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The Effects of Electronic Word of Mouth (Ewom) and Brand Ambassador Concerning Consumer Purchase Decisions

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Abstract. The increasing competition in the beauty industry has made effective marketing strategies critical, particularly for products like Scarlett Whitening. This study examines the influence of two key variables Brand Ambassador (X1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on consumer purchase decisions. The research problem focuses on understanding which marketing method better drives purchasing decisions. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected and analyzed to assess the impact of these variables. The findings reveal that while Brand Ambassadors have minimal influence on consumer purchase decisions, e-WOM significantly and positively impacts purchasing behavior. Combined, both factors account for 69.2% of the variation in consumer decisions. The results highlight that e-WOM is more effective than Brand Ambassadors in influencing buyers in the beauty industry. This study concludes that leveraging e-WOM-based marketing strategies can better guide consumers in making informed purchasing choices, providing a valuable reference for businesses aiming to enhance their marketing effectiveness in the competitive beauty product market.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (Ewom); brand ambassador purchasing decisions; scarlett whitening

INTRODUCTION

Because of the fierce rivalry that exists in the business world today, manufacturers are working hard to grow their companies. One highly sought-after sector is beauty products. Women use cosmetics to maintain their beauty, making beauty products a primary necessity for both women and men. Amidst the intensifying market competition, businesses are adopting various innovations and strategies to capture customer attention and influence their purchasing decisions. Giffari (2020) defines a brand ambassador as a well-known individual chosen by a company to encourage customers to use and consume its products. Scarlett Whitening, a cosmetic brand gaining popularity in Indonesia, utilizes a brand ambassador strategy for promotion. Founded in 2017 by celebrity Felicya Angelista,

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the brand employs endorsements from both national and international celebrities, as well as social media influencers (selebgram).

Recently, the internationally acclaimed K-pop group EXO was enlisted as a brand ambassador for Scarlett Whitening to influence consumer purchasing decisions. EXO, a South Korean boyband under SM Entertainment, debuted in 2011 and comprises Suho, Lay, Chen, Xiumin, Baekhyun, Chanyeol, D.O., Kai, Sehun, and Lay. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), The marketing strategy known as electronic word of mouth, or e-WOM, utilizes the internet to create a word-of-mouth effect, supporting marketing efforts and goals. One form of WOM communication is sharing experiences and reviewing products. The primary The The aim of this study is to ascertain which strategy has the most significant influence on customer purchasing decisions regarding Scarlett Whitening skincare products.

Previous studies on e-WOM and brand ambassadors for Scarlett Whitening skincare products have yielded diverse results. According to Safika & Raflah (2021), brand ambassadors significantly and favorably influence consumers' purchase decisions. Regarding the other hand, Anggreni & Hambalah (2022) reported a coefficient of determination value of 54.4%, indicating that 45.6% is influenced by other variables. However, Rohman & Pramesti (2022) found that e-WOM has a negative impact on purchasing decisions. Hera & Fourqoniah's (2023) According to a study, brand ambassadors have a negligible and unfavorable effect on consumers' decisions to buy. This research aims to provide insights for sellers of Scarlett Whitening skincare products, helping them better understand the significant impact of using brand ambassadors and electronic word-of-mouth influences consumer choice in products. The research will uncover consumer perceptions, addressing both challenges and satisfaction related to the products offered through these techniques for marketing.

METHOD

The research focuses on users of Scarlett Whitening, utilizing a descriptive quantitative method. The population comprises all Scarlett Whitening users in Bengkulu City. Due to the large and unknown population size, the researcher employs purposive sampling, where respondents are intentionally selected depending on the investigator's considerations. The investigator ascertains the size of the sample for Scarlett Whitening users using the Cochran formula below:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

n_0 = Unknown population

p = Percentage of the populace

q = 1-p

e = Error margin

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The study's underlying hypothesis is that p = 0.5, with a margin of error of 10% (0.1) and a 95% confidence level. The normal distribution table shows that a Z-value of 1.96 corresponds to a 95% degree of confidence.

$$n_0 = (1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5) / (0,1)^2$$

$$= 96,04$$

Rounded up, the total sample size for this study is 96 respondents. According to Sugiyono (2020), Using a questionnaire, the researcher gathers data by giving respondents a list of inquiries or text statements to be responded to, using Likert scale measurements. To provide a clearer understanding of the method used to measure respondents' perceptions, Table 1. presents the detailed process for calculating the Likert scale.

Table 1. Illustrates how to calculate the Likert scale.

Keterangan	Bobot
Disagree Strongly (DS)	1
Dispute (D)	2
Indifferent (I)	3
Accept (A)	4
Very Strongly Agree (VSA)	5

Based on Table 1. employs statistical tools to test the established hypotheses. The instruments used in this investigation for data analysis include coefficient of determination, validity, reliability, normality, and multiple linear regression.

The researcher gathered information through a questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section 1 included demographic questions about the respondents, namely gender and age. Section 2 of the questionnaire for this research comprised 13 statements, consisting of 4 items for the Brand Ambassador variable (X1), 5 items for the Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) variable (X2), and 4 items for the Purchase Decision variable (Y). These statements were completed by 96 respondents who use Scarlett Whitening in Bengkulu City.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Test of Validity

The product-moment Pearson correlation test is employed to examine validity; it aligns each statement item to determine its validity. A statement item is deemed valid if The significance level (sig) is smaller than the critical r-value, and the computed r is greater than the critical value (using a significance level of 5% = 0.05). The results of the validity test, which assess the accuracy and appropriateness of the research instruments, are summarized in Table 2.

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Table 2. Shows the outcomes of the test for validity.

Changeable	Object	R. Hung	R Table	Information
Brand Ambassador (X1)	1	0.859	0,200	Indeed
	2	0.858	0,200	Indeed
	3	0.817	0,200	Indeed
	4	0.871	0,200	Indeed
Electronic word of mouth (Ewom) (X2)	1	0.645	0,200	Indeed
	2	0.773	0,200	Indeed
	3	0.796	0,200	Indeed
	4	0.772	0,200	Indeed
	5	0.772	0,200	Indeed
Purchase Decision (Y)	1	0.800	0,200	Indeed
	2	0.757	0,200	Indeed
	3	0.847	0,200	Indeed
	4	0.904	0,200	Indeed

[Source]: Obtained from SPSS 16.0

The Table 2. indicates that all statement Items are considered valid when the degree of significance (sig) is smaller than critical worth and the calculated r-value is higher than the crucial r-value.

Test of Reliability

The dependability (reliability) of this research is evaluated by a reliability test, wherein Cronbach's Alpha above 0.60 is used for assessment. Table 3 presents the results of the dependability test, which evaluate the reliability and consistency of the research instruments.

Table 3. displays the outcomes of the test for dependability.

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	R tabel	Details
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0.871	0.60	dependable
Electronic word of mouth (Ewom) (X2)	0.782	0.60	dependable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.848	0.60	dependable

Source: Analyzed using SPSS 16.0.

As each Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.60 statement item for every variable is considered reliable, as indicated in Table 2.

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Test of Normalcy

Finding out if the residual or disturbance variables in the regression model have a normal distribution is the purpose of the test for normalcy. Table 4 shows the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for one sample, which was conducted to assess the normality of the data distribution.

Table 4. Test of Normative Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for One Sample

		Non-standard Remaining
N		96
Typical Settings	Mean	.0000000
	Standard Deviation 1.83108850	
The Most Severe Disparities	Complete	.100
	Good	.056
	Adverse	-.100
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.976
2-tailed Asymptotic Sig.		.296

It is a Normal test distribution.

The SPSS final product Table 5. shows that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) The significance value is higher than 0.05 at 0.296. Based on Table 3's Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test result, it is possible to determine that the data has a normal distribution and is prepared for additional analysis.

Test of Multiple Linear Regression

Finding out how independent factors affect the dependent variable requires analyzing the multiple linear regression equation concerning the changes caused by an increase or decrease in independent variables. Table 5 presents the multiple linear regression model used to analyze the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable in the study.

Table 5. Model of Multiple Linear Regression

Coefficients						
		Unnormalized Coefficients		Standardized Ratios of		
Model		B	Normal Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1.	(Continuous)	5.839	1.242		4.701	.000
	Brand Ambassador	.173	.092	.211	1.877	.064
	EWOM	.406	.088	.520	4.625	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

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As a result of the previous calculations, the The following is the regression equation:

$$Y = 5.839 + 0.173\ X1 + 0.406\ X2$$

Each number able to clarified as follows:

1. The fixed amount of 5.839 shows that the factors digital referrals (Ewom) (X2) and Brand Ambassador (X1) on Consumer Purchase Decision (Y) will remain at 5.839 when both are equal to zero. This result is valid throughout the research process.
2. Assuming the Digital Word of Mouth (Ewom) variable, the regression coefficient of the Brand Ambassador variable (X1), at 0.173, shows that a one-unit increase in Brand Ambassador (X1) will result in a 0.173 rise in Consumer Purchase Decision (Y) for Scarlett Whitening in Bengkulu City.
3. The Electronic Word of Mouth Regression Coefficient (Ewom) variable (X2), at 0.406, indicates that assuming the Brand Ambassador variable, Consumer Purchase Decision (Y) for Scarlett Whitening in Bengkulu City will increase by 0.406 if Electronic Word of Mouth (Ewom) is increased by one unit.

Partial Hypothesis Testing (T-Test)

The hypothesis test, sometimes referred to as the t-test, indicates how much one independent variable influences the dependent variable. Table 6 shows the findings from the T-test, which was conducted to determine the significance of the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 6. Displays the findings from The T-test.

Coefficients[a]						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.839	1.242		4.701	.000
	Brand Ambassador	.173	.092	.211	1.877	.064
	EWOM	.406	.088	.520	4.625	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

The comparison between the t-value and t = a/2 (n-k-1) = 96-2-1 = 93 (1.98580) for each variable was found through calculations use the SPSS application. Based on the table, the partial hypothesis test findings are as follows above:

1. According to the output above, the Brand Ambassador variable (X1) does not significantly and favorably impact the Bengkulu City consumer's choice to purchase Scarlett Whitening (Y). The t-value < t table (1.877 < 1.98580) and the significance value (sig) of 0.06, which is higher less than 0.05, both support this.
2. The Digital Referrals (Ewom) (X2) shows that there's a favorable and substantial impact on the Consumer Acquire Decision (Y) for Scarlett Whitening in Bengkulu City, with a t-value bigger than the t-table (4.625 > 1.98580) and sig = 0.00, greater than 0.05.

Testing Simultaneous Hypotheses (F-Test)

One way to assess the concurrent influence of independent and dependent variables is to use the F-test. Table 7 presents the outcomes of the F-score analysis, which was performed to evaluate the overall significance of the regression model.

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Table 7. Shows outcomes of the F-score.

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Total Squares	Df	Square Mean	F	Sig.
1.	Regression Total Residual	292.809	2	146.405	42.746	.000[a]
	Regression Total Residual	318.524	93	3.425		
	Regression Total Residual	611.333	95			
a. Predictors: (Constant), EWOM, Brand Ambassador						
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

According to table 6, we found that the variables Brand Ambassador (X1) as well as electronic word-of-mouth (X2) jointly influence the consumer decisions (Y) to purchase Scarlet Whitening in Kota Bengkulu. The F-Value is 42.746, which means the F-Table value is 2.70, and 42.746 is greater than 2.70.

Coefficient of Determination

The research process seeks to ascertain the degree to which separate factors impact the variable that is dependant. Table 8 displays the results of the coefficient of determination analysis, which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables.

Table 8. Displays the coefficient of determination results.

Model Synopsis[b]				
Model	R	Square R	R Squared Adjusted	Std. Error of the Approximation
1.	.692[a]	.479	.468	1.85067
a. Forecasters: (Invariant), EWOM, Brand Ambassador				
b. The Reliant One: Purchase Decision				

The coefficient of determination value R Square (R2) indicates that the variables Brand Ambassador (X1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (Ewom) (X2) contribute 0.692, or 69.2%, to the Consumer Purchase Decision (Y) of Scarlet Whitening in Bengkulu City. Indicating The R Square is the coefficient of determination value.

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions, particularly in the context of Scarlett Whitening in Bengkulu City. The regression analysis, supported by the F-test, shows that the Brand Ambassador (X1) and e-WOM (X2) variables collectively explain 69.2% of the variation in consumer purchase decisions, as indicated by the R Square value. This highlights the substantial role these factors play in shaping purchasing behavior. The remaining 30.8% of the variance, however, suggests the existence of other influences, such as product quality, pricing strategies,

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promotions, or broader market dynamics, which warrant further investigation to create a more holistic understanding of consumer behavior.

A closer examination of the individual variables provides valuable guidance for marketing strategies. The e-WOM variable (X2) emerges as a dominant factor, with a significant regression coefficient (0.406) and a t-value (4.625) exceeding the critical threshold. This demonstrates that positive digital interactions, such as online reviews, recommendations, and social media discussions, are critical drivers of consumer confidence and purchase decisions. Conversely, the Brand Ambassador variable (X1) shows no significant effect, as its t-value (1.877) falls below the critical value, and its significance level exceeds 0.05. This finding implies that while traditional endorsements may enhance brand visibility, they may not translate directly into purchase intent in this context.

These findings have important implications for businesses in the beauty industry. As consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms to inform their purchasing decisions, companies should focus on optimizing their e-WOM strategies. This can include fostering positive online reviews through quality products and excellent customer service, engaging with customers on social media, and leveraging user-generated content to build trust. Furthermore, companies may consider reallocating resources from traditional ambassador-driven campaigns to innovative digital referral programs and influencer partnerships that resonate with the target audience. By aligning marketing efforts with consumer behavior trends, businesses can enhance their competitive advantage and drive better results in an increasingly digital marketplace.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and brand ambassadors (X1) both influence consumer choices (Y) about Scarlet Whitening in Bengkulu City at the same time. Purchasing decisions (Y) are negatively and statistically insignificantly impacted by Brand Ambassador (X1), rejecting H1. With a coefficient of determination of 69.2%, the study's conclusions show how independent variables affect the dependent variable. It is concluded that Bengkulu City consumers' decisions to buy Scarlet Whitening skincare products can be improved via electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Nevertheless, there hasn't been any discernible improvement in Bengkulu City consumers' decisions to buy Scarlet Whitening skincare products as a result of Brand Ambassador (X1).

The research's conclusions can serve as a guide in the domains of management and marketing, offering firms insightful information as they select tactics to increase the sales of their merchandise to customers. It also acts as a knowledge booster for business owners who want to learn more about efficient marketing strategies. We strongly encourage other scholars to carry out comparable study, especially in other areas.

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