written comments from some information, this certainly does not guarantee the credibility of the informant and also the effect of information by several different people can be

inconsistent, so consumers are not too influenced by social media in the purchase decision-making process. This also reduces the strength of consumer trust in content or reviews.

H2 is rejected, which states that there is no influence from the tested variables, seen in the respondents' answers to the questionnaire, which means that some consumers think that ERHA products are low-quality moisturizers. ERHA is not easy to express. The results of this study are not in line with the previous research (54, 55). However, this study is supported by (56), which states that brand image has a negative and insignificant effect on purchase decisions because some consumers have the perception that not all brands that already have popularity and have a good image will be the main choice for consumers; there are several other considerations, such as other products that have unique offerings, skin needs that do not match expectations and better quality than other products.

H3 is accepted, which states that there is an influence of the tested variables. This means that consumers believe that ERHA always releases new products, ERHA can fulfill the promises that consumers want, consumers believe in the ERHA brand skincare, consumers always rely on ERHA products, always use ERHA, and consumers believe that ERHA will provide good integrity. Of course, trust is an important factor in the process of making purchase decisions because buying and selling activities are carried out online and do not involve meeting in person. The results of this study are the results of respondents' answers to the questionnaire that was distributed, with the number agreeing reaching 41.33% and answers strongly agreeing at 25.16%. The results of the study were significantly positive, in line with the research of (57, 23, 58), which stated that brand image had a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. This is because the inherent nature of online transactions, where consumers are unable to physically inspect goods prior to purchase or directly interact with the seller, often fosters a degree of hesitation among potential buyers. This fundamental challenge underscores the critical importance of consumer trust for e-commerce platforms like Shopee. To mitigate this apprehension and cultivate trust, several strategies are employed. A primary approach involves establishing a professional and user-friendly website. Furthermore, a strong site reputation, bolstered by positive testimonials from other consumers, significantly contributes to enhancing user confidence and encouraging transactions on the Shopee e-commerce application.

H4 is accepted, which states that there is an influence of the tested variables. This means that consumers often read product reviews, ensure that the product purchased is correct, consult first, and collect information, and product reviews make consumers confident in making purchases. This means that E-WOM is the most important part of social commerce. Information communicated through E-WOM consists of personal experiences, discussions, evaluations, and stated user recommendations because this is related to product information, services, and company brands that are disseminated on social media. E-WOM marketing is an important measure used by ERHA to promote

products so that it will increase market share. The results of this study are by the answers of respondents who answered agree by 30.83% and answered strongly agree by 43.77%. The results of the study, which produced a significant positive effect, are in line with the research of (34, 59, 49), which stated that electronic word of mouth has a significant positive effect. E-WOM is an important medium for carrying out promotional activities in the current digital era, which will certainly have an impact on a person's purchase intention.

H5 is rejected, which states that there is no influence from the tested variables, meaning that some consumers feel neutral about their intention in ERHA products because the products are less attractive to consumers. When a product offers good quality and offers, consumers will be interested and glance at ERHA products, but in the results of the study conducted, there are still many consumers who feel that the ERHA product moisturizer is not suitable and is unable to meet their skin needs, so consumers look for other alternatives by buying skincare products with other brands. The results of this study are by the answers of respondents who answered neutrally by 19.38%. The results of this study do not match the hypothesis that researchers expect with the results of the study by (40), which stated that brand image has a significant positive effect, While our findings align with previous research (60, 61) indicating a positive, yet non-significant effect of brand image on purchase intention, this suggests that brand image may not be a primary determinant of consumer buying decisions for ERHA products. This outcome implies that a strong brand image, while potentially contributing to brand recognition, does not inherently translate into increased purchase intention within this specific context. In essence, the mere existence of a positive brand image is not always sufficient to drive consumer purchasing behaviour.

H6 is accepted, which states that there is an influence from the tested variables, which means that consumers believe that ERHA products on e-commerce platforms have various product variants that consumers want and consumers feel safe when using products so that the brand is always relied on by consumers. ERHA always provides good integrity so that consumers always rely on the brand. This is evidenced by the results of the respondents' answers, who answered agree by 41.33% and those who answered strongly agree by 25.15%. The results of the study which produced a significant positive are in line with the research of (35), which stated that brand trust has a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Consumer trust when making transactions boldly is an absolute requirement to have confidence in making transactions. Making purchases boldly is prone to system errors or goods sent that are not appropriate, so consumer trust is needed so as not to cancel their intention to shop on the Shopee e-commerce media

H7 is accepted, which states that there is an influence of the tested variables, which means that the purchase intention that arises in the minds of consumers can influence purchase decisions, where consumers are attracted to ERHA because of needs, variations in ERHA products can attract consumer attention, ERHA always provides

product innovation, consumers are always interested if ERHA products release new products, consumers are always looking for more information, consumers have a desire to buy ERHA products, consumers have demonstrated with other products, and consumers make ERHA products the main choice to meet consumer needs. The results of the study which produced a significant positive are in line with the research of (62, 44, 51), which stated that purchase intention has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. High purchase intention in ERHA products also makes purchase decisions high. The experience felt by consumers makes it difficult for them to switch to other skincare products.

H8 is rejected, which states that there is no influence from the tested variables, which means that good E-WOM dissemination is still unable to foster interest in consumers. Of course, customers prefer to buy ERHA products directly by seeing the physical product, and consumers do not pay much attention to the opinions of other consumers on Shopee e-commerce. This is evidenced by the results of respondents' answers to the questionnaire, which stated that in the E-WOM variable, with a neutral percentage of 16%, disagreed 7% and strongly disagreed 2.77%; in the purchase intention variable, with a neutral number reaching 20.25%, disagreed 6% and strongly disagreed 2.88%; and in the purchase decision variable, with a neutral number of 20.33%, disagreed 5.33% and strongly disagreed 3%. The results of this study are supported by (59), which states that purchase intention is unable to mediate the influence of E-WOM on purchase decisions. This indicates that ERHA cannot increase consumer purchase intention so purchase intention cannot be a mediator of the influence of E-WOM and purchase decisions.

H9 is rejected, which states that there is no influence from the tested variables, which means that the image of the ERHA product is still unable to grow intention in consumers. Some consumers still have the perception that not all well-known brands have a positive image. ERHA products still need to pay attention to the level of quality of moisturizers known as non-sticky products, and the characteristics that consumers consider are still unclear; the offers given still cannot increase intention in consumers, and the services provided to consumers are still neutral and not satisfactory. This is evidenced by the results of respondents' answers to the questionnaire, which stated that in the brand image variable, with a neutral percentage of 19.38%, disagreed 5.13% and strongly disagreed 2.13%; in the purchase intention variable, with a neutral number reaching 20.25%, disagreed 6%, and strongly disagreed 2.88%; and in the purchase variable, with a neutral number of 20.33%, did not amount to 5.33% and strongly disagreed 3%. The results of this study are supported by (60), who stated that purchase intention is unable to mediate the influence of brand image on purchase decisions. This indicates that authenticity cannot foster purchase intention in consumers so purchase intention is unable to mediate the influence of brand image and purchase decisions.

H10 is accepted, which states that there is an influence of the tested variables, which means that consumers believe that the information provided by ERHA can meet the needs of consumer skin so that purchase intention will increase and finally consumers

will decide to make a purchase transaction. This is evidenced by the results of respondents' answers to the questionnaire, which stated that in the brand trust variable, with a percentage of agreement of 41.33%, strongly agree 25.16%; in the purchase intention variable, with the number of agrees reaching 41.25%, strongly agree 29.63%; and in the purchase decision variable, with the number of agrees of 40.33%, strongly agree 5.33% and strongly disagree 31%. Based on these results, it is known that trust in purchase decisions through purchase intention can mediate significantly and positively. These results are in line with the research of (61), which states that brand trust in purchase decisions through purchase intention has a significant positive effect.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the analysis of the relationship between variables is that electronic word of mouth on consumers of ERHA products is not able to influence purchasing decisions directly; likewise, brand image on consumers of ERHA skincare products is not able to influence purchasing decisions directly, but brand trust on consumers of ERHA skincare products can influence purchasing decisions directly; likewise, e-WOM on consumers of ERHA skincare products can influence purchasing interest directly.

Furthermore, the brand image of consumers of ERHA skincare products is not able to influence purchasing interest directly, in contrast to the relationship between brand trust on consumers of ERHA skincare products, which is proven to be able to influence purchasing interest directly. On the purchasing interest of consumers of ERHA skincare products, with results that can influence purchasing decisions directly.

This study reveals nuanced insights into the indirect pathways affecting purchasing decisions for ERHA skincare products. Notably, e-WOM, when mediated by purchase interest, does not exert an indirect influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Similarly, brand image among ERHA skincare consumers is also indirectly unable to shape purchasing decisions through purchase interest as an intervening variable. Conversely, the findings indicate that brand trust among consumers of ERHA skincare products does indirectly influence purchasing decisions, with purchase interest serving as a significant mediating factor.

This research is still limited to the consumer locus of Cosmotech ERHA in Pekalongan City. In the future, it is necessary to expand the research area and several respondents and also elaborate the method longitudinally so that the research results can be generalized. Then further researchers can expand the model and studies related to purchasing decisions.

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