



Mediation of Brand Image Between the Influence of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention Somethinc

Annisa Febriani Putri¹, Effed Darta Hadi^{2*}

Universitas Bengkulu

Corresponding Author: Effed Darta Hadi edarta@unib.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to examine how social media marketing and electronic word of mouth influence consumers' purchase intentions, with brand image functioning as a mediating variable in the relationship. 273 respondents from all around Indonesia who satisfied the research criteria were included in the study using a non-probability sample technique combined with a purposive sampling. Smart PLS software was used to evaluate the gathered data using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The results of the analysis show that social media marketing, EWOM, and brand image significantly affect purchase intention, where promotional content, other consumer reviews, and perceptions of the brand can improve consumer purchase intention. In addition, social media marketing is also proven to have a significant effect on brand image, it can be concluded that strategies on social media can shape consumer perceptions. Brand image is found to have no significant mediating role in the connection between EWOM and purchase intention, indicating that it does not effectively serve as a bridge to explain how EWOM impacts consumers' intent to buy. On the other hand, the brand image serves as a vital intermediary between social media marketing and buy intention, as social media marketing effectively shapes customer perceptions and enhances their propensity to purchase.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the local beauty industry has continued to experience significant growth along with public awareness of the importance of skin care and the use of safe and quality cosmetic products according to the needs of skin conditions. The growth in the number of cosmetic industries in Indonesia reached 21.9 percent, which in 2022 there were 913 companies, in 2023 to 1,010 companies (Kompas.com 2024). Somethinc is a leading local skin care brand that follows trends and provides high quality skin care solutions. A large selection of skincare and cosmetic items that are tailored to each consumer's unique needs is what draws customers to Somethinc. The success of Somethinc's products is not only in the innovation of its products, but it is also recognized by how a company conducts promotions.

At present, social media stands as one of the most widely used platforms for promotional communication in today's fast-evolving digital landscape. Within the realm of digital marketing, social media marketing holds considerable influence due to its ability to enhance brand perception. In a competitive marketplace where distinguishing one brand from another is essential, shaping how customers view a product becomes crucial to increasing its appeal (Ellitan et al., 2022). Social media marketing combines the use of social media platforms and technology features that support marketing objectives with other marketing communications tools (Dahnil et al., 2014), social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to build strong relationships with its customers. Interesting social media content can make audiences curious about a product. So much so that consumers eventually want to buy the product.

Purchase intentions are increasingly impacted by electronic word of mouth as well as social media. Consumers tend to trust recommendations from peers who have tried the product, rather than relying solely on information from the brand itself. According to Navitha Sulthana et al., (2019), electronic word of mouth is a variety of product and service information where people interact with each other on social media to help consumers choose the right product or service from many options. Therefore, Tiktok and Instagram play an important role in spreading EWOM for Somethinc products. In addition to providing reviews on e-commerce and marketplaces, consumers sometimes share short videos on their social media about reviews, testimonials, and how to use the product. When consumer-generated content goes viral, it can reach a broader audience (Winarno & Indrawati, 2022).

Consumers' intention to buy Somethinc products cannot be determined only from marketing on social media or e-word of mouth. One important thing that can influence their purchase intention is brand image. Armawan et al., (2022) say that brand image pertains to the way a brand is interpreted or viewed by consumers, shaped by the impressions and information they gather, especially through their personal experiences with the product. A positive brand image can strengthen the company's relationship with the brand through innovative products and marketing strategies. In this way, a positive brand image facilitates the development of enduring bonds with customers (Tariq et al., 2013).

Based on the above background and phenomena, in order to compete and expand market share, factors that influence purchase intention in consumers such as social media marketing used by Somethinc, electronic word of mouth on Somethinc products, and a positive brand image on Somethinc. This study uses a quantitative method to see how the brand image of Somethinc products becomes an intermediary between marketing via social media and EWOM towards purchase intention. The focus is on social media users, especially those who have the intention to buy Somethinc products. Through this study, it is hoped that it can be seen how marketing on social media and EWOM influenced by brand image can affect consumer behavior, especially regarding their intention to buy certain products. Therefore, this research was conducted to understand how Somethinc uses social media to influence consumer perception and behavior.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Theory S-O-R

The S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory is how humans respond to external stimuli. This theory explains how the external environment (stimulus) can influence human behavior. In addition, stimuli from the external environment affect personal experiences in the body (organism), such as a person's perceptions and feelings, which in turn cause a person's reaction (response) (Vieira, 2013). In purchase intention research, this theory is very relevant because social media marketing and EWOM as a stimulus influence customer perceptions through promotional content, social media interactions, and positive reviews from other customers. Both provide external stimuli that can draw customers' attention to a brand. Brand image acts as an organism because it is the result of consumers' perceptions, emotions and evaluations of stimuli (social media marketing and e-word of mouth). Brand image is the result of how consumers process and respond to the stimuli they receive from social media marketing and EWOM. Purchase intention refers to a consumer's willingness to buy a product that arises from favorable brand perceptions, which are shaped by external influences like social media promotions and EWOM. Purchase intention finally forms a consumer response after receiving and processing stimuli from SMM and EWOM through brand image.

Purchase Intention

Navitha Sulthana et al., (2019) defines purchase intention as an individual's encouragement to purchase a product or service in the future. Consumers' cognitive behavior about their intention to buy a particular product or brand can be categorized as purchase intention (Nasim & Hosein, 2012). According to Martins et al., (2019), positive brand involvement will encourage customers to make purchases when they have positive purchase intentions. When someone has the desire to buy something, they tend to reconsider their decision to make the purchase. This happens because these desires greatly influence their decisions (Rahmaningtyas et al., 2017). Research by Ajzen, (1991)

says that there are several motivational factors that influence behavior, and a person's intention will show how hard they try to do what has been planned so that the behavior can occur. First, buyers gather information about the brand they want, then they evaluate the quality of the product by using it if it meets their intentions. After that, they begin to consider making a purchase decision when they try to buy a particular brand. Following direct usage, consumers gain thorough understanding of the product, especially when their experience with the brand leads to satisfaction (Tariq et al., 2013).

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing represents a facet of digital interaction where individuals engage and share content through established social networking platforms (Ellitan et al., 2022). Social media functions as a cost-effective and easily reachable platform for spreading details about a company's brand and offerings (Moslehpour et al., 2022). SMM combines technology-related aspects and social media platforms to accomplish marketing goals with additional marketing communication tools (Dahnil et al., 2014). According to Isman et al., (2020), SMM refers to promotional activities carried out through social networking sites with the goal of boosting brand visibility, familiarity, and customer commitment. This method can also make consumers more confident in the product, which in the end can make them interested in buying (Winarno & Indrawati, 2022). This is because SMM is related to awareness, memory, and action about a brand, company, product, person, or anything that uses social platforms such as blogs, microblogs, and social networks (Armawan et al., 2022). The results of research conducted by Moslehpour et al., (2022) SMM significantly affects purchase intention and brand image. Winarno & Indrawati (2022) SMM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, and Ellitan et al., (2022) say whether SMM positively and significantly affects brand image.

H₁ = Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

H₂ = Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on brand image.

Electronic Word of Mouth

electronic word of mouth or commonly known as EWOM. Winarno & Indrawati (2022) say that currently the Internet has transformed word of mouth into electronic word of mouth. Information shared through word of mouth is now more pervasive and no longer constrained by geographical boundaries, as product reviews circulate rapidly and have the potential to sway consumers' purchasing choices (Lee & Youn, 2009). Social media acts as an effective tool for EWOM among consumers so that it serves as a source of information and perspectives regarding a product (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). According to Navitha Sulthana et al., (2019), EWOM is a variety of information about products and services where people interact with each other on social media so that consumers can choose the right product or service from the many choices available. This is consistent with the conclusions of Yunus et al., (2016) that customer reviews, comments and feedback and the way companies disseminate this information on social media are very important in improving the reputation

of the product brand and encouraging customers to purchase. Most customers can be influenced by positive reviews or recommendations they receive from previous customers, which has a direct impact on their product choices (Yunus et al., 2016). The results of research conducted by Yunus et al., (2016) and Winarno & Indrawati (2022) EWOM has a positive effect on purchase intention. Yunus et al., (2016) EWOM has a positive effect on brand image. Meanwhile, Nuseir (2019) EWOM exerts a favorable and notable influence on consumers' intention to make a purchase, and it also plays a crucial role in shaping brand image.

H₃ = Electronic word of mouth has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention.

H₄ = Electronic word of mouth has a significant positive effect on brand image.

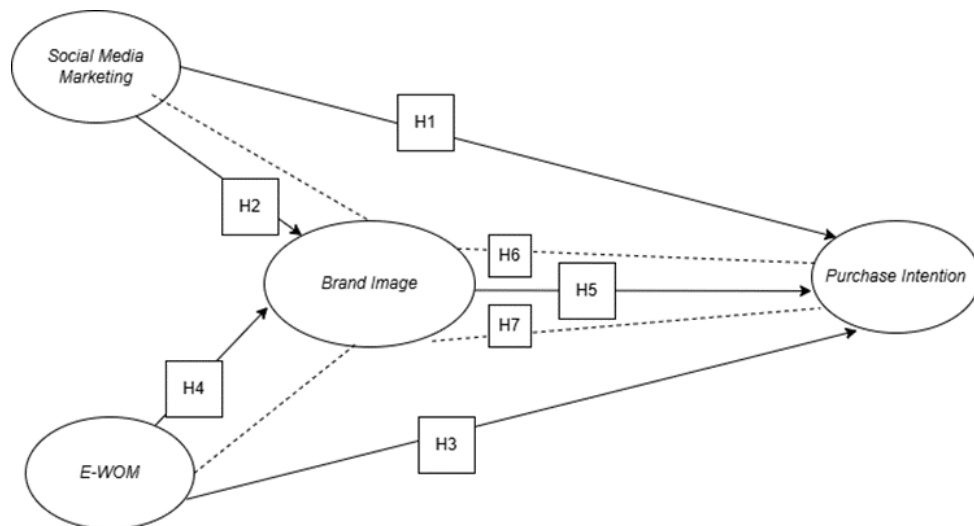
Brand Image

According to Armawan et al., (2022), consumers perceptions of a product's brand and the knowledge they gain from using it are known as its brand image. The general impression that people have of a brand is shaped by the knowledge and experiences of its past (Takaya, 2017). According to Ellitan et al., (2022), brand image is a tangible construct that may be ingrained in the minds of consumers. Consumers' opinion of a brand is shaped by the total amount of brand associations they have. For consumers, brands function as product identification, producer responsibility, self-image, and have a special bond with the producer (Mambu, 2015). This aligns with the findings of Tariq et al., (2013), which indicate that a strong brand image fosters enduring ties with consumers. This is a very useful way to improve the brand image in the market, with the aim of increasing product sales. The higher the brand image, the higher the purchase intention. The results of research by Nuseir (2019), Sanny et al., (2020), and Ellitan et al., (2022) state that brand image has a positive effect on purchase intention. Savitri et al., (2021) and Ellitan et al., (2022) state that brand image significantly mediates social media marketing on purchase intention. Yunus et al., (2016) and Ade Candra & Kerti Yasa (2022) state that brand image significantly mediates EWOM on purchase intention.

H₅ = Brand image has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

H₆ = Brand image mediates the effect of social media marketing on purchase intention positively and significantly

H₇ = Brand image mediates the effect of EWOM on purchase intention positively and significantly.



Gambar 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the impact of social media marketing and EWOM on purchase intention, with the Somethinc brand image serving as a mediating variable. Sampling was carried out using a purposive sampling technique combined with non-probability sampling, with the following criteria: (1) social media users and (2) have the intention to buy Somethinc products. The number of samples was determined based on the guidelines from (Hair & Will, 1996), which recommends a minimum sample size of five times, and a maximum of ten times, of the total indicators used in the study. In this study, there were 17 indicators, so the maximum sample required was 170 respondents. However, in accordance with the opinion of Hair et al., (2022), the larger sample size used, the better it will represent the population as a whole, improve parameter estimation, strengthen model reliability and validity, and reduce variation on analysis results. So a larger sample is used and this study uses 273 samples that meet the respondent criteria.

Data was collected through distributing questionnaires. This research questionnaire will contain statements that will be used in collecting data on research variables. This research uses Google Form and then the questionnaire will be distributed online through various social media platforms to a group of individuals who meet predetermined criteria. The employed methodology is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) utilising a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, analysed by Smart PLS software. Utilising Smart PLS, this methodology facilitates the research objectives, which encompass assessing the measurement model (outer model) to evaluate the validity and reliability of the employed indicators, alongside the structural model (inner model) to examine the interrelations among constructs and to investigate the mediating role of brand image in the influence of SMM and EWOM on purchase intention.

Table 1. Operational Variables

Variables	Indicator	Source
Purchase Intention (Y)	1. Prioritize Somethinc products over other brands. 2. Would buy Somethic products over other products. 3. I have the intention to buy Somethinc.	(Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017)
	4. Be willing to recommend Somethinc to others to buy	(Salhab et al., 2023)
Social Media Marketing (X ₁)	1. Can share information with others. 2. Easy to express opinions about Somethinc. 3. The shared content is the latest information. 4. Somethinc provides the information needed. 5. Like the way Somethinc delivers content.	(Salhab et al., 2023)
Electronic Word of Mouth (X ₂)	1. Read other consumers' reviews to ensure the right purchase. 2. Read other customers' reviews to know Somethinc made a good impression. 3. Reading other customers' reviews helps to gather information. 4. Read other customers' reviews to convince me to buy.	(Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017)
Brand Image (M)	1. Compared to other brands, Somethinc has high quality. 2. Can estimate how Somethinc products will perform. 3. Somethinc comes to mind when I want to buy beauty products. 4. I feel connected to Somethinc.	(Kala et al., 2018)

RESULT

Validity and Reliability

The Outer Loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. An indication is considered valid if the Outer Loading value exceeds 0.7 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value surpasses 0.5. Based on the results of the validity test, two indicators of social media marketing must be removed because they have a value below 0.7. After removing indicators that did not meet the criteria in the first test and retesting, the analysis results show that all indicators have an Outer Loading value > 0.7 and an AVE value > 0.5, so it can be concluded that this study has good convergent validity.

Reliability is assessed by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Consequently, a variable is deemed dependable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.7 and Composite Reliability surpasses 0.7.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Output

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Media Marketing			0.632	0.837	0.710
	SMM3	0.764			
	SMM4	0.843			
	SMM5	0.776			
Electronic Word of Mouth			0.585	0.766	0.849
	EWOM1	0.757			
	EWOM2	0.780			
	EWOM3	0.735			
Brand Image			0.637	0.875	0.810
	BI1	0.812			
	BI2	0.785			
	BI3	0.778			
Purchase Intention			0.593	0.853	0.710
	PI1	0.785			
	PI2	0.778			
	PI3	0.753			
	PI4	0.763			

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

R-Square

The degree to which the independent variable can account for the variation in the dependent dependent variable is shown by the R-square. If the R-squared value is 0.75, the strong model is explained, 0.50 explains the medium model and 0.25 explains the weak model. This study shows that the value of the relationship between the independent variable and brand image has a weak influence model with an R-square value of 0.375. Meanwhile, the independent variable and purchase intention have a moderate influence model with an R-squared value of 0.637.

Table 3. R-Square

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted	Keterangan
Brand Image	0.375	0.371	Lemah
Purchase Intention	0.637	0.633	Sedang

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study uses a one-tailed approach by looking at the T-Statistics and P-Values. The hypothesis is considered accepted if the T-Statistics value is more than 1.64 and the P-Values are less than 0.05. This test assesses the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable inside the research model.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Direct Effect

	<i>Original Sample</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T-Statistic (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P Values</i>	Hasil
BI => PI	0.637	0.640	0.054	11.765	0.000	Accepted
EWOM => BI	0.028	0.034	0.062	0.447	0.327	Rejected
EWOM => PI	0.098	0.102	0.055	1.783	0.038	Accepted
SMM => BI	0.599	0.590	0.052	11.426	0.000	Accepted
SMM => PI	0.175	0.175	0.064	2.743	0.003	Accepted

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Purchase intention is favourably and significantly influenced by brand image, as indicated by the hypothesis test results ($\beta = 0.637$, $t = 11.765$, $p = 0.000$), implying that a favourable brand image might enhance customer purchase intention. EWOM exerts a favourable yet small influence on brand image ($\beta = 0.028$, $t = 0.327$, $p = 0.327$), indicating that EWOM alone is insufficient to enhance a company's brand image. EWOM exerts a positive and significant influence on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.098$, $t = 1.783$, $p = 0.038$), suggesting that consumer reviews and recommendations can affect an individual's purchasing decisions. SMM exerts a positive and substantial influence on brand image ($\beta = 0.599$, $t = 11.426$, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that a successful marketing approach via social media can enhance brand image. Purchase intention is positively and significantly influenced by SMM ($\beta = 0.175$, $t = 2.743$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that successful SMM can directly enhance customer purchase intents.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effect

	<i>Original Sample</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T-Statistic (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P Values</i>	Result
EWOM => BI => PI	0.018	0.022	0.040	0.450	0.327	Rejected
SMM => BI => PI	0.382	0.377	0.043	8.982	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

The brand image exerts a positive albeit negligible influence in mediating the relationship between EWOM and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.018$, $t = 0.450$, $p = 0.327$), as indicated by the mediation study utilising bootstrapping in Smart PLS. This means that the relationship between EWOM and purchase intention does

not become stronger even though there is a brand image in the middle. But it is a different story with marketing on social media, brand image actually has a positive and significant influence as an intermediary between promotion on social media and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.382$, $t = 8.982$, $p = 0.000$). This means that brand image is completely a bridge that strengthens the relationship.

DISCUSSION

Effect of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

Social media marketing exerts a favourable and substantial impact on purchase intention. This indicates that social media marketing might enhance consumer confidence, hence influencing their purchasing intentions. The findings are corroborated by studies conducted by Moslehpour et al., (2022) and Winarno & Indrawati, (2022), which indicates that social media marketing positively and significantly influences purchase intention. Winarno & Indrawati (2022) assert that social media marketing enhances consumer confidence in a product, hence fostering purchase intentions.

Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Image

Social media marketing exerts a favourable and substantial impact on brand image. A successful social media marketing approach can enhance brand image. In addition, perceptions about brands can be formed through consumer experiences such as when seeing advertisements about the Somethinc brand. According to Takaya (2017), the comprehensive perception of a brand is shaped by the information and experiences associated with it. The findings of this study corroborate the research conducted by Ellitan et al., (2022), which asserts that social media marketing has a good and considerable impact on brand image.

Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention

Electronic word of mouth exerts a positive and substantial impact on purchase intention. This indicates that user ratings and suggestions might effectively influence purchasing intentions. This is in line with the opinion of Lee & Youn (2009) who say that information about reviews spreads quickly and can influence buyer decisions. The results of this study also support the research of Yunus et al., (2016) and Winarno & Indrawati (2022) which state that EWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

Effect Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image

Electronic word of mouth has a positive but not significant influence on brand image. This shows that EWOM alone is not enough to improve brand image. Armawan et al., (2022) say that brand image is a consumer's perception of a product and information received through experience when using the product. Therefore, it can be concluded that only information alone cannot build a brand image. This research contradicts the results of Nuseir (2019) which states that EWOM significantly influences brand image. This discrepancy may arise from multiple sources, including the research subject and the respondent count.

Effect Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The brand image exerts a favourable and substantial impact on purchase intention. This is because the better the image of a brand, it will increase consumer purchasing intentions. This is in line with the research of Nuseir, (2019) Sanny et al., (2020) and Ellitan et al., (2022) which states that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

The Influence of SMM on Purchase Intention mediated by Brand Image

Brand image has been shown to have a significant and positive role as an intermediary between social media marketing and purchase intention. This means that brand image is truly a bridge that strengthens the relationship between the two. These findings are consistent with the studies conducted by Ellitan et al., (2022) and Savitri et al., (2021), which also demonstrated that brand image plays a crucial and statistically significant role in bridging the connection between social media marketing and purchase intention.

The Influence of EWOM on Purchase Intention mediated by Brand Image

The brand image exerts a favourable albeit negligible influence in mediating the association between EWOM and purchase intention, suggesting that brand image does not enhance the connection between EWOM and purchase intention. The findings of this study demonstrate that EWOM exerts a more direct impact on purchase intention than via brand image. This research contradicts the research of Ade Candra & Kerti Yasa (2022) which states that brand image has a positive and significant effect in mediating EWOM on purchase intention. This difference can be caused by the object of research in which this study uses a population that lives throughout Indonesia while in Ade Candra & Kerti Yasa (2022) uses a population that lives in Sarbagita (Denpasar, Bandung, Gianyar, and Tabanan).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that not all hypotheses have a positive and significant effect. Therefore, H3 and H7 of this study were rejected. This study has limitations, this can be caused by the sample used in the study where the majority of respondents are women with an age range of 21-30 years and most domiciles are on the island of Java. Then the data collected may be that the information provided by respondents does not fully reflect their actual opinions.

Hence, the findings of this research are as follows: (1) Social media marketing has a notable and positive influence on consumers' intention to purchase; engaging content contributes strongly to this outcome. (2) Social media marketing also positively influences brand image. The content shared by Somethinc effectively enhances its brand perception. (3) Electronic word of mouth (EWOM) positively and significantly affects buying intention, highlighting its crucial role in influencing consumer decisions. (4) Although EWOM shows a positive link to brand image, the impact is statistically insignificant, likely because not all customer feedback directly affects brand perception. (5) A strong brand

image significantly boosts the likelihood of a purchase, as it builds greater consumer trust. (6) Brand image acts as a meaningful mediator between social media marketing and purchase intention. The more impactful Somethinc's online strategy, the more favorable the brand image, which in turn drives buying interest. (7) Brand image also mediates the connection between EWOM and purchase intention, but the effect, while positive, is not statistically significant. Although EWOM affects purchase intention directly, its role in shaping brand image is not strong enough to be a significant mediating path. So the results of this study are that the more attractive the way Somethinc promotes its products and the more positive reviews from other consumers, it can affect the brand image of Somethinc and increase consumer purchase intentions.

FURTHER STUDY

There are flaws and restrictions in this study that could be fixed with more investigation. Other factors that can affect consumers' intents to buy, such as pricing, brand trust, and customer loyalty, must be taken into account for future research. To obtain better research results, additional research might also increase the number of respondents and the question items.

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