

The Influence Of *E-WOM* On *Purchase Intention* With *Brand Image* As A Mediator Variable

E-WOM, Purchase Intention and Brand Image

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ABSTRACT

This research is a quantitative research with a causal relationship to determine the direct effect of eWOM and Brand Image on Purchase Intention and to determine the indirect effect of eWOM on Purchase Intention through the Brand Image of skincare products something. Data collection was carried out by collecting information through a survey with a questionnaire. The population in this study is someone who already knows the Something skincare product in the Jabodetabek area. The questionnaire collected 110 respondents using the Hair et al., (2017) formula. The questionnaire collected was 110 respondents, the data was then processed using the SmartPLS analysis tool. The sampling method used is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling technique. Based on the research results, 4 hypotheses can be accepted, namely eWOM has an effect on Brand Image, eWOM has an effect on Purchase Intention, Brand Image has an effect on Purchase Intention, Brand Image has an effect on mediating eWOM and Purchase Intention. The contribution of this research resulted in increased awareness of eWOM with the influencing factors, namely Brand Image and Purchase Intention. Therefore, it is important for Something's product to increase brand image awareness from the influence of electronic word of mouth which can increase interest in buying the product. The purpose of this study was to determine the direct effect of E-WOM, Brand Image and Purchase Intention and also to determine the indirect effect of E-WOM, Brand Image and Purchase Intention shown to consumers of Something skincare products.

Keywords: Electronic Word Of Mouth, Brand Image, Purchase Intention

INTRODUCTION

In the current era, the world has developed rapidly in all aspects, one of which is in the field of technology, where all people can make purchases online *using just a mobile phone*. (Takaya et al., 2019 ; Ramli, 2019b ; Chandra et al., 2019) . It is also easier for people to provide reviews or opinions on a product via social media or *e-commerce platforms* (Rumaidlany et al., 2022 ; Ramli, 2019c ; Mariam et al., 2022) . This influences the increase in *eWOM (electronic word of mouth)* which has a big impact on the Brand Image of a product. One industry that benefits from increased *eWOM* is the cosmetics industry (Mariam et al., 2020 ; Imran & Ramli, 2019 ; Sukarno et al., 2020 ; Ghazmahadi et al., 2020) . Meanwhile, Creamatte et al., (2021), stated that this increase is a good opportunity for businesses operating in the cosmetics sector, causing competition to become tighter, in this case it is important for companies to be able to adapt to market conditions and maximize product quality and continue to innovate. can maintain the existence of its brand. In addition, the rise of *e-commerce* and social networks as direct sales channels between brands and consumers has brought many benefits and convenience for consumers in meeting the needs of industrial consumers (Amin & Yanti, 2021) .

Sales of beauty products have increased rapidly since 2017 to 11.99% with a contribution of IDR 19 trillion, according to Nielsen and Euromonitor data. Cosmetic or beauty products increased by 10%. In addition, exports of beauty products increased strongly from 2013 to 2017 by 3.56 %. However, according to Statistical data, the global growth rate of beauty or cosmetic products has returned to a growth rate of around 6.46

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% , especially in 2021. Strongly driven by online sales, which reached 25.2% this year, after a decline of 8% in the previous year and a decrease of 13.25% in 2019. This is different from the growth rate in 2019 which increased by 5.25 % due to the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak.

According to Jayanti *et al.*, (2020) , skin care is an important beauty product for keeping skin young and radiant. The main aim of using skin care products is to nourish the skin, slow down the appearance of wrinkles, minimize *dark spots* (dark areas), get softer skin and reduce the risk of damage to dull skin (Irwanto & Hariatiningsih, 2020) . With this phenomenon, many skin care products are now offered and sold online and offline, from local brands.

The number of foreign brands emerging has made competition in the skin care market increasingly fierce. One of the most famous skincare products in Indonesia is Somethinc. The Somethinc brand is a local skin care brand founded in 2019 by Irene Ursula. Somethinc products are able to attract public interest, not only because of their affordable prices, but this is proven by having won many awards, including: Somethinc won Best New Brand 2019 by the Best of Beauty Award Female Daily and Sociolla, and was included in the top 50 domestic brands in 2020. Even though it can be considered a new brand, Somethinc achieved total revenue of IDR 53.2 billion and took first place. share. Somethinc offers products tailored to the skin problems of Indonesian women with high quality ingredients. Somethinc has been registered for the BPOM feasibility test, which means that all Somethinc serum products are guaranteed to be safe and not harmful to the user's skin.

Looking at data from Somethinc.com (2022), the average sales volume of Somethinc serum products sold in the official Somethinc online store reaches more than 10,000. This data also shows that people's enthusiasm for the intention to buy a serum is very large (Amalia & Nurlinda, 2022) . Quoting an article entitled "Top 10 Best Selling Local Skincare Brands Online" on comcom.co.id, beauty products are included in various categories based on demand and needs, and several brands come from within and outside the country. The level of use of beauty products and public awareness of the use of beauty products has also increased. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of beauty products in Indonesia increased. Awareness of beauty treatments is also increasing due to people's changing lifestyles and emerging new trends. This is shown by the 2020 report from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) which shows growth in the cosmetics industry of 5.59% and an estimated growth of 7% in 2021.

According to Ramli (2019) , one of the factors that influences buying interest is the increasing number of technological and internet developments that use *electronic word of mouth (eWOM)* in the form of *online reviews* on social networks as a reference in the process of searching for information and recommendations for any product, because of its convenience and practicality (Mariasih & Setiyaningrum, 2021) . Based on previous research from Kusuma & Wijaya, (2022) , Erkmien & Hancer (2019) It can be seen that *EWOM* has a positive effect on consumer purchasing preferences. Brand image is very important in influencing decision preferences , so that when a brand is present in a good product, it will help differentiate the product from competitors (Ramli & Sjahrudin, 2015 ; Utama et al., 2020 ; Sukarno et al., 2020) . Branding aims to show consumers the quality before consumers buy it, so it cannot directly promote the buyer's reputation when the wearable product has a good image (Lien et al., 2015). According to Nugraha (2013), *eWOM* is one of the factors that most effectively influences brand image. The product image will be influenced by the increasing volume of searches for product information. According to research conducted by Iryanita (2013), brand image has a positive impact on the intention to buy something, the better the brand image, the greater the intention to buy something. However, these findings conflict with research by Torlak, Ozkara, Tiltay, Cengiz, and Dulger (2014), which found that electronic word of mouth did not influence purchase intentions. In contrast, research by Kala & Chaubey (2018) found that electronic word of mouth did not significantly influence purchase intentions. (Edeline & Praptiningsih, 2022) . Given previous research findings that disagree, this discussion is

interesting to study. Apart from analyzing indirect effects, this research also combines the variables *eWOM*, brand image and purchase intention. As previously explained, the aim of this research is to determine the direct and indirect influence of *eWOM*, brand image, and consumer purchase intention of Somethinc skin care products.

The relationship between e-WOM and Brand Image

According to Fadzri Kusuma & Wijaya (2022) *Ewom* can be an alternative for achieving a good brand image because it allows consumers to understand brands and products via the internet. *Ewom* can influence product brand image positively, according to Jalilvand and Samiei (2012). *EWOM* can create a good or bad brand image depending on what consumers think about the product (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). This means that they will be connected to large groups. This opinion agrees with the findings of Tariq et al (2017), Jalivand & Samiei (2012), and Senecal & Nantel (2004) that *EWOM* has a positive and significant impact on brand image. Thus, the research hypothesis is as follows: H1: e-WOM is thought to have a positive effect on *Brand Image*.

The relationship between e-WOM and Purchase Intention

Hendri & Budiono (2021) provide an explanation that *E - WOM* has a strong and positive relationship with purchase intentions and that *EWOM* plays a very important role in influencing consumers' purchase intentions. Technological advances that make it very fast and easy to find information about a product or company, especially those that depend on the internet, prove this. Tan & Keni (2020) argue that *eWOM is an important component that influences consumer purchasing behavior, because eWOM consumer behavior shapes consumer behavior in making purchasing decisions.* Kristinawati & Keni (2021) The study conducted found that *eWOM* has a strong influence on both *eWOM* and purchase intention. The results show that *eWOM* has a positive effect on purchase intention. Thus, the research hypothesis is as follows: H2 : *e-WOM* is thought to have a positive influence on *Purchase Intention*.

The relationship between Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Budiman & Hartoko (2022) explain that the resulting purchase intention is greater if the company has a good brand reputation. Companies that have a good brand reputation believe that brand reputation is very influential (Kristinawati & Keni, 2021) . The research results of Hadi & Keni (2022) show that brand image has a significant influence on consumer purchase intentions. Thus, the research hypothesis is as follows: H3: *Brand Image* is thought to have a positive influence on purchase intention.

The relationship between e-WOM and Purchase Intention through Brand Image

Marketers can use a strong brand reputation to attract customers. Customers want to buy something commensurate with a good brand reputation. (Tan & Keni, 2020) . Fellysia & Simamora (2023) stated that products with a positive image can increase customer trust. This will have an impact on customer perceptions and actions towards branding in the future. According to Lin et al. (2013), research has been conducted which shows that brand image has a positive effect on the mediation of e- *WOM* with purchase intention. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that brand image can function as a positive link between e- *WOM* and purchase intention. Thus, the research hypothesis is as follows: H4: *Brand Image* is thought to be able to positively influence e- *WOM* on purchase intentions.

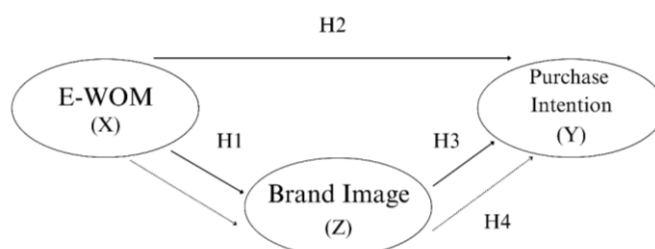


Figure 1. 2 Research Model

METHOD

Data Collection was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale, which has one to four response levels. The questionnaire scale consists of strongly disagree (STS), disagree (TS), agree (S), and strongly agree (SS). According to (Pentury et al., 2019) In *e-WOM and Brand Image* there are 3 dimensions in measuring e-WOM, namely *e-WOM quality, e-WOM quantity, sender's expertise*. Meanwhile, *Brand Image* can be created and meaningful according to 3 important dimensions, namely: *Strength, Uniqueness, Favorability*. There are five dimensions of purchase intention proposed by (Juliana et al., 2023) , namely: *Interested in Finding Information, Consider Buying, Interested to Try, Desire to know, Desire to use*.

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Respondents who live in Jabodetabek are the population in this study. According to Hair et al., (2019) stated that the minimum sample size is 5 times the number of statements, and that there are 22 statements in the questionnaire, the number of samples that can be used is 110 respondents. According to Sugiyono (2021) *purposive* sampling is a sampling method that is determined based on certain standards. This type of sampling was used in this study. For this research, the sample consisted of women over 17 years of age who knew about Somethic products, had purchased the product, and lived in the Jabodetabek area.

The SmartPLS Path Analysis method includes two stages of data analysis in this research. First, an external model analysis was carried out to ensure that the measure used could be used as a valid and reliable measure. This analysis includes convergent validity testing with indicator factor loadings of more than 0.7. According to *Hair et al.*, (2021) the AVE size must be more than 0.5. In addition, the discriminant validity test can be said to be good if the structure AVE solution is greater than the structure correlation with other latent variables. On the other hand, the cross-load test should provide a higher index value for each structure than the correlation of the structure with other latent variables. After the questionnaire is declared valid, reliability testing can be carried out. Reliability test uses composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. According to Ghazali (2018) If the Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.7 and the composite reliability is greater than 0.7, the assessment is considered reliable. However, if the Cronbach's alpha value is still acceptable between 0.5 and 0.7, the assessment is considered unreliable. In the second stage, an internal model is built. The influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is assessed using the R-Square test. According to Ghazali (2018) mark 0.25 indicates a weak R-Square, a value of 0.50 indicates moderate, and a value of 0.75 indicates a strong R-Square. Next, see whether the model fits the established SRMR<0>T table. The T statistical value for each hypothesis must be greater than T Table 1.96 (α 5%), which means the hypothesis can be accepted (Ghazali 2018) . The T statistical test has two criteria (Ghazali 2018) , (1) significant structure values for the t test of more than 0.05 are accepted and rejected; (2) if the t test significance of the value constructed is less than 0.05, H0 is not accepted and H α is accepted, so it can be said that there is an influence between the variables.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

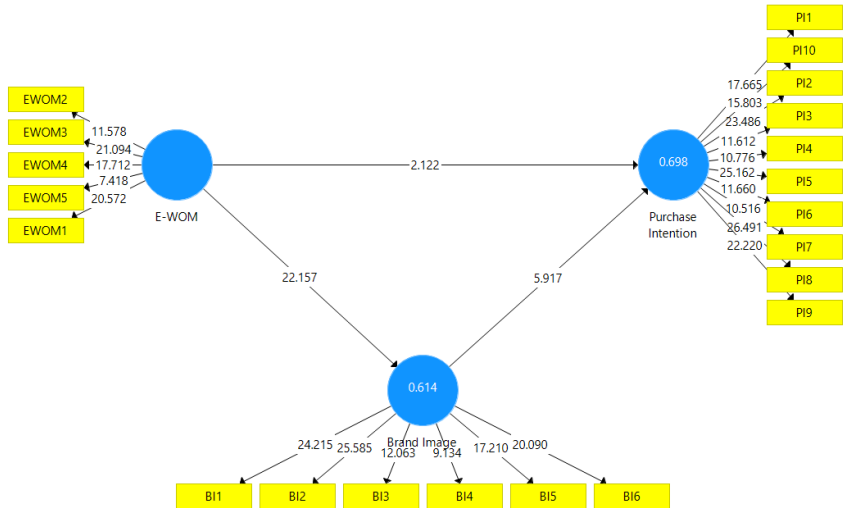
Based on the results of distributing questionnaires conducted online using Google Form to a total of 110 respondents, the number of respondents who knew about Something Care care products was 110 people (100%). Apart from that, most of the respondents lived in the Jakarta area, 84 people (76.4%) and most were aged between 17 and 25 years, 97 people (88.2%). Then, most of the respondents were women, namely 93 people (84.5 %). Most of the respondents were students, namely 66 people (60.0 %). And the maximum average monthly income is 1,000,000 to 2,500,000 for 65 people (59.1 %). Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are women aged between 17 and 25 years and belong to Generation Z who are familiar with Somethinc skin care products and some are still students. Some people believe that skin

care products are in high demand among Gen Z, who greatly enjoy online shopping. The results are shown in the appendix.

Outer Model

Validity tests will be carried out in this research to determine the size of the statements in the questionnaire used to measure the indicators and variables studied. This research will test 22 statements. The results of this research are valid as follows:

Outer loading analysis to determine the magnitude of the correlation between indicators and their latent constructs so that it can be determined whether the indicators are valid or invalid. The indicator can be declared valid if the value is > 0.70.



Source: Data processed by the author, 2023

Figure 2. Outer Model

Based on the outer loading image above, all indicators in the 22 questionnaire questions are valid because the value is > 0.70. This means that all questions in the questionnaire are suitable for measuring each variable (the results are presented in the appendix).

Average Variance Extraded (AVE) results can show the ability of latent variables to represent the original score. A larger AVE value indicates that the explanatory power of the indicator measuring the latent variable increases. The AVE threshold value is usually 0.50 , with a minimum AVE value of 0.50 to indicate a good convergent value. The average extracted (AVE) results are shown below.

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted

	Rata-rata Varians Diekstrak (AVE)
Brand Image	0.587
E-WOM	0.539
Purchase Intention	0.590

Source: data processed by the author, 2023

From the results of the AVE values, it can be seen that all structures > 0.5 indicate that they meet the requirements for convergent validity and reliability. According to the results of Cronbach's Alpha and Rho_A > 0.6 , all constructs meet the reliability requirements. Based on the composite reliability results > 0.7 , all constructs are considered reliable or have passed the reliability test. In addition, the composite trust value is much higher than the Cronbach's Alpha value.

Cross Loading Discriminate Validity is a model for measuring where the reflectance index evaluated comes from the results of cross load testing when measuring structures. If the correlation of one structural item is higher compared to other structures, then it can be concluded that these results can indicate that the latent structure can predict the size of one block well compared to the size of other blocks. The results show that all variables are declared good and exceed 0.7. (Results can be seen in the attachment.)

In research, reliability tests are carried out to find out whether the measuring instrument really has consistency and can be used at the next stage. The reliability test results were evaluated using the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha measurement provisions.

Table 2. Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliabilitas Komposit
Brand Image	0.857	0.894
E-WOM	0.784	0.853
Purchase Intention	0.922	0.935

Source: data processed by the author, 2023

The value of each construct has exceeded 0.70 based on the previous composite reliability and Cronbach alpha output. Therefore, it can be said that each estimated model structure has a reliability value that is very suitable to enable the structure verification process to be carried out.

Hypothesis testing

By checking the statistical significance value of T and the value of ρ , we can determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. The hypothesis is accepted if the T statistical value is greater than T table 1.96 (5%) and the - value must be smaller than 0.05. Following are the results of the analysis:

Table 3. Direct Effect of Hypothesis

	Sampel Asli (O)	Rata-rata Sampel (M)	Standar Deviasi (STDEV)	T Statistik (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Image (Z) -> Purchase Intention (Y)	0.639	0.639	0.108	5.917	0.000
E-WOM (X1) -> Brand Image (Z)	0.784	0.795	0.035	22.157	0.000
E-WOM (X1) -> Purchase Intention (Y)	0.235	0.234	0.111	2.122	0.017

Source: Data processed by the author, 2023

Based on the results in the table above, eWOM on brand image is shown by a T-statistic of 22.157 above 1.96, a significant p-value of 0.000 above 1.96, a significant p-value of 0.017 above 1.96, a significant p-value of 0.000 above 1.96, and a significant p value of.000 above.000.05. This shows that a company's brand image is very important to pay attention to, because more and more people want to buy certain skin care products. Based on the analysis of the table above, it can be concluded that the two existing hypotheses are accepted. H1, H2, and H3 are the two remaining hypotheses.

Table.4 Direct Effect Hypothesis Test Results

Hipotesis	Pernyataan Hipotesis	P-Value	T-statistic	Keterangan	Kesimpulan
H1	e-WOM memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Brand Image	0.000	22.157	Data mendukung hipotesis	H1 Diterima
H2	e-WOM memiliki pengaruh positif pada Purchase Intention.	0.017	2.122	Data mendukung hipotesis	H2 Diterima
H3	Brand Image memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap Purchase Intention.	0.000	5.917	Data mendukung hipotesis	H3 Diterima

Source: data processed by the author, 2023

Based on the analysis of the table above, it can be concluded that the 2 existing hypotheses are accepted. The 2 accepted hypotheses are H1, H2, H3.

Indirect Effect

The next stage is to determine the indirect influence of eWOM on purchase intentions through brand image, as shown in the following indirect influence table:

Table 5. Indirect Effects

	Sampel Asli (O)	Rata-rata Sampel (M)	Standar Deviasi (STDEV)	T Statistik (O/STDEV)	P Values
E-WOM -> Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0.500	0.508	0.090	5.574	0.000

Source: data processed by the author, 2023

After the overall test, it was found that the eWOM variable had an indirect influence on purchase intention through brand image; the results show a t-statistic of 5.574 greater than 1.96 and a p-value of 0.000 greater than 0.05. This shows that the eWOM variable has an indirect influence on purchase intention through brand image. Therefore, it can be concluded that the brand image of Somethinc skincare products functions as a mediator (full mediator) between the eWOM variable purchase intention and the brand image itself.

Table 6. Indirect Effects

Hipotesis	Pernyataan Hipotesis	P-Value	T-statistic	Keterangan	Kesimpulan
H4	Brand image dapat memediasi secara positif e-WOM terhadap Purchase Intention.	0.000	5.574	Data mendukung hipotesis	H4 Diterima

Source: data processed by the author, 2023

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that electronic conversations have a positive impact on purchase intentions. This suggests that cosmetics companies must understand how eWOM and brand image influence purchase intentions. Efforts to create a good brand image and manage eWOM wisely can increase customer trust and have a positive impact on customer purchasing interest. The attached test results show that the coefficient of the electronic word-of-mouth variable on purchase intention is positive. It is possible that brand image will increase purchase intentions if e-word of mouth increases. eWOM has been proven to increase purchase intention through brand perception. The results of this study are in line with previous research. Hendri & Budiono (2021) and (Tan & Keni, 2020) .

The analysis results show that eWOM influences the image of the Somethinc skincare brand well because it contains information, recommendations and testimonials from other customers. This shows that eWOM can shape brand image. Conversely, a strong brand reputation can influence the marketing and acceptance of eWOM by customers. The attached test results show that the coefficient of the electronic word of mouth variable on brand image is positive. This means that if electronic word of mouth grows, brand image will also grow. The results of this study are in line with previous research (Fadzri Kusuma & Wijaya 2022) and (Jalilvand & Samiei 2012).

The results of the analysis show that brand image has a positive effect on purchase intention. This is demonstrated by the fact that skincare products receive good reviews from eWOM, which can strengthen a good brand image. Conversely, a good brand image can influence trust which encourages potential customers to leave reviews on social media and e-commerce. The attached test results show that the coefficient value of brand image on purchase intention is positive. Positive influence means that purchase intention will

increase as the brand image improves. There is evidence that brand image increases purchase intentions. The results of previous research are in line with this research by Budiman & Hartoko (2022) and Hadi & Keni (2022) .

CONCLUSION

Researchers obtained results from the research and discussions carried out. These results will be used to achieve research objectives. The hypothesis built in this research succeeded in showing that eWOM has a positive effect on brand image, purchase interest, purchase intention, purchase intention, and the intermediary of eWOM and purchase intention.

The research results show that the Brand Image aspect of eWom has a very positive influence because honest reviews from respondents greatly increase interest in purchasing a product. This also shows that respondents will feel safe when they want to purchase a product because a positive brand image has been formed from eWOM. The research results also show that eWOM has a dominant influence on Brand Image; eWOM also has a direct influence on Purchase Intention, as shown by the influence of respondents before making a purchase, which statistically influences respondents' purchase intention. The research results also show that eWOM has a dominant influence on Purchase Intention. In this increasingly developing era, it also shows that the comprehensive development of eWOM in every e-commerce is very beneficial for sellers from every brand. Furthermore, from the research results it can be interpreted that the development of eWOM has a positive impact from the perspective of people who have the ability to talk freely about the goods they buy. The better a company's brand image, the greater the desire to buy, and companies that have a good brand image will be more interested in buying. This research also found that brand image has a direct influence on purchase intentions.

This research also shows that eWOM has a direct influence on purchase intention through brand image as a mediating variable. has a big influence on increasing purchasing intentions. It can be said that the brand image of several products needs to be further improved in the future to increase purchasing interest.

Recommendations for further research regarding the additional use and combination of Perceived Quality, Promotion, Price, Consumer Attitudes, Green Marketing variables with the influence of Image on brand image and purchase intention, as well as the use of other analytical tools such as SEM Amos and lisrel. This research only discusses the eWOM, Brand Image and Purchase Intention variables. This search only focuses on Somethinc skincare products in the JABODETABEK area, which if distributed more widely, would achieve different or better results.

The aim of this research is to find out how eWOM influences purchase intentions through brand image. Somethinc skincare products, one of the successful local brands, offers company quality. If the company has a good brand image, consumers will be more interested in buying the product. Researchers argue that brand image has a significant influence on purchase intention. Cosmetic content that is more profitable for users. In this research, eWOM is considered as one of the best approaches to build brand image and purchase intention. Therefore, it is important for Somethinc to continue to improve the quality of product content, so that consumers will continue to intend to buy Somethinc skincare products. Skincare company Somethinc needs to exploit the potential of eWOM by creating marketing campaigns that address the role of consumers as brand messengers. They can use social media, product review sites, or other platforms that facilitate eWOM to encourage satisfied consumers to talk about Somethinc products positively. They should also pay attention to negative feedback and find ways to deal with problems quickly and effectively. Then the Somethinc skincare company needs to build a Somethinc brand image that is consistent with the brand values and company vision. A consistent brand image will help create a positive and memorable impression in the eyes of consumers, which in turn can increase consumer trust and their purchasing intentions. And skincare company Somethinc must regularly measure and monitor eWOM

performance, brand image and purchase intent for Somethinc products. They can use online analytics tools to track and measure the extent to which a brand message spreads and how it influences consumer purchase intentions.

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