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Intervening Role of Brand Image in Purchasing Decisions: Path Analysis

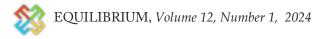
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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products on Gen Z in Blitar City, as well as the intervening influence of brand image between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products on Gen Z. The novelty of this research lies in the research location, namely in Blitar city. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires measured on a 5-point Likert scale to 250 Gen Z in Blitar City who purchased halal cosmetic products at least twice in the last six months. The collected research data were subjected to research instrument tests, classical assumption tests, path tests, and hypothesis tests. The results showed that digital marketing and brand image have an effect on purchasing decisions, e-WOM has no impact on buying decisions, and brand image can intervene in the influence between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions. The results of this study contribute as evaluation material for companies to pay more attention to e-WOM by improving sales services, collaborating with content creators in reviewing products, building online communities, and holding events that can provoke consumers to share their best experiences in using products to increase the number and quality of reviews related to halal cosmetics both on social media and shopping platforms so that potential consumers feel they are taking the proper steps by making a purchase.

Keywords: Brand Image; Digital Marketing; e-WOM; Halal Cosmetics; Purchasing Decisions

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INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry is growing massively due to the growing young Muslim population and the wide-spreading trend of halal lifestyle, which is also apparent in Indonesia (Dinar Standard, 2020). Indonesia is ranked third in the world and has the most robust Islamic economic ecosystem. The final SGIER score that determines the country's ranking is calculated based on six halal industry sectors, one of which is the halal cosmetics industry. Indonesia's total consumption of halal cosmetics throughout 2023 amounted to USD5.4, the second largest in the world after India (Laiqat, 2023). The existence of halal cosmetics in Indonesia is supported by the large Muslim population and high awareness of the importance of choosing halal products, where the halal label on the packaging is the first consideration for consumers when purchasing products (Naurah, 2023).

The use of halal products for Muslims is not an option but an obligation (Hamid et al., 2024; Ngah et al., 2021). Halal products have been integrated into the lives of Muslims, and they can describe a person's level of religiosity (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013). Cosmetics do not enter the body but are used in various activities, including worship. It must be ensured that the cosmetic product is halal to not interfere with the validity of prayer (Razak, 2023). The basic concept of halal cosmetic products itself includes raw materials, packaging process, storage, distribution process, and sales process to be free from non-halal elements (Idris et al., 2021; Nurdin & Rahman, 2021). In addition, concern for hygiene factors, safety, and conformity with Sharia makes halal cosmetics much favored by consumers, and the loyalty of its users is increasing rapidly (Khalid et al., 2018).

Purchasing decisions are influenced by marketing strategy factors, environmental factors, and individual factors (Idrus, 2019). Marketing factors aim to provide information, affirmation, and stimulus for consumers to purchase. Digital marketing strategies facilitate the reach of information to consumers and provide ease of transactions to increase the chances of a purchase (Blazheska & Ristovska, 2020; Ganguly et al., 2010; Putri & Marlien, 2022; Rameshkumar, 2022; Sukaini, 2022; Tiffany et al., 2018). Environmental factors surround consumers, including family, work environment, organizational groups, references, and friendship environments. Recommendations and reviews on e-commerce and media, commonly called Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), can strengthen consumer confidence in purchasing (Amin, 2019; Chen et al., 2023; Gurav et al.,



2023; Poturak & Turkyilmaz, 2018; Sa'ait et al., 2016; Shashikala & Thilina, 2020). Experienced consumers have their considerations before determining what shopping channel to use and consider e-WOM before deciding to buy a particular product. Supported by security factors, cost efficiency, trust, and experience, consumers are more selective in online shopping, but, at the same time, they have high confidence to do it repeatedly (Tchanturia, 2022).

Individual factors come from internal consumers, which can be in the form of personality, beliefs, tastes, ideas, thoughts, and consumer perceptions of products or what is commonly referred to as brand image. Products with a good brand image are more likely to be purchased by consumers (Atidira et al., 2019; Majeed et al., 2022; Martadina & Anwar, 2023; Yodpram & Intalar, 2020). Brand image is formed by external stimuli, in this case, digital marketing and e-WOM, which then round up consumer purchase decisions. Thus, brand image plays an intervening role in the influence of digital marketing and e-WOM on consumer purchasing decisions (Gunawan & Pertiwi, 2022; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2022; Manggalania & Soesanto, 2021; Putri & Munas, 2023; Tauran et al., 2022). This research maintains digital marketing, e-WOM, and brand image as factors in analyzing the reasons consumers make product purchases.

The use of digital marketing, e-WOM, and brand image in influencing halal cosmetic purchasing decisions has been widely used by previous researchers. Rizq and Muslichah (2023) researched social media users in Indonesia and found that e-WOM influences purchasing decisions but not digital marketing. This result contradicts the analysis of Jalil et al. (2021), which reveals that social media marketing influences purchasing decisions. Indriana et al. (2022) analyzed purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products for students in Surakarta, showing that e-WOM influences purchasing decisions both directly and through brand image. Wajdi et al. (2020) analyzed purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products for students who live in Jogjakarta; the results of the analysis prove that e-WOM affects purchasing decisions.

These results are similar to the results of the analysis of Bhutto et al. (2024), who analyzed Generation Z (Gen Z) in Pakistan, and Purwianti (2022), who researched Muslim women in the city of Batam, Indonesia. However, they were contrary to the results of Jalil et al. (2021), who analyzed online customers in Malaysia with an age range of 21-30 years, which showed that e-WOM did

not affect purchasing decisions. Similar research was conducted by Sa'adah and Mardhotillah (2023), researching purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products (Avoskin) for consumers in Surabaya. The results of the analysis indicate that both brand image and e-WOM affect purchasing decisions. These findings align with the results of the analysis of Monoarfa et al. (2023), those who researched generations Y and Z in West Java, and Hudzaifah et al. (2024), who analyzed purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products on Gen Z students in Pontianak.

The different research results between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions, as well as the fact that there are not many researchers who place the brand image as intervening between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions, make researchers maintain digital marketing, e-WOM, brand image, and purchasing decisions as variables that will be further tested in this study. The originality of this research is an entirely new location, namely Blitar City. Different locations are very likely to get different research results, given the different cultures and characteristics of the community. The subject of this study was Gen Z, a digital native generation and the largest cosmetic market compared to the generations before and after (Evan, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to complement previous research that has not sufficiently examined the impact of digital marketing and e-WOM and the intervening impact of brand image on halal cosmetic purchasing decisions. Specifically, this study aims to examine the effect of digital marketing and e-WOM on halal cosmetic purchasing decisions through intervening variables in Gen Z in Blitar City. These objectives are used to formulate Gen Z behavior in buying halal cosmetic products. This research contributes to the literature by focusing on the relationship between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions and the intervening effect of brand image on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetics in Gen Z in Blitar City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Cosmetics

Cosmetics are products used on the outside of the body to maintain cleanliness, health, fragrance, beauty, and body parts so that they are always



in good condition (Septianingrum et al., 2023). Cosmetics are included in the category of products that must be certified halal because they are used in daily life, come into direct contact with the skin, and are used for praying, especially for Muslims. Prayers become invalid if impurity is attached to our skin, so it is mandatory to ensure that the products used are free from materials that contain impurities (LPPOM MUI, 2022a). The guarantee that a product has been ensured that the material source, production process, packaging, storage, and distribution process are holy and not exposed to impurities is the presence of a halal label issued by LPPOM MUI (LPPOM MUI, 2022b). Halal cosmetic products referred to in this study are Sariayu Martha Tilaar, Wardah, BLP Beauty, Somethinc, Garnier, Emina, MAKEOVER, Madame Gie, Rollover React, Avoskin, ERHA, Maybelline, Oriflame, ESQA Cosmetics, and studio tropic. These cosmetic products are circulating in Indonesia and already have Halal certification by LPPOM MUI (Aura, 2022).

Generation Z

Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012, is proficient in operating the internet, and is up to date with information spread on social media (Savira, 2022). Gen Z is the largest generation of cosmetic users because Gen Z is most exposed to cosmetic content. Gen Z's purchasing power is not as high as that of their predecessors, but they are curious and love trying new products (Evan, 2022). Globally, the number of Gen Z reaches 41% of the world's population or 3.2 billion (Pamela, 2022), while in Indonesia the number of Gen Z reaches 27.94% or 74.93 million people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). The large number of Gen Z nationally comes from the accumulated number of Gen Z in all districts and cities in Indonesia. Blitar City is indirectly a city that contributes to the large number of Gen Z because Blitar City is one of the cities with a larger percentage of Gen Z compared to the previous and subsequent generations. The number of Gen Z in Blitar City in 2020 reached 38,235 people, or 25.64% (BPS Kota Blitar, 2020).

Purchase Decision

According to Idrus, consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by the internal factors of the individual itself, environmental factors, and marketing

factors (Idrus, 2019). This purchase starts with consumer awareness of their needs by comparing the expected and current situations. Consideration of product specifications, prices, and financial conditions allows consumers to choose different products. This purchasing decision-making process begins when consumers feel a problem; consumers seek information to find a solution, evaluate alternative solutions, and make a purchase decision (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Some things that need to be considered before choosing a cosmetic product include the halal logo on the packaging, the composition of the main ingredients, already having a distribution permit, the name and address of the manufacturer, and knowing that not all products with natural ingredients can be declared 100% halal (Kompas, 2022).

Digital Marketing

Changes in consumer behavior require companies to compete to meet consumer needs, including using digital-based technology in marketing and sales, or what is commonly referred to as digital marketing (Chasanah & Saino, 2021). Digital marketing utilizes the internet to connect with consumers (Sawlan, 2021). Digital marketing helps sellers to survive in business competition through a wide marketing reach by eliminating geographic distance (Mahida, 2023; Mulyansyah & Sulistyowati, 2021). The relatively affordable advertising costs and the flexibility of sellers in managing content according to their needs make marketing media widely chosen to promote the products they sell. An attractive sales web layout allows consumers to stay on the web for a long time. Quality and relevant marketing content helps the sales process (Idrus, 2019). Digital marketing facilitates consumers to get the best experience in finding information about the products offered, both through social media, websites, and e-commerce. Page reload speed, responsive customer service, and ease of transactions are plus points why digital marketing has many enthusiasts (Bhosale et al., 2020; Sawlan, 2021). The explanation above shows the close relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions; thus, the hypothesis proposed is:

H1: Digital marketing affects purchasing decisions for halal cosmetics



Electronic Word-Of-Mouth

Another factor that is taken into consideration when buying a product is social factors in the form of other people's opinions on online sites or what is commonly called e-WOM (Goyette et al., 2010). E-WOM is considered effective because consumers tend to believe what others convey, especially those closest to them (Latief, 2019). Through these online reviews, consumers obtain information related to the impressions or experiences of other consumers who have used the product first, the advantages and disadvantages of the product, and even recommendations for buying (Mythili & Sowndarya, 2024; Sukaini, 2022). Online reviews include independent marketing communication media because they come from parties outside the company but are concerned with the products offered by the company. Some reviews come purely from consumers or content creators who intend to share experiences or educate consumers, but some reviews are deliberately created by companies through collaborative ties with content creators to persuade followers of the content creator to make purchases (Latief, 2019). Effective e-WOM is e-WOM whose messages can be well received by consumers. consumers obtain information about products through what they see and read, thereby increasing consumer interest in buying products (Marziqah & Albari, 2023). The explanation above shows the close relationship between e-WOM and purchasing decisions; thus, the hypothesis is proposed:

H2: E-WOM affects purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products

Brand Image

In addition to digital marketing and e-WOM, brand image is one of the most widely used marketing strategies. Brand image is a mindset and consumer confidence in the products offered (Firmansyah, 2019; Kannappan, 2023). Brand image is formed through many factors, such as the quality of the products offered, honesty, providing product identity, and establishing good relationships with consumers (Ligaraba et al., 2024; Puška et al., 2018). Forming a good brand image takes a relatively long time because it must present repeated information imprinted in consumers' memories (Saxena & Dhar, 2021). Consumers who do not have experience buying a product tend to choose products that are familiar and have a good image because they are considered more reliable while minimizing

the risk of disappointment (Sindarto & Ellitan, 2022). The explanation above shows the close relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions; thus, the hypothesis proposed is:

H3: Brand image affects purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products

The intervening effect of the brand image between digital marketing and e-WOM on Purchasing Decisions

Brand image not only acts as an independent variable that influences purchasing decisions but can also act as an intervening variable between digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions. Freud's theory states that stimuli from the surrounding environment can cause reflexes or unconscious behavior, but human conscious behavior comes from logic (Hall, 2019). In this case, the stimuli presented through digital marketing and e-WOM influence customer perceptions and beliefs on a subconscious level. However, these subconsciously developed perceptions and beliefs become rational for consumers when they consider making a purchase. If consumers have negative attitudes or views about a product, it may discourage them from making a purchase. Good, relevant, and quality digital marketing can influence consumer perceptions of the products offered so that consumers reach a unanimous decision to buy the product (Putri & Munas, 2023; Tauran et al., 2022). No different from e-WOM, the more people give good reviews, the better the consumer's perception and confidence in the product so that they do not hesitate to make a purchase (Gunawan & Pertiwi, 2022; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2022; Mohamed et al., 2024). The proposed hypotheses are:

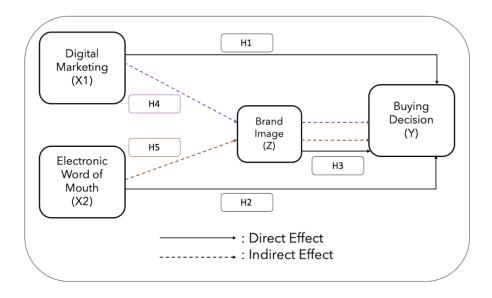
H4: Brand image can intervene in the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products.

H5: Brand image can intervene in the influence of e-WOM on purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products



Conceptual model

Figure 1.Research Conceptual Model



Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

The research consists of 2 independent variables, digital marketing and e-WOM, 1 dependent variable, purchasing decisions, and 1 intervening variable, brand image.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses path analysis to determine the relationship between digital marketing and e-WOM in purchasing decisions and the influence of brand image on Gen Z's purchase of halal cosmetics in Bitar City. The research data was collected through a questionnaire distributed online to Gen Z in Blitar City, who had purchased halal cosmetic products at least twice in the past year. There are two parts to the questionnaire distributed. The first part contains respondents' data, which consists of gender, age, occupation, and cosmetic brands that have been purchased. The second part consists of 25 questions and 7 questions. The second part consists of 25 questions, including 7 digital marketing questions, 7

e-WOM questions, 5 brand image questions, and 6 purchase decision questions. Each question was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The research data collected a total of 250 answers, which were then grouped and carried out research instrument tests consisting of validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests consisting of normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation tests, path tests, and hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The demographic features of the study respondents are shown in the following table:

Table 1.Demographic features of respondents

Category		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	7	2.8%
Gender	Woman	7 243 20 159 69 2 131 98 4 2 15 113 12 49 31	97.2%
	11-15 years old	20	8%
A 20	16-20 years old	159	63.6%
Age	21-25 years old	69	27.6%
	26 years old	2	0.8%
	Student	131	52.4%
	College student	98	39.2%
Occupation	Self-employed	4	1.6%
	Housewife	2	0.8%
	Employee	15	6%
	Wardah	113	45.2%
	Sariayu Martha Tilaar	12	4.8%
Halal Cosmetic Products	Emina	49	19.6%
	Garnier	31	12.4%
	Somethinc	3	1.2%



Madame Gie	13	5.2%
Oriflame	2	0.8%
MAKE OVER	6	2.4%
studio tropic	3	1.2%
Avoskin	5	2%
ERHA	2	0.8%
Maybelline	7	2.8%
ESQA Cosmetics	4	1.6%
Rollover React	0	0%
BLP Beauty	0	0%

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

Table 1 shows that the respondents were dominated by women, totaling 97.2%, 63.6% are aged 16-20 years, 45.2% are Wardah cosmetic users, and 52.4% are students.

This research uses primary data, so it must be ensured that the instruments used are precise and reliable by testing the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The validity test is used to determine the feasibility of research instruments for collecting data. If the calculation results show a sig<0.05 or r count> 0.3 and are positive, the research instrument has a strong construct value and is suitable for use (Sujianto, 2009).

Table 2.

Validity test results

Variable	Question Item Number	R count	Sig	Conclusion (Ö/X)
	1	.678**	.000	Ö
	2	.689**	.000	Ö
	3	.708**	.000	Ö
Digital Marketing	4	.809**	.000	Ö
-	5	.777**	.000	Ö
	6	.776**	.000	Ö
	7	.753**	.000	Ö

	1	.817**	.000	Ö
	2	.798**	.000	Ö
Electronic Mond of	3	.886**	.000	Ö
Electronic Word-of- Mouth	4	.880**	.000	Ö
Mount	5	.861**	.000	Ö
	6	.773**	.000	Ö
	7	.822**	.000	Ö
	1	.868**	.000	Ö
	2	.802**	.000	Ö
Brand Image	3	.866**	.000	Ö
_	4	.874**	.000	Ö
	5	.830**	.000	Ö
	1	.860**	.000	Ö
	2	.835**	.000	Ö
Purving Decision	3	.818**	.000	Ö
Buying Decision	4	.760**	.000	Ö
	5	.884**	.000	Ö
	6	.865**	.000	Ö
Information:	Ö = Valid, X = Invalid			

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

Table 2 shows that the significance value of each question item on the digital marketing, e-WOM, brand image, and purchase decision variables is 0.000 < 0.05, the value of r count for each question item number < 0.3, so the research questions on each variable are valid.

The reliability test is used to determine whether the research instrument used on the same object in different periods can provide the same results. The decision-making range of Cronbach's alpha calculation results is divided into 5: less (0.00-0.20), somewhat (0.21-0.40), quite (0.41-0.60), reliable (0.61-0.80), and very reliable (0.81-1.00) (Sujianto, 2009).

Table 3. *Reliability Test Results*

Variable	Cronbach's alpha value	Conclusion
Digital Marketing	.855	Very reliable
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	.925	Very reliable
Brand Image	.898	Very reliable
Buying Decision	.913	Very reliable

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024



Table 3 shows that Cronbach's alpha values for the digital marketing variable are 0.855, e-WOM 0.925, brand image 0.898, and purchasing decision variable 0.913. Cronbach's alpha value for each variable ranges from 0.80-1.00, so the research instruments for all variables are declared highly reliable.

The next test is the classic assumption test, and the first test is the normality test to determine the residual value of normally distributed data. Data meets the assumption of normality if the significance value > 0.05.

Table 4. *Normality Test Results*

N		250
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.	.212e

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

Based on the calculation results in Table 4, it is known that the significance value is 0.212>0.05; thus, the research data is normally distributed.

The second test is the multicollinearity test, which determines the existence of a definite linear relationship between independent variables and explains the regression line detected through the VIF value. If the VIF value is less than 10 then the data is free from symptoms of multicollinearity (Sahir, 2021).

Table 5. *Multicollinearity Test Results*

Model	Tolerance	VIF
Digital Marketing	.397	2.518
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	.600	1.667
Brand Image	.446	2.244

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

Based on the calculation results in Table 5, it is known that the VIF value of the digital marketing variable is 2,518, the e-WOM variable is 1,667, and the brand image variable is 1,142. This value is less than 10; thus, it is free from symptoms of multicollinearity.

The third test is the autocorrelation test, which determines the remaining correlation between observations in one period and the previous period. Data is free from autocorrelation symptoms if the DW value is between 1.65 and 2.35 (Sujianto, 2009).

Table 6.Autocorrelation Test Results

Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
3.17099	1.940

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

The calculation results in Table 6 show a DW value of 1,940, which is more than 1.65 and less than 2.35; thus, it is free from autocorrelation symptoms.

The f-test is used to determine the joint influence between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The independent variables have a simultaneous influence if the F value> F table and the significance value <0.05. the value of F table DF 250 is 2.641. The coefficient of determination test is used to determine how far the independent variable influences the dependent variable. The magnitude of this influence can be seen from the results of the adjusted r-square calculation (Sujianto, 2009).

Table 7.F Test Results and Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Variable relationships	F	Sig	Adjusted R square
Digital marketing, e-WOM->brand image	153.628	.000	.551
Digital marketing, e-WOM, Brand image- >buying decision	85.189	.000	.504

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

The calculation results in Table 7 show that the F count of the effect of digital marketing and e-WOM variables on brand image variables is 153,628> 2,641 and a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05. The results of the calculation of F



digital marketing variables, e-WOM, and brand image on purchasing decisions are 85.189> 2.641 and a significance value of 0.000 <0.05, so it can be concluded that both relationships have an effect simultaneously.

The Adjusted r square value in Table 7 of the digital marketing and e-WOM variables on the brand image variable is 0.551, meaning that digital marketing and e-WOM affect brand image by 55.1%. The adjusted r square value of the digital marketing, e-WOM, and brand image variables on purchasing decisions is 0.504, meaning that digital marketing and brand image affect purchasing decisions by 50.4%.

The next test is path analysis, where path analysis is the development of regression analysis. This study uses two regression analysis models. The first regression model is to determine the effect of digital marketing and brand image variables on purchasing decisions. The second regression model is used to determine the effect of digital marketing variables on brand image. Furthermore, calculations were carried out with the help of the Sobel test calculator to determine the existence of indirect effects.

Table 8. *Model 1 Regression Test Results*

	Unstandard	dized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	В	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	7.143	1.183	
Digital Marketing	.326	.065	.356
E-WOM	.042	.042	.057
Brand Image	.429	.077	.371

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

The first model regression test can be described as follows:

Y = a + B1X1 + B2X2 + B3Z + e

Y=7.143+0.326+0.042+0.429



Table 9. *Model 2 Regression Test Results*

	Unstandard	lized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
	В	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	7.143	.948	
Digital Marketing	.326	.043	.636
E-WOM	.429	.034	.159

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

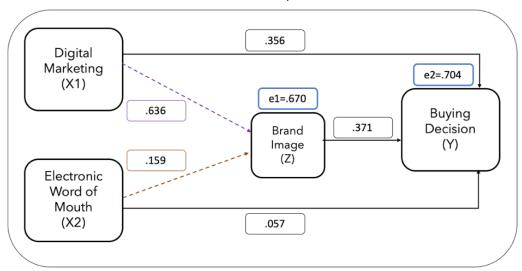
The second model regression test can be described as follows:

Z = a + B1X1 + B2X2 + e

Z=7.143+0.326+0.429

The results of the regression analysis of model 1 and model 2 are presented in the variable relationship structure as in the following figure:

Figure 2.Variable Relationship Structure



Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024



Based on the variable relationship structure in Figure 2, the amount of direct influence, indirect influence, and total influence by each variable can be seen in the following table:

Table 10.Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, and Total Effect

Relationship	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
X1-Y	.356	-	.356
X2-Y	.057	-	.057
Z-Y	.371	-	.371
X1-Z-Y	.356	.236	.592
X2-Z-Y	.057	.059	.116

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

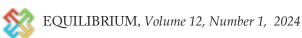
Based on the data in Table 10, it is known that the magnitude of the direct effect of X1-Y is 0.356, the magnitude of the X2-Y effect is 0.057, and the magnitude of the Z-Y effect is 0.371. The magnitude of the indirect effect of X1-Z-Y is 0.236; thus, a total effect of 0.592 is obtained. The magnitude of the indirect effect of X2-Z-Y is 0.059; thus, a total effect of 0.116 is obtained.

The next test is a hypothesis test to test the correctness of the hypothesis that has been made previously. Testing for H1, H2, and H3 is done by comparing the t value with the t table and looking at the amount of significance value <0.05. Hypothesis testing for H4 and H5 is done by comparing the results of the Sobel test calculation with the t table and comparing the ρ -Value with a significance value of 0.05. The t table value for df 250 is 1.969.

Table 11 *Hypothesis Test Results H1, H2 and H3*

На	T	Sig.	Conclusion
H1	5.023	.000	accepted
H2	.994	.321	rejected
H3	5.542	.000	accepted

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024



The calculation results in Table 11 show that the t value of H1 is 5.023> 1.969, and the value of sig is 0.000 < 0.05, so H1 is accepted. The t value of H2 is .994 < 1.969, and the value of sig is 0.321 > 0.05, so H2 is rejected. The t value of H3 is 5.542 > 1.969, and the value of sig is 0.000 < 0.05, so H3 is accepted.

Table 12Hypothesis Test Results from H4 and H5

На	Variable	Beta	Standard Error	Sobel Test	ρ-Value	Conclusion
H4 -	Digital Marketing- Brand Image	.504	.043	- 5.032	0.000	accepted
	Brand Image- Purchase decisions	.429	.077			
H5 -	E-WOM-Brand Image	.100	.034	- 2.601	0.004	accepted
	Brand Image- Purchase decisions	.429	.077			

Source: Primary data processed by the author, 2024

The calculation results in Table 12 show that the Sobel test value H4 5.032> 1.969, the ρ -value is 0.000 <0.05, so H4 is accepted. Sobel test value H5 2.601> 1.969, the ρ -value is 0.004 <0.05, so H5 is accepted.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 is accepted, meaning that digital marketing influences the decision to purchase halal cosmetic products. These results support the research of Jalil et al. (2021), which states that digital marketing influences purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products. Many halal cosmetic products are available on online shopping platforms. Product information can be found easily on the internet, regarding product specifications, benefits, how to use them, and even product swatch results. Most products already have official websites that provide information about purchasing products and services, making it more flexible for consumers to make purchases. Several brands already have features



in the form of filters on Instagram to make it easier for consumers to choose the color of lipstick, foundation, or powder that suits the consumer's skin color. This filter makes it easier for consumers who want to shop for products but are unsure about the right color of lipstick or powder. Consumers prefer shopping via digital platforms for all their needs because it can be done anywhere and at any time (Muafidah & Sulistyowati, 2021; Tiffany et al., 2018). The promotions offered, ease of access, promotional content, and influencers support teenagers' choice of digital marketing (Rameshkumar, 2022). Exposure to online advertising greatly influences consumer confidence in making purchases; email blasts, advertisements on gadgets, and social media strengthen teenagers' purchase decisions (Sukaini, 2022). Consumers' need for a product will make them visit websites to find out information about the product (Putri & Marlien, 2022). Detailed information about the products offered will make it easier for consumers to find references for purchasing products (Mulyansyah & Sulistyowati, 2021).

Hypothesis 2 is rejected, meaning that when e-WOM experiences an increase or decrease, it does not affect purchasing decisions. This result is in line with the research conducted by Jalil et al. (2021), which found that e-WOM is unable to influence consumer decisions in making purchases. However, it contradicts the results of the study by Bhutto et al. (2024), Indriana et al. (2022), Monoarfa et al. (2023), Sa'adah and Mardhotillah (2023), Rizq and Muslichah (2023), and Wajdi et al. (2020) which show otherwise. E-WOM is not able to influence Gen Z to purchase halal cosmetic products. Gen Z is a generation that is selective in receiving the information they receive. Occasionally, Gen Z perceives an overwhelming amount of information and attributes it to the influence of buzzers, leading them to question its veracity. In addition, Gen Z prefers short and to-the-point information compared to long and wordy information. Gen Z believes more in experiences from their own experiments than product reviews. Abin et al. (2022) stated in their research that some consumers are reluctant to provide reviews or feedback on a product in the channels or suggestion boxes that have been provided because they are considered a waste of time. This channel is considered to be only used for aesthetic purposes without being appropriately utilized. Reviews that are contradictory, different, and incongruent make consumers unsure about purchasing because of the risk potential (Bo et al., 2023). The use of e-WOM as a marketing strategy is not always successful. The effectiveness of e-WOM in increasing consumer purchases is influenced by several aspects, including the credibility of sources, the intensity of messages, the perceived valence, and the consumer experience in using social media (López & Sicilia, 2014).

Hypothesis 3 is accepted, meaning that brand image influences consumer purchasing decisions. This result is based on the analysis of Monoarfa et al. (2023) and Sa'adah and Mardhotillah (2023), who found that brand image influences consumer decisions to buy halal cosmetic products. Brand image is the consumer's image or perception when they hear the name of a brand, whether in the form of product quality, features, or services (Firmansyah, 2019). A good and convincing brand image is more easily accepted by consumers (Alfifto et al., 2023; Manggalania & Soesanto, 2021). However, brand image needs to be balanced with quality, promotions, and benefits so that consumers consider it more when purchasing (Atidira et al., 2019). Brand image is formed through a long process, namely, through consumers' understanding and experience of the services provided by the company. This image will continue to be observed for its development occasionally and give rise to a positive impression; thus, it must be handled appropriately (Subagiyo, 2016). Companies need to improve and increase their reputations to increase consumer trust. The destruction of reputation will have an impact on many things, not only decreasing consumer trust but it will further impact the survival of the company (Utami et al., 2023). The stronger the brand image, the stronger the product's position in consumers' minds (Yasmin, 2017).

Hypothesis 4 is accepted, meaning that brand image can have an intervening influence on digital marketing and purchasing decisions. Consumers like activities on social media for various purposes. Companies can create interesting and information-dense product-related content to attract consumer attention. Attractive marketing content can improve the product image so that consumers are confident in making a purchase (Tauran et al., 2022). Product specifications should be conveyed honestly to maintain consumer trust and a good product image; thus, consumers will loyally purchase the products offered (Putri & Munas, 2023). The completeness of the information on the website provides satisfaction for consumers who visit. Because they get detailed product information with an attractive appearance, consumers will return to visit the website if they are sure to make a purchase (Saputro & Laura, 2020). Companies that have used online marketing strategies are considered modern companies that follow technology.



This also has an impact on the image of the products offered. Modern companies offer up-to-date, sound, and quality products so that consumers feel interested in making purchases (Mulyani & Hermina, 2023).

Hypothesis 5 is accepted, meaning that brand image can influence the impacts of e-WOM in purchasing decisions. These results support the research by Indriana et al. (2022), which shows that brand image can influence the impacts of e-WOM's influence on consumer decisions to buy halal cosmetics. Satisfied consumers will happily share their pleasant experiences and provide good comments on the sales website. This comment will make other consumers who read it believe that the product suits what they need, and if they buy it, they will get the product they expected (Gunawan & Pertiwi, 2022; Suryaningrum, 2023). Comments that have been posted by previous consumers will help ordinary consumers to make purchases. Ordinary consumers tend to collect information and recommendations about the product they are targeting to ensure it is excellent and then make a purchase (Yulianto & Soesanto, 2019). E-WOM is a powerful source of information because it can influence consumer perceptions and beliefs. Consumers can access E-WOM for free from various media. As long as e-WOM is relevant, actual, and posted by potential consumers, potential consumers will be confident in choosing the product (Astuti & Rahmawati, 2023; Rahayu, 2020). With a single click on the page provided, consumers can simply indicate whether they like it or not. Consumers do not hesitate to voice their experiences using the product, and consumers do not hesitate to refute reviews or information provided by the seller if they feel it is not appropriate. E-WOM has a significant influence on consumer thinking and perceptions. Of course, it also greatly influences consumer confidence in making purchases (Shashikala & Thilina, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The research results show that digital marketing and brand image can influence consumers' purchasing decisions for halal cosmetic products, while e-WOM cannot. Brand image can have an intervening influence on digital marketing and e-WOM on purchasing decisions. Attractive website design and informative marketing content make consumers confident to buy the products offered. Inconsistent reviews and sources that are not credible make consumers

unsure about the products offered. A good product image needs to be balanced with quality and adequate promotion to attract consumer attention. Content posted on social media or websites provides an overview of the consumer's character and perception of the product. It is essential to ensure that the content posted is interesting and relevant to convince consumers to buy the offered product. Satisfied consumers will share their experiences on websites or shopping platforms. This pleasant experience makes potential consumers confident that the products offered are outstanding; thus, potential consumers are more confident in buying the product.

This research revealed the influence of brand image between digital marketing and e-WOM on the decision to purchase halal cosmetics among Gen Z in Blitar City and the absence of e-WOM influence. The quality of marketing strategies through e-WOM can be improved by improving sales services, collaborating with content creators to review products, building online communities, and holding events encouraging consumers to share their best experiences using halal cosmetic products. This needs to be done to increase the number and quality of reviews regarding halal cosmetics both on social media and shopping platforms so that potential consumers feel they are taking the right steps by making a purchase.

Efforts have been made to complete this research as closely as possible, but there are still gaps for further research to be carried out by future researchers. Future researchers can consider using different variables such as trends, lifestyle, and product knowledge as well as geographic considerations such as the research population used. It is entirely feasible for the researcher to acquire findings with inconsistent outcomes due to the fact that each population in this particular area possesses distinct characteristics.



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