The influence of E-commerce and Brand Ambassadors on purchasing decisions is mediated by brand image

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to analyze and prove whether electronic word of mouth and brand ambassadors affect purchase decisions on MS Glow for Men goods in the Malang City region, with brand image serving as a variable mediator. This research employs a quantitative method based on primary data. 160 people provided data via a questionnaire. After the data has been obtained, it will be analyzed by utilizing structural techniques equation modeling - partial least squares. This study is designed to offer an overview of the impact of electronic word-of-mouth and brand ambassadors on purchase decisions through brand image.

Keywords: E-Commerce, Brand Ambassadors, Brand Image, Purchasing Decision

1 Introduction

The arrival and expansion of the internet has expanded consumers' range of options for gathering product information by incorporating other consumers' comments posted on the internet, as well as providing consumers with the opportunity to offer them suggestions for consumption themselves through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) [1]. The internet has made it possible for information to be controlled by more than one news organization or corporation. E-WOM allows anyone to share their opinions with millions of internet users and influence other people's decisions [2] The value of complex information items is difficult to quantify since they can only be appreciated after they have been used or understood. In other words, many information and cultural commodities are experiencing goods that customers must sample before determining their quality and placement in relation to the ideal product [3]. In recent years, there has been a detailed examination of the influence of e-WOM on online sales. In recent years, there have been numerous unsolved questions. According to research, customers are driven to read and create e-WOM for decision-making and social advantages, which no longer impact purchase decisions [4]

Research conducted by [5] states that One of the things caused by purchasing decisions is the buyer's assessment which is carried out online through its e-commerce platform. Purchasing

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Decision is one of the factors influenced by electronic word of mouth, brand ambassador, and brand image. Factors influencing buying interest one of which is electronic word of mouth. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has emerged as one of the most powerful marketing tools. [4] Previous studies have shown that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is more successful than personal selling, traditional marketing, and media advertising [6]. Now more consumers are using it (eWOM) to make purchasing choices. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is used as a description of informal information carried out by consumers to other consumers about the purchase or use of products and services. Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is information about a product or service provided by customers via social networks [7]

This shows the reviews made by consumers previously influenced someone's interest in buying the product. According to Goldsmith and Horowitz, internet use has revolutionized the way people interact, communicate, and exchange ideas or evaluations about items or services they have ever consumed [8]. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) refers to the process of communicating with customers over the Internet. Thurau defines electronic word of mouth as a good or negative impression expressed by past consumers about general items through online media [9]. One form of electronic word of mouth is comments and reviews from users another on a social networking site [10]. This is supported by some previous researchers, such as research conducted by [11] and [12] The better reviews about products in online media, the more and more consumers will be interested in buying products.

A new marketing phenomenon, taking advantage of developments in digital media or social media with the emergence of social media. The company assumes, that implementing internet marketing as a strategy in marketing will provide convenience and add value to the products offered for interest by consumers. Badir & Andjarwati also said that social media is also an encouragement for potential buyers to make a purchase driven based on reviews, comments, and product advantages owned by the company [13]. Brand image has an important role in brand development because concerns the reputation and credibility of the company's products[14]. Consumers create images and brand guidelines for trying and consuming products [15].

Brand image is a form of association that occurs in customers' brains when they recall a certain brand [16]. The association simply takes the shape of certain ideas or pictures that are connected with a brand [17]. A product with a positive brand image will pique the curiosity of potential buyers [18]. Consumers like well-known brand items because they are dependable, conveniently accessible, and of unquestionable quality. So brand image is an element The most important thing is that it can help the marketing process within the company. This study, also done by [19] and [20], found that electronic word of mouth had a considerable impact on brand image and purchase intention. Aside from electronic word of mouth and brand image, brand ambassadors also influence purchasing decisions.

Brand ambassadors play an important role in helping marketing activities run smoothly locally because they can be used to support a product brand that is in the consumer buying interest [21]. A brand ambassador is someone who has a passion for the brand and influences or invites consumers to buy or use a product [22]. Brand ambassadors make it easier for consumers to receive information. Research is using the MSGLOW FOR MEN product as one of the products much in demand among young people, especially those who are already familiar with the product, This product is also known to be widely used by several ambassadors such as Arief Muhammad, Raffi Ahmad, and Gading Marten. What is MSGLOW FOR MEN several of its

ambassadors have significant influence on purchasing decisions that consumers will make regarding products.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Electronic word of mouth is the communication and exchange of information between old consumers and new consumers, using technological developments such as online discussion forums, electronic bulletin boards, newsgroups, blogs, review sites, and networking sites. social media that facilitates the exchange of information between communicators [19]. The communication conveyed is a positive or negative message. Positive messages are triggered by consumer satisfaction, while negative messages are triggered by consumer dissatisfaction [23]. The WOM channel can be done online and offline (face-to-face). Offline WOM is the process of sharing information about products or services between two or more parties who are interested in each other and is carried out voluntarily, while online WOM two-way communication has a very wide reach for sharing opinions and experiences with other people [23]. This research uses online WOM, in other words, electronic word of mouth, this is because electronic word of mouth has a wide reach. Based on the experts above, researchers can conclude that electronic word of mouth is the exchange of consumer information through technology on social media and can increase awareness and motivation in buying a product which is triggered by positive and negative messages. Because EWOM has a wide reach.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) Indicators According to Thurau [9] platform help is one of numerous indications of electronic word of mouth. Electronic word-of-mouth behavior is operationalized using two methods: the frequency of customer visits to the opinion platform and the number of comments published by consumers on opinion platforms, as well as concern for other consumers. Concern for other consumers in this scenario equates to concern for other people. For example, stopping others from purchasing inferior items or services. Extraversion/positive self-enhancement. This reason involves an emphasis on the communicator's psychological advantages via electronic word of mouth, which incorporates the basic motive category of expressing happy thoughts and self-improvement. This leads to a great experience for the consumers. Based on the indications listed above, the researcher selected study indicators such as platform help, care for consumers, and extraversion/positive self-enhancement.

2.2 Brand Ambassadors

One of the marketing strategies used by companies to gain the hearts and trust of consumers in the products offered is that companies use public figures as brand ambassadors [24]. According to Lea-Greenwood [25] a brand ambassador is a tool used by companies to communicate and connect with the public about increasing consumer sales. According to Yung *et.al.* [26] Brand Ambassadors are advertising supporters also known as advertising stars in supporting advertising, while the selection process is based on interests which have several considerations. Based on the experts above, it can be concluded that a Brand Ambassador is a public figure who

supports a product and is used by companies as a communication tool that connects with consumers and can increase sales.

According to Ambroise [27], the use of celebrities, athletes, or public figures as brand ambassadors needs to be classified into four based on their role: Product or service testimonials [28]. Celebrities or public figures start as users, they are assessed as users, and their opinions are conveyed in the form of reviews [29]. Endorsement: use of the celebrity's name for advertising, the celebrity concerned is responsible for the promotion or service, Actor. Celebrities are only asked to play a role in using a product or service [30].

2.3 Brand Image

Brand image has an important role in brand development because it concerns the reputation and credibility of the company's products [31]. Consumers use brand image as a guide in trying and consuming products [32]. According to Lee *at. al.* [33], brand image describes the extrinsic properties of products or services, including the way the brand tries to meet customers' psychological or social needs. Usually, consumers tend to buy well-known brand products compared to unknown brand products. Consumers assume that well-known brands are reliable, always available, easy to find, and have undoubted quality. From the description above, it can be concluded by the author that brand image has a very important role regarding reputation, as well as having a description of the intrinsic nature of products and services to fulfill consumer desires.

2.4 Purchasing Decision

Purchasing behavior is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic [34] [35]to the consumer. Traditionally, marketing theory has posited that consumer purchasing decisions are the result of a comprehensive interplay of cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors [36]. More recently, researchers have delved deeper into the nuances of this decision-making process, exploring the relative influence of specific determinants [37]

One critical distinction that has emerged in the literature is the difference between hedonic and utilitarian motivations for purchasing [38], [39]. Hedonic motivations are associated with the pleasure, excitement, and entertainment derived from the shopping experience [38], [39], while utilitarian motivations are centered on the functional, practical aspects of the purchase [40], [41]. This dichotomy has been shown to impact both impulse buying behavior, driven by emotional and experiential factors, as well as more rational, deliberative purchasing decisions[42]

People have to make a decision when faced with two or more existing alternatives [43]. If a person is faced with two choices, namely buying or not buying, and then he chooses to buy, then he has made a decision. According to Katrodia [44] the purchasing decision is the stage where the consumer decides to make a decision. Purchasing decisions are made by individuals who are directly related to obtaining the goods purchased [45]. Purchasing decisions are an attitude to purchase and use a product or service that is able to fulfill desires or needs [46]). Interpretation

of consumer cognitive and personal factors is very useful and has a strong influence on attitudes towards purchasing a product [47].

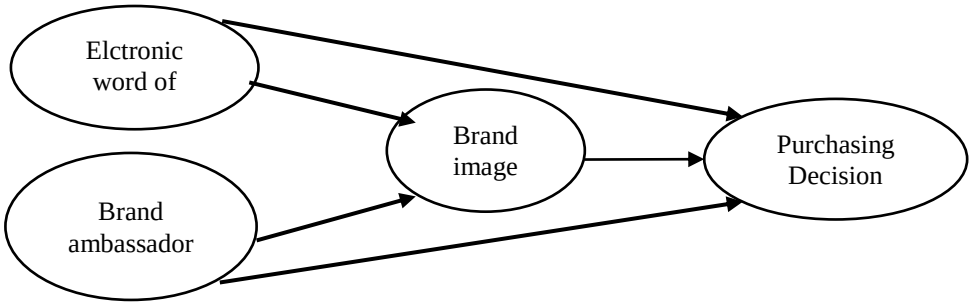

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

3 Method

This research uses a quantitative approach, which is a research method based on the philosophy of positivism, which aims to examine certain populations and samples. Research subjects used in this research were consumers of MS Glow for Men products, The total research sample was 160 consumers who live in the city Poor. The questionnaire will be constructed using a Likert scale of 1-5 (very disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and disagree), with sample selection randomly according to predetermined criteria. Data analysis process. This research was carried out using the structural equation modeling method – partial least squares (SEM-PLS). SEM-PLS was chosen on the basis of flexibility as well as more reliability of results than traditional SEM approaches. SEM-PLS too allows it to be run on data conditions that are not normally distributed and can still analyze relatively small amounts of data. The model constructed in this research consists of 4 latent variables, where all variables are measured reflectively, with measurement items measured in the first order. EWOM is measured with 13 items, brand ambassador 5 items, brand image 8 items, and purchasing decision 5 items.

This analysis process will go through two model evaluations, the first is the evaluation measurement model (outer model) by considering outer parameters loadings, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach alpha (CA), average variance extracted (AVE), and heterotrait - monotrait ratio (HTMT). In stages Next is the evaluation of the structural model (inner model) the researcher uses inner parameters VIF, path coefficient, and f-square. Meanwhile, to ensure that the model built is suitable, researchers use model fit parameters (goodness of fit) including r-square, q-square, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and PLS prediction. In this study, researchers used the bootstrapping method to be able to answer several hypotheses put forward. Bootstrapping is a statistical technique that is used to evaluate the reliability of analysis results as well as to obtain confidence interval estimation. Later this technique will be carried out with tools SmartPLS 3 can assist researchers in evaluating levels confidence of the model

that has been built and testing the statistical significance of structural efficiency in order to answer the hypothesis that has been made previously. Referring to the views of [48] regarding the process of using this method, researchers will replicate existing datasets randomly (bootstrapping) 10,000 times. Based on the structural model built in this research, it can be The hypothesis in this research is formulated as follows:

a) H_1: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

b) H_2: Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

c) H_3: Electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on brand image.

d) H_4: Brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on brand image.

e) H_5: Brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

f) H_6: Brand image mediates the relationship between electronic word of mouth on purchasing decisions.

g) H_7: Brand image mediates the relationship between brand ambassadors towards purchase decisions.

4 Result and Discussions

Through this inferential analysis, researchers aim to test hypotheses proposed, confirms cause and effect relationships, and provides interpretations comprehensive approach to research results. Before researchers can achieve results appropriate research, there are two stages of model evaluation that will be carried out, includes: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). This evaluation is carried out as a form of confirmation procedure that the proposed model is accurate in providing an overview in the form of predictions in a social phenomenon, so that the research results are found to be good and accountable. Below are the model specifics SEM-PLS proposed in this research:

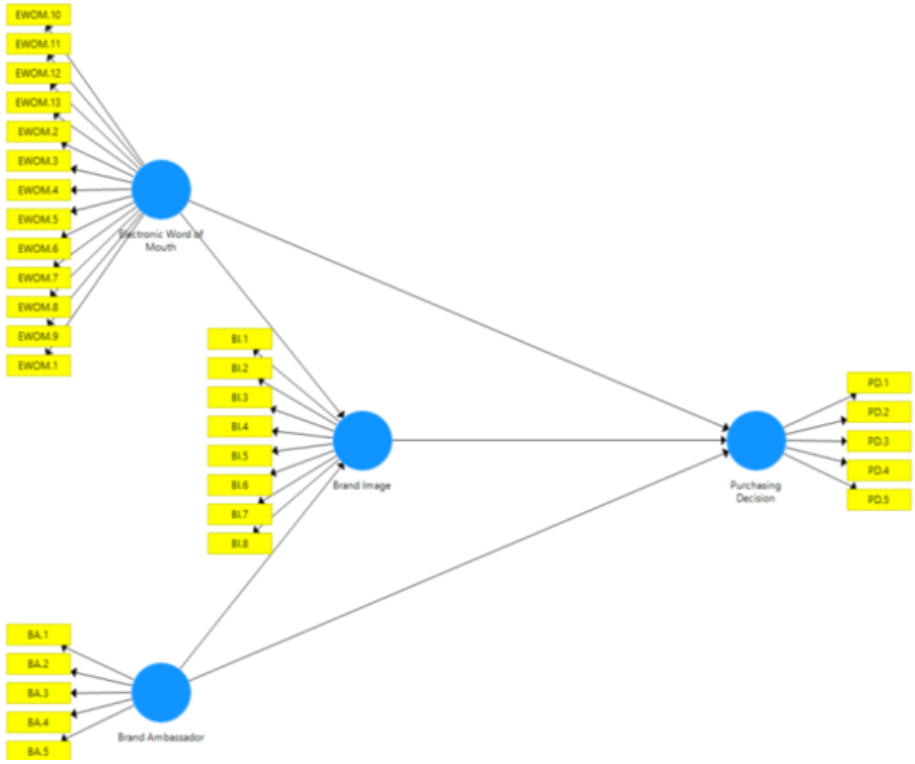

Fig. 2. SEM-PLS Model

To ensure the quality and reliability of the research, evaluating the model measurement (outer model) is an important step in SEM-PLS analysis. Apart from that, this evaluation is useful to help researchers identify indicators that are irrelevant or less informative in research. With outer a good model, researchers can be more confident in the research results and later get more meaningful interpretation results from the relationships between variables. The following are the results of the evaluation of the measurement model that researchers have carried out.

Table 1. CA, CR, and AVE

Item	Item Reliability	Convergent Validity		
	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH				
EWOM.1	0.773	0.950	0.956	0.627
EWOM.2	0.749			
EWOM.3	0.813			
EWOM.4	0.825			

Item	Item Reliability	Convergent Validity		
	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
EWOM.5	0.710			
EWOM.6	0.763			
EWOM.7	0.811			
EWOM.8	0.818			
EWOM.9	0.750			
EWOM.10	0.808			
EWOM.11	0.833			
EWOM.12	0.797			
EWOM.13	0.833			
BRAND AMABASSADOR				
BA.1	0.786			
BA.2	0.784			
BA.3	0.788	0.851	0.893	0.625
BA.4	0.790			
BA.5	0.806			
BRAND IMAGE				
BI.1	0.791			
BI.3	0.815			
BI.3	0.703			
BI.4	0.789	0.912	0.928	0.618
BI.5	0.804			
BI.6	0.799			
BI.7	0.770			
BI.8	0.814			
PURCHASING DECISION				
PD.1	0.836			
PD.2	0.833			
PD.3	0.806	0.869	0.905	0.656
PD.4	0.794			
PD.5	0.780			

The measurement model in this research is that all constructs are built using a reflective measurement model for each variable. The first parameter that researchers used in the evaluation process of this measurement model was the magnitude of the outer loadings value. It can be seen that from the evaluation that has been carried out on 13 indicators on the electronic word of mouth variable, 5 indicators on the brand ambassador variable, 8 indicators on brand image, and 5 indicators on the purchasing decision variable, all indicators have a strong correlation and positive value to each latent variable. In this case, the researcher uses criteria where the outer loading value for each item must be greater than 0.70.

Meanwhile, the next parameter aspect refers to how well different indicators produce consistent results to measure a latent variable. Researchers used three parameters including Cronbach alpha (CA) value, composite reliability (CR) value and average variance extracted (AVE) value. Based on the results of the evaluation that the researcher has carried out on the proposed measurement model, the researcher can state that each measure used in this research will truly capture the concept that will be observed. This is proven by the CR value exceeding 0.70, CA value exceeding 0.70, and AVE value exceeding 0.05.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Brand Ambassador	Brand Image	EWOM	Purchasing Decision
Brand Ambassador	-	-	-	-
Brand Image	0.853	-	-	-
EWOM	0.786	0.769	-	-
Purchasing Decision	0.502	0.623	0.703	-

Next, in the final measurement evaluation process, where the researcher tries to prove that the measurement models built are truly different from each other (convergent validity), the researcher uses the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) parameter. Where in this evaluation process the measurement model must have an HTMT value below 0.90, so that it can be ensured that the model built is truly different. Based on the recapitulation of the HTMT test results, it can be explained that the proposed measurement models are believed to be different from one another. Below, the researcher includes a diagrammatic visualization of the evaluation results of the measurement model in this research:

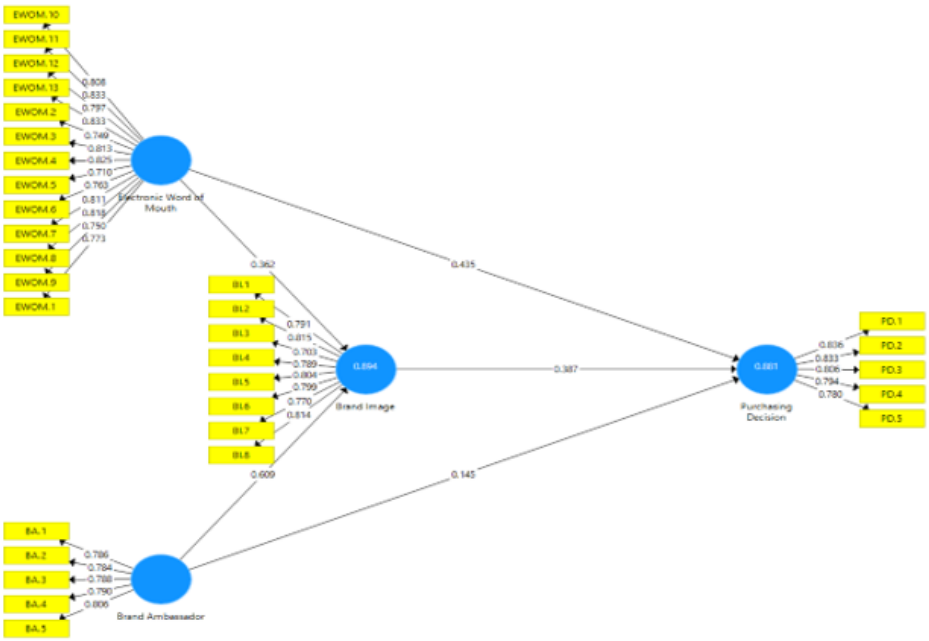

Fig. 3. Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model evaluation is an analytical process related to testing hypotheses of influence between research variables. According to [48] the structural model evaluation process includes several processes, namely: checking for symptoms of multicollinearity, this process can be done by comparing the Inner VIF values, where the model does not show symptoms of multicollinearity if (Inner VIF < 5). Next, test the significance of the path coefficient, where in a model the relationship between the two variables is said to be significant if it has a probability value of less than 0.05 (p-value < 0.05). In this stage, researchers will also evaluate the direct influence in the structural model built using the F-Square (F2) measurement with criteria of 0.02 (low), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (high) [48]. Meanwhile, to evaluate the mediation effect or indirect influence in this research, researchers used the upsilon-v statistical measure which was obtained by squaring the mediation coefficient value. Explained further by [49] if the upsilon-v value is 0.02, it means low mediation, 0.075 medium mediation, and 0.175 high mediation.

The overall evaluation stage of the model in this research was carried out by looking at the R-square (R2) value formed. According [50], the r-square values are 0.19 (low), 0.33 (medium), and 0.66 (high). Meanwhile, for the appropriate Q-Square quantity according to [48] is more than 0 (q-square > 0). Further explanation of the appropriate SRMR criteria is less than 0.08 (SRMR < 0.08), whereas in another view the SRMR value is said to be appropriate if it is in the range of 0.08 – 0.10. Then finally, in this research, the feasibility of the structural model built is based on the PLS prediction criteria, where the model is said to be feasible if the RMSE and MAE values in the PLS model are lower than the values in the LM model [48].

Table 3. Inner VIF, P Value, Path Coefficient, and Upsilon V

Model	Inner VIF	P Value	Path	F^2/ Upsilon v
Pengaruh Langsung				
Electronic Word of Mouth → Purchasing Decision	3.012	0.000	0.435	0.364
Brand Ambassador → Purchasing Decision	3.283	0.028	0.146	0.021
Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Image	3.771	0.000	0.362	0.360
Brand Ambassador → Brand Image	3.771	0.000	0.609	0.436
Brand Image → Purchasing Decision	4.465	0.000	0.378	0.133
Pengaruh Tidak Langsung				
Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Image → Purchasing Decision	-	0.001	0.140	0.018
Brand Ambassador → Brand Image → Purchasing Decision	-	0.001	0.236	0.052

The first step that researchers take before carrying out this structural evaluation process is to check whether there are symptoms of multicollinearity between variables. The variables in the research do not show multicollinear symptoms if the inner VIF value is smaller than 5. Based on the results of the tests that have been carried out, it can be explained that each variable built in this research model does not show multicollinear symptoms. So that the next structural evaluation process can be carried out.

Based on the results of the evaluation that has been carried out, it can be explained that EWOM, brand ambassador, and brand image have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This result can be confirmed by the probability value of the three tests having a value of less than 0.05. Apart from that, this linear relationship can be explained by the positive value of the path coefficient. Meanwhile, the magnitude of the influence of these three variables at the structural level is as follows: EWOM is able to provide an impact of 0.364 or equivalent to 36.4%, brand ambassador is able to provide an impact amount of 0.021 or equivalent to 2.1%, while brand image is able to provide an impact amount of 0.133 or equivalent to 13.3%. In the same process, researchers also obtained results that EWOM and brand ambassadors have a positive and significant influence on brand image. Where at the structural level EWOM is able to provide an influence amount of 0.360 or the equivalent of 36% and brand ambassadors provide an influence amount of 0.436 or the equivalent of 43.6%.

In the indirect influence model, researchers obtained results that job satisfaction was able to significantly mediate the relationship between EWOM and brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions. This result can be proven by obtaining a probability value from the structural evaluation results which shows a value of less than 0.05. With these results, it can be interpreted that the presence of high EWOM or brand ambassadors can lead to an increase in the brand image that consumers feel, so that in the end it can provide an increase in their purchasing decisions in purchasing a product. Meanwhile, to be able to determine the magnitude of the mediating influence provided by the brand image in the model, researchers used the upsilon-v statistical calculation method with the following formula: Upsilon v=β^2 MX×β^2 YMX. Based on the results of these calculations, an upsilon v value of 0.018 was obtained for the EWOM model on purchasing decisions and 0.052 for the brand ambassador model on purchasing decisions. So it can be interpreted at the structural level that the brand image variable has a low mediating influence in the relationship between the two models.

Meanwhile, to be able to evaluate the suitability or feasibility of the researcher's model using four parameters, including R-square, Q-square, SRMR, and PLS Predict, here is a summary of the test results:

Table 4. R-square, Q-square, and SRMR

R-Square	Brand Image	0.894
	Purchasing Decision	0.881
Q-Square	Brand Image	0.546
	Purchasing Decision	0.569
	SRMR	0.085

PLS PREDICT				
Item	PLS		LM	
	RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE
BI.1	0.480	0.315	0.503	0.413
BI.2	0.465	0.314	0.495	0.414
BI.3	0.628	0.432	0.652	0.527
BI.4	0.555	0.385	0.553	0.453
BI.5	0.468	0.313	0.476	0.386
BI.6	0.467	0.314	0.480	0.400
BI.7	0.465	0.331	0.479	0.398

BI.8	0.455	0.359	0.480	0.403
PD.1	0.510	0.418	0.511	0.430
PD.2	0.527	0.471	0.572	0.491
PD.3	0.562	0.424	0.580	0461
PD.4	0.419	0.413	0.511	0.426
PD.5	0.548	0.480	0.611	0.499

Based on the results of the tests that the researchers have carried out, the researchers obtained the results that in terms of predictive power, the brand image construct in this structural model has predictive power in the high category. This can be confirmed from the test results obtained by an R-square value of 0.894 or equivalent to 84.9%. Meanwhile, the purchasing decision construct has predictive power in the high category. This statement can be proven by obtaining an R-Square value for the construct of 0.881 or the equivalent of 88.1%. If the suitability of the model in this research is based on the Q-square parameter, it can be concluded that the two constructs (brand image and purchasing decision) in the model built have shown relevant predictive value, or it can be interpreted that this model is robust and generalizable. It can be further explained from the recapitulation results above that the model in this study shows an SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) value of 0.085, which means that the model built has a good fit. The suitability of this research model is also confirmed from the PLS prediction results, where the RMSE and MAE values of the PLS model have lower values when compared to the LM model. So it can be ensured that the structural model built in this research is quality, valid and credible for use in explaining research results. The following is a visualization of the SEM-PLS algorithm model specifications.

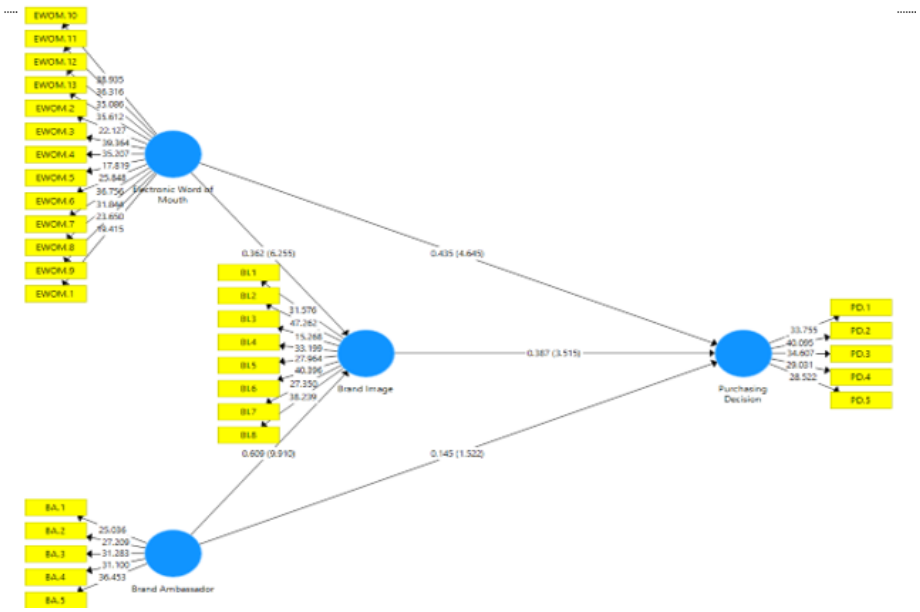

Fig. 2. SEM-PLS Algorithm

5 Discussions

Based on research results, Electronic Word of Mouth influences Brand Image. This shows that respondents felt it was helpful to get information regarding product choices, product quality and recommendations for MS Glow For Men products via Instagram. Instagram has become an effective tool for producers to interact with consumers via electronic media. This allows the exchange of information to be carried out quickly and increases consumers' ability to choose Wardah products and even purchase MS Glow For Men products. This is in line with research by [51] and Jalilvand [19] that there is a positive influence between E-Wom relationships on brand image. E-WoM provides information to customers regarding the brand of MS Glow For Men products they will purchase.

This research proves that based on the results of hypothesis testing that has been carried out, it shows that there is no influence between Brand Ambassador on purchase decisions. These unproven test results could be influenced by several things, this could be because consumers don't pay much attention to the brand ambassadors used, who tend to pay more attention to the function of the MS Glow For Men product. The results of this research are supported by research by [52] and Ryan [53]which are stated that brand ambassadors have no influence on purchase decisions. The results of this test show several new findings whose causes are caused by various things other than the existing variables.

This research also proves that the next hypothesis which proves the relationship between E-WOM mediated by brand image influences purchasing decisions in purchasing MS-Glow For Men products. This is in line with research conducted by Stefanny [54]. This proves that E - WOM is the most effective media in marketing today. Because direct interaction makes this the basis for consumers to make purchases.

The next hypothesis also proves that when the purchase decision is mediated by the brand image, the influence of the brand ambassador is significant. This is in accordance with research conducted by Saputri *et al.* [55] which proves that the brand ambassador, mediated by the brand image, has a significant impact on purchasing decisions regarding MS Glow products. For Men. This proves that the stronger the Brand Ambassador supported by the Brand Image, the stronger it will be for consumers to make decisions to purchase a product.

6 Conclusion

Research can be carried out with different studies, especially related to product brand ambassadors who are attached to one of the well-known products. This might make changes to the hypothesis in the research that has been carried out. Further studies can also be carried out by changing the brand being studied and the research respondents. Respondents are also one of the things that can change this research, especially the generation that is familiar with social media will definitely be more familiar with this issue.

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