

**The Influence of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention Through Brand Image as Intervening Variables
A Study on Azarine Cosmetic in Malang City**

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ABSTRACT

TikTok has emerged as the most popular social media app among today's Generation Z users. Simultaneously, this presents a new challenge for businesses, particularly in the intensely competitive local beauty product market as well as worldwide. Azarine Cosmetics is one of the cosmetic brands being investigated. The purpose of this study is to investigate how brand image and social media marketing affect consumers' intentions to make purchases. 155 members of Malang City's Generation Z were given a questionnaire as part of the study's quantitative methodology. Purposive and nonprobability sampling methods were used in the sampling process. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach was used to analyze the data. Two factors social media marketing and E-WOM, have a significant impact on purchase intention, according to the research findings. The influence of the brand image variable on purchase intention does not have a positive and significant effect. Regarding the connection between E-WOM and social media marketing, both significantly and favorably affect the perception of a brand image. Social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth, however, are not able to strongly affect purchase intention through brand image. This study broadens our knowledge of the factors influencing consumers' intentions to make purchases in the digital age. Further research efforts might be based on the findings of this study.

Keywords: *purchase intention, Electronic word of mouth, Social media marketing, brand image.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has had a variety of effects on human activity. One of the most popular social media platforms available today is TikTok. On the social media platform TikTok, users may find brief video clips for amusement or as a creative outlet. The TikTok social media platform has become crucial in the business sector for marketing purposes (Setianingsih & Aziz: 2022). TikTok has created fierce competition for the beauty industry, especially domestic and international skincare products. Beauty products are highly sought after by Generation Z and have become one of the most competitive business sectors. According to data from BPOM, the number of cosmetic industry players increased from 819 businesses in 2021 to 913 businesses in 2022, a 20.6% increase (Wijianti: 2023). This is due to the modern era where beauty is the focus of attention. According to (Adriyati & Indriani: 2017), Generation Z and Millennials tend to feel insecure or lack confidence if they have skin problems.

One of the beauty product brands in Indonesia is Azarine. Azarine is a local beauty brand that focuses on producing skincare, makeup, and beauty tools using natural ingredients and has been certified halal by MUI and registered by BPOM. Azarine is one of the local cosmetic brands highly favored by beauty enthusiasts (Dian: 2022). In 2023, Azarine Cosmetics received a prestigious award at the Brand Choice Award 2023, organized by Info Brand ID and Trasn Co Indonesia, in the Sunscreen Mist category based on top ratings, sales, and awareness achievements.

One of the reasons for the rise of the Azarine brand is by utilizing social media marketing strategies following technological advancements. The number of followers on Azarine's social media accounts on the TikTok platform is quite popular, reaching around 788.2 thousand followers and almost reaching 1 million followers. Azarine's account is quite adept at utilizing the features provided by TikTok, such as TikTok Shop, live streaming, content creation, as well as comment and review sections, which facilitate consumers in finding information. From this, consumers will feel interested, thus sparking their buying interest.

According to Garg & Kumar, (2021), interesting information or content spread on social media will cultivate consumer buying interest, thus social media has a significant impact on brand image and consumer purchasing behavior. Currently, businesses are striving to enhance their brand image through various media, focusing on creating a strong brand image and perceived value to increase consumer purchase intent (Yawar: 2021). There are several studies supporting this statement, such as those by Armawan (2023); Dewi (2022); Salhab (2023); dan Yunikartika (2022), stating that a company's brand image may be improved through social media marketing, thus increasing consumer buying interest. However, there are also studies contradicting this statement, such as findings by (Febriyanto: 2020).

Reviews, comments, or discussions on social media can also impact a business's brand image and, in turn, consumer interest in making purchases (Solihin: 2022). Previous research by Ardana (2018); Evgeniy (2019); Iswara (2019); Kadek (2020); Kusuma (2022); Markiones (2023); dan Putri (2023) indicates that WOM information on social media impacts the brand image of a company and can influence consumer buying interest.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

According to Tuten (2018), SMM is the process of creating offerings, information sharing, exchanges, and communication that benefits the many parties involved in a business or organization via the use of social media platforms and tools. Gunelius, (2011) identifies four indicators of SMM, namely community building, connecting, content sharing, and content creation.

E-WOM

Based on (Kadek 2020), E-WOM is an online review, either favorable or unfavorable, left by past, present, and prospective consumers of a business or product. The influence of WOM can have a strong impact on consumer purchasing behavior, especially amplified by the internet through online forums, blogs, social media, and websites (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). According to Goyette (2010), there are three indicators of E-WOM, namely: (1) Intentistas, (2) Content, and (3) Positive Valence of Opinion.

Brand Image

Kotler & Armstrong, (2020) define a brand image as a group of customer perceptions about a certain brand. Brand image, a set of consumer beliefs about the features, benefits, and services of a brand, is crucial for entrepreneurs as it affects what customers decide to buy. (Yuliantoro 2019). According to Kotler & Keller (2017), there are three indicators of brand image: (1) strength, (2) excellence, (3) uniqueness.

Purchase Intention

Schiffman (2020) states that purchase intention is the inclination or desire of consumers to acquire a particular product or service. Those who can, anticipate, or plan to purchase an item or service in the future are said to have purchasing intentions (Daswan 2019). According to Ferdinand (2002), indicators of purchase intention include (1) transactional purchase intention, (2) preferential purchase intention, and (3) exploratory purchase intention.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

A previous study by Yunikartika & Harti, (2022) suggested that the social media marketing variable has a strong and favorable impact on buying intention. Similarly, Dewi (2022) also claimed that purchase intention is significantly and favorably impacted by social media marketing.

H1: Purchase interest can be influenced by social media marketing significantly and positively

E-WOM on Purchase Intention

Some previous research suggests that buy intentions may be positively impacted by E-WOM (Adriyati & Indriani, 2017; Aljaafreh 2005; Ardana & Rastini, 2018; Lkhaasuren & Nam, 2018; Markiones 2023; Sa'ait 2016; Yunikartika & Harti, 2022).

H2: Purchase interest can be influenced by E-WOM significantly and positively.

Brand Image on Purchase Intention

Interest in buying can also be influenced by brand image based on some previous research. (Adriana 2022; Armawan 2023; Kadek 2020).

H3: Purchase interest can be influenced by brand image significantly and positively.

Social Media Marketing on Brand Image

According to several earlier research, social media marketing may significantly and favorably affect a company's reputation or brand image. (Armawan 2023; Putri & Nofri, 2023; Salhab 2023).

H4: Brand image can be influenced by social media marketing significantly and positively.

E-WOM on Brand Image

According to earlier studies, E-WOM significantly and favorably affects brand image. (Adriana 2022; Armawan 2023; Daswan 2019; Elseidi & El-Baz, 2016; Kusuma & Wijaya, 2022; Solihin, 2022).

H5: Brand image can be influenced by E-WOM significantly and positively.

Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Image

Marketing through social media can strengthen the brand image, thus enhancing consumers' perceptions of the company, resulting in purchase intentions. Referring to previous research stating that the link between purchase intention and social media marketing might be mediated by brand image (Armawan 2023; Salhab 2023; Solihin, 2022).

H6: There is an influence between social media marketing on purchase intention mediated by brand image

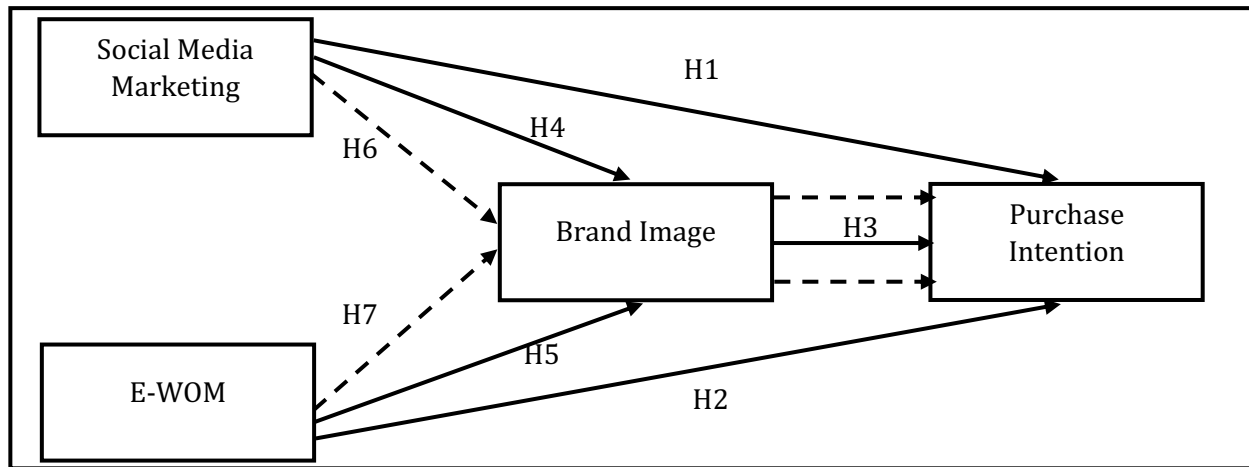
E-WOM and Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Image

Having good product-related information will create a brand image so that consumers or prospective consumers will be more confident and willing to buy. This statement is supported by some previous research that stated that E-WOM has a positive influence on purchase intention through brand image (Alsoud 2023; Armawan 2023; Solihin, 2022).

H7: There is an influence between the E-WOM on purchase intention mediated by brand image

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework



Source: processed by researchers, 2024

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a quantitative methodology focused on theory testing through the measurement of research variables using numerical data, followed by statistical analysis. With explanatory goals in mind, the study takes place in Malang City, targeting active Gen Z TikTok users as its population of interest. The sample size, determined by the formula proposed by Malhotra (2017) as $n = 5$ times the number of indicators, amounts to 155 individuals due to the presence of 31 indicators. Nonprobability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, is utilized for participant selection, ensuring alignment with the research objectives. There are two sources of research data: secondary data and primary data. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire utilizing Likert scales of 1-5 consisting of options. A questionnaire is a method of data collection by directly posing questions to respondents to be filled out and returned. Data analysis employs the PLS-SEM analysis method, utilizing the Smart-PLS 3 device for mediation testing, validity, and reliability testing.

RESULTS

1. Description Of Respondent Characteristics

a. Gender

The following is data from the results of respondent characteristics based on gender for Gen Z in Malang City :

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

No	Gender	Amount	Percentage
1	Laki-laki	33	21,29%
2	Perempuan	122	78,71%

Total 155 100%

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 1 above indicates that 33 out of 155 respondents, or 21.29% of the total, are male respondents. Meanwhile, the female gender yielded a response of 122 out of 155, or 78.71%. It is clear from these statistics that there are more female respondents than male responders overall who have purchase intentions towards Azarine Cosmetics products compared to males.

b. Age

Based on the respondent's age, the following characteristic results were obtained:

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age

No	Age	Amount	Percentage
1	11 - 16	6	3,87%
2	17 - 22	85	54,84%
3	23 - 26	64	41,29%
Total		155	100%

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 2 shows the classification of respondents based on age. In this study, respondent ages are categorized into 3 groups. The first group, aged 11 to 16 years, with an interest in Azarine Cosmetics products, consists of 6 respondents (3.87%). The second group, aged 17 to 22 years, has a total of 85 respondents, or 54.84%. The third group, aged 23 to 26 years, comprises 64 respondents out of the total 155 respondents, or approximately 41.29%. It is explained by these statistics that the majority of responders with purchase intentions towards Azarine Cosmetics products are the second group, aged 17 to 22 years, with 54.84% of the total 155 respondents.

c. Status

The following is data from the results of respondent characteristics based on employment status for Gen Z in Malang City:

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Status

No	Status	Amount	Percentage
1	Pelajar	6	3,87%
2	Mahasiswa S1	108	69,68%
3	Mahasiswa S2	5	3,23%
4	Mahasiswa S3	1	0,65%
5	Karyawan swasta	15	9,68%
6	wiraswasta	17	10,97%
7	Freelancer	3	1,94%

Total 155 100%

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 3 indicates that undergraduate students make up the majority of respondents in terms of status, with 108 respondents or 69.68% of the total required respondents for this study. Based on this data, it can be interpreted that the majority of those who intend to purchase Azarine products are undergraduate students.

d. Domicile

The following characteristic findings were derived from the data gathering process based on the respondents' domicile in the city of Malang:

Table 4. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Domicile

No	Ward	Amount	Persentase
1	Lowokwaru	31	20%
2	Klojen	31	20%
3	Sukun	31	20%
4	Kedungkandang	31	20%
5	Blimbing	31	20%
Total		155	100%

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Referring to Table 4 states the criteria of respondents based on residence in the city of Malang are evenly distributed across 5 sub-districts in Malang city: Lowokwaru, Klojen, Sukun, Kedungkandang, and Blimbing for consumers who have not purchased or shown interest in purchasing Azarine Cosmetics products.

2. Outer Model Analysis

Convergence validity

Convergence validity measurement aims to assess the correlation between items used on respondents calculated with PLS. Indicators with loading factors of 0.7 are acceptable in measuring convergence validity. However, according to Ghazali & Latan, (2014), loading factor values between 0.5 to 0.7 are still acceptable.

Table 5. Loading Factor Value

Variable	Item	Loading Factor Value	AVE	Information
<i>Social Media Marketing (SMM)</i>	SMM1	0,751	0,558	Valid
	SMM2	0,753		Valid
	SMM3	0,759		Valid
	SMM4	0,770		Valid
	SMM5	0,709		Valid
	SMM6	0,751		Valid

	SMM7	0,711		Valid
	SMM8	0,775		Valid
	E1	0,770		Valid
	E2	0,792		Valid
	E3	0,783		Valid
	E4	0,846		Valid
<i>E-WOM (E)</i>	E5	0,798		Valid
	E6	0,743	0,604	Valid
	E7	0,757		Valid
	E8	0,763		Valid
	E9	0,760		Valid
	E10	0,753		Valid
		BI1	0,707	
<i>Brand image (BI)</i>	BI2	0,761		Valid
	BI3	0,782		Valid
	BI4	0,762	0,549	Valid
	BI5	0,721		Valid
	BI6	0,734		Valid
	BI7	0,760		Valid
		PI1	0,710	
<i>Purchase Intention (PI)</i>	PI2	0,751		Valid
	PI3	0,743		Valid
	PI4	0,716	0,559	Valid
	PI5	0,782		Valid
	PI6	0,739		Valid

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 5 indicates that the outer loading values of each indicator item are above 0.7, indicating that the items from each variable can be considered valid. Strong measurement items are indicated by large loading factor values. The AVE values in the table show that all variables have AVE values > 0.5. The values of the following variables are as follows: 0.558 for social media marketing, 0.604 for E-WOM, 0.549 for brand image, and 0.559 for buy intention. These findings imply that every variable is regarded as legitimate or valid.

Reliability Test

The value of Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability is more than 0.7, so a variable is considered reliable. Table 6 presents the findings from the reliability tests carried out in this research.

Table 6. Cross Loadings Value

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Brand image (BI)	0,868	0,898

E-WOM (E)	0,927	0,938
Purchase Intention (PI)	0,835	0,879
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0,887	0,910

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 6 shows that all of the study's variables have Cronbach's alpha values over 0.7, demonstrating dependability. Reliability is confirmed by Composite Reliability values, which likewise produce scores greater than 0.7. Since both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores are over 0.7, the variables of social media marketing, E-WOM, brand image, and buy intention may thus be regarded as trustworthy.

3. Inner Model Analysis

R-square Analysis

Table 7. R-square Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
<i>Brand image</i>	0,817	0,815
<i>Purchase intention</i>	0,760	0,756

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 7 shows that the social media marketing variable and the E-WOM variable which uses brand image as a mediating variable have an R-squared value of 0.817 which indicates that these variables account for 81.7% of the variance in brand image, and the remaining 18.3% is associated with variables other than the research model. This pattern is considered significant. The social media marketing and E-WOM variables have an R-Square value of 0.760 for the dependent variable, namely purchase intention. This means that these two variables contributed 76% to the variation in purchase intentions, while variables outside the scope of the research contributed 24%. This model is also considered important.

Path Coefficient Analysis

Table 8. Path Coefficient

Variable	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Smm -> PI	3,477	0,001
E-WOM -> PI	6,700	0,000
BI -> PI	1,050	0,294
Smm -> BI	5,740	0,000
E-WOM -> BI	9,207	0,000

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

Table 8 shows a strong correlation between social media marketing and E-WOM variables and purchase intention; the p-values are less than 0.05, and the T-statistic values are 3.477 and 6.700, both greater than 1.96. Furthermore, E-WOM marketing and social media have a significant impact on brand image; The T-statistic values are 9.207 and 5.740, both greater than 1.96, and the p-values are less than 0.05. With a p-value greater than 0.05 and a T-statistic value less than 1.050, the association between purchase intention and brand image is negligible.

4. Mediation Test Analysis

Table 9. T-Statistics and P-Values in Indirect Effect

Variable	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Smm -> BI -> PI	1,055	0,292
E-WOM -> BI -> PI	1,019	0,308

Source: processed by researchers, 2024

The results of the bootstrap experiments on the direct link between mediated brand image to purchase intention and social media marketing are presented in Table 9. The T-statistic value is 1.055 less than 1.96, and the p-value is 0.292 greater than 0.05. This means that the relationship between purchase intention and social media marketing is not significantly influenced by the brand image variable. In other words, the results of the hypothesis indicate that H0 is accepted and H6 is rejected. For the indirect association between the electronic word-of-mouth variable and purchase intention using a brand image, similar results were found: a T-statistic value of 1.019 is lower than 1.96 and a P value of 0.308 is higher than 0.05. According to this finding, the brand image of E-WOM.

Discussion

Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

The results of the conducted research have found a significant and positive influence of Azarine's social media marketing on the purchase intention of Generation Z in Malang City. These findings support the hypothesis, thus H1 is accepted while H0 is rejected. This research outcome is consistent with the findings of (Armawan: 2023, Dewi: 2022, Garg & Kumar: 2021, Mazed & Kodumagulla, 2019, Yunikartika & Harti: 2022).

E-WOM on Purchase Intention

Based on the observations conducted regarding E-WOM (E-WOM) on Azarine products on the TikTok social media platform, it was found that there is a significant and positive influence on the purchase intention of Generation Z in Malang City. These results support the hypothesis, thus H2 is accepted while H0 is rejected. This research outcome is consistent with the findings of (Adriyati &

Indriani: 2017, Aljaafreh: 2005, Ardana & Rastini: 2018, Lkhaasuren & Nam: 2018, Markiones: 2023, Sa'ait: 2016, Yunikartika & Harti: 2022).

Brand Image on Purchase Intention

Purchase intention does not appear to be significantly influenced by brand image, according to the path analysis model resulting from data processing on the inner model. Considering that these findings support the hypothesis, H3 is rejected and H0 is accepted. The results of this research are in line with the findings of Alrwashdeh (2019).

Social Media Marketing on Brand Image

Based on the data processing results of the research regarding the variable of social media marketing on the brand image of Generation Z in Malang City, it can be elaborated that it has a significant and positive influence. These findings confirm the hypothesis, thus H4 is accepted while H0 is rejected. This research outcome is consistent with the findings of (Armawan: 2023, Putri & Nofri: 2023, Salhab: 2023)

E-WOM on Brand Image

The discussion regarding the influence of E-WOM on the brand image of Azarine products among Generation Z in Malang City, referring to the results obtained from data processing, can be stated to have a significant and positive impact. These results confirm the hypothesis, thus H5 is accepted while H0 is rejected. This research outcome is consistent with the findings of (Adriana: 2022, Armawan: 2023, Daswan: 2019, Elseidi & El-Baz: 2016, Kusuma & Wijaya: 2022, Solihin: 2022)

Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Image

It can be further explained that brand image is not able to have a significant and positive influence based on the data processing results of the research regarding the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between social media marketing variables and the purchase intention of Generation Z in Malang City. Since these results support the hypothesis, H0 is accepted and H6 is rejected. In Malang City, consumers belonging to Generation Z do not yet have a strong enough brand image to influence their intention to purchase through social media marketing. The results of this study agree with Febriyantoro, (2020) findings. But this research differs from earlier investigations carried out by (Armawan: 2023, Salhab: 2023, Solihin: 2022).

E-wom and Purchase Intention Mediated by Brand Image

It can be concluded that there is no discernible positive effect based on the data processing findings of the study about the mediating function of brand image in the link between the social media marketing variable and purchase intention. Since the hypothesis is supported by the data, H0 is accepted and H7 is rejected. It is possible to conclude that Malang City's Generation Z, who have never bought

Azarine items, disagrees that brand perception might tangentially impact consumers' intentions to buy. The results of this study agree with those of Kentzo (2020). But this research differs from earlier investigations carried out by (Alsoud: 2023, Armawan: 2023, Solihin: 2022).

CONCLUSION

According to the data processing and discussion in this study, the link between the influence of social media marketing, E-WOM and brand image on purchase intention can have a positive and significant impact. E-WOM's direct impact on the company's image and its social media marketing have also produced positive and noteworthy results. The influence of the brand image variable on purchase intention does not have a positive and significant effect. However, the study findings suggest that social media marketing and E-WOM cannot significantly influence consumers' intentions to shop through brand image.

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