

# The Role of E-WOM in Mediating the Influence of Brand Image on Product Purchasing Decisions

*WOM in Mediating  
the Influence of  
Brand Image*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In the context of marketing, e-WOM is a highly influential tool in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions. This study aims to assess the role of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) in mediating the influence of brand image on consumer purchasing decisions for Voordurend Love, a local fashion brand in Bali. This research employs a quantitative method, utilizing an online questionnaire distributed to 130 respondents from Generation Z and Millennials who are familiar with and have purchased Voordurend Love products. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Version 4. The findings reveal that brand image has a significant positive effect on e-WOM and purchasing decisions. Additionally, e-WOM positively influences purchasing decisions. One key finding is that e-WOM serves as a mediating variable, strengthening the impact of brand image on purchasing decisions. This study underscores the importance of maintaining a strong brand image and proactively managing online consumer reviews to enhance purchase intentions in the digital marketplace.*

*Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Brand Image, Purchase Decision*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Dalam konteks pemasaran, e-WOM merupakan alat yang sangat berpengaruh dalam membentuk persepsi konsumen dan mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk menilai peran Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) dalam memediasi pengaruh citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen Voordurend Love, sebuah merek fashion lokal di Bali. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kuantitatif melalui distribusi kuesioner secara daring kepada 130 responden dari Generasi Z dan Milenial yang familiar dan telah membeli produk Voordurend Love. Data diolah dengan Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Versi 4. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa citra merek secara signifikan berpengaruh positif terhadap e-WOM, dan secara signifikan berpengaruh positif terhadap keputusan pembelian*

**JIMKES**

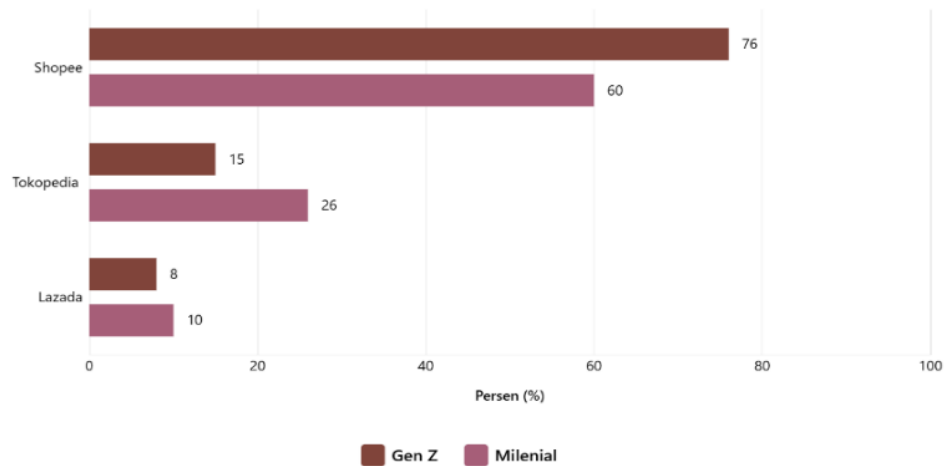
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juga. Selain itu, e-WOM memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian. Salah satu temuan dari penelitian ini adalah peran e-WOM sebagai variabel mediasi yang memperkuat pengaruh citra merek terhadap keputusan pembelian. Studi ini menyoroti perlunya menjaga citra merek dan secara proaktif mengelola ulasan konsumen secara daring untuk meningkatkan niat beli di antara konsumen di pasar digital.

*Kata kunci: Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM), Brand Image, Keputusan Pembelian*

## INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has changed the way consumers interact with products and brands. One of the rapidly growing phenomena is Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), which is communication carried out by consumers to share their experiences related to a product or service through digital platforms such as social media, discussion forums, and online reviews (Putri & Fauzi, 2023; Karismawan, 2023). Unlike conventional marketing, e-WOM has a wide reach, is fast, and is trusted by potential consumers because it comes from the real experiences of other users. In the context of marketing, e-WOM is a very influential tool in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions (Kajtazi & Zeqiri, 2020; Zeqiri et al., 2023). Positive reviews can increase trust in a brand, while negative reviews have the potential to damage the company's image. Therefore, many companies are now trying to manage e-WOM with the right digital marketing strategy in order to increase customer loyalty and business competitiveness.



**Figure 1.** Proportion of Gen Z and Millennial Respondents in the Marketplace Used

Shopee ranks first in the market in terms of the number of users among Generation Z, with a percentage of 76, and 60% among Millennials in March 2024. Shopee has positioned itself as a leading marketplace for online shopping, outperforming competing platforms. It has now become a necessity for entrepreneurs to increase their competitiveness in order to attract and retain clients considering the many online shopping platforms. To improve brand image and maintain the effectiveness of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is one of the main steps to attract customers. Customers now rely more on information from social media and market reviews and recommendations to make their purchasing decisions (Wahyuni et al., 2022; Suharto et al., 2023; Mehmood & Hamid, 2024). A positive brand image contributes to consumer perception and consequently loyalty, while e-WOM acts as a moderating factor that strengthens the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions (Amilia, 2017; Fatmaningrum et al., 2020; Rihayana et al, 2022). Brand image is considered as one of the determining features for purchasing decisions. Brand image is the consumer's

perspective on the company and the products offered through the company. A positive brand image helps retain customers and increase brand loyalty (Feblicia & Cuandra, 2022; Ramdhani & Saputro, 2025).

This study focuses on the role of e-WOM in mediating the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions of consumers of Brand V, a local fashion brand in Bali. Consumer behavior when shopping has shifted from conventional methods to digital platforms, especially among the younger generation such as Gen Z and Millennials. They tend to search for product information through online reviews and recommendations from other users before making a purchasing decision. A positive brand image can increase consumer trust, which has the potential to generate positive reviews on digital platforms. This shows that brand image and e-WOM have a close relationship that can influence purchasing decisions.

Brand V, a local fashion brand in Bali, has tried to build a strong brand image by integrating local and innovative elements into their products. However, the emergence of negative reviews on online platforms indicates a mismatch between consumer expectations and the reality of the products received. It is important to understand how brand image and e-WOM influence consumer purchasing decisions (Sylvia & Ramli, 2023; Zahid & Ruswanti, 2024). The local fashion brand in Bali has its own challenges in building and maintaining a brand image in a competitive market. By understanding how e-WOM plays a role in mediating the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions, this study aims to provide useful insights for marketers in designing effective strategies to attract and retain consumers in the digital era. Based on previous studies, there are differences in the results of the influence of brand image and e-WOM on purchasing decisions, so this study is important to fill the gap.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is a development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TPB explains that an individual's intention to act is influenced by three main factors: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. An additional element in TPB, namely perceived behavioral control, allows for a deeper understanding of the factors that can influence a person's decision, especially in the context of consumption behavior and purchasing decisions (Ajzen, 2020; Nainggolan & Harsoyo, 2023). In consumer behavior studies, TPB is often used to identify how psychological and environmental factors contribute to purchasing intentions and actions (Bosnjak et al., 2020). By considering these aspects, this study aims to analyze how attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control contribute to shaping consumer decisions, providing broader insights into the factors that drive or inhibit purchasing behavior (Maharani & Syah, 2024).

A positive brand image can increase consumer loyalty and influence purchasing decisions (Nuary et al., 2022; Widiastuti et al., 2023). According to Aaker (2012), brand image consists of several aspects, including recognition, reputation, affinity, and domain. Brand image refers to consumer perceptions of a brand that are formed through various interactions with the product or service. A positive brand image means that consumers have a good perception of the brand, which is usually formed through positive experiences, good product quality, and a good reputation in the market. When consumers have a positive perception of a brand, they talk about the brand more often on digital platforms, such as social media or online review platforms, as part of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). This assumption is supported by Khoirunnisa & Albari (2023), stating that brand image has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. Based on previous research, the research hypothesis is proposed as follows.

E-WOM is a form of digital communication where consumers share information about products through online platforms. This includes reviews, comments, and recommendations that can influence purchasing decisions (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Consumers tend to trust e-WOM more than direct promotions from companies, making it an important factor in marketing strategies. E-WOM is one of the main sources of

information used by consumers in the purchasing decision-making process, especially in today's digital era. Consumers often look for reviews and recommendations from platforms such as Shopee before deciding to buy a product. Positive e-WOM, such as good reviews or recommendations from other users, can strengthen consumer trust in a product and influence them to make a purchase (Kurniawati & Nuvriasari, 2024; Romadhany & Hakim, 2024).

Purchase Decision is the process by which consumers choose to buy a particular product. Some factors that influence this decision include brand image, e-WOM, and product quality (Anastasia & Nurendah, 2014; Puspita & Rahmawan, 2021; Rihayana et al., 2022). This process includes problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Consumer purchase decisions are greatly influenced by their perception of the brand or brand image. This assumption is supported by Rosadi, & Kusdiyanto (2024), who stated that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.

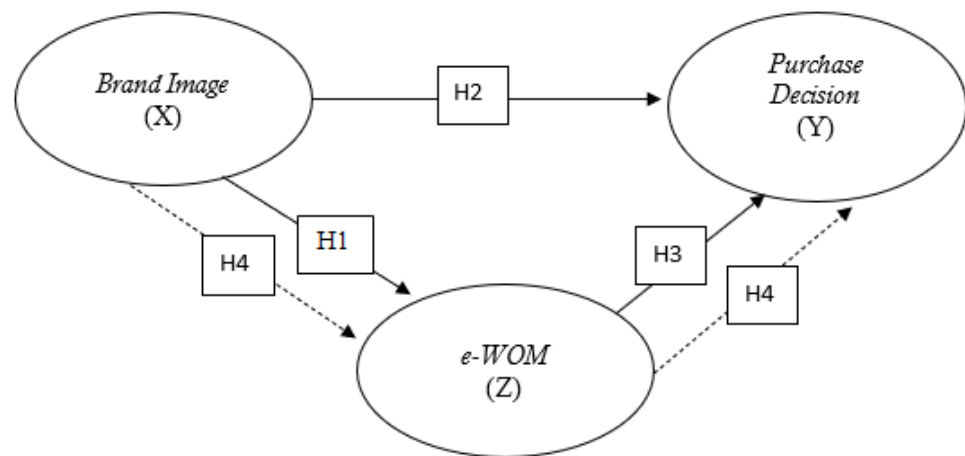


Figure 2. Research Framework

## METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach, which, according to Sujarweni (2014), aims to produce findings obtained through statistical procedures. This approach is used to objectively and measurably analyze the influence of various variables in research. The population of this study consists of consumers of Brand V products who have made purchases, although the exact number is not yet known. Therefore, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with a sample size of 130 respondents. The selected respondents must meet certain criteria, namely being 18–45 years old, being familiar with, and having purchased Brand V products. Data collection was conducted using a survey method with a questionnaire consisting of three main sections. The first section serves as a screening tool to ensure that respondents meet the research criteria. The second section gathers respondent information, such as age, gender, and purchase frequency. The third section contains research statements measured using a Likert scale. The data analysis method follows the structural equation modeling–partial least squares (SEM-PLS) approach. The analytical techniques used include outer model tests to assess the validity and reliability of indicators, inner model tests to evaluate the relationships between latent variables, and hypothesis tests to determine the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. The results of this study are expected to provide empirical insights into consumer behavior regarding Brand V products and the factors influencing purchasing decisions. By employing a systematic and data-driven approach, this study aims to contribute to future marketing strategies and product development.

**RESULTS**

The results of the validity test research to measure the relationship between indicators and research variables. The variables tested in this study include Brand Image (X), Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y). Each variable consists of several indicators analyzed using the Outer Loading value. This validity test is carried out to ensure that each indicator can represent the variable well. The value obtained in this test is the basis for assessing the feasibility of the research instrument. In this study, testing convergent validity (convergent validity) using factor loading (outer loading) > 0.70.

**Table 1.** Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading Value
Brand Image (X)	X.1	0.788
	X.2	0.777
	X.3	0.803
	X.4	0.728
	X.5	0.754
	X.6	0.799
Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Z)	Z.1	0.718
	Z.2	0.726
	Z.3	0.738
	Z.4	0.737
	Z.5	0.722
	Z.6	0.743
	Z.7	0.716
	Z.8	0.717
	Z.9	0.776
	Z.10	0.732
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y.1	0.767
	Y.2	0.756
	Y.3	0.768
	Y.4	0.799
	Y.5	0.856
	Y.6	0.797
	Y.7	0.764
	Y.8	0.790
	Y.9	0.806
	Y.10	0.729

The results of the validity test show that all indicators have an Outer Loading value above 0.70. This indicates that each indicator has a fairly strong contribution in representing the measured variables. In the Brand Image (X) variable, the Outer Loading value ranges from 0.728 to 0.803, which indicates that all indicators are valid in measuring consumer perceptions of brand image. The Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Z) variable has an Outer Loading value ranging from 0.716 to 0.776, indicating that each indicator in this variable is also valid. Meanwhile, the Purchase Decision (Y) variable has an Outer Loading value between 0.729 and 0.856, with indicator Y.5 having the highest value, indicating that this aspect has a stronger influence in explaining purchasing decisions. Thus, all indicators in this study meet the requirements of convergent validity, so they can be used for further analysis. After the data is valid, a reliability test is carried out. This test is recognized as reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value exceeds 0.70 and the composite reliability exceeds 0.70. The following are the results of the reliability investigation.

**Table 2.** Reliability Test Results

Variable	Conbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Description
Brand Image (X)	0.867	0.869	0.900	Reliable
Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Z)	0.904	0.905	0.920	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.930	0.930	0.941	Reliable

The results of the reliability test for the variables Brand Image (X), Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y). Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (rho\_a and rho\_c). All variables have values above 0.70, indicating a high level of consistency. The values obtained indicate that the indicators in each variable have good reliability. Thus, this research instrument can be used consistently for further analysis.

**Table 3.** Direct Effect Test (Direct Influence) and Indirect Effect Test (Indirect Influence/Mediation)

Variable	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Std. Dev.	T. Statistic	P-Values	Description
X -> Z	0.785	0.793	0.039	20.178	0.000	Significance
X -> Y	0.410	0.415	0.106	3.870	0.000	Significance
Z -> Y	0.525	0.518	0.104	5.057	0.000	Significance
X -> Z -> Y	0.412	0.411	0.084	4.882	0.000	Significance

The results of hypothesis testing, the critical value in the table is compared with the t-statistic value. In this case, the variables have a continuous influence on each other if the t-statistic value is higher than the t-table value, which is 1.96. All of these factors do not significantly influence each other, on the other hand, if there is a difference between the t-statistic value and the t-table value (Sarsted et al., 2021). The direct effect test shows that H1, H2, and H3 have a significant and beneficial impact. The three hypotheses can be considered accepted because the t-statistic value > 1.96 and the p value < 0.005 support this. The indirect effect between brand image and purchase decision through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has a continuous and constructive impact. It can be concluded that the three hypotheses are accepted because the t-statistic value > 1.96 and the p value < 0.005.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of this study, the initial hypothesis states that brand image has a positive and substantial effect on electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). In line with the hypothesis test through the bootstrapping procedure, a path coefficient value of 0.785 was obtained, indicating that brand image has a positive effect of 78.5% on electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). In other words, the increasing brand image will result in an increase in electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). The t-statistic value of 20.178 > 1.96 and the P value of 0.000 < 0.05. This is related to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), especially the component of attitude towards behavior. In the context of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude towards behavior describes an individual's evaluation of whether the behavior is desired or not. If customers think positively about the Voordurend Love brand image, they will evaluate the product positively. This forms a good attitude towards sharing experiences through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). When buyers feel that Voordurend Love products meet their expectations and are in accordance with the existing positive image, consumers will be encouraged to spread positive reviews. This attitude is created from previous positive experiences with the brand, which then motivates them to participate in electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). According to this description, in line with previous studies which state that brand image has a positive and significant effect on electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Nuseir, 2019; Yohana et al., 2020; Khoirunnisa & Albari, 2023).

The data from this study supports the second hypothesis, which states that brand image significantly and beneficially influences consumer decisions to purchase. With a path coefficient value of 0.410 obtained from hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping approach, brand image has a positive effect of 41% on purchasing decisions. 0.000 < 0.05 is the P-Value, while the t-statistic value is 3.780 > 1.96. This finding is related to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), especially in the component of attitude towards behavior. Consumer attitudes towards activities, as defined by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), are their assessment of the advantages or disadvantages of a particular action, in this example, making a purchase. A positive brand image will form the

perception that the product is of high quality, meets needs, and is worth buying. If Brand V has a strong and positive brand image, consumers will have a more positive attitude towards the decision to purchase the product. They will feel confident in choosing this product over other products, because a good brand image is often associated with quality, added value, and a satisfying consumer experience. Thus, attitudes towards behavior are again the main factors influencing purchase decisions, where consumer perceptions of brand image create positive attitudes that lead to purchase decisions. This is supported by a study conducted by Rihayana et al. (2022) and Rosadi & Kusdiyanto (2024), who stated that brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions.

The third hypothesis suggests that shopping choices have a positive and significant effect on electronic word-of-mouth, or e-WOM. According to the hypothesis test through the bootstrapping procedure, a path coefficient value of 0.525 was obtained, which shows that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has a positive effect of 52.5% on purchasing decisions, which is the most significant electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) factor. Both the p-value of 0.000 and the t-statistic value of 5.057 are below 0.05 and 1.96, respectively. Purchasing decisions in this study are influenced by electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior. (TPB). states that subjective norms focus on the social influence or pressure experienced by individuals by those around them, especially regarding whether the action is considered acceptable or not by others. Thus, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which is a review or recommendation from other buyers, creates a social norm about Voordurend Love products (Duong et al., 2025; Su et al., 2025). Consumers often look for online reviews or recommendations before deciding to pay for a product. When electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is positive, clients feel that there is environmental encouragement or approval from other consumers to make a purchase. They trust reviews from fellow consumers, which are socially considered more objective than direct advertising from the company. This norm puts pressure on consumers to make decisions that are in line with what is recommended on online platforms. It can be concluded that subjective norms play a major role in influencing purchase decisions through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), where consumers are influenced by positive perceptions and reviews from other clients. In line with previous research which states that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions (Karismawan, 2023; Pashtoon et al., 2024; Mauludin & Firmansyah, 2024).

The fourth or final hypothesis states that brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). The mediation variable electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) plays a partial role (47%) and is significant. The t-statistic value of 4.882 is more than 1.96 and the p value of 0.000 is less than 0.05, according to the findings of the hypothesis test conducted using the bootstrapping technique. Related to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) precisely on the perceived behavioral control factor. In terms of internal factors, consumer confidence in making decisions is greatly influenced by their knowledge of the quality of Brand V products, such as the materials used, unique designs, or testimonials from other users. If the reviews they read strengthen their belief in the product, consumers will feel more confident in making purchasing decisions. In addition, previous experience with similar products or with Brand V itself also affects perceived behavioral control. Meanwhile, external factors such as ease of access to information also play an important role. Ease of access in this study refers to how clients can easily find and access information about Brand V products through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM).

Ease in this case includes several aspects, such as the ability of consumers to search for and read positive reviews on platforms such as Shopee or social media, which gives them clarity about product quality and increases confidence in making purchasing decisions. In addition, the availability of user-generated content, such as product reviews or recommendations based on personal experience, provides more practical insights for prospective buyers. All of these conveniences give consumers a sense of

control. A greater level of involvement in the purchase decision process, so they feel more confident and empowered to make purchases. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) mediates the relationship between brand image and purchase decisions by giving consumers a greater sense of control in making purchasing decisions. Positive reviews from other consumers on Shopee or social media can give consumers a clearer view of Brand V products, so they feel more in control in making decisions. Thus, these internal and external factors influence consumer perceptions of behavioral control which ultimately influences the choice to purchase Brand V goods. This finding is similar to research conducted by Tajuddin et al. (2020); Ardani (2024) which found that brand image has a positive and significant influence both directly and through electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on consumer desire to purchase products.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that brand image has a positive and significant impact on electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on Brand V consumers in Bali. In addition, brand image also has a significant and positive effect on consumer purchase decisions. This shows that the better the brand image, the higher the likelihood of consumers to engage in e-WOM and make stronger purchasing decisions. Brand V consumers in Bali are significantly and positively influenced by e-WOM in the purchasing process. Recommendations and reviews from other consumers play an important role in shaping purchasing decisions, thus strengthening the relationship between brand image and purchasing decisions. In other words, e-WOM acts as a significant mediating variable, indicating that communication between consumers can increase the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Overall, this study highlights the importance of maintaining and improving brand image through effective marketing strategies and utilizing e-WOM to improve purchasing decisions. These findings provide insight for marketing practitioners to focus more on developing brand image, strengthening consumer engagement, and increasing interactions on digital platforms to strengthen loyalty and drive sales growth.

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