

**THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE AND E-WOM ON PURCHASE DECISION WITH
TRUST AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE
(A Study on Evangeline Perfume Users in Generation Y and Z)**

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Abstract

Competitive business competition in the digital era means that entrepreneurs need to make careful efforts to win market competition. Brand Image, e-WOM and trust are needed to make purchasing decisions. This research aims to determine the influence of brand image and e-WOM on purchasing decisions through trust as a mediating variable in Evangeline perfume users generation Y and Z. This research is a type of quantitative research and uses non-probability sampling techniques with the path analysis method. Respondents in this research took a sample of 220 respondents who were women aged at least 17 years and had purchased Evangeline perfume at least twice in the last 2 months offline. The research results show that there is an influence of brand image and e-WOM on purchasing decisions through trust as a mediating variable for Evangeline perfume users.

Keywords: Brand Image, E-Wom, Purchasing Decision, Path Analysis, Trust.

INTRODUCTION

The competition in the cosmetic industry today can be said to have entered the market of perfect competition for local cosmetic brands in Indonesia. Competition among cosmetic industries in Indonesia is becoming more competitive. This is evidenced by the emergence of many new local brands producing various types of cosmetics. International and local cosmetics enable consumers to freely choose cosmetic products to use. With the increasing variety of cosmetic products in the market industry, consumers in Indonesia prefer local cosmetic products to fulfill their cosmetic needs. This can be proven by the following data:

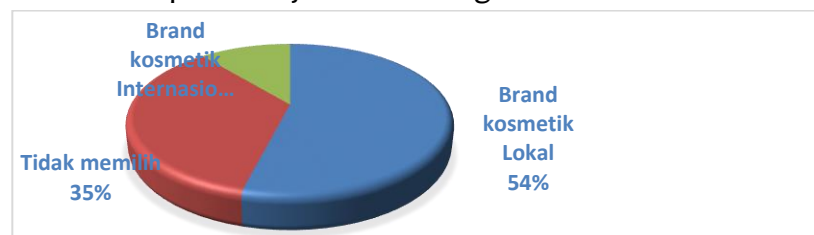


Figure 1. Percentage of Selection of Local and International Cosmetic Brands

Source: (databoks.katadata.co.id, 2022)

A market can be said to have perfect competition if in that market, neither sellers nor buyers can influence prices (Kompasiana.com, 2022). In its usage, cosmetics ranked second (Harbolnas) in 2021 with a percentage of 53%. The majority of consumers purchase makeup, cosmetic tools, facial cleansers, nail beauty tools, and perfume. This is evidenced by the data in Figure 2.

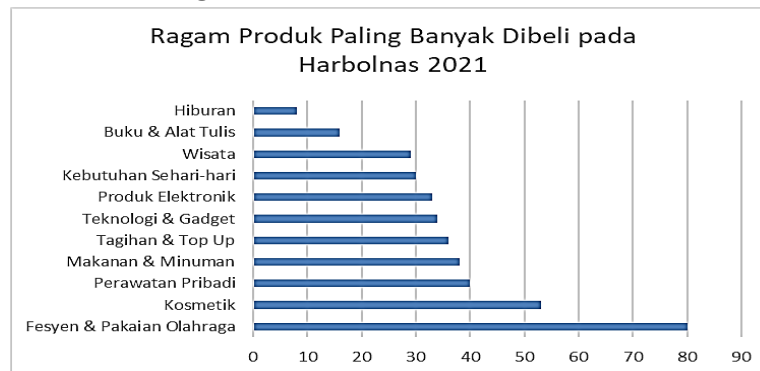


Figure 2. Most Purchased Product Varieties in Harbolnas 2021

Source: katadata.co.id, 2022

Cosmetics are divided into 13 preparations in the regulation of the Indonesian Ministry of Health (Tranggono, 2004). Among these 13 preparations are those for babies, bathing, eyes, fragrances, hair, makeup, oral hygiene, body hygiene, nails, skin care, shaving, suntan, and sunscreen. One of the fragrance preparations is perfume. Perfume is one of the cosmetic products that is liked and commonly used by society. The habit of using perfume or fragrance oil has become a lifestyle that can support an individual's confidence.

The perfume product market in Indonesia experiences growth every year. According to data presented by the Statista Research Department (2022), there has been an increase in revenue in the perfume industry in Indonesia from 2020 onwards. This increase in revenue is predicted to continue to grow to 462.1 million US dollars by 2026. This is evidenced by the data in Figure 3:

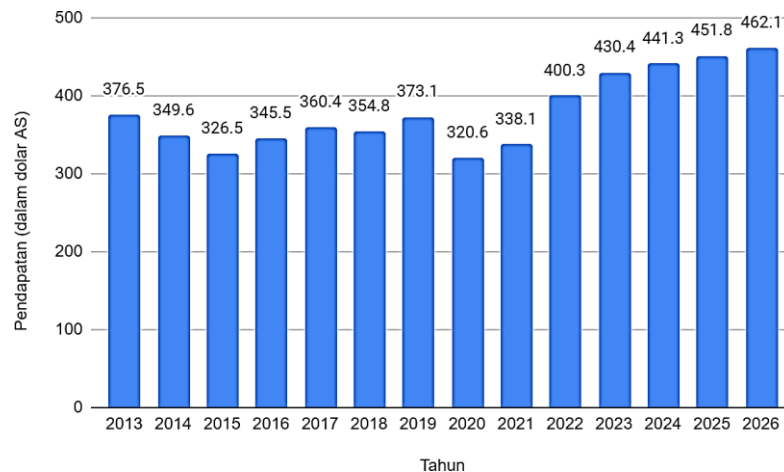


Figure 3. Perfume Market Revenue in Indonesia from 2013 to 2026

Source: Statista Research Department, 2022

The purchasing decision process involves an integration process that combines analyzing several alternative options and choosing one among them (Kotler & Olson, 2017:163). Sulmarwan (2020:10) states that consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by three main factors: marketing strategy, individual characteristics, and environmental factors. Sulmarwan (2020:10) further asserts that marketing strategy is a factor that can affect consumer purchasing decisions. Marketing strategy is divided into 5 components: environmental analysis, market results, segmentation, positioning and repositioning, and marketing mix (Sulmarwan, 2020). The marketing mix consists of 4Ps (Product, Place, Price, Promotion). Additionally, individual characteristics, which are the individual characteristics arising from within consumers and the psychological processes that occur within consumers, greatly influence consumer purchasing decisions, such as perception, motivation, personality, self-concept, information processing, and perception, learning processes, attitudes, and religion.

Consumer purchasing decisions are based on several factors, one of which is brand image. According to Kotler & Keller (2016:758), brand image is the perception and beliefs held by consumers, such as the associations embedded in consumers' memories. Brand image plays a significant role in the purchasing decision process, particularly in the information search stage, as strong brand images are usually popular and frequently discussed by society (Soim et al., 2016). Kotler & Keller (2016:347) propose three indicators that define Brand Image: Strength of brand association, Favorability of brand association, and Uniqueness of brand association. Information search is the second stage of the consumer decision-making process according to Engel (2012:141). Information search begins when consumers perceive that their needs can be met by purchasing and consuming a product (Maharani, 2015). Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) communication through electronic media allows consumers not only to obtain information about related products from people they know but also from a diverse

group of individuals from different geographic areas who have experience with the product in question (Christy, 2010).

In the shopping process, according to Engel et al. (2012:200), before consumers trust and make a purchasing decision, consumers will first go through the purchasing process. The first thing that happens in this process is the emergence of trust followed by the formation of attitudes, which then leads to the intention to purchase and ends with the decision to purchase. If consumers do not have experience with a product, they tend to trust preferred or well-known brands (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008:173). Trust is something that must be built by companies so that consumers will be confident and trust in conducting transactions and providing the necessary services (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust, according to Mowen & Minor (2002), encompasses all the knowledge consumers possess and all the conclusions consumers draw about objects, attributes, and benefits. Based on this, consumer trust can be considered an important indicator in the marketing process of a product, where a good brand image will certainly allow consumers to trust the product more because a good brand image will foster consumer trust.

Currently, the perfume product market in Indonesia is experiencing growth and demand, making perfume industries compete in creating product brand images and marketing strategies that attract customers for increased sales. There are now more varieties of perfume products available. Additionally, perfume products are easily accessible in retail stores, minimarkets, and supermarkets. Some perfume products dominating the Top Brand category in Indonesia in 2022 include Bellagio, Gatsby, Evangeline, Morris, and Romano. Bellagio ranks first, followed by Gatsby, and then Evangeline. This is supported by the following data:

Table 1. Top Brand in the Eau De Parfum Category in 2021 & 2022.

Brand	TBI 2021	TBI 2022	Tahun Berdiri	
Bellagio	35,80%	34,70%	2008	TOP
Gastby	29,20%	30,10%	2000	TOP
Evangeline	11, 50%	15,50%	2011	TOP
Morris	5,00%	6,60%	2010	
Romano	4,40%	5,00%	2008	

Source: www.topbrand-award.com, 2022

Compiled by the Author

Currently, Evangeline has 11 variants and more than 80 items. The Evangeline brand is produced in its own factory and its products have been distributed to all provinces in Indonesia. Evangeline has obtained BPOM certification and received the 'Top Brand' award in the Perfume category. In 2022, Evangeline ranked third in terms of

the highest sales, compared to the fourth place of other products in Table 1.1. Evangeline has been among the top 3 perfumes in the Eau De Parfum category from 2021 to 2022, experiencing a 4% increase in sales. Evangeline has achieved the top 3 position and even became one of the perfume brands with the highest sales increase from 2021 to 2022 compared to the other 4 brands in the Eau De Parfum category.

Online sales refer to transactions conducted via the internet, utilizing platforms such as websites connected to the internet. With the convenience offered by online sales, many companies are starting to create online shops. Additionally, they also utilize e-commerce and marketplaces. Evangeline is one of the products from PT. Griff Prima Abadi that utilizes e-commerce for online sales. One feature of e-commerce is the availability of reviews written by other consumers who have purchased the product, known as e-WOM. E-WOM is a form of promotion that can be applied to Evangeline products, which can influence someone's perception and evaluation, either encouraging or discouraging the purchase of Evangeline products. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) from unfamiliar people still affects perceptions and evaluations, leading to trust (Erlandy et al., 2016). Electronic Word of Mouth can enhance marketing effectiveness but can also damage the reputation of the brand established by the company, especially when there is inconsistency in organizational activities (Chan & Ngai, 2011).

There is a gap in previous research results regarding brand image and purchasing decisions. Wijanarko & Fachrodji (2020) found that brand image significantly influences purchasing decisions positively. However, in the study by Nurulita et al. (2022), brand image did not significantly influence purchasing decisions. Inconsistencies were also found in previous research regarding the variable of e-WOM and purchasing decisions. Kurniawati (2020) stated that e-WOM partially and significantly influences purchasing decisions, while Cristimonica & Setiawan (2022) found no significant influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions. Based on the empirical study above, there is inconsistency between brand image and purchasing decisions, as well as e-WOM and purchasing decisions. To fill these gaps, replication studies and the inclusion of trust variables as a mediating variable are suggested in future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Image

According to Kotler & Keller (2009:403), brand image is the perception and beliefs held by consumers, as reflected in the associations embedded in consumers' memories. Additionally, Tjiptono (2005:49) states that brand image is a description of the associations and beliefs consumers have about a particular brand. Meanwhile, Ferrinadewi (2008:166) argues that brand image is a concept created by consumers due to subjective reasons and the personal emotions of consumers. The indicators used in

the brand image variable utilize the Free Association Technique because this technique is a simple qualitative technique often used to obtain brand association profiles. In this study, the Free Association technique involves asking 20 respondents to mention their impressions of the brand, and then the most frequently mentioned associations will be used to assess the brand image variable.

E-WOM

According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), e-WOM refers to both positive and negative statements made by actual, potential, or former customers about a company or product that are made available to many people and institutions using the internet. Litvin et al. (2006) in Serra-Cantalops et al. (2018) define e-WOM as all informal communications aimed at consumers using internet-based technology regarding the use or characteristics of specific goods and services, or their sellers. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), also often referred to as online reviews, online recommendations, or online opinions. The main differences between WOM and e-WOM can be identified in the scope of reviews (the number of people who can be influenced) and the speed of interaction (Serra-Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). The indicators used in this study, according to Lin et al. (2013), adjusted to the object being studied, include e-WOM Quality, e-WOM Quantity, and Sender Expertise.

Trust According to Mowen & Minor (2002), trust is the knowledge initially held by consumers and all the conclusions made by consumers about the object, attributes, and benefits. Meanwhile, Chul & Kim (2011) state that consumer trust in social networks for reviews is considered in consumer decision-making. Then, according to Mayer et al. (1995), trust is something that must be built by companies so that consumers will be confident and trust in conducting transactions and providing the necessary services to consumers. The indicators used in this study, according to Mayer et al. (1995), adjusted to the object being studied, include competence, benevolence, and integrity.

Purchase Decision

According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2008:485), consumer purchase decision is the selection among two or more alternatives, if consumers have no other choice but to choose, it cannot be classified as decision-making. Meanwhile, Kotler & Keller (2009:184) argue that basic psychological processes play a crucial role in understanding how consumers actually make purchase decisions. Then, Amstrong & Kotler (2003:227) explain that consumer purchase decision is buying the most preferred brand from various alternatives available, but two factors can be between purchase intention and purchase decision. The indicators used in this study, according to Kotler & Keller (2016:178), adjusted to the object being studied, include product selection, distributor selection, and purchase quantity.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

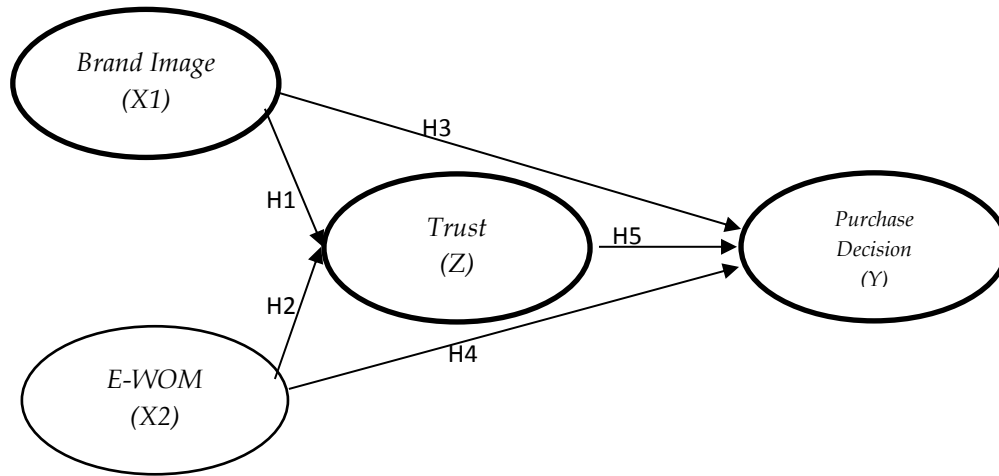


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework
Source: Data Processed (2023)

- H1: Brand image has a significant effect on trust.
H2: e-WOM has a significant effect on trust.
H3: Brand image has a significant effect on purchase decision.
H4: e-WOM has a significant effect on trust.
H5: Trust has a significant effect on purchase decision

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research method. It is a quantitative research type utilizing non-probability sampling technique using judgmental sampling method. The respondents in this study were sampled with a total of 220 respondents who are females aged at least 17 years old and have made at least 2 purchases of Evangeline perfume offline in the last 2 months. The research results indicate that there is an influence of brand image and e-WOM on purchase decision through trust as a mediating variable among Evangeline perfume users. The measurement in this research uses a 5-point Likert scale with response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Questionnaires were distributed online by sharing questionnaire links to respondents via social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Data analysis technique employs Path Analysis with the assistance of AMOS Version 24 software and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of Respondents Characteristics

The number of respondents who completed the research questionnaire is 220. Based on age, respondents are predominantly in the age range of 17-22 years old, with

a total of 151 respondents (67%). Regarding occupation, the majority of respondents are still students, with a total of 119 respondents (54%). The highest number of respondents are domiciled in Central Surabaya, with a total of 59 respondents (26%).

Results of Validity and Reliability Test

The validity and reliability test was conducted on 220 respondents. Based on the validity test results, all statement items are deemed valid because the calculated r values for the brand image, e-WOM, trust, and purchase decision variables are all greater than 0.30, indicating that all statement items can be used as measuring tools in the study. The reliability test results prove that all statement items from the entire variables have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.60, indicating that the statements made in the instrument are reliable and can be continued as measuring tools.

Results of Path Analysis

Figure 5 shows the results of the path analysis. Figure 5 can be converted into structural model equations (1) and (2). The details of the relationships between variables are also presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that the relationship between trust and brand image has a path coefficient of 0.277. Trust with e-WOM has a path coefficient of 0.550. Furthermore, the relationship between purchase decision and trust has a path coefficient of 0.298. Purchase decision with brand image has a path coefficient of -0.059. Meanwhile, the relationship between purchase decision and e-WOM has a path coefficient of 0.487.

$$Z = 0,277X_1 + 0,550X_2 + 0,618 \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

$$Y = -0,059X_1 + 0,487X_2 + 0,298Z + 0,719 \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

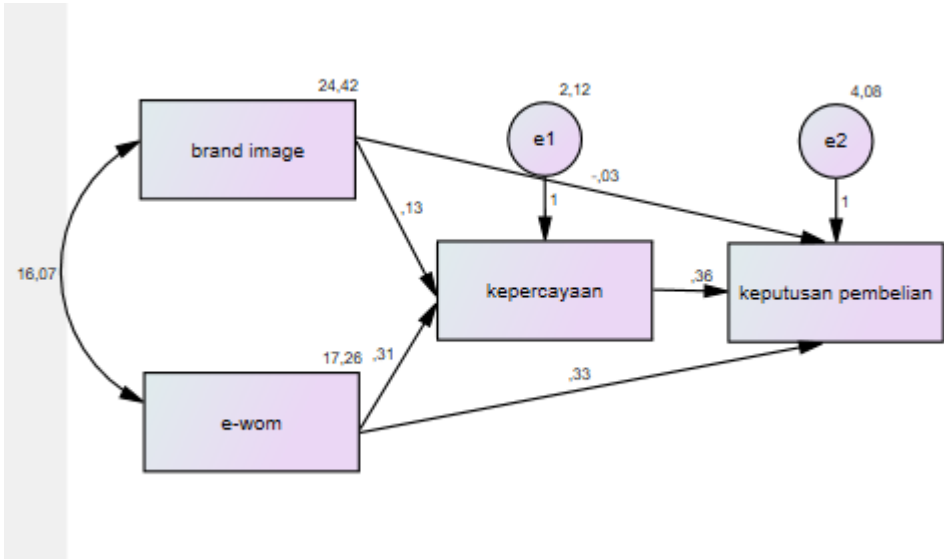


Figure 5. Path Analysis Results
Source: AMOS Version 24 Output (2023)

Table 2. Standardized Regression Weight

	Estimate
Kepercayaan ← <i>Brand image</i>	0,277
Kepercayaan ← <i>E-Wom</i>	0,550
Keputusan pembelian ← Kepercayaan	0,298
Keputusan pembelian ← <i>Brand image</i>	-0,059
Keputusan pembelian ← <i>E-Wom</i>	0,487

Results of Hypothesis

Testing For the first hypothesis, the calculated CR value between the brand image variable and trust is 4.117, which is greater than 2.00. The probability significance value is 0.000 ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that the brand image variable has a significant effect on the trust variable. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted. For the second hypothesis, the calculated CR value between the e-WOM variable and trust is 8.195, which is greater than 2.00. The probability significance value is 0.000 ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that the e-WOM variable has a significant effect on the trust variable. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted. For the third hypothesis, the calculated CR value between the purchase decision variable and brand image is -0.731, which is less than 2.00. The probability significance value is 0.465 ($p \leq 0.05$), indicating that there is no significant influence or effect. Therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected. For the fourth hypothesis, the calculated CR value between the e-WOM variable and purchase decision is 5.447, which is greater than 2.00. The probability significance value is 0.000 ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that the e-WOM variable has a significant effect on the purchase decision variable. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. For the fifth hypothesis, the calculated CR value between the trust variable and purchase decision is 3.791, which is greater than 2.00. The probability significance value is 0.000 ($p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that the trust variable has a significant effect on the purchase decision variable. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hipotesis	Variabel	Standardized Estimate	Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Kepercayaan ← <i>Brand image</i>	0,277	0,132	0,032	4,117	***
H2	Kepercayaan ← <i>E-Wom</i>	0,550	0,312	0,038	8,195	***

Hipotesis	Variabel	Standardized Estimate	Unstandardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H3	Keputusan pembelian ← <i>Brand image</i>	-0,059	-0,034	0,046	-,731	,465
H4	Keputusan pembelian ← <i>E-Wom</i>	0,487	0,329	0,060	5,447	***
H5	Keputusan pembelian ← Kepercayaan	0,298	0,355	0,094	3,791	***

Source: AMOS Version 24 Output (2023)

Mediation Test

In the path of the brand image variable, full mediation is evident because the direct effect of brand image on purchase decision is not significant, but its effect becomes significant when involving the mediating variable trust. This means that significantly, the brand image variable cannot influence the purchase decision variable without involving the trust variable. In the path of the e-WOM variable, partial mediation is evident because both the direct and indirect effects of brand image on the purchase decision variable are significant, whether through the mediating variable trust or not through the mediating variable trust. This indicates that by involving the trust variable, both directly and indirectly, the e-WOM variable can influence the purchase decision variable.

DISCUSSION

1. The Influence of Brand Image on Trust

A positive brand image leads to trust in the product, thus companies must promote a strong brand image to enhance consumer trust in their products. Brand image is a crucial aspect of marketing as long-term trust and satisfaction with the brand have significant roles in purchasing behavior. The results of this study suggest a significant and positive relationship between brand image and trust. This indicates that a good brand image of Evangeline perfume will also increase consumer trust. Therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted: "brand image affects trust".

This finding aligns with the basic concept put forward by Donely & Cannon (1997) that a positive brand image influences consumer trust, as trust serves as an indicator of confidence and satisfaction with a brand, and companies utilize brand

trust from consumers as a mechanism to mitigate risks. Similarly, research by Elsch et al. (2006) suggests that a brand image contributes to long-term trust and satisfaction with the brand, playing a significant role in consumer behavior. With a good brand image, consumers are more likely to engage in purchasing behavior. Consumer trust is crucial in determining purchase decisions. This research also corroborates the findings of a study conducted by Pultri & Harti (2022) which stated that brand image has a positive and significant effect on trust. Thus, brand image can influence trust by promoting a strong brand image to enhance consumer trust in the company's products. This implies that the better the brand image of a product to consumers, the higher the level of trust they will have.

2. The Influence of e-WOM on Trust

In online transactions, buyers are faced with high uncertainty because they cannot directly inspect the products they are purchasing. Trust in e-commerce becomes a key factor in conducting online buying and selling. In e-commerce, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) can effectively serve as a reference for consumers to evaluate products or brands. Additionally, the reviews from e-WOM can mitigate the uncertainty faced by consumers when purchasing products or services. The results of this study indicate a significant and positive relationship between e-WOM and trust. This suggests that if the reviews on e-commerce platforms are positive, then consumer trust in Evangeline perfume products will also be high. Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted: "e-WOM affects trust".

This finding is consistent with the basic concept put forward by Litvin et al. (2006) in Selrra-Cantalops et al. (2018) that e-WOM is an informal communication medium that influences consumers using Internet-based technology to disseminate opinions about specific products or services. This is also related to the theory proposed by Yulianto & Soelsanto (2020) that the recommendations from e-WOM can reduce the uncertainty faced by consumers when purchasing products or services, thereby enhancing trust in the product. With positive comments on e-commerce platforms visible to consumers, it will encourage them to engage in buying behavior. Consumer trust is a readiness to accept a brand's message, which can increase the brand's sales. This research also supports the findings of a study conducted by Nurl & Octavia (2022) which stated that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on trust. Therefore, e-WOM can influence consumer trust by providing comments that enhance the credibility of Evangeline perfume products, thereby increasing their sales.

3. The Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Decision

Individual purchasing decisions are often influenced by brand image. Brand image is the perception and belief held by consumers that is ingrained in their

memory. A strong brand image plays a significant role in the purchasing decision process, particularly in the information search stage, as strong brand images are usually popular and widely discussed by society. However, the results of this study indicate that brand image does not have a significant and direct influence on purchase decisions. This suggests that although Evangeline perfume has a good brand image, it does not directly influence individual consumers in making purchasing decisions. Therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected: "Brand image affects purchase decision".

This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by Bloemer et al. (1998), which suggests that brand image does not have a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions because it is believed that there are other variables that directly influence purchasing decisions, such as e-WOM and others. In this study, it was found that brand image does not correlate with decision-making, as some consumers may go through the decision-making stages but do not consider brand image itself, as some consumers may consider brand image not to be important or essential in making their decisions. This study's findings are also consistent with the research conducted by Nurlita et al. (2022) and Sone (2019) on cosmetic research, which stated that brand image does not significantly affect purchase decisions. This phenomenon occurs because brand images vary for each consumer.

In terms of the brand image variable, it indicates a full mediation effect, as the direct influence of brand image on purchase decision was not significant but its influence was significant when involving the mediating variable of trust. In this case, Evangeline perfume can build a good relationship by interacting with consumers through brand trust so that consumers can trust Evangeline perfume products in making purchases. Evangeline perfume must also be able to maintain and maximize sales as well as build consumer trust in the purchased product, thus increasing purchasing decisions among consumers. Therefore, Evangeline perfume can provide information about brand image and trust to buyers when they make purchase decisions.

4. The Influence of e-WOM on Purchase Decision

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions by influencing what consumers will buy. e-WOM plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions and in shaping consumer behavior patterns. The results of this study show a positive and significant relationship between e-WOM and purchase decisions. This indicates that if the product reviews of the Evangeline brand on e-commerce platforms are good, they can encourage consumers to make purchase decisions. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is accepted: "e-WOM influences purchase decisions".

This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by Sulryadi (2019), which suggests that recommendations or reviews provided by other consumers can influence consumers in making purchasing decisions for a product. e-WOM communication can take various forms, such as consumers posting opinions, comments, and product reviews on platforms like discussion forums, blogs, and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This can be related to Sulmarwan's theory (2020:10) that marketing strategies can influence consumer decisions. Advertisements created by marketers also provide information to potential consumers before purchasing a product. Sales in Indonesia are increasing because sellers can utilize social media as a promotional tool as best as possible. With positive comments, it will encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. This study's results are also consistent with the research conducted by Kulniawati (2020) and Nurlita et al. (2022) on cosmetic research, which found that e-WOM significantly influences purchase decisions.

5. The Influence of Trust on Purchase Decision

The trust that consumers have in providing reviews on social networks is considered in consumer decision-making. Trust is something that companies must build so that consumers will be confident and trust in making transactions. Trust is an attitude of consumers that shows confidence in a product or service. The results of this study indicate a positive and significant relationship between trust and purchase decisions. This indicates that if consumers' trust in Evangeline perfume products is high, it can encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is accepted: "trust influences purchase decisions".

This finding is consistent with the theory proposed by Mowen & Minor (2002:312) that consumer trust is the initial judgment held by customers and the ultimate conclusion made by consumers about the object, attributes, and benefits. It can also be related to the theory proposed by Schiffman & Kanuk (2008:173) that if consumers do not have experience with a product, they tend to rely on what is said or claimed. From these theories, it can be interpreted that trust is a consumer attitude that instills a sense of confidence in a product. This means that purchase decisions have a strong relationship with consumer trust in Evangeline perfume products. This trust can encourage consumers to make purchases. This study's results are also consistent with the findings of Putri & Harti (2022) and Nurl & Octavia (2022) that trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. This means that the better the trust, the higher the purchasing decisions made by consumers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data from the research results in the discussion analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistic 25.0 and IBM SPSS AMOS 24.0 in Chapter IV, the following conclusions can be drawn from this study, as summarized below:

1. There is a positive and significant influence of brand image on trust.
2. There is a positive and significant influence of e-WOM on trust.
3. There is no positive and significant influence of brand on purchase decisions.
4. There is a positive and significant influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions.
5. There is a positive and significant influence of trust on purchase decisions

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