

HOW PRODUCT QUALITY AND EWOM SHAPE PURCHASE DECISION THROUGH BRAND IMAGE: EVIDENCE FROM YOGYAKARTA CONSUMERS

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ABSTRAK

Pertumbuhan industri kosmetik yang semakin pesat meningkatkan persaingan antar merek dan menjadikan kualitas produk, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), serta citra merek sebagai faktor yang penting dalam keputusan pembelian konsumen. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh kualitas produk dan eWOM terhadap keputusan pembelian, baik secara langsung maupun tidak langsung melalui citra merek pada konsumen kosmetik Hanasui di Yogyakarta. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif melalui survei terhadap 254 konsumen Hanasui yang dipilih dengan teknik purposive sampling. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kualitas produk tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap citra merek ($\beta = 0,100$; $p = 0,144$), sedangkan eWOM berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap citra merek ($\beta = 0,254$; $p < 0,001$). Citra merek tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian ($\beta = -0,086$; $p = 0,179$), sedangkan kualitas produk ($\beta = 0,351$; $p < 0,001$) dan eWOM ($\beta = 0,236$; $p = 0,004$) berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian. Pengaruh tidak langsung kualitas produk dan eWOM terhadap keputusan pembelian melalui citra merek juga tidak signifikan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa keputusan pembelian konsumen lebih berkaitan secara langsung dengan kualitas produk dan eWOM dibandingkan dengan peran citra merek sebagai mekanisme mediasi.

Kata kunci: *Citra Merek; Electronic Word Of Mouth; Hanasui; Keputusan Pembelian; Kualitas Produk*

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the cosmetics industry has intensified competition among brands, making product quality, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), and brand image important factors in consumers' purchase decisions. This study aims to examine the effects of product quality and eWOM on purchase decision, both directly and indirectly through brand image, among Hanasui cosmetic consumers in Yogyakarta. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 254 Hanasui consumers selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that product quality does not significantly affect brand image ($\beta = 0.100$; $p = 0.144$), whereas eWOM has a significant positive effect on brand image ($\beta = 0.254$; $p < 0.001$). Brand image does not significantly affect purchase decision ($\beta = -0.086$; $p = 0.179$), while product quality ($\beta = 0.351$; $p < 0.001$) and eWOM ($\beta = 0.236$; $p = 0.004$) have significant positive effects on purchase decision. The indirect effects of product quality and eWOM on purchase decision through brand image are also not significant. These findings indicate that consumers' purchase decisions are more directly associated with product quality and eWOM than with brand image as a mediating mechanism.

Keywords: *Brand Image, eWOM, Hanasui, Product Quality, Purchase Decision.*



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's cosmetics industry has experienced substantial growth, intensifying competition among local and international brands and increasing the importance of understanding the factors underlying consumers' purchase decisions. The Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs reported a 43% increase in the number of cosmetics industry players between 2020 and 2023 (Kurnia, 2024). Meanwhile, Statista reported continued growth in Indonesia's beauty and personal care market and projected an increasing contribution from online sales channels (Statista, 2024). This increasingly competitive environment exposes consumers to numerous product alternatives and sources of information, including product attributes, online reviews, recommendations, and social media content, making product quality and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) relevant factors for explaining purchase decisions in the cosmetics market.

Hanasui represents an interesting case within this competitive market because the brand has achieved considerable market visibility as a local cosmetics brand. Hanasui was reported as one of the best-selling local beauty brands in 2024, recording 813,932 units sold during the Ramadan period, and its products have obtained certifications including CPKB, BPOM, and Halal (Apriliani, 2024). The brand also emphasizes product quality, e-commerce, and social media marketing, indicating that Hanasui has established substantial market presence and digital exposure among consumers.

Nevertheless, market visibility and commercial success do not necessarily explain how consumers evaluate Hanasui or what factors ultimately determine their purchase decisions. A brand may have recognized product quality, regulatory and halal certifications, substantial sales, and extensive digital exposure, yet these attributes do not automatically indicate that consumers develop a favorable brand image or that brand image becomes the primary basis for purchasing decisions. The central problem is therefore whether product quality and eWOM influence Hanasui consumers' purchase decisions directly or whether their effects are transmitted through consumers' perceptions of brand image.

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is particularly relevant to this problem because consumers can obtain product-related information from reviews, recommendations, and experiences shared by other users through digital platforms. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) explain that eWOM represents consumer-generated communication disseminated through online platforms, while Erkan and Evans (2016) show that the credibility and usefulness of online information can influence consumers' evaluations and purchase decisions. Tariq et al. (2017) further demonstrate that eWOM can contribute to brand-related responses, suggesting that information communicated by other consumers may influence both purchase decisions and perceptions of a brand.

Product quality represents another important factor because cosmetic consumers may evaluate products according to their performance, benefits, safety, and ability to meet expectations. Previous studies suggest that product quality can contribute to favorable brand image and purchase decisions (Afwan & Santosa, 2020; Irhandi et al., 2021; Montolalu et al., 2021). Nevertheless, the strength and significance of these relationships may differ across products and consumer contexts, creating a need to examine whether product quality is translated into purchase decisions through brand image or whether its influence remains primarily direct.

Brand image may provide an explanatory mechanism connecting consumers' evaluations with their purchase decisions because favorable brand associations can increase



consumers' confidence when evaluating alternatives. Previous studies have reported relationships among product quality, eWOM, brand image, and purchase-related outcomes, including evidence that brand image can mediate some of these relationships (Aditria et al., 2023; Febriati & Respati, 2020; Saraswati & Giantari, 2022). However, the existing evidence is not fully consistent, indicating that the role of brand image as a mediating mechanism may depend on the characteristics of the product, market, and consumers being examined.

Previous research has examined the relationships among product quality, eWOM, brand image, and purchase decision in the cosmetics market. Maharani et al. (2024), for example, found that eWOM, brand image, and product quality were associated with purchase decisions among Luxcrime consumers in East Surabaya. These findings indicate that the three constructs may jointly contribute to consumers' purchase decisions, but the extent to which brand image functions as a mediating mechanism may vary across brands and consumer contexts.

This inconsistency is particularly relevant in the Hanasui context because the brand has substantial market visibility, while the mechanisms underlying consumers' purchase decisions remain insufficiently established. The existence of product quality, certification, digital exposure, and eWOM does not by itself demonstrate that these factors strengthen brand image and subsequently lead consumers to purchase Hanasui products. Therefore, the research problem addressed in this study is whether product quality and eWOM influence purchase decisions directly and whether brand image explains these relationships among Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta.

The present study adopts the conceptual model proposed by Saraswati and Giantari (2022), while applying it to a different product and regional context, namely Hanasui cosmetics consumers in Yogyakarta. The independent variables remain product quality and eWOM, while brand image functions as the mediating variable; however, the present study examines purchase decision rather than repurchase decision as the dependent variable. Thus, this study is positioned as a contextual application of the conceptual model rather than a direct replication, because it involves a different brand, consumer context, geographic setting, and purchase outcome.

The Yogyakarta context is important because consumer responses to cosmetics may vary according to local market characteristics, exposure to digital information, and purchasing environments. Hanasui's national market visibility does not necessarily mean that the relationships among product quality, eWOM, brand image, and purchase decision will operate in the same way among consumers in a specific regional market. Examining Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta therefore provides an opportunity to determine whether the relationships proposed in the previous model remain applicable when transferred to a different brand and geographic context.

Good product quality is theoretically expected to strengthen consumers' perceptions of a brand because favorable experiences with product performance can become positive brand associations (Afwan & Santosa, 2020; Irhandi et al., 2021; Wedari & Yasa, 2022). Consumers who perceive a product as reliable, functional, and capable of meeting their expectations may develop more favorable evaluations of the brand associated with that product. Therefore, product quality is hypothesized to have a positive effect on brand image.

Positive eWOM can shape consumers' perceptions and trust toward a brand because online reviews and recommendations provide information originating from other users. Previous studies indicate that eWOM can contribute to consumers' perceptions of brands and



their subsequent behavioral intentions (Sari et al., 2021; Innayah et al., 2022). Accordingly, stronger positive eWOM is expected to improve brand image.

A favorable brand image can increase consumers' confidence when evaluating and selecting products because positive associations may reduce uncertainty and strengthen perceptions of the brand. Previous research has reported a positive relationship between brand image and purchase decision (Nurhandayani et al., 2019; Wedari & Yasa, 2022), while Wulandari and Sujono (2024) specifically found that brand image significantly influences the purchase decisions of Hanasui consumers. The finding is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides empirical evidence from the same brand, although the consumer context differs from the Hanasui consumers examined in Yogyakarta. Thus, brand image is hypothesized to positively affect purchase decision.

Product quality is also expected to have a direct effect on purchase decision because consumers consider product performance and perceived benefits when choosing cosmetics. Previous research has demonstrated that product quality can influence consumers' purchase decisions across different product contexts (Montolalu et al., 2021; Febriati & Respati, 2020; Purba et al., 2018). Therefore, higher perceived product quality is expected to increase consumers' likelihood of purchasing Hanasui products.

eWOM may also directly influence purchase decisions because online reviews and recommendations provide consumers with additional information and social validation before making a purchase. Previous studies have shown that positive eWOM can influence consumers' purchase decisions across different product contexts (Yulindasari & Fikriyah, 2022; Prayoga & Mulyandi, 2020; Purba et al., 2018), while Lestari et al. (2024) specifically found that eWOM significantly influences purchase decisions for Hanasui cosmetic products among students in Kendari. This finding provides contextual support for examining whether a similar relationship occurs among Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta. Therefore, eWOM is hypothesized to have a positive effect on purchase decisions.

eWOM may also directly influence purchase decision because online reviews and The proposed relationships also provide a basis for examining the mediating role of brand image between product quality and purchase decision. If product quality contributes to a favorable brand image and brand image subsequently influences purchase decision, brand image may transmit part of the effect of product quality to consumers' purchasing behavior (Sijabat, 2020; Febriati & Respati, 2020; Putri & Dwiyanto, 2023). Accordingly, brand image is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase decision.

A similar mediating mechanism may occur in the relationship between eWOM and purchase decision. Positive eWOM may strengthen consumers' perceptions of a brand, while a favorable brand image may subsequently increase consumers' willingness to purchase the product (Aditria et al., 2023; Wedari & Yasa, 2022; Basuki et al., 2023). Therefore, brand image is also hypothesized to mediate the relationship between eWOM and purchase decision.

Based on these relationships, the present study examines whether product quality and eWOM influence purchase decision directly and whether brand image functions as an intervening mechanism among Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta. The study retains the core conceptual structure proposed by Saraswati and Giantari (2022) but applies it to a different brand, geographic context, and purchase outcome. The seven hypotheses developed from these relationships are subsequently tested using PLS-SEM to determine whether the proposed direct and indirect relationships are supported empirically.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative survey design. Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire from Hanasui cosmetics consumers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on four criteria: (1) residing in Yogyakarta, (2) being at least 18 years old, (3) having purchased and used Hanasui products, and (4) having seen or received Hanasui product information through social media. A total of 254 respondents met the criteria and were included in the analysis.

The research model was adapted from Saraswati and Giantari (2022), with adjustments to the research context and dependent variable. While the previous study examined the role of brand image in mediating the effects of product quality and eWOM on repurchase decision, the present study examines purchase decision among Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta. Figure 1 presents the research model, which specifies the direct relationships of product quality and eWOM with brand image and purchase decision, as well as the indirect relationships through brand image.

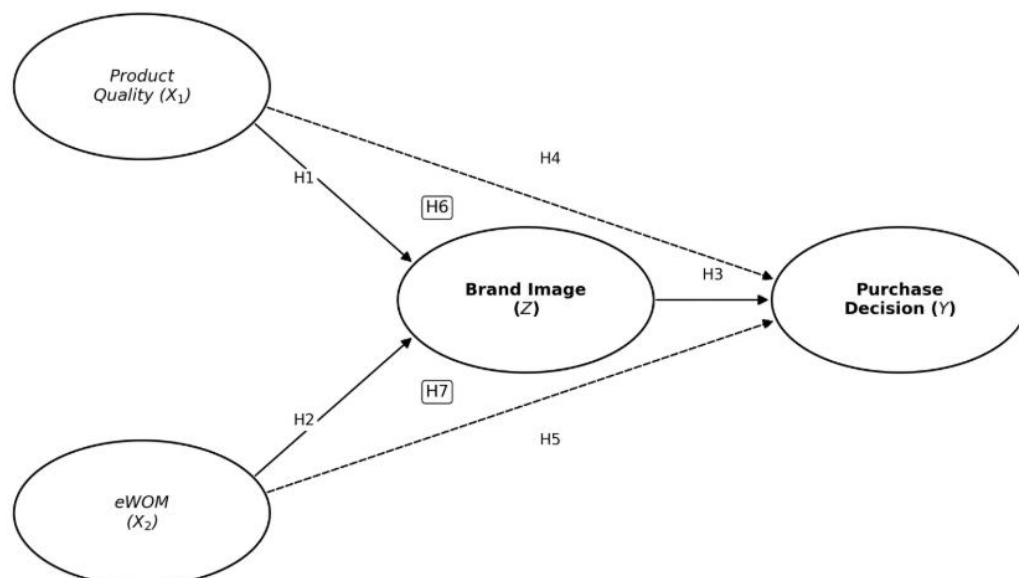


Figure 1. Research Model (Source: Saraswati & Giantari, 2022)

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), with the measurement model (outer model) assessed before the structural model (inner model) (Ghozali, 2021). Convergent validity was evaluated using indicator loadings of at least 0.70 and AVE above 0.50, while discriminant validity was assessed by comparing indicator loadings across constructs. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with values of at least 0.70 considered acceptable. The structural model was evaluated using VIF, R^2 , Q^2 , and f^2 . Hypotheses were tested through bootstrapping using a two-tailed significance criterion of t -statistic ≥ 1.96 and p -value ≤ 0.05 .

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the observed indicators, including frequency, mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation. The structural model was then interpreted based on the estimated path coefficients, explained variance, predictive relevance, and effect sizes. Direct and indirect effects were evaluated separately so that the mediating role of brand image could be assessed explicitly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The initial convergent validity assessment identified four indicators with loading values below the recommended threshold of 0.70: BI1 (0.688), BI2 (0.673), KP8 (0.685), and eWOM9 (0.660). These indicators were removed before the final model estimation, and the measurement model was subsequently reprocessed using the remaining 26 indicators. The resulting model after indicator refinement is presented in Figure 2.

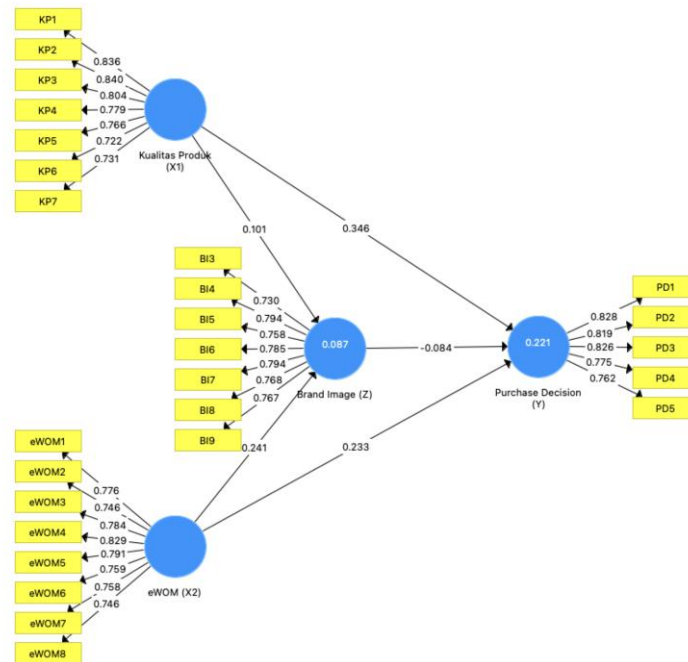


Figure 2. Stage 2 Data Processing Results

The final convergent validity results are presented in Table 1. All retained indicators have loading values above 0.70, ranging from 0.722 to 0.840, while the AVE values for Brand Image, Product Quality, Purchase Decision, and eWOM are 0.595, 0.614, 0.644, and 0.599, respectively. These results indicate that the retained indicators adequately represent their respective constructs and satisfy the convergent validity criteria.

Table 1. Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description	AVE
Brand Image	BI3	0,730	Valid	0,595
	BI4	0,794	Valid	
	BI5	0,758	Valid	
	BI6	0,785	Valid	
	BI7	0,794	Valid	
	BI8	0,768	Valid	
	BI9	0,767	Valid	
Product Quality	KP1	0,836	Valid	0,614
	KP2	0,840	Valid	
	KP3	0,804	Valid	
	KP4	0,779	Valid	



Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Description	AVE
Purchase Decision	KP5	0,766	Valid	0,644
	KP6	0,722	Valid	
	KP7	0,731	Valid	
	PD1	0,828	Valid	
	PD2	0,819	Valid	
	PD3	0,826	Valid	
	PD4	0,775	Valid	
	PD5	0,762	Valid	
e-WOM	eWOM1	0,776	Valid	0,599
	eWOM2	0,746	Valid	
	eWOM3	0,784	Valid	
	eWOM4	0,829	Valid	
	eWOM5	0,791	Valid	
	eWOM6	0,759	Valid	
	eWOM7	0,758	Valid	
	eWOM8	0,746	Valid	

Based on the convergent validity results, all retained indicators have loading values of at least 0.70, while the AVE values for Brand Image, Product Quality, Purchase Decision, and eWOM are 0.595, 0.614, 0.644, and 0.599, respectively. These results indicate that the retained indicators adequately represent their respective constructs and that the convergent validity criteria have been satisfied.

The discriminant validity results indicate that each indicator loads more strongly on its associated construct than on the other constructs. This pattern indicates that the constructs are empirically distinguishable and that the discriminant validity requirement is satisfied.

Table 2. Internal Consistency

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Description
Brand Image	0,887	0,911	Reliable
Product Quality	0,895	0,917	Reliable
Purchase Decision	0,863	0,900	Reliable
e-WOM	0,905	0,923	Reliable

The internal consistency results show Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.863 to 0.905 and composite reliability values ranging from 0.900 to 0.923. All values exceed the 0.70 criterion, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability for all constructs.

Table 3. Predictive Relevance

	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Brand Image (Z)	0.456
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.462

The Q² values are 0.456 for Brand Image and 0.462 for Purchase Decision. Because both values are greater than zero, the endogenous constructs demonstrate predictive relevance. Q² is interpreted only for endogenous constructs in this model.



Table 4. Effect Size (f^2)

Variable	Brand Image (Z)	Product Quality (X1)	Purchase Decision (Y)	eWOM (X2)
Brand Image (Z)			0,292	
Product Quality (X1)	0,525		0,292	
Purchase Decision (Y)				
eWOM (X2)	0,539		—	

The f^2 statistic assesses the change in explained variance when a predictor is omitted from a structural relationship. Based on the reported values, Product Quality has an f^2 of 0.525 for Brand Image and 0.292 for Purchase Decision, while eWOM has an f^2 of 0.539 for Brand Image. Brand Image has an f^2 of 0.292 for Purchase Decision. Using the criteria stated in the method, values around 0.15 indicate a medium effect and values around 0.35 indicate a large effect; therefore, the reported effects range from medium to large for the specified structural paths.

Table 5. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Image (Z)	0.087	0.080
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.221	0.212

The R^2 value for Brand Image is 0.087 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.080$), meaning that Product Quality and eWOM jointly explain 8.7% of the variance in Brand Image. The remaining 91.3% is associated with factors outside the model. For Purchase Decision, the R^2 value is 0.221 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.212$), indicating that Product Quality, eWOM, and Brand Image explain 22.1% of the variance in Purchase Decision. These results suggest that the model has limited explanatory power, particularly for Brand Image, and that other relevant determinants of consumers' decisions are not captured by the present model.

Hypothesis testing used a 5% significance level. A hypothesis was considered supported when the bootstrapped t-statistic was at least 1.96, and the p-value was no greater than 0.05. Direct effects and indirect effects were evaluated separately to determine both the individual relationships and the mediating role of Brand Image.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results

Relationship Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Description
Product Quality (X1) → Brand Image (Z)	0,100	0,100	0,069	1,464	0,144	Not Significant
eWOM (X2) → Brand Image (Z)	0,254	0,254	0,068	3,526	0,000	Positive and Significant
Brand Image (Z) → Purchase Decision (Y)	-0,086	-0,086	0,062	1,346	0,179	No Significant Effect
Product Quality (X1) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0,351	0,351	0,079	4,370	0,000	Positive and Significant



eWOM (X2) → Purchase Decision (Y)	0,236	0,236	0,081	2,854	0,004	Effect Positive and Significant Effect
Product Quality (X1) → Brand Image (Z) → Purchase Decision (Y)	-0,008	-0,008	0,009	0,995	0,320	No Significant Indirect Effect
eWOM (X2) → Brand Image (Z) → Purchase Decision (Y)	-0,023	-0,023	0,019	1,077	0,282	No Significant Indirect Effect

Discussion

Product Quality does not have a significant effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.100$, $t = 1.464$, $p = 0.144$), so H1 is rejected. This result differs from the theoretical expectation that favorable product quality should strengthen brand associations. One possible explanation is that consumers may evaluate Hanasui's product performance as a functional consideration for an immediate purchase rather than as a basis for forming a broader brand perception. In addition, Hanasui's brand image may be shaped more strongly by digital communication, reviews, promotion, or other brand associations than by product quality alone. The low R^2 for Brand Image (0.087) also indicates that important determinants of brand image are outside the present model.

eWOM has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 3.526$, $p < 0.001$), so H2 is supported. This finding indicates that information, reviews, and recommendations circulating through digital channels contribute to consumers' perceptions of Hanasui. The result is consistent with Erkan and Evans (2016), who emphasize the role of online information in consumer evaluation, and suggests that eWOM may be more salient than product quality in shaping brand associations within this sample. Brand Image does not have a significant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = -0.086$, $t = 1.346$, $p = 0.179$), so H3 is rejected. This finding contrasts with studies that report a positive relationship between brand image and purchase decision. A possible explanation is that Hanasui consumers may place greater weight on immediate product-related benefits and user-generated information than on general brand associations when making a purchase. The negative but insignificant coefficient should not be interpreted as evidence of a negative causal effect; rather, the result indicates that the estimated relationship is not statistically distinguishable from zero in this sample.

Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.351$, $t = 4.370$, $p < 0.001$), so H4 is supported. This result indicates that consumers consider product performance and perceived benefits when deciding to purchase Hanasui cosmetics. The finding is consistent with previous research showing that product quality is an important determinant of purchase decisions (Montolalu et al., 2021; Febriati & Respati, 2020; Purba et al., 2018). eWOM has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.236$, $t = 2.854$, $p = 0.004$), so H5 is supported. This result indicates that consumers' exposure to online reviews and recommendations can directly increase purchase-related responses. Together with the significant effect of eWOM on Brand Image, the finding highlights the importance of digital consumer information in the Hanasui market. The indirect effect of Product Quality on Purchase Decision through Brand Image is not significant ($\beta = -0.008$, $t = 0.995$, $p = 0.320$), so H6 is rejected. The absence of mediation is consistent with the nonsignificant Product



Quality → Brand Image relationship. Thus, although product quality directly influences purchase decision, the present evidence does not support the assumption that this effect operates through brand image. The indirect effect of eWOM on Purchase Decision through Brand Image is also not significant ($\beta = -0.023$, $t = 1.077$, $p = 0.282$), so H7 is rejected. Although eWOM significantly influences both Brand Image and Purchase Decision directly, the indirect pathway is not statistically significant. This pattern suggests that the purchase-related value of eWOM in this sample is primarily direct rather than transmitted through brand image, and it reinforces the need to distinguish between a variable's direct influence and its mediating mechanism.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that Product Quality and eWOM have positive and significant direct effects on Purchase Decision among Hanasui cosmetics consumers in Yogyakarta. eWOM also has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image, whereas Product Quality does not significantly affect Brand Image and Brand Image does not significantly affect Purchase Decision. Brand Image does not significantly mediate the relationships of Product Quality or eWOM with Purchase Decision. Thus, the research objective is answered by showing that purchase decisions in this sample are more directly associated with product quality and eWOM than with brand image as a mediating mechanism.

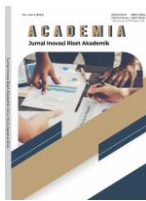
The findings imply that Hanasui should continue improving product quality while strengthening credible eWOM through social media, marketplaces, and consumer reviews. Future research should consider additional determinants of purchase decision and brand image, such as price, promotion, brand trust, and influencer effects, because the current model explains only 8.7% of the variance in Brand Image and 22.1% in Purchase Decision. Studies involving different consumer characteristics or regional contexts may also help determine whether the observed relationships are specific to Hanasui consumers in Yogyakarta.

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