

## The Effect of The Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Decision with Image as Intervening Variable

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine and analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase decisions with the brand image as an intervening variable on customers of Scarlett whitening in Shopee. The population in this study was Scarlett consumers who made purchases on the Shopee application. 100 respondents were selected by a purposive sampling method. The data analysis technique in this study uses a scale range and path analysis. The process of data analysis was performed with SPSS 26.0. The result showed that electronic word of mouth had a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Scarlett whitening in Shopee. Electronic word of mouth had a positive and significant effect on the brand image of Scarlett whitening. The brand image had a positive and significant effect on the purchase decision of Scarlett whitening in Shopee.*

**Keywords:** *electronic word of mouth, brand image, purchase decision*

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menganalisis pengaruh *electronic word of mouth* terhadap keputusan pembelian dengan citra merek sebagai variabel *intervening* pada konsumen Scarlett whitening di Shopee. Populasi didalam penelitian ini adalah konsumen Scarlett yang melakukan pembelian di aplikasi Shopee sebanyak 100 responden yang dipilih menggunakan metode *purposive sampling*. Teknik analisis data pada penelitian ini menggunakan rentang skala dan analisis jalur atau *path analysis*. Proses analisis data dilakukan dengan SPSS 26.0 Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *electronic word of mouth* berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian Scarlett whitening di Shopee. *Electronic word of mouth* berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek Scarlett whitening. Citra merek berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian Scarlett whitening di Shopee. Citra merek mampu memediasi *electronic word of mouth* terhadap keputusan pembelian Scarlett whitening di Shopee.

Kata kunci: *electronic word of mouth, citra merek, keputusan pembelian*

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## INTRODUCTION

Digital technology in Indonesia is spreading very rapidly through the internet. The progress of using the internet has an impact on the increasing number of activities supported by the internet. Based on the results of a survey from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) from 2019 until the second quarter of 2020 internet users in Indonesia reached 196.7 million. The survey explains the increase in the number of internet users in Indonesia by 25.5 million users, an increase of about 8.9%

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compared to 2018 (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers, 2019). Every year internet users continue to increase and make Indonesia the country with the fourth highest number of internet users in the world. With the increasing number of internet users, the activities that will be supported by the internet will also develop, one of which is online business or better known as electronic commerce (e-commerce) which is present in the community by providing convenience and flexibility in conducting trade transactions, both for selling and selling. or buy goods online. One of the e-commerce sites favored by the Indonesian people is Shopee, it can be shown from monthly visitor data and rankings of e-commerce in Indonesia as follows:

**Table 1.** Ranking of e-commerce in Indonesia in the fourth quarter of 2020

| Marketplace | Monthly Visitors (Million) | Appstore Ranking | Playstore Ranking |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Shopee      | 129,320,800                | 1                | 1                 |
| Tokopedia   | 114,655,600                | 2                | 4                 |
| Bukalapak   | 38,583,100                 | 7                | 7                 |
| Lazada      | 36,260,600                 | 3                | 3                 |
| Blibli      | 22,413,100                 | 6                | 5                 |
| Sociolla    | 3,086,500                  | 5                | 2                 |
| Zalora      | 2,991,800                  | 4                | 8                 |

Source: iprice (2021)

Table 1 shows data on the ranking of e-commerce in Indonesia in the fourth quarter of 2020, from the data above it is known that the first highest monthly application visitors in Indonesia was achieved by Shopee with 129,320,800 visits, while the second position was Tokopedia with the number of monthly application visitors. 114,655,600 times, followed by Bukalapak as the third rank with 38,583,100 times, and after that are Lazada, Blibli, Sociolla, and Zalora. Shopee also won first place as the most popular e-commerce application on the Appstore and Playstore. Shopee's success in being able to dominate the online market in Indonesia and gain the trust of consumers is due to the superiority of the marketing strategy implemented. The advantages of the Shopee application that can be used by users are the free shipping program, discounts, cashback, and the Shopee live program where sellers can sell their products in real-time. As an international platform, Shopee also gains access to a large market and allows sellers to be able to market their products widely to foreign countries.

One of the brands that managed to get a lot of attention on Shopee is Scarlett. Scarlett is a body care brand that was founded in 2017, this business was founded by Felicya Angelista, a national celebrity. Scarlett's target market is students to working women and men over the age of seventeen. The highlight of this product is that it contains glutathione and vitamin E, which are effective in providing nutrition, moisturizing, and brightening the body's skin more optimally. Since its inception, Scarlett whitening has been increasingly recognized by the public and has created great success, as evidenced by the high sales of body care and skin care products on Shopee e-commerce in table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Sales of Scarlett Products at Shopee for the period April 2020-March 2022

| Variant                         | Total Sales |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Scarlett whitening serum        | 1.151.270   |
| Scarlett whitening body lotion  | 761,934     |
| Scarlett whitening shower scrub | 235,356     |
| Scarlett whitening body scrub   | 163.528     |

Source: Shopee (2022)

Table 2 data shows that the Scarlett product with the whitening serum variant is the product with the highest sales with a total of 1,151,270 items. Followed by the whitening body lotion variant with total sales of 761,934 items, the whitening shower scrub variant with 235,356 items, and the whitening body scrub variant with 163,528 items. This shows that Scarlett as a new brand can attract large consumers on Indonesian online business platforms and is able to compete with other product brands that have been in Shopee for a long time. Competition between brands is very possible today, every company is competing to make its products superior to competing company products. Along with Scarlett's success, there is news about fake products circulating in the market.

Reviews on how to distinguish genuine products from fake Scarlett whitening products have also started to be uploaded on social media such as Instagram and YouTube by several influencers. This of course can lead to a negative brand image in the community and even potential consumers will feel hesitant to try Scarlett products which can influence purchasing decisions. With this, Scarlett is updating its products by providing a barcode that is useful to ensure the authenticity of the product and can be checked through the official Scarlett whitening website. This step is expected to restore Scarlett's negative image and strengthen its marketing network. Previous research conducted by Suryani & Akhirman (2021) regarding "Electronic word of mouth, product quality on purchasing decisions for HPAI herbal products with the brand image as an intervening variable (to customers of HPAI herbal products in Tanjung Pinang City)" produces positive data, namely e-WOM has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. through brand image, but there are also negative data, namely, e-WOM partially does not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Thus, this research can be used as a temporary reference that brand image can mediate the effect of e-WOM on purchasing decisions that will be carried out in this study

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Before the internet, consumers shared experiences about a product through traditional word of mouth. With the awareness of the internet at this time, finally forming a new paradigm in the word of mouth communication strategies called electronic word of mouth Fatmawati & Soliha (2017). According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), e-WOM is a positive or negative statement made by potential consumers, actual consumers, and past consumers about a product or company that is presented to many people and institutions through internet media. There are eight indicators of the occurrence of e-WOM according to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) namely (1) platform assistance, (2) venting negative feelings, (3) concern for other consumers, (4) positive self-enhancement, (5) social benefits, (6) economic incentives. According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2007), brand image is a set of associations about a brand that is stored in the minds or memories of consumers. Brand image is a view or assessment of a person or even the wider community towards the products of a company. There are four indicators of the brand image according to Low, G. & Lamb (2000) namely (1) friendly, (2) popular, (3) modern, and (4) useful.

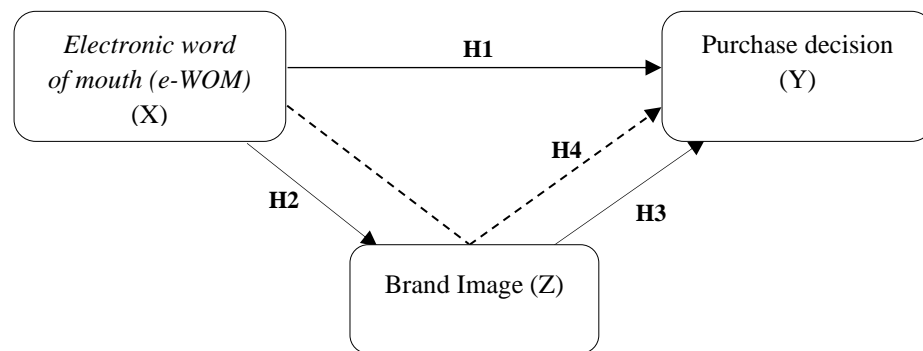
Purchasing decisions are an element of consumer behavior, that is, the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations choose, purchase, use goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The purchase decision is an action taken and decided after going through a series of stages of selection by considering several factors. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2012) there are three indicators in purchasing decisions, namely (1) stability in buying products, (2) habits in buying products, and (3) speed in buying products. Based on the explanation of the theoretical study above, the following hypothesis is obtained:

H1: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee.

H2: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on the brand image of Scarlett Whitening.

H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee.

H4: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with brand image as an intervening variable.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative research. The population in this study are consumers who use the Shopee application who were selected using the purposive sampling method. Measurement of research data uses a Likert scale, where this scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions, of a person or group of people about social phenomena (Sugiyono, 2019). The data analysis technique uses a scale range, classical assumption test, and path analysis. The data analysis process was carried out using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 26.0 application. The sample taken in this study was 100 respondents. The data collection is done by distributing a questionnaire (questionnaire).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research from distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents with characteristics aged between 21 to 25 years were 77%, and 92% dominated by women. The results of testing on 100 respondents in this study are described as follows:

**Table 1.** Characteristics of Respondents

| Information | Items       | Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Gender      | Male        | 8 people    | 8%         |
|             | Female      | 92 people   | 92%        |
| Age         | 17-20 years | 16          | 16%        |
|             | 21-25 years | 77          | 77%        |
|             | 26-30 years | 4           | 4%         |
|             | >31 years   | 3           | 3%         |

**Table 2.** Validity Test Results

| Variable                            | Items                            | R.Count | R.Table | Information |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| <i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i> (X) | Platform assistance (X1)         | 0.816   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Venting negative feelings (X2)   | 0.800   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Concern for other consumers (X3) | 0.768   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Positive self-enhancement (X4)   | 0.791   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Social benefits (X5)             | 0.726   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Economic incentives (X6)         | 0.825   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Helping the company (X7)         | 0.783   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Advice seeking (X8)              | 0.819   | 0.196   | Valid       |
| Brand Image (Z)                     | Friendly (Z1)                    | 0.794   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Popular (Z2)                     | 0.773   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Modern (Z3)                      | 0.811   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Usefull (Z4)                     | 0.815   | 0.196   | Valid       |
| Purchase Decision (Y)               | Sturdy (Y1)                      | 0.814   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Habit (Y2)                       | 0.838   | 0.196   | Valid       |
|                                     | Quick (Y3)                       | 0.825   | 0.196   | Valid       |

From table 3, the results of the validity test of the e-WOM, brand image, and purchasing decisions variables that show valid results are measured by the value of count which is greater than the value of table which is 0.196. Based on these results, all indicators in this study are declared valid, because they have met the count table criteria. This proves that the research instrument used has a high validity value.

**Table 3.** Reliability Test

| Variable          | Cronbach's Alpha .<br>value | Information |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| E-WOM             | 0.915                       | Reliable    |
| Brand Image       | 0.810                       | Reliable    |
| Purchase Decision | 0.767                       | Reliable    |

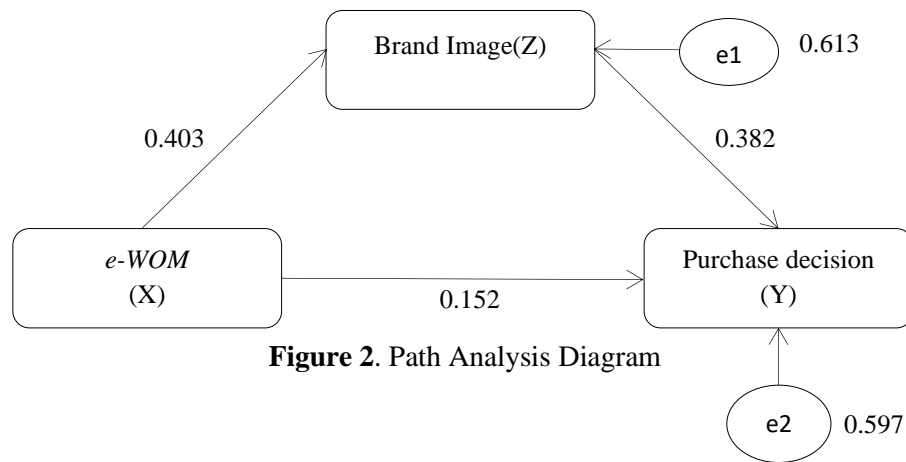
Based on table 4 above, the reliability test results of the Cronbach alpha value on the e-WOM variable are 0.915, the brand image variable is 0.810, and the purchasing decision variable is 0.767 which is greater than 0.70. This proves that the results of this study are stated to be reliable, so that even if the test is carried out repeatedly, it will give the same results.

**Table 4.** Results of e-WOM Path Analysis

| Variable Relationship | Coefficient      |                       | Total |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
|                       | Direct influence | Indirect influence    |       |
| X → Y                 | 0.152            | -                     | 0.152 |
| X → Z                 | 0.403            | -                     | 0.403 |
| Z → Y                 | 0.382            | -                     | 0.382 |
| X → Y → Z             | -                | 0.152+(0.403 x 0.382) | 0.306 |

Based on table 4, there is an indirect effect between e-WOM on purchasing decisions through brand image as an intervening variable of 0.306. These results indicate that the indirect effect is greater than the direct effect, which is 0.152. This proves that the brand image variable in this study can be an intervening variable.

From the results of the equation of the brand image model (Z) and the purchasing decision model (Y) above, the path analysis diagram is generated as follows:



**Figure 2.** Path Analysis Diagram

**Table 5.** T-Test Results

| Variable Relationship | Tcount | Ttable | Significance | Note.       |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------------|-------------|
| X → Y                 | 3,762  | 1,984  | 0.000        | Significant |
| X → Z                 |        | 1,984  | 0.000        | Significant |
| Z → Y                 | 12,746 | 1,984  | 0.000        | Significant |
|                       | 4,812  |        |              |             |

The effect of the e-WOM variable on purchasing decisions results in a Tcount value of 3.762 which is greater than the Ttable value of 1.984, and a significance value of 0.000 is obtained which is smaller than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ). These results indicate that the e-WOM variable has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, so it can be concluded that hypothesis one is accepted. The results of data analysis show that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This explains that if e-WOM can spread product reviews well, there will be an increase in purchasing decisions. E-WOM is distributed using the internet as an intermediary medium, with the availability of social communication in online form it can automatically help consumers to share experiences about the products or services they get when they make a purchase (Kamtarin, 2012). The existence of e-WOM will make it easier for consumers to get information about the desired product as a consideration before deciding to purchase.

The existence of positive information about Scarlett products sold through Shopee can strengthen consumer confidence, so they are sure to make purchases. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Mutiara & Madiawati (2019), Himmah & Prihatini (2021), and Manggalania & Soesanto (2021) showing that the electronic word of mouth variable has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Based on the results of the analysis, it is known that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image. These results indicate that an attractive e-WOM can produce a good brand image. Brand image is a set of associations of a brand that is embedded in the minds or memories of consumers (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007). From e-WOM, a good image can be formed on a brand so that it will be remembered by the public.

The effect of the relationship of the e-WOM variable on the brand image variable produces a Tcount value of 12.746 which is greater than the Ttable value of 1.984, and a significance value of 0.000 is obtained which is smaller than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ). These results indicate that the e-WOM variable has a positive and significant effect on the brand image variable, so it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is accepted. A good image of Scarlett whitening can be created thanks to e-WOM in the



form of comments to positive reviews on Shopee. This is also in line with previous research conducted by Adriyati *et al.* (2017), Yulianto & Soesanto (2019), and Suryani *et al.* (2021) stating that the electronic word of mouth variable has a positive and significant influence on brand image variable.

The influence of the relationship between brand image variables on purchasing decision variables produces a Tcount value of 4.812 which is greater than the Ttable value of 1.984, and a significance value of 0.000 is obtained which is smaller than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ). These results indicate that the brand image variable has a positive and significant effect on the purchasing decision variable, so it can be stated that the third hypothesis is accepted. The results of data analysis show that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, so it can be stated that a good brand image will improve purchasing decisions. Maintaining a good company reputation and introducing products with a good image to consumers will positively influence consumer purchasing decisions Manggalania & Soesanto (2021) The company tries to create a good brand image, has a good popularity as well so that it goes along with increasing sales.

Scarlett whitening was introduced with the aim of being able to have benefits by taking care of the body's skin of its consumers, with a good image it will enable an increase in purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Mutiara & Madiawati (2019), Himmah & Prihatini (2021), and Mariska *et al.* (2022) explaining that the variable that brand image has a significant effect on purchasing decision variables.

**Table 6.** Mediation Test Results

| Score     | Test    | Test Statistics | Std. Error | <i>p-value</i> |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| a. 0.403  | Sobel   | 4.51413641      | 0.03410309 | 0.000000636    |
| b. 0.382  |         |                 |            |                |
| Sa. 0.032 | Aroian  | 4.50178473      | 0.03419666 | 0.000000674    |
|           | Goodman | 4.52659032      | 0.0340926  | 000000599      |

From the results of the Sobel test, it is known that the p-value is 0.00000636 which is smaller than 0.05 ( $\alpha$ ). These results indicate that the effect of e-WOM on purchasing decisions through brand image has significant results. This explains that the brand image variable is able to mediate e-WOM on purchasing decisions, so it can be stated that the fourth hypothesis is accepted. Based on the results of data analysis, e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions with brand image as an intervening variable. This shows that the relationship between e-WOM and a good brand image will improve purchasing decisions. Scarlett whitening continues to innovate and aggressively introduces its products and gets positive comments, especially on Shopee. When consumers read positive reviews of Scarlett products, it will create a good memory that strengthens them to make purchasing decisions. The results of this study are supported by previous research conducted by Suryani *et al.* (2021), Manggalania & Soesanto (2021), and Mariska *et al.* (2022) showing that electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. through brand image as an intervening variable.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine and analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions with brand image as an intervening variable on Scarlett whitening consumers at Shopee. Electronic word of mouth from Scarlett whitening is included in the attractive category and the brand image is in the good category. The purchase decision on Scarlett whitening at Shopee is included in the steady category. Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee. This explains that if e-WOM can spread product reviews well, there will be an increase in purchasing decisions. Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on the brand image

of Scarlett Whitening. These results indicate that an attractive e-WOM can produce a good brand image. Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, so it can be stated that a good brand image will increase purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee. Brand image can mediate electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee. This shows that the relationship between e-WOM and a good brand image will increase stability in purchasing decisions. Brand image can mediate electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee. This shows that the relationship between e-WOM and a good brand image will increase stability in purchasing decisions. Brand image can mediate electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions for Scarlett whitening at Shopee. This shows that the relationship between e-WOM and a good brand image will increase stability in purchasing decisions.

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