

## The Mediating Effect of Brand Image on the Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth Towards Purchase Intention for Somethinc Products (Case Study on Followers of the @somethincofficial TikTok Account)

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#### ABSTRACT

Social media is an appropriate platform for conveying electronic word of mouth related to products, services, and brands to other users. One of the social media that can generate electronic word of mouth is TikTok. Conceptually, experts say electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communication can influence a company's brand image and consumer purchase intentions. However, e-WOM research via Tiktok is still limited in Indonesia. Therefore, to conduct such research, the researchers judgementally recruited 183 respondents as the sample. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with WarpPLS version 8.0 for data analysis, the researchers found that electronic word of mouth positively affects brand image. Furthermore, electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, and brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Moreover, brand image mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention. Future researchers are suggested to use other social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.

**Keywords:** Brand Image, Electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase Intention.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Skincare is one of the beauty products currently trending and innovating by launching beauty products that can be used by women and men (Amin & Yanti, 2021). It is one of the products that used in every day life and is widespread to everywhere (Yunianto, E& Anggoro, 2021). Various skincare options make consumers more selective in choosing a beauty product they will use. The Korean beauty trend also increases Korean skincare popularity among consumers in many countries, including Indonesia (Hengky, Novianto, Yulandi, Puspa, & Henly, 2021). One of the local skincare brands that successfully dominate the beauty market in Indonesia currently is Somethinc.

Various local skincare brands in Indonesia compete to dominate the market by creating a series of innovations that can attract consumer attention. For this reason, Somethinc always pays attention and maintains product quality in the hands of consumers (Sukmawati, Mathori, & Marzuki, 2022) because in purchasing a product, consumers will consider several important factors contained in the product. One factor is good quality products (Pradana, Hudayah, & Rahmawati, 2018).

The quality of products can help companies retain current customers and create new consumers through word of mouth (Astaki & Purnami, 2019). Before knowing the internet, consumers preferred to share their experiences about the products traditionally through word of mouth (Simamarta, 2019). The rapid development of technology has made the era more sophisticated so that every year it continuously undergoes various changes, including the increase in internet and social media users.

Currently, the internet and social media facilitates consumers to find various information before buying a product. In addition, consumers can also share knowledge according to their own experiences and opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of the brand or product (Arif & Sari, 2022).

Along with public awareness of the growth on the internet and social media, it forms a new word-of-mouth communication strategy model and it is called electronic word of mouth (Simamarta, 2019). Many businesses, including the beauty business, utilize electronic word of mouth. Somethinc began to build a marketing strategy through social media, which is TikTok. TikTok created a platform to distribute the creativity of the Indonesian people while filling the void during the pandemic. That is where many people started creating content and uploading it to TikTok. Apart from acting as an entertainment medium, TikTok is also started to enter the world of digital marketing. The high public interest in using TikTok is an opportunity for beauty businesses to carry out marketing activities (Aninditya, 2022).

Sharing information online is important and useful because consumers will see and consider a product's quality of opinion in making decisions. If the information about the product is in accordance with consumer perceptions, consumers will evaluate each product according to the criteria for the product they will buy (Shahid, Hussain, & Zafar, 2017). Indirectly, we can say that social media can create and offer an excellent platform for electronic word-of-mouth marketing communications.

This is because social media is considered a very appropriate platform for electronic word-of-mouth because it has helped consumers find opportunities to provide and discuss opinions and experiences about products, services and brands with other users (Evan & Erkan, 2016). Electronic word of mouth communication that occurs on the @somethincofficial TikTok account can influence purchase intention.

With the existence of electronic word-of-mouth, consumers are facilitated in finding information or experiences of other consumers about a product to be purchased (Simamarta, 2019). In general, purchase intention will be created when consumers start looking for information about specific products to be bought before finally purchasing (Rahma, 2020).

Besides that, e-WOM is also related to brand image. Positive electronic word-of-mouth statements will impact increasing product sales and creating a positive brand image in minds of consumers. Conversely, negative electronic word-of-mouth statements will signal others not to buy certain products and can also quickly destroy a company's brand image (Residona, 2019).

With a positive brand image, consumer trust can increase in the products offered by the company to attract consumer attention to make purchases of these products because, with a higher brand image, the intention to buy will also be higher (Candra & Suparna, 2019). Previous studies that used tiktok social media in the context of their research, namely Hasena and Sakapurnama (2021), Lestari and Gunawan (2021). Other researchers such as Adriana, Ellitan, and Lukito, (2022), Edeline and Praptiningsih (2022), Residona (2019), Sipahutar and Nugrahani (2021) used Instagram social media in the context of their research. Then, Melinda, Sari, and Prasetyo, (2018) and Abdillah (2018) use Twitter and Tokopedia social media respectively in the context of their research.

In addition, research conducted by Edeline and Praptiningsih (2022) states that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention through brand image. However, the two researchers stated that there was a shortcoming in their research, namely the absence of a hypothesis stating the direct effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention. The background of this study is that there are still limited studies using TikTok social media in the context of research in Indonesia and there are weaknesses in previous studies. In addition, researchers also want to reproduce the same research by using SEM as an analysis technique.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Electronic Word of Mouth**

Electronic word of mouth refers to a marketing strategy implemented through word of mouth or internet version of advertising (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Ismagilova, Dwivedi, Slade, and Williams (2017) explain the electronic word of mouth as a dynamic and continual process of exchanging information among previous customers and potential customers regarding certain products or services available to the public or internet users. Electronic word of mouth in the social media context can be measured in six dimensions, namely: information quality, information credibility, needs of information, attitude towards information, information usefulness, and information adoption (Erkan & Evan, 2016).

### **Brand Image**

According to Tjiptono and Diana (2016), brand image is consumer perceptions of a brand with strategic efforts to instill strong positive associations in the minds of consumers about the company's brand. Brand image also can be defined as a description of the nature of a product or service extrinsically where the way the brand is applied is related to meeting the psychological and social needs of customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Firmansyah (2018) considers that brand image is a reflection of consumers' overall perceptions based on the information and other people's experiences with the brand. The

dimensions of brand image in this study are user image and product image. Researchers did not use the corporate image component in the observation variable of this study because the Somethinc company (PT. Royal Pesona Indonesia) was not widely known by the public. These dimensions are adopted from the brand image components developed by Firmansyah (2019).

### **Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention is a plan in the "if-then" form that connects situational or conditional aspects in the form of a reasonable opportunity to act or do something with an effective response to achieve the desired goal (Gollwitzer, 1999). Khan, Rukhsar, and Shoaib (2016) consider that Purchase intention is a planned purchase of a product for future use based on consumer perceptions and information about the product.

Putra and Suprpti (2019) explain purchase intention as a concrete form of consumer thoughts to purchase a product from several brands in a certain amount. Purchase intention in the implementation intention context can be measured in three observed variables, namely: precision in selecting the if-parts and then-parts of implementation intentions, forming multiple implementation intentions, and format of implementation intention (Gollwitzer, 1999).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The object of this study is brand skincare Somethinc. The population in this study is aged at least 17 years old, knows Somethinc products, are followers of the @somethincofficial TikTok account, and have interacted with other users on the @somethincofficial TikTok account at least twice. On the other hand, the sample was collected with nonprobability sampling by using the judgment sampling technique. In taking samples, it should be able to give a chance to everyone who participates in a previously determined population to become a respondent.

This research used a survey method to collect primary data using questionnaires distributed via Google form. The data was processed using structural equation modeling with the help of WarpPLS 8.0. In determining the number of respondents, Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2019) stated that a good sample size for the SEM method is 100 or more. The general provision for determining the minimum sample size is five times greater than the total statement items, and a ratio of 10:1 would be better. The number of statement items in this study was 18 statement items, so the minimum sample size required was  $18 \times 10 = 180$  respondents.

## **RESULTS**

### **Respondent Profiles**

Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents are female, which is 72.1%, and 84.2% are followers of the @somethincofficial TikTok account aged 17 to 25 years. Based on the aspect of occupation, most of the respondents are students.

**Table 1.** Respondent Profiles

Gender	Male	51	27,9%
	Female	132	72,1%
Age	17 – 25 years old	154	84,2%
	26 – 35 years old	19	10,4%
	36 – 45 years old	7	3,8%
	> 45 years old	3	1,6%
Occupation	Student	122	66,7%
	Entrepreneur	17	9,3%
	Employee	31	16,9%
	Others	13	7,1%

### Validity and Reliability

The validity test in this research was performed through the loading factor. Indicators can be said to be valid if the loading factor  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair et al. 2019: 677), and AVE is said to be good if it  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair et al. 2019: 676). Meanwhile, in the reliability test, the construct can be stated as reliable if it has a composite reliability value  $\geq 0.7$  (Hair et al., 2019: 676). In Table 2 we can see that each indicator of all constructs has a factor loading value and AVE  $> 0.50$ . Then, cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are  $> 0.70$ . Thus, it can be summarized that the data is valid and obtained from a reliable instrument.

**Table 2.** Validity and Reliability

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loading	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i>	EWOM 1	0,755	0,534	0,875	0,902
	EWOM 2	0,726			
	EWOM 3	0,697			
	EWOM 4	0,755			
	EWOM 5	0,760			
	EWOM 6	0,762			
	EWOM 7	0,674			
	EWOM 8	0,713			
Brand Image	BI1	0,788	0,561	0,869	0,899
	BI2	0,774			
	BI3	0,761			
	BI4	0,818			
	BI5	0,686			
	BI6	0,743			
	BI7	0,661			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0,848	0,707	0,793	0,879
	PI2	0,860			
	PI3	0,814			

### The Goodness of Fit Test

Based on the results in Table 3, it can be seen that the values obtained from the ten criteria used in conducting goodness-of-fit in the WarpPLS program have met the criteria for evaluating the fit model. Thus, it can be summarized that the SEM model in this research is acceptable (fit).

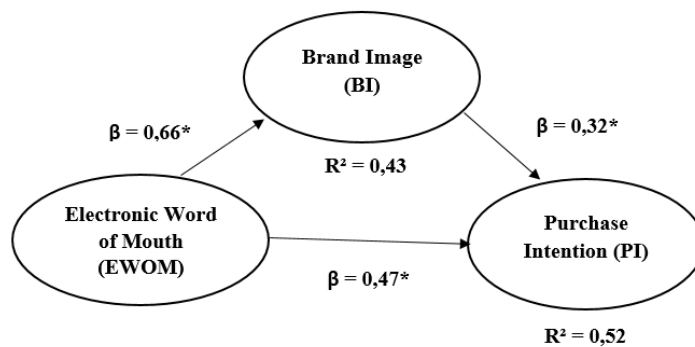
**Table 3:** Model's Goodness of Fit Test Results

Criteria	Fit Criteria	Output Value	Result
<i>Average Path Coefficient (APC)</i>	$P \leq 0,05$	0,482, $P < 0,001$	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Average R-squared (ARS)</i>	$P \leq 0,05$	0,478, $P < 0,001$	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS)</i>	$P \leq 0,05$	0,473, $P < 0,001$	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Average Block VIF (AVIF)</i>	$\leq 3,3$ , but values $\leq 5$ are still acceptable	1,791	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF)</i>	$\leq 3,3$ , but values $\leq 5$ are still acceptable	2,034	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Tenenhaus GoF</i>	$\geq 0,10$ , $\geq 0,25$ , dan $\geq 0,36$ (small, medium, big)	0,536	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Sympson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)</i>	Ideally = 1, but values $\geq 0,7$ are still acceptable	1,000	<i>Fit</i>
<i>R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR)</i>	Ideally = 1, but values $\geq 0,9$ are still acceptable	1,000	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR)</i>	Must be $\geq 0,7$	1,000	<i>Fit</i>
<i>Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR)</i>	Must be $\geq 0,7$	1,000	<i>Fit</i>

### Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model evaluation produces an estimated value of the causal relationship between variables. The results of structural model testing will be presented in Figure 1. Meanwhile, the direct effect and indirect effect will be presented in Table 4 and Table 5.

**Figure 1.** Structural Model Evaluation



Caption:

\* =  $P < 0,01$

In the structural equation, the  $R^2$  value of purchase intention is 0.52, indicating that e-WOM is able to explain purchase intention by 52%, while the rest of 48% is described by other factors not examined in this study. Then, the structural equation indicates that the  $R^2$  value of the brand image variable is 0.43, meaning that electronic word of mouth is capable of explaining brand image by 43%, while the rest of 57% is described by other factors not examined in this study.

**Table 4.** Direct and Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	<i>p-value</i>	Result
H1	Electronic Word of Mouth -> Brand Image	0,657	< 0,001	Supported
H2	Electronic Word of Mouth -> Purchase Intention	0,475	< 0,001	Supported
H3	Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0,315	< 0,001	Supported
H4	Electronic Word of Mouth -> Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0,207	< 0,001	Supported

Based on Table 4, the results are as follows:

- The path coefficient of electronic word of mouth on brand image shows 0.657 with a  $p$ -value < 0.001, so it can be said to reject  $H_0$ . Thus, hypothesis one (H1) can be accepted which states that electronic word of mouth positively affects brand image.
- The path coefficient of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention shows 0.475 with a  $p$ -value < 0.001, so it can be said to reject  $H_0$ . Thus, hypothesis two (H2) can be accepted which states that electronic word of mouth positively affects purchase intention.
- The path coefficient of brand image on purchase intention shows 0.315 with a  $p$ -value < 0.001, so it can be said to reject  $H_0$ . Thus, hypothesis three (H3) can be accepted which states that brand image positively affects purchase intention.
- The path coefficient of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention through brand image is 0.207 with a  $p$ -value < 0.001, so it can be said to reject  $H_0$ . Thus, hypothesis four (H4) it can be accepted which states that brand image mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image**

This study shows that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly influences brand image. Thus, the better or higher electronic word of mouth through the @somethincofficial TikTok account, the better or higher Somethinc's brand image will also be. According to Hussain et al. (2018), consumers can be influenced by positive or negative statements because they will prefer to evaluate the opinions of other consumers before making a decision. Residona (2019) explain that positive electronic word-of-mouth statements would boost product sales and create a positive brand image in consumers' minds, and conversely negative electronic word-of-mouth statements would indicate a signal for others not to buy a particular product and can also destroy the brand image of a company quickly.

This research has shown electronic word of mouth that occurs on the @somethincofficial TikTok account has been conveyed well, so that the Somethinc brand image is also good. This statement is confirmed by Adriana et al. (2022), Hasena and Sakapurnama (2021), Lestari and Gunawan (2021), Residona (2019), Sipahutar and Nugrahani (2021), who found that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects brand image.

### **The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention**

This study indicates that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly influences brand image. From this we know that the better or higher of electronic word of mouth through @somethincofficial TikTok account, the consumer purchase intention will also be good or high.

The presence of social media is considered a very appropriate platform to convey an electronic word of mouth because it has helped consumers find a chance to share and discuss opinions and experiences related to products, services, and brands with other users (Erkan and Evan, 2016). With electronic word of mouth, consumers will be facilitated in finding information or experiences of other consumers about a product to be purchased (Simamarta, 2019). In general, purchase intention will be created when consumers start looking for information about certain products to be purchased before finally purchasing (Rahma, 2020).

So, this research has shown electronic word of mouth that occurs on the @somethincofficial TikTok account is able to increase consumer purchase intentions for Somethinc products. The results of this study are in line with the research of Melinda et al. (2018), Adriana et al. (2022), Edeline and Praptiningsih (2022), Hasena and Sakapurnama (2021), Residona (2019) which show that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects purchase intention.

### **The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention**

This study shows that brand image positively and significantly influences purchase intention. Thus, the better or higher the Somethinc brand image, the better or higher the consumer's purchase intention will be.

Candra and Suparna (2019) suggest that products with a positive image can increase consumer trust in the products and will attract consumer attention to buy these products. The higher brand image, can increase purchase intention because consumers will more easily recognize products with a good brand image which can increase consumer buying intentions for the company's products.



So, this research has shown that Somethinc's brand image is good, so consumers' purchase intention for Somethinc products also increases. The results of this study are in line with the research of Abdillah (2018), Adriana et al. (2022), Edeline and Praptiningsih (2022), Hasena and Sakapurnama (2021), Residona (2019), who found that brand image positively and significantly affects purchase intention.

### **Brand Image Mediates the Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention**

This study shows that brand image is able to mediate the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention. Thus, the better the electronic word of mouth through the @somethincofficial TikTok account, the better Somethinc's brand image will also be, as well as the better or higher consumer purchase intention.

Residona (2019), Candra and Suparna (2019) convey that positive e-WOM statements will increase product sales and are able to create a positive brand image in the consumer's mind, and conversely, negative electronic word-of-mouth statements will show signals for others, not to buy certain products and can also destroy a company's brand image quickly. Products with a positive image can increase consumer trust in the products offered and subsequently stimulates consumer attention to buy these products. This will affect the attitudes and actions that consumers will take in the future against the brand. A higher brand image can increase purchase intention because consumers will more easily recognize a product with a good brand image, so it can increase consumers' purchase intention for product companies. Purchase intention can be used to predict future consumer behavior, meaning that if the purchase intention shown by consumers is higher, the chances of these consumers purchasing a product will be higher (Pratama, Lukitaningsih, & Ningrum, 2022).

So, this research has shown that the electronic word of mouth on the @somethincofficial TikTok account is good and is able to create a positive brand image in consumers' minds, so purchase intention for Somethinc products increases. This statement is reinforced by Hasena and Sakapurnama (2021) and Residona (2019), who found that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects purchase intention, electronic word of mouth positively and significantly affects brand image, brand image positively and significantly affects purchase intention all have a positive and significant effect, and electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention which is mediated by brand image.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that electronic word of mouth positively and significantly influences brand image, electronic word of mouth positively and significantly influences purchase intention, brand image positively and significantly influences purchase intention, and lastly brand image is able to mediate the effect of electronic word of mouth on purchase intention.

### **LIMITATION (OPTIONAL)**

The limitation of this study is that researchers only examined electronic word of mouth through TikTok social media.

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## **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

There are no potential conflicting interests reported by the author.

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