

THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND CUSTOMER REVIEWS ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION OF WARDAH BEAUTY PRODUCTS THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE IN THE GERBANGKERTOSUSILA REGION (STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM) METHOD – PATRIAL LEAST SQUARE (PLS)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Keyword: <i>Influencer Marketing, Customer Reviews, Brand Image, Purchase Intention .</i>	The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of Influencer Marketing and Customer Reviews on the Purchase Intention of Wardah beauty products, mediated by Brand Image, in the Gerbangkertasusila area (Gresik, Bangkalan, Mojokerto, Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Lamongan). This research employs a quantitative approach using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3 software. A total of 200 respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The results indicate that Influencer Marketing (X1) and Customer Reviews (X2) have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y). Furthermore, Brand Image (Z) significantly mediates the influence of Influencer Marketing and Customer Reviews on the Purchase Intention of Wardah beauty products. This study reinforces the importance of brand image and customer opinions in digital marketing strategies, especially for beauty products that are highly influenced by consumer trust and perception.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information technology has fundamentally transformed consumer behavior, particularly in accessing information prior to making purchases. The internet and social media have become primary channels for consumers to seek product references. This shift significantly impacts marketing strategies, which no longer rely solely on conventional promotion but increasingly emphasize digital approaches through influencers and customer reviews.

According to the 2024 report by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), internet users in Indonesia have reached over 221 million, reflecting a digital penetration rate of 79.5%. his data indicates increasing connectivity among the population and presents a substantial opportunity

for businesses, including the beauty industry, to directly reach consumers via digital channels. Active social media users represent a potential target market for influencer-based marketing strategies.

In the beauty industry context, purchase decisions are heavily influenced by consumer perceptions and experiences. Cosmetic products, in particular, depend greatly on trust and reputation. Therefore, employing Influencer Marketing is an effective approach to engage audiences more personally and emotionally. Influencers are perceived to have close relationships with their followers, enabling them to shape strong opinions. Moreover, Customer Reviews play a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions. Consumers tend to trust the experiences of other users more than direct company promotions. Positive reviews can enhance trust and perceived quality of the brand, whereas negative reviews may reduce Purchase Intention. Hence, managing Customer Reviews is an essential component of an effective digital marketing strategy.

Brand Image represents consumers' perceptions formed through experiences, communication, and associations related to a brand. In this study, brand image is positioned as a mediating variable connecting the influence of Influencer Marketing and Customer Reviews on Purchase Intention. A positive brand image is believed to strengthen consumers' purchase intentions and increase product loyalty. The Gerbangkertasusila region, comprising Gresik, Bangkalan, Mojokerto, Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Lamongan, was selected as the research location due to its high digital growth and consumption of beauty products. The area's diverse demographic characteristics provide a broad and representative overview of consumer behavior in the digital era.

This study aims to empirically analyze the effects of Influencer Marketing and Customer Reviews on the Purchase Intention of Wardah beauty products, with Brand Image as a mediating variable. Utilizing a quantitative approach and PLS-SEM method, the findings are expected to offer practical contributions to the beauty industry practitioners and enrich academic discourse in digital marketing.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS 3.0. The population consisted of Wardah product consumers in the Gerbangkertasusila area. A total of 200 respondents were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The analysis included outer model testing, inner model evaluation, and mediation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model

Measurement model testing was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. Based on the outer loading results, all indicators within the variables of Influencer Marketing, Customer Reviews, Brand Image, and Purchase Intention exhibited values $> 0,70$. This indicates that the indicators in this study meet the criteria for convergent validity.

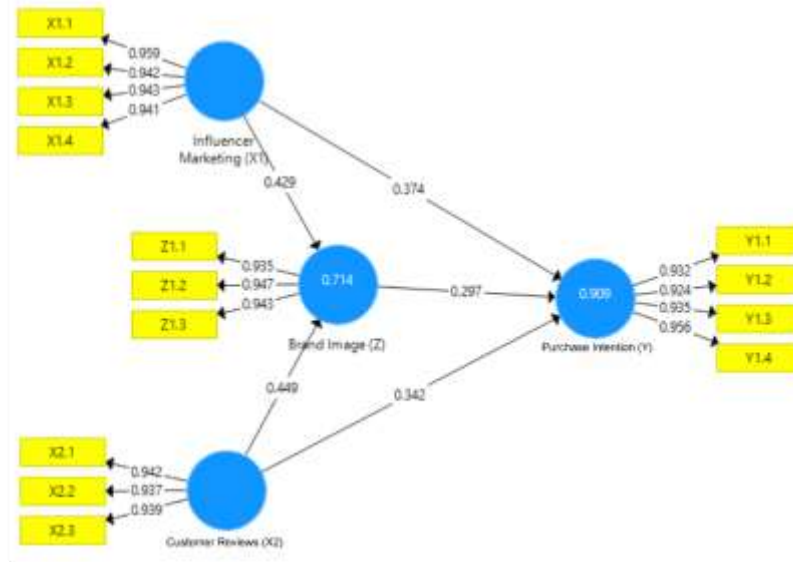
Table 1 Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Cronbach' Alpha	AVE
<i>Influencer Marketing (X1)</i>	X1.1	0.959	0.972	0.961	0.895
	X1.2	0.942			
	X1.3	0.943			
	X1.4	0.941			
<i>Customer Reviews (X2)</i>	X2.1	0.942	0.957	0.933	0.882
	X2.2	0.937			
	X2.3	0.939			
<i>Purchase Intention (Y)</i>	Y.1	0.932	0.966	0.954	0.878
	Y.2	0.924			

Variable	Indicator	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Cronbach' Alpha	AVE
Brand Image (Z)	Y.3	0.935	0.959	0.936	0.887
	Y.4	0.856			
	Z.1	0.935			
	Z.2	0.947			
	Z.3	0.943			

All constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, with Composite Reliability values above 0.90 and AVE values exceeding 0.87. Thus, the measurement model is both valid and reliable.

Inner Model



Picture 1 Structural Model

This model is also used to view and analyze existing values. In the inner model, the R-Square test is used to measure the extent of variation explained between variables. The results show that the R-Square value for Brand Image is 0.714, and for Purchase Intention is 0.909. These results indicate that the model has strong explanatory power between the tested variables.

Table 2 R-Square Test

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.909	0.907
Brand Image (Z)	0.714	0.711

Source: Primary Data (2025)

The R-Square (R^2) value for the Brand Image variable is 0.714, indicating that 71.4% of the variance in Brand Image (Z) can be explained by Influencer Marketing (X1) and Customer Review (X2). Meanwhile, the R^2 value for Purchase Intention (Y) is 0.909, meaning that 90.9% of the variance in Purchase Intention (Y) is explained by Influencer Marketing (X1), Customer Review (X2), and Brand Image (Z). These values indicate that the structural model has a high predictive accuracy, as R^2 values above 0.67 are considered substantial (Hair et al., 2017).

Hypothesis Test

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with a bootstrapping technique of 5,000 subsamples. The acceptance or rejection of hypotheses was based on the recommendations by Hair et al. (2017), where a T-statistic greater than 1.960 or a P-value below 0.05 indicates a significant relationship. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected if the T-statistic exceeds 1.960 or the P-value is less than 0.05.

Tabel 3 Hypothesis Test

Variable	Coefficient	P value	T-Statistic	T-tabel
<i>Influencer Marketing (X1) -> Brand Image(Z)</i>	0.429	0.000	4.277	1.960
<i>Customer Reviews (X2) -> Brand Image (Z)</i>	0.449	0.000	4.239	1.960
<i>Influencer Marketing (X1)-> Purchase Intention (Y)</i>	0.374	0.000	6.287	1.960
<i>Customer Reviews (X2)-> Purchase Intention (Y)</i>	0.342	0.000	5.329	1.960
<i>Purchase Intention (Y)-> Brand Image (Z)</i>	0.297	0.000	4.606	1.960

Source: Primary data (2025)

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Influencer Marketing has a significant effect on Purchase Intention

The analysis shows a path coefficient of 0.374, with a T-statistic of 6.287 and P-value of 0.000. These results indicate a significant and positive effect, meaning H1 is supported. This suggests that influencer content can strongly influence consumers' decisions to purchase Wardah products. The findings are in line with Penny and Makaba (2024), who highlighted the persuasive power of influencer communication in beauty product marketing.

Hypothesis 2: Customer Review has a significant effect on Purchase Intention

The path coefficient for this relationship is 0.342, with a T-statistic of 5.329 and a P-value of 0.000. Since both criteria for significance are met, H2 is accepted. Customer reviews play an important role in shaping consumer trust, especially when purchasing personal care products online. This is consistent with Elwada et al. (2016), who found that user-generated reviews significantly impact purchasing behavior.

Hypothesis 3: Influencer Marketing has a significant effect on Brand Image

The coefficient value is 0.429, supported by a T-statistic of 4.277 and P-value of 0.000. Therefore, H3 is supported. This implies that effective influencer strategies can enhance how consumers perceive the Wardah brand. As noted by Agustin and Amron (2022), influencers help shape brand associations and values through consistent messaging.

Hypothesis 4: Customer Review has a significant effect on Brand Image

The analysis reports a coefficient of 0.449, with a T-statistic of 4.239 and P-value of 0.000, confirming H4. Positive customer feedback contributes not only to product credibility but also to a stronger brand image. This supports the findings of Vieri and Suyanto (2023), who emphasized the role of online reviews in brand building.

Hypothesis 5: Brand Image has a significant effect on Purchase Intention

Brand Image shows a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention, with a coefficient of 0.297, T-statistic of 4.606, and P-value of 0.000. H5 is therefore supported. A strong brand image enhances consumer trust and confidence in making purchase decisions. This is in line with Kotler and Keller (2016), who noted that brand perception is a key driver of consumer behavior.

Hypothesis 6: Brand Image mediates the effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention
The indirect effect of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention through Brand Image is 0.128, with a T-statistic of 3.056 and P-value of 0.002. These results confirm that Brand Image significantly mediates this relationship. Influencer Marketing contributes to shaping brand perception, which in turn leads to increased purchase intention.

Hypothesis 7: Brand Image mediates the effect of Customer Review on Purchase Intention
Similarly, the indirect effect of Customer Review on Purchase Intention via Brand Image is 0.133, with a T-statistic of 3.152 and P-value of 0.002. H7 is supported, indicating that customer feedback strengthens brand image and subsequently encourages buying behavior.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that Influencer Marketing (X1), Customer Reviews (X2), and Brand Image (Z) have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (Y), both directly and through Z as a mediating variable. The study is limited to one beauty brand, Wardah, and data were collected via online questionnaire, which may affect the generalizability and introduce response bias. Future research could consider other product categories and broader respondent profiles.

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