

Analysis of the Influence of Brand Awareness, Brand Image, and e-WOM on Purchasing Decision: Study of Mustika Ratu Medan Customers

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Abstract. The emergence of local beauty brands in Indonesia has made the market more competitive and consumers more selective in their purchasing decisions on beauty products. Mustika Ratu is one of the pioneers of local cosmetics in Indonesia, but it cannot keep up with the emergence of new brands on the market. This is proven by a decrease in purchase decisions, indicated by a decrease in sales. Mustika Ratu Medan customer as the object of the research. The research aims to see the influence of brand awareness, brand image, and e-WOM on purchase decisions. This research is quantitative with a regression model and processed using SPSS 25. The sample used in this study is 97 respondents. This shows that brand awareness and e-WOM have a positive and significant influence on Mustika Ratu customers in Medan. Meanwhile, brand image has no positive and significant influence on Mustika Ratu customers in Medan. It is recommended that Mustika Ratu conduct pop-up stores, use brand faces aged 15-17 years to emphasize the image of teenage users, and collaborate with influencers to increase purchasing decisions among customers.

Keywords: Brand Awareness; Brand Image; e-WOM; Mustika Ratu; Purchase Decision.

Abstrak. Munculnya brand kecantikan lokal di Indonesia membuat pasar semakin kompetitif dan konsumen lebih selektif dalam mengambil keputusan pembelian produk kecantikan. Mustika Ratu merupakan salah satu pionir kosmetik lokal di Indonesia, namun belum mampu mengimbangi munculnya merek baru tersebut di pasaran. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan menurunnya keputusan pembelian yang ditunjukkan dengan menurunnya penjualan. Pelanggan Mustika Ratu Medan adalah objek penelitian ini. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat pengaruh kesadaran merek, citra merek, dan e-WOM terhadap keputusan pembelian. Penelitian ini bersifat kuantitatif dengan model regresi dan pengolahannya menggunakan SPSS 25. Sampel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 97 responden. Hal ini menunjukkan kesadaran merek dan e-WOM mempunyai pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap pelanggan Mustika Ratu di Medan, sedangkan citra merek tidak mempunyai pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap pelanggan Mustika Ratu di Medan. Mustika Ratu disarankan mengadakan pop-up store, menggunakan brand face berusia 15-17 tahun untuk menonjolkan citra pengguna remaja dan

berkolaborasi dengan influencer untuk meningkatkan keputusan pembelian di kalangan pelanggan.

Kata kunci: Kesadaran merek; Citra merek; e-WOM; Keputusan pembelian; Mustika Ratu.

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BACKGROUND

The development of the cosmetics industry in Indonesia has succeeded in bringing out innovations in cosmetics products in the current era, and has succeeded in meeting the needs of women in Indonesia to reflect their character or personality. According to Sayidah et al. (2022), the cosmetics industry in Indonesia is experiencing promising growth, and a survey indicates it is expected to increase by 10-17% per year. The emergence of local beauty brands in Indonesia has made the market more competitive and consumers more selective in their purchasing decisions on beauty products (Priyanka & Sulistyawati, 2023). There are several pioneer cosmetic brands in Indonesia, i.e., Viva Cosmetic, Martha Tilaar, Purbasari, Wardah, and Mustika Ratu. This research will discuss the Mustika Ratu Company, which is one of the companies that compete in the narrow cosmetics market. Mustika Ratu Company is one of the pioneers of the cosmetic industry in Indonesia. Mustika Ratu offers beauty products that use traditional, natural ingredients sourced from Indonesia (Mustika Ratu, 2021). One of the pioneers of local cosmetics cannot compete with the current market. This can be proven in Table 1, where PT. Mustika Ratu has experienced a reduction in purchasing decisions, as indicated by sales management.

Table 1. Financial Statement 2022 of Mustika Ratu

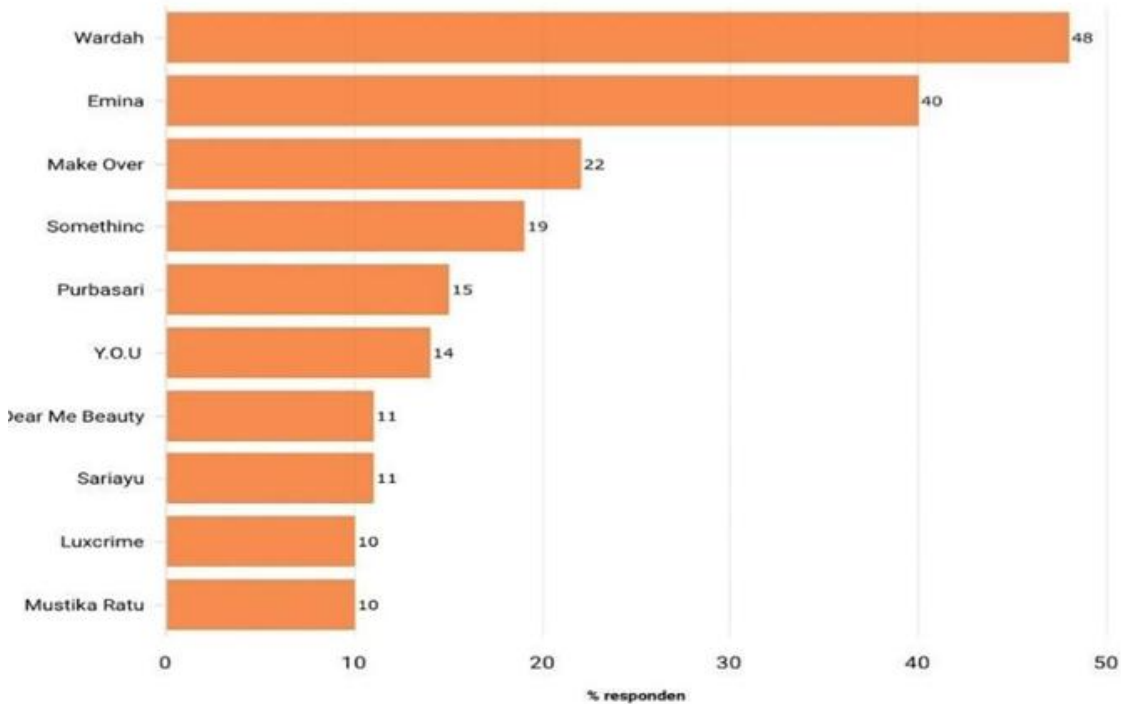
Year	Sales
2020	318.408
2021	326.795
2021	285.178

Source: Mustika Ratu Financial Statement 2022-2023.

Based on Table 1, Mustika Ratu beauty products have increased from 2020 to 2021, reaching 326,795 with a difference of 2.5% from the previous. However, in 2022, it significantly decreased from the previous year to 285,178, with a difference of -12.7%. Mustika Ratu is indeed one of the pioneers of local cosmetic brands in Indonesia, but it cannot keep up with the emergence of new brands on the market. Thus, there is a decrease in purchasing decisions for customers. Companies must focus on this process, where if the company can read the needs of the customer, the customer will be satisfied. Mustika Ratu has several problems that can determine whether the customer chooses or does not choose this product in the purchase decision process.

Mustika Ratu itself is a company that has existed for decades. In fact, Mustika Ratu used to be the most superior product of choice among Indonesian people, especially for women. As time goes by, Mustika Ratu has declined. According to Maulidia et al.

(2021), many Indonesians think that it is only for old people and is very unattractive to today's young generation. This is also proven by Figures 1 and 2.



Source: Databoks Katadata (2023).

Figure 1. Most Used Local Cosmetics Brands

In Figure 1, which is the result of a survey regarding the most used local cosmetics brands in 2022 is shown. Mustika Ratu got the lowest position with only 10%. Also, in Figure 2, which are the five best skincare brands in Indonesia are shown.



Source: Kompas (2023).

Figure 2. The Five Best Skincare Products in Indonesia

The data above shows that Mustika Ratu is not included in the list of the five best skincare brands in Indonesia. From the two problems, we can see that this is related to brand awareness. So, in this research, in the existing problem, customers will not choose Mustika Ratu in information on research or evaluation of alternatives because the customers themselves are unaware of the Mustika Ratu brand anymore in the market. But it can be if they recall with help by showing some attributes like the logo of the brand. According to Chandra and Keni (2019), customers will buy a product because it has been recognized and is in the mind of the customer, which can increase purchase decisions.

The image of the Mustika Ratu brand is one of the pioneers of Indonesian cosmetic brands that use natural ingredients grown in Indonesia, and of course, are halal. Stated in Mustika Ratu (2021) website, "Discover the natural beauty secrets of ancestral recipes and the philosophy of the beauty of the Javanese palace in a series of safe and lawful Mustika Ratu products specially made for you". And based on the Mustika Ratu website, the products produced use jicama, coconut, cucumber, soursop, betel leaf, and kemuning leaf extract, which are natural ingredients that grow in Indonesia. This explains that Mustika Ratu is a brand that prioritizes natural ingredients in the products it produces.

Because it has an image of natural ingredients, many customers expect that the products released by Mustika Ratu have natural alternatives for all the ingredients. However, what customers get does not match the image conveyed by the product in terms of ingredients and brand. Where the product of Mustika Ratu still contains ingredients that are avoided by customers who want to switch to products with natural ingredients. This was also followed up by customers saying the Mustika Ratu shampoo that the customer purchased contained *Sodium Lauryl Sulphate* or SLS, even though the shampoo looked natural. *Sodium Lauryl Sulphate* or SLS is an alkyl surfactant derived from organic alcohol and is usually found to increase the level of cleanliness and foaming in the product (Alli et al., 2019). In fact, the Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS) content in Mustika Ratu products is still in accordance with the dosage, but this can cause negative reactions in customers. The *Sodium Lauryl Sulphate* content is not dangerous if used briefly and rinsed from the skin and must be used in the right concentration, however, in several other studies it has been said that even though the content and use are minimal, Sodium Lauryl Sulphate can cause risks to the body, especially in people who have Sensitive skin is cause to eye and skin irritation and allergic skin reactions (Halodoc, 2022).

Apart from that, Mustika Ratu is also famous for its affordable prices among Indonesian people. The price of Mustika Ratu products ranges from under Rp100,000 or Rp10,000 - Rp85,000. This also creates problems for Mustika Ratu's corporate image. It turns out that the products released by Mustika Ratu cannot provide quality and performance that are more than their price. The quality and performance of the products supplied by Mustika Ratu are not very good. This was followed up by a customer who said that the product he used was not suitable and had no expectations because the price was low.

The next problem is a review of the Mustika Ratu product. One source of research information is public resources such as mass media and online search. This relates to Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). So, in this research, in the existing problem, the valence of opinion of e-WOM is more inclined towards negative reviews and low in recommendation, which is suspected to make customers not want to buy

products from the Mustika Ratu brand. This was also followed up by reviews from customers who made reviews about Mustika Ratu's products, namely *merang* and spinach shampoo. The review stated the product from Mustika Ratu did not live up to the customer's expectations, which claims to be able to treat dandruff and hair fall but instead it makes the hair condition worse. Where the results of the product produced negative effects for the customer. It produces more dandruff, more hair fall, and makes the hair really dry. The number of recommendations for Mustika Ratu products is not equivalent to the reviews made by customers. This is confirmed by the results of the recommendations for Spinach shampoo and Yam tube mask that are on the website Female Daily.id. The Spinach shampoo itself has 347 reviews, but only 19% of users recommend purchasing this product. Likewise, the yam tube mask has 1645 reviews, but only 24% of users recommend purchasing this product.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision

Brand awareness is one of the factors that influences customer decisions on cosmetics. Rita and Nabilla (2022) stated that brand awareness is the ability of customers to recognize a brand or realize when its characteristics are mentioned. Building brand awareness over a natural period can create repetition and reinforcement (Satria & Hamawaty, 2021). The indicators used in this research were taken by Sari et al. (2021), namely (a) recall, is how far the customer can remember and choose the brand when asked about the brand; (b) recognition, how far the customer can recognize and realize the brand from a certain aspect; (c) purchase, how far the customer chooses the brand over choices when purchasing the product and consuming the product; (d) consumption, how far consumers can recognize the brand when using products and services.

The relationship between brand awareness and purchasing decisions creates a display of something from other competitors (Hayati & Handika, 2021). Brand awareness can affect purchasing decisions, that cause a lot of brand push to survive in the minds of customers. Its influence can be proven by Waani et al. (2022), and Azzahra et al. (2021), there is a positive and significant influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions.

H₁: Brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on the purchase decisions of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan.

Brand Image and Purchase Decision

Brand image is also one of the supports in customer purchase decisions. This is supported by Arianty and Arinda (2020), the better the brand image of the product being created by the brand, the higher the purchasing decision by consumers. Brand image is a perception or belief held by consumers that reflects the products of a brand (Mahiri, 2020). The indicators used in this research were taken from Paramitha (2020), i.e., (a) corporate image, which is a customer's perception of the company; (b) user image, which is the perception about users of the brand's products; and product image, which is the perception of the attributes and benefits of the product for consumers.

The placement of a brand image with consumers must be carried out in the long term to be created strongly and accepted by customers, which will provoke the possibility of purchasing the product (Kolinug et al., 2022). According to Sterie et al. (2019),

Setiawan and Yosepha (2020), and Kolinug et al. (2022), there is a positive and significant influence of brand image on purchase decisions.

H₂: Brand image has a positive and significant influence on the purchase decisions of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan.

eWOM and Purchase Decision

According to Astuti & Rahmawati (2023), e-WOM is an important forum for customers to share their experiences and is more powerful than offline word of mouth because it is easier to access and has many variations. This shows that consumers trust e-WOM more in purchasing decisions. e-WOM has 3 indicators, namely (a) intensity, the number of opinions written by customers; (b) valence of opinion, whether consumer opinions are negative or positive regarding products or services; (c) content, the information offered (Luthfiyatillah et al., 2020).

eWOM has a big opportunity to encourage customers to make purchase decisions. According to Rachbini et al (2021), eWOM is the most influential marketing tool in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Likewise, according to Fajar and Pratminingsih (2022), eWOM creates a form of meeting and sharing opinions by people who search for information for decision-making and consider it accurate, which can be used in the decision-making process. According to Edarwati et al. (2023) and Sudirman et al. (2023), there is a positive and significant influence of eWOM on purchase decisions.

H₃: eWOM has a positive and significant influence on the purchase decisions of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan.

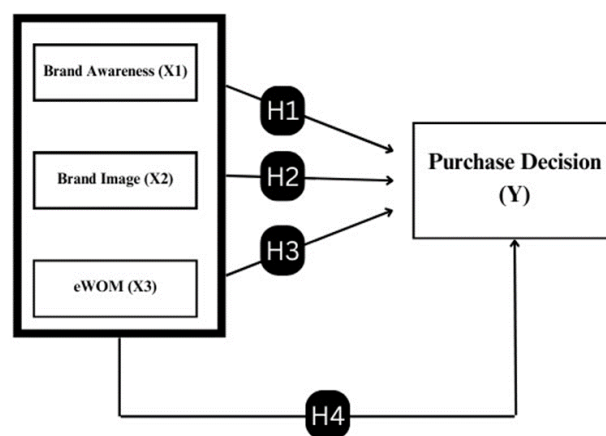


Figure 3. Research Model

This research also aims to look at the influence of 3 independent variables on the dependent variable, which are brand awareness, brand image, and eWOM Toward Purchase Decision at Mustika Ratu customers in Medan. The research model in this study is shown in Figure 3.

H₄: Brand awareness, brand image, and eWOM have a positive and significant influence on the purchase decisions of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative methods. The primary data used in this research are obtained from the users of the Mustika Ratu questionnaire, and the secondary data are books, journals, and articles related to research topics on brand awareness, brand image, and e-WOM in purchase decisions. The population criteria used for the research are buyers of Mustika Ratu products in Medan. The sampling method used is snowball sampling. The sample for this study comprised 97 respondents, with a regression model used to process the data using SPSS 25. Instrumental test, classical assumption test, multiple regression analysis, Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2), and Hypothesis Testing will be used in the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Instrumental Test

Table 2 shows the results of the validity test for the e-WOM (X_3), with r-count values greater than r-table, so that all items in the e-WOM (X_3) question statement are valid and the reliability results show that the variables Brand Awareness (X_1), Brand Image (X_2), e-WOM (X_3), and Purchase Decision (Y) are declared reliable.

Table 2. The Validity And Reliability Result

Variable	Validity			Reliability
	Questions	r-count	r-table	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Awareness	X1.1	0,540	0,361	0,670
	X1.2	0,762	0,361	
	X1.3	0,738	0,361	
	X1.4	0,772	0,361	
Brand Image	X2.1	0,669	0,361	0,783
	X2.2	0,850	0,361	
	X2.3	0,890	0,361	
	X2.4	0,726	0,361	
	X2.5	0,542	0,361	
	X2.6	0,617	0,361	
e-WOM	X3.1	0,555	0,361	0,651
	X3.2	0,495	0,361	
	X3.3	0,775	0,361	
	X3.4	0,740	0,361	
	X3.5	0,496	0,361	
	X3.6	0,532	0,361	
Purchase Decision	Y.1	0,780	0,361	0,845
	Y.2	0,614	0,361	
	Y.3	0,850	0,361	
	Y.4	0,836	0,361	
	Y.5	0,874	0,361	

Classical Assumption Testing Result

Based on Table 3, it is known that the significance value of 0.200 is greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data tested is normally distributed.

Table 3. The Result of the One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

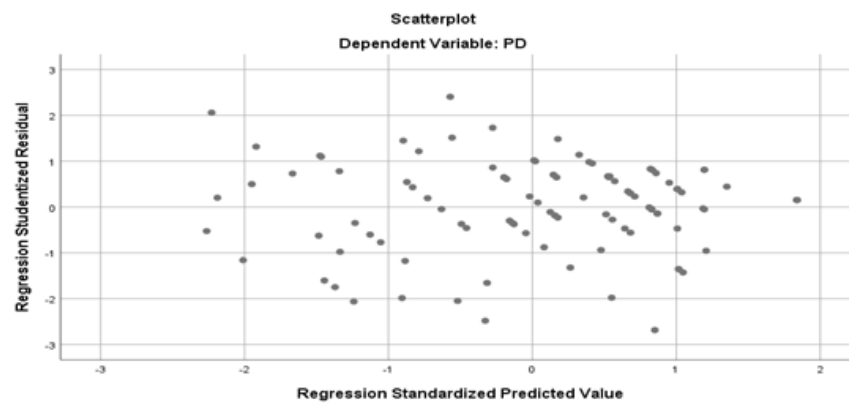
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		97
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	1.15548694
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.076
	Positive	.046
	Negative	-.076
Test Statistic		.076
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

Brand awareness, brand image, and e-WOM show tolerance with a value greater than 0.10, and the VIF values are less than 10, which shows there is no multicollinearity problem.

Table 4. The Result of the Multicollinearity Test

Model	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Awareness	0.436	2.293
Brand Image	0.551	1.816
e-WOM	0.405	2.467

Based on Figure 4, it can be seen that the dots are random or do not form a clear pattern, and are scattered both above and below. This means that there is no heteroscedasticity in the regression model, so this regression model is feasible to use to predict purchasing decisions.

**Figure 4. The Result of the Heteroscedasticity Test**

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

From Table 5 above, a multiple linear regression test is obtained with the regression equation [1].

$$Y = 2.042 + 0.406 - 0.024 + 0.513 + e \quad \text{-----}[1]$$

Table 5. The Result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	B	Std. Error
(Constant)	2.042	.989
Brand Awareness	.406	.083
Brand Image	-.024	.048
e-WOM	.513	.046

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

From Table 6, the Adjusted R Square coefficient of the test used to assess the extent to which the dependent variable's variance can be explained by the model is 0.844. This shows that 84.4% of the purchase decision of Mustika Ratu is influenced by the variables of Brand Awareness, Brand Image, and e-WOM, while the remaining 15.10% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. These can be product quality, perceived quality, and brand trust.

Table 6. The result of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.922 ^a	.849	.844		1.17398

t-Test Results

For the t-table obtained by $df = 93$, the t-table used is 1,986. From the t-test, it can be seen in Table 7. The result of the significance value for the brand awareness variable is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.00 \leq 0.05$). As well as the t_{count} value is 4,908, which is greater than t_{table} is 1,986. It can be concluded that hypothesis one (H_1) is accepted. Brand Image variable is 0.621, which is greater than 0.05 ($0.00 \geq 0.05$). As well as t_{count} value is -0.469, which is smaller than t_{table} 1.986. It can be concluded that hypothesis two (H_2) is not accepted. The result of the significance value for the e-WOM variable is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ($0.00 \leq 0.05$). As well as t_{count} value is 11.046, which is greater than t_{table} 1.986. It can be concluded that hypothesis three (H_3) is accepted.

Table 7. t-test Significant Test Results

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.065	.042
Brand Awareness	4.908	.000
Brand Image	-.496	.621
e-WOM	11.046	.000

F-test Results

From Table 8, the significance value is 0.000, which indicates a significant result smaller than 0.05. It can be concluded that hypothesis four (H_4) is accepted.

Table 8. F-test Significant Test Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	722.279	3	240.760	174.689	.000 ^b
	Residual	128.174	93	1.378		
	Total	850.454	96			

^aDependent Variable: PD

^bPredictors: (Constant), EWOM, BI, BA.

Discussions

Based on research that has been carried out, brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mustika Ratu. This result is in line with

previous research that has been established, namely Waani et al. (2022), and Satria and Pudjoprastyono (2022), who say there is a positive and significant influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions. Since the emergence of many local beauty brands on the market in Indonesia, and not to mention the many international beauty brands entering the Indonesian beauty market, Mustika Ratu is starting to fade. Those who used to be number one are now starting to decline. This is also due to the current lack of awareness among Indonesian people about one of Indonesia's pioneering beauty brands, and a focus on new emerging brands now.

As we know, brand awareness is very important for all brands on the market. This can be an opportunity for a customer to choose a brand of product that he needs to meet his needs. This is also supported by Clinton and Secapramana (2022). Customer awareness of a brand can make customers understand more about the product or service being offered. Therefore, it is very easy for a customer to make a purchasing decision. Mustika Rata can also take advantage of this opportunity to continue to increase purchasing decisions, which have declined among Indonesian people. The most important goal of brand awareness is not only for economic decisions for the company, which can be short-term, but also to become an asset that is long-term. Therefore, a brand with good management will try to build brand awareness over the last decade. and increase the range of products (Rouly and Pandjaitan, 2019). This is also a reason for Mustika Ratu to increase brand awareness again, which has caused the skincare-loving community to become unfamiliar with Mustika Ratu.

Brand image does not have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions at Mustika Ratu. Mustika Ratu is very natural, which is one of the images most highlighted by the brand. Natural here discusses the ingredients used in the products released by Mustika Ratu, so that customers who have alternative natural products will be more interested in this brand. Mustika Ratu is also famous for its affordable prices. The price is very affordable for college students and also high school students, so it has a fairly large market reach. The product itself can be used for teenagers and adults, although it is stated by the results of the questionnaire that has been distributed to Mustika Ratu customers that the use of Mustika Ratu products is more common for adult users than teenagers. This result is in accordance with the results of the research conducted by Putra and Abiyoga (2023), Ali et al (2019), and Rohmanuddin and Suprayoga (2021), which state that brand image does not have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Brand image may not be something that a customer will pay attention to as a consideration for making a purchase decision. But even so, Azmy et al (2020) stated that brands still need to improve their brand image from the perspective of the customer to create a long-term expectation from the customer.

e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This is in line with previous research, which has been established. According to Edarwati et al (2023) and Sudirman et al (2023), there is a positive and significant influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions. e-WOM is a reference for customers in the purchasing decision process. Mustika Ratu has a very high intensity for e-WOM, especially on one of the online review platforms most frequently visited by people in Indonesia, namely Femaildaily.id. Even though it has high intensity, if the review is more inclined to the negative side, then this can reduce the customer's purchase decision because the customer is afraid to make a purchase decision about the item. This also happened to e-WOM Mustika Ratu, which leaned towards the negative. Customers themselves will feel

uncomfortable when they make a purchase decision because they will continue to think about the e-WOM that previous customers have written about the product the customer wants to buy. According to Yulindasari and Fikriyah (2022), A customer will carry out an investigation into the product he is going to buy with the help of e-WOM. e-WOM itself is very helpful for a brand that uses social media to improve a customer's decision, which is influenced by the comments of other consumers (Prayoga & Mulyandi, 2020). This is also a reason for Mustika Ratu to increase the intensity of positive e-WOM again, which has caused people to feel hesitant about making a purchase decision for this product.

Based on research that has been carried out, Brand Awareness, Brand Image, and e-WOM have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Mustika Ratu Medan customers. The beauty industry in Indonesia is developing very quickly and has even become one of the most promising industries in the current era for business. Today's public is less aware of the Mustika Ratu brand. Mustika Ratu doesn't really follow trends on social media or the appearance of products. Mustika Ratu, despite its long-standing presence in Indonesia and its loyal customer base, does not effectively utilize social media to boost brand awareness, despite the high potential for this strategy in the current generation. As stated by the customer, the customer said the packaging was "too old school" but distinctive, so the customer suggested changing the packaging to make it look fresher and more attractive. This is also the reason there are no potential future customers for Mustika Ratu products. Mustika Ratu, an Indonesian company, has a strong brand image among Indonesians, prioritizing narrative material from the country to preserve culture. However, misperceptions have arisen, with customers claiming the products are not entirely natural due to high alcohol content, strong perfume smell, and doubts about the company's claims, leading to a decline in purchase decisions.

Apart from that, there is also e-WOM. The most influential is when a customer processes research information and evaluates alternatives. Mustika Ratu has lots of online reviews of its products. But even this still has problems with e-WOM. Customers stated that they very rarely find e-WOM for Mustika Ratu products, which can be very influential in a customer deciding to purchase the Mustika Ratu brand. This means that Mustika Ratu does not really use several well-known online platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and X (Twitter), which can stimulate the growth of e-WOM to a higher intensity. Even compared to other competitors, the rating for Mustika Ratu products is still very low, mostly 3.3. This can make customers confused by low ratings and afraid to purchase Mustika Ratu products, so that potential future customers are not interested in buying Mustika Ratu products. Mustika Ratu faces competition from emerging beauty brands like Somethinc and Rose All Day, highlighting the need for increased brand awareness, image, and eWOM to boost customer purchasing decisions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that brand awareness and e-WOM have a positive and significant partial influence on the purchase decisions of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan. Meanwhile, brand image does not have a positive and significant partial influence on the purchase decision of Mustika Ratu customers in Medan.

The recommendations for the company include holding a pop-up store, using a 15-17 year old brand face to highlight the image of teenage users, and collaborating with influencers to increase purchasing decisions among customers. For future research, the writer suggests conducting research on other variables that could affect the purchase decision of Mustika Ratu, such as customer loyalty and product quality. Additionally, future research should focus more on the younger generation as respondents to better understand the preferences and behaviors of this demographic.

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