THE IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE, PRODUCT QUALITY, AND PROMOTION ON THE PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF SCARLETT WHITENING SKIN CARE PRODUCTS AS MEDIATED BY E-WOM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine: (1) the direct influence of brand image towards purchase intention, (2) the direct influence of product quality towards purchase intention, (3) the direct influence of promotion towards purchase intention, (4) the influence of brand image towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM, (5) the influence of product quality towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM, (6) the influence of promotion towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM . The population in this study constituted of Scarlett Whitening skin care product users, whereas the system consists of 96 Scarlett Whitening skin care product users. This research employed a combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling for its sampling strategy. Distribution of questionnaires to 96 respondents who satisfied the criteria yielded data. E-WOM-related questionnaires on brand image, product quality, promotion, purchasing intent, and E-WOM. SmartPLS 3 was employed during the data analysis procedure. Based on the results of data analysis, the research results obtained that: (1) brand image had directly positive influence towards purchase intention, (2) product quality didn't have directly positive influence towards purchase intention, (3) promotion had directly positive influence towards purchase intention, (4) brand image didn't have positive influence towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM, (5) product quality had positive influence towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM (full mediation), (6) promotion didn't have positive influence towards purchase intention mediated by E-WOM.

Keywords: brand image, product quality, promotion, purchase intention, E-WOM.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: (1) pengaruh secara langsung citra merek terhadap minat beli produk, (2) pengaruh secara langsung kualitas produk terhadap minat beli produk, (3) pengaruh secara langsung promosi terhadap minat beli produk, (4) pengaruh citra merek terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi oleh E-WOM, (5) pengaruh kualitas produk terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi oleh E-WOM, (6) pengaruh promosi terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi oleh E-WOM. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah seluruh konsumen produk perawatan kulit Scarlett Whitening, sedangkan sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah sebanyak 96 konsumen produk perawatan kulit Scarlett Whitening. Teknik pengambilan sampel penelitian ini menggunakan kombinasi purposive sampling dan snowball sampling. Data diperoleh dengan cara menyebarkan kuesioner kepada 96 responden yang memenuhi kriteria. Kuesioner berkaitan dengan citra merek, kualitas produk, promosi, minat beli, dan E-WOM. Proses analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan software SmartPLS 3. Berdasarkan hasil analisis data, diperoleh hasil penelitian bahwa: (1) citra merek secara

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langsung berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk, (2) kualitas produk secara langsung tidak berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk, (3) promosi secara langsung berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk, (4) citra merek tidak berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi oleh E-WOM, (5) kualitas produk berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi penuh oleh E-WOM (full mediation), (6) promosi tidak berpengaruh positif terhadap minat beli produk dengan dimediasi oleh E-WOM.

Kata kunci*: citra merek, kualitas produk, promosi, minat beli, E-WOM.*

BACKGROUND

Through the use of technology, the era of globalization has witnessed the successful emergence of new lifestyle trends. In this digital era, technology has effectively served as a conduit for generating new industrial and corporate prospects. In particular, social media is a product of technical advancements as a tool for constructing a new reality. Social media contribute to the dissemination of information. Multiple phenomena that occur at various locations and times can be acknowledged in only seconds. The cosmetic and beauty industry is one of the industries affected by the development of technology and information (Sedita et al., 2021). The beauty and body care industry in Indonesia is projected to reach $6.03 billion in 2019 and $8.46 billion in 2022, according to market research (www.trade.gov, 2021).

Scarlett Whitening, which ranked first with a market share of 18.9% for the week of 1-15 August 2021 according to the online shopping sites Tokopedia and Shopee, is one of the companies that has succeeded in fostering growth in the cosmetic and beauty business (Fransiscus et al., 2022). Curiosity-inducing Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) activity has led to widespread discussion of Scarlett Whitening products in online. E-WOM is a natural marketing technique based on the process of product description through word of mouth as represented by tweets, captions, and so on. Especially if this action is performed by individuals who are considered experts in the field or who have a positive reputation. Technological advancements must be tackled sensibly in order to offer new opportunities and effectively communicate them to consumers via promotional techniques. Internal elements must be linked with marketing strategy for marketing activities to function properly. Numerous elements influence the consumer response to a product. These elements include product quality, price, service, and product image. Based on the aforementioned description, the researcher attempted to perform this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Brand Image

Brand image is a combination of information about the product and the company's brand (Savitri et al., 2022). Image has an important role in the product journey because it is related to consumer confidence in the product which concluded that there is a significant influence between brand image and consumer trust (Adhelia et al., 2022). Brand image must be instilled gradually so that it remains in the minds of new and existing customers. According to Firmansyah (2019) there are several indicators that can be used to determine brand image: (1) Brand awareness: the ability of consumers to recognize a brand as part of a certain product category.; (2) Brand association: the impression that arises when remembering a brand.; (3)

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Quality perception: consumer views on product quality as expected.; (4) Brand loyalty: consumer purchasing choices for a brand in a certain product category. This study evaluated the following hypothesis on the brand image variable:

H1 (a): Brand image significantly affect product purchasing intention of Scarlett Whitening skin care.

Product Quality

On the basis of the consumer's assessment of the product's overall excellence or superiority, quality can be defined as the value perceived by the consumer (de Giovanni & Zaccour, 2022; Suchánek et al., 2015). The following are product quality indicators used in this study (Firmansyah, 2019): (1) Performance: relates to characteristics in operation.; (2) Additional features: characteristics that serve as a complement, such as interior, extra storage space, and so on.; (3) Reliability: an estimate of the probability of damage or production failure.; (4) Conformance to specifications: efforts to meet standards with due regard to design and operation.; (5) Durability: the approximate length of time the product can be used.; (6) Aesthetics: the beauty of the product that can be enjoyed by the five senses. The following is hypothesis regarding the product quality variable which tested in this study:

H2 (b): Product quality significantly affect product purchasing intention of Scarlett Whitening skin care.

Promotion

Promotion is a marketing activity that entails communicating new products to consumers in order to arouse their desire to make a purchase (Hanaysha, 2022). The audience will gradually learn what the product is, how it appears, what it does, and so on, as a result of continuous advertising. These are indicators of promotion variables (Kotler & Armstrong, 2019): (1) Online marketing consists of online activities and initiatives aimed to engage clients and boost sales.; (2) Publicity programs to promote products, protect images, or communicate things through numerous sources.; (3) Rewards/contests/sweepstakes/games: opportunities to win prizes.; (4) Cross-promotion is the advertising of one brand through the utilization of other, unrelated brands. This study evaluated the following hypothesis on the promotion variable:

H3 (c): Promotion significantly affect product purchasing intention of Scarlett Whitening skin care.

E-WOM

E-WOM is a method of communicating information about items via a communication system in a simple and straightforward marketing way (Kristia, 2021; Nurittamont, 2021). E-WOM is a kind of the evolution of WOM, which was originally based solely on word of mouth. Now, promotions occur via business-appropriate social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Snapchat, in addition to word of mouth (Delafrooz et al., 2019). E-WOM is proven to be able to mediate various marketing stimuli such as promotion, brand image, and product quality on consumer buying interest in an item or service (Sagynbekova et al., 2021; Sardar et al., 2021). Indicators for the E-WOM variable (Goyette et al., 2010) in this study include, (1) Read product reviews written by online shoppers.; (2) Engage with other internet users in discussion.; (3) Often look for information

online before buying a product.; (4) Reviews from other internet consumers instill confidence in their purchasing selections.; (5) Recommendations from network website users. The following hypothesis regarding E-WOM variable which tested in this study:

H4 (d): E-WOM mediated relationship between brand image and purchasing intention in Scarlett Whitening skin care products.
H5 (e): E-WOM mediated relationship between product quality and purchasing intention in Scarlett Whitening skin care products.
H6 (f): E-WOM mediated relationship between promotion and purchasing intention in Scarlett Whitening skin care products.

Purchasing Interest

Purchasing interest is an internal or external factor that influences the desire to purchase a product or service (Kuberasyani & Rahyuda, 2019). Consumers' purchasing interest can be increased. There are individuals that are uninterested in the product, but due to the product's appealing marketing strategy, it can build consumer desire to at least learn more about the product until a purchase choice is made. According to Fattah Al-Azzam & Al-mizeed, (2021) promotion in the form of advertising has a substantial impact on purchasing decisions. This indicates that an attractive campaign will increase the likelihood of consumers purchasing the provided products. Indicators of buying interest variables in this study include the following (Purbohastuti & Hidayah, 2020): (1) transactional interest: the propensity for making purchases exhibited by consumers.; (2) Referential interest is the propensity of consumers to promote the things they purchase to others.; (3) Preferential interest: the interest demonstrated by consumers who have a strong preference for a specific product.; (4) Exploratory interest: a consumer's activity of digging for information about a product in order to find positive reviews.; (5) Attention: consumer knowledge of the existence of the supplied product. The study's hypotheses are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Research Framework
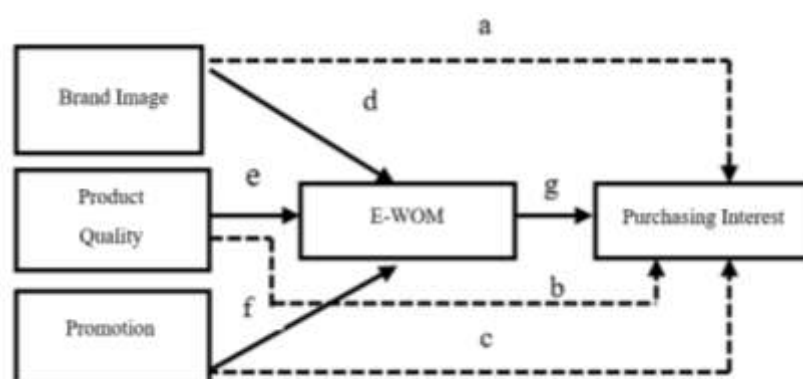
RESEARCH METHODS

Population & Samples

A population is a group of similar elements with specific characteristics. The population in this study were all consumers of Scarlett Whitening skin care products. The sample is representative of the population. The researchers determined the number of samples using Slovin formula and

resulted in 96 of samples in total (Damayanti et al., 2021). Purposive sampling, which involves selecting samples in accordance with the research aims, is the sampling method utilized. The sampling methodology is combined with the snowball sampling technique, which is a method for collecting samples by dispersing information around familiar groups (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Data collection in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires to the respondents according to the criteria needed by the author.

Instrument Analysis Tool

This study uses PLS (Partial Least Square) model measurements. PLS is the most appropriate alternative to OLS regression, canonical correlation, and covariance-based structure when research attempts to create exploratory models or make predictions (Ali et al., 2018; Sarstedt et al., 2022). In this PLS method, a bootstrap procedure or hypothesis is utilized to establish the significance of the relationship between variables. The goal of PLS is to forecast the influence of variable X on Y and to explain their theoretical relationship (Shmueli, 2010).

Instrument Testing Techniques

Validity Test

Shmueli (2010) define the validity test as a measurement step from a scale that use variables to determine the link between two events. Construct validity defined by Abdillah et al. (2015) as validation that may characterize the results produced from theoretical measures based on the quality of the data, and this validation comprises of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is relating to the notion that construct measurement should be highly connected. Discriminant validity is a validity test that is projected to have no association that results in a related score if two separate instruments also measure two unrelated constructs.

Reliability Test

The reliability test covers the internal measurement of measuring equipment based on their uniformity. This investigation will utilize Cronbach's alpha to determine the minimum value of construct dependability. If the Cronbach alpha value is more than 0.60, then the statement or question is reliable. If the value of Cronbach alpha 0.60 then the statement/question concerned is not reliable.

Data Analysis Technique

Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Important and useful for forecasting rational and causal linkages from a concept and research model that cannot be validated in measurement modeling, which seeks to assess construct validity and instrument reliability, is the purification step (Abdillah et al., 2015).

Structural Model (Inner Model)

t-values for each path for the significance test between constructs in structural modeling; path coefficient value that helps to demonstrate the level of significance in hypothesis testing with t-statistic values; R^2 to identify the dependent construct in the PLS structural model evaluation process. R^2 measures the level of variation between changes in the independent variable and the dependent variable (Abdillah et al., 2015). If R^2 is greater, the proposed prediction model

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becomes more accurate. In hypothesis testing with 5% alpha and 80% power, the t-statistic must be greater than 1.96 for two-tailed and 1.64 for one-tailed curve (Hair et al., 2019).

Hypothesis Test

P-values serve as a reference for testing hypotheses in PLS-based research. While the level of significance in this study is 0.05, there is a 5% (σ) chance of mistake and a 95% chance of reaching a conclusion. If p-values are 0.05 with a significance level of 5%, then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. If p-values are more than 0.05 with a significance level of 5%, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Convergent Validity

Validity is determined by an outer loading value of > 0.70 and an AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value of > 0.50. The obtained data has an AVE value greater than 0.5, hence the convergent test indicates that the obtained data is legitimate.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test can be established by examining the cross-loading value, which can be observed in the SmartPLS analysis findings. The cross-loading value must be greater than 0.5 for discriminant validity testing to deem the data genuine. The obtained values are all more than 0.5, hence the data discriminant test is valid.

Reliability Test

This test is conducted using SmartPLS while paying close attention to Cronbach's alpha, which must be greater than 0.6, and the composite reliability value, which must be greater than 0.7. According to the data in the table above, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability have a value more than 0.70, hence the data are deemed legitimate based on the reliability test.

Structural Model Testing (Inner)

Using SmartPLS, R2 or R-Square is employed to test structural models. The acquired data indicate that the R-square value for the E-WOM variable is 0.834. This figure demonstrates the influence of exogenous variables, namely brand image, product quality, and promotion, to the tune of 83.4%, with the remaining 16.6% representing the influence of variables that were not explored by the researchers. In addition, the R-square value for the purchasing interest variable is 0.946%. This chart depicts differences in exogenous variables, notably brand image, product quality, and promotion, to the tune of 94.6%, with the remaining 5.4% attributable to the influence of unstudied variables. The obtained value of Q-square is 0.937. This result indicates that the diversity derived from this study is 93.7%, with the remaining 6.3% attributable to the effect of other variables. This value also explains why the study's goodness of fit is good.

Inner model

This model is used to determine how exogenous variables influence endogenous variables. Using SmartPLS makes it simpler to examine data by examining bootstrapping. This section will display the t-statistic value to see its significance provided that it is said to be significant if the t-statistic value is > 1.96.

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Table 1. Result of Direct Effect Relationship

No	Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Values	Information
1	Brand image → purchase interest	0,640	11,441	0,000	Significant
2	Product quality → purchase interest	0,037	0,424	0,672	Not significant
3	Promotion → purchase interest	0,225	3,584	0,000	Significant

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 2. Results of Indirect Influence Relationship

No	Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Values	Information
1	Brand image → E-WOM→ purchase interest	0,014	1,081	0,280	Not significant
2	Product quality →E-WOM → purchase interest	0,067	2,011	0,045	Significant
3	Promotion → E-WOM→ purchase interest	0,025	1,201	0,231	Not significant

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Hypothesis test

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded to accept or reject Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Then the information about the direct effect (Table 1) and indirect relationship (Table 2) shows the results to reject or accept Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. The direct effect of brand image on buying interest is shown by t-statistic 11.441 (positive sign with original sample value of 0.640) with p-value 0.000 <0.05, so $H0_1$ is rejected and Ha1 is accepted, which means that brand image directly has a positive effect on purchase intention. The direct effect of product quality on purchase intention is shown by a t-statistic of 0.424 (positive sign with the original sample value of 0.037) with a p-value of 0.672 > 0.05, so $H0_2$ is accepted and Ha_2 is rejected, which means that product quality has no positive effect on purchase intention. The direct effect of promotion on buying interest is shown by a t-statistic of 3.584 (positive sign with the original sample value of 0.225) with a p-value of 0.000 <0.05, so $H0_3$ is rejected and Ha_3 is accepted, which means that promotion directly has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The effect of brand image on buying interest mediated by E-WOM is indicated by a t-statistic of 1.081 (positive sign with the original sample value of 0.014) at a p-value of 0.280 > 0.05, so $H0_4$ is accepted and Ha_4 is rejected. The effect of product quality on purchase intention mediated by E-WOM is indicated by an t-statistic of 2.011 (positive sign with the original sample value of 0.067) at a p-value of 0.045 <0.05, so $H0_5$ is rejected and Ha_5 is accepted. After entering the mediating variable, product quality has no direct effect on buying interest (t-statistic 0.424 and p-value 0.672 > 0.05), which means that product quality has a positive effect on buying interest fully mediated by E-WOM. Fully mediated means that the influence of product quality on purchase intention is entirely through (mediated by) E-WOM. The effect of promotion on buying interest mediated by E-WOM is indicated by a t-statistic of 1.201 (positive

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sign with the original sample value of 0.025) at a p-value of 0.231 > 0.05, so $H0_6$ is accepted and Ha_6 is rejected.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that brand image has a direct positive effect on consumer interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products. Purchasing interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products is not directly affected by the quality of the product. The effect of promotion on consumer purchasing interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products is direct with positive relationship. E-WOM does not increase purchasing interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products as a result of brand image (no mediation). E-WOM mediates a positive relationship between Scarlett Whitening skin care product quality and buyer interest (full mediation). E-WOM-mediated promotion has no effect on purchasing interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products (no mediation). According to the study's findings, the quality of Scarlett Whitening skin care products has no direct effect on consumer interest in purchasing them.

With E-WOM as a moderating variable, however, product quality has a positive effect on purchasing intent. In due to these findings, Scarlett Whitening is advised to continue focusing on factors of product quality, despite the study's conclusion that product quality has no direct influence on buyer interest. Companies may enhance consumer purchasing interest in Scarlet products by communicating the superiority of their products quality through engaging and viral digital marketing campaigns. Direct marketing has a significant effect on consumer interest in Scarlett Whitening skin care products. It is recommended that Scarlett Whitening increase the frequency of exposure to promotions, one of which is through advertising, as it is considered influential on consumers to see, recognize, try, and even purchase a product through media such as television, YouTube, social networking sites, and websites (Kim, 2017). The results of data processing also indicate that Scarlett Whitening's promotions are already classified as "interesting" with the score of 4.115. Nonetheless, this promotion can be optimized further. Aspects can be enhanced, particularly the component of marketing through television advertising, which Scarlett Whitening has never done previously, to increase the promotion's exposure. According to the results of the study, E-WOM fully mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intent. Based on these outcomes, it is suggested that Scarlett Whitening utilize nano influencers to boost the variety of E-WOM, particularly within the scope of promotional agents on social media (influencers who have 1,000-10,000 followers) (de Veirman et al., 2017; Harshitha et al., 2021). These nano influencers will have a greater proximity to the target market, allowing for a more natural E-WOM process.

Exogenous variables, such as pricing and brand ambassadors, are among the various ways that researchers might suggest for future research. Scarlett Whitening has recently demonstrated an interest in both of these elements. Each variety of Scarlett Whitening product costs the same amount, which is IDR 75,000. This pricing strategy's effect is interesting to analyze. This strategy employed by Scarlett Whitening to maximize product sales is intriguing to study. Therefore, the researcher proposes to future researchers that they attempt to incorporate variables, particularly those that are the focus of Scarlett Whitening's development.

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