

(Research Article)

The Role of Brand Image in Mediating The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) on Purchase Intention (A Study on La Roche-Posay Skincare Products)

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Abstract: The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly increased the role of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) as a source of information in consumer decision-making, particularly for dermatological skincare products that possess relatively high value. La Roche-Posay, as one of the global dermatological skincare brands expanding in Indonesia, faces challenges in building a positive brand image to enhance consumers' purchase intention. This study aims to analyze the role of brand image in mediating the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention among prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay products in Denpasar City. This research employs a quantitative approach with an associative design. Data were collected through the distribution of online questionnaires to 110 female respondents residing in Denpasar City who met the criteria as prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay products. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results indicate that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention; e-WoM also has a positive and significant effect on brand image; brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention; and brand image significantly mediates the effect of e-WoM on purchase intention. These findings are consistent with consumer behavior theory, which explains that external information influences consumer decision-making processes, as well as the Theory of Planned Behavior, which positions brand image as part of attitude formation that influences behavioral intention.

Keywords: Brand Image; Consumer Behavior; e-WoM; Purchase Intention; Theory Planned Behavior.

1. Introduction

Physical appearance has increasingly become a concern, as it influences self-confidence as well as perceptions of competence, credibility, and trustworthiness. This has led to greater awareness of the importance of appropriate skincare according to skin type, including sensitive skin, which is prone to irritation. Sensitive skin is a complex condition that is generally diagnosed subjectively, characterized by susceptibility to allergies, redness, and sensitivity to external factors, with the number of affected individuals continuing to rise. This condition positions skincare products as high-involvement products, as consumers require intensive information search and evaluation, including through testimonials or reviews from other users. In the digital era, electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) via social media plays an important role in shaping consumer trust, brand image, and purchase intention, which ultimately influence purchasing decisions.

Previous studies have identified a positive effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention (Darmawan et al., 2022). Similarly, Ulan et al. (2022) found that e-WoM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) also encourages individuals to gather information about desired products and services, not only from acquaintances but also from broader groups of users who have experienced the products or services, thereby indirectly increasing consumers' purchase intention (Fariq et al., 2017).

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Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) not only creates initial awareness or interest but also strengthens or enhances brand image in the minds of consumers. This is supported by research conducted by Putri and Sukawati (2019), which states that more favorable reviews provided by consumers on social media can positively influence a product's brand image. This finding is further supported by Rusiana et al. (2023) and Supriadi et al. (2021), who found that e-WoM positively influences purchase intention. Positive reviews and a strong brand image are expected to foster and sustain consumers' purchase intention over time (Putri & Sienaar, 2023). Previous studies also indicate that brand image has a positive effect on purchase intention (Darmawan et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2024).

A strong brand image plays a crucial role in mediating the effect of e-WoM on purchase intention. When e-WoM generates positive information, a solid brand image enhances consumers' trust and confidence in a product. Thus, the stronger the brand image formed through high-quality e-WoM, the greater the likelihood that consumers will develop purchase intention. This is supported by prior studies indicating that brand image significantly mediates the effect of e-WoM on purchase intention (Ariesi & Suprapti, 2022; Surya & Utama, 2025; Ulan et al., 2022).

This phenomenon can be observed in dermatological skincare products designed for consumers with sensitive skin, whether from local or international brands. Indonesian consumers tend to place higher value on foreign products than local ones, as imported products are often perceived to have superior quality, better innovation, and more reliable global reputations (Staal & Wardaya, 2021). This perception is influenced by the belief that imported products offer higher standards in terms of ingredients, technology, and effectiveness, particularly in skincare and cosmetics. Consequently, consumers tend to prefer foreign products over local alternatives (Staal & Wardaya, 2021).

One international skincare brand specializing in sensitive skin is La Roche-Posay. Originating from France and deeply rooted in dermatology, La Roche-Posay has become a globally trusted brand for sensitive skincare for more than 40 years. Its product formulations aim to restore the skin microbiome balance, strengthen the skin barrier function, and soothe irritated skin. The brand offers a range of products tailored to specific skin concerns, including La Roche-Posay Cicaplast Baume B5+ Soothing Balm, which is specifically designed for irritated and sensitive skin (Miracle, 2022). These products incorporate innovations such as tribioma prebiotic complexes to balance the microbiome, madecassoside to maintain the skin barrier, panthenol for soothing effects, and antibacterial ingredients. La Roche-Posay officially entering the Indonesian market in 2021, it is essential to understand the factors that drive consumer purchase intention. In this process, consumers obtain information and form perceptions of the brand through various testimonials available on social media, official websites, and e-commerce platforms.

Reviews shared on e-commerce platforms specifically reflect real consumer experiences and provide insights into market perceptions of a brand. A study by Rachmiani et al. (2024) found that reading online reviews has become a common habit before making purchases on e-commerce platforms. Approximately 85% of respondents regularly read reviews, and 60% reported that reviews significantly influence their purchasing decisions. Reviews generally provide an objective overview of product quality, with 45% of respondents preferring products with a higher number of reviews (Rachmiani et al., 2024).

In 2024, the e-commerce platform dominating online transactions in Indonesia with a market share of 80.71% was Shopee (Vritimes, 2025). On this platform, dermatological moisturizers designed for sensitive skin compete intensely through electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) generated from customer reviews. An article published on Alodokter on February 5, 2025, highlighted several moisturizers suitable for sensitive skin that do not trigger irritation, including products from La Roche-Posay.

Positive perceptions driven by online reviews and recommendations can increase consumer interest and accelerate purchasing decisions. Sensitive skincare products require a high level of trust; therefore, consumers tend to rely more on user testimonials than advertisements. This phenomenon indicates that purchasing decisions are influenced not only by product quality but also by online communication, particularly electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), which shapes brand image and ultimately affects purchase intention. This raises the question of the extent to which the intensity of e-WoM formed through online media influences brand image and, consequently, consumer purchase intention.

Although numerous studies have examined the effects of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), brand image, and purchase intention across various product categories, most have focused on general cosmetic products or well-established local brands in Indonesia. This study offers novelty by focusing on a foreign dermatological brand, La Roche-Posay, which is relatively new to the Indonesian market and targets consumers with sensitive skin.

La Roche-Posay skincare products are widely recognized as dermatological formulations designed to address various skin concerns, particularly sensitive skin. These products are developed using dermatological approaches with carefully formulated active ingredients to maintain skin health. In Indonesia, La Roche-Posay products are distributed through official channels such as beauty retail stores, selected pharmacies, beauty clinics, and authorized e-commerce platforms. The relatively selective distribution channels and dermatological formulations position La Roche-Posay products as higher-value skincare compared to general products.

This condition leads consumers to be more cautious in making purchasing decisions and to seek additional information before purchasing. One of the most utilized information sources is electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), which allows consumers to access experiences and evaluations from other users regarding product quality and benefits. Information obtained through e-WoM can influence consumers' perceptions of brand image and shape their purchase intention. Based on the importance of e-WoM in influencing brand image and purchase intention, as well as the limited research on this phenomenon in the context of foreign dermatological skincare products, this study is conducted as a replication study using a similar conceptual framework applied to a different research object, namely La Roche-Posay, with a focus on respondents residing in Denpasar City.

Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior, especially in the digital era where consumers actively seek information before making purchasing decisions. Positive online reviews and recommendations can reduce uncertainty and increase consumer confidence toward a product. Several previous studies have found that e-WoM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, indicating that better online information leads to higher buying interest (Candra & Suparna, 2019; Ariesi & Suprapti, 2022; Putri & Sukawati, 2019).

H1: E-WoM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention

Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) not only provides product-related information but also shapes consumer perceptions of a brand. Online reviews act as quality signals that influence how consumers evaluate and perceive brand credibility. Positive e-WoM can strengthen brand image, while negative information can weaken it. Previous studies have consistently shown that e-WoM has a positive and significant effect on brand image (Yohana et al., 2020; Yuliani & Panasea, 2025; Nashiroh et al., 2025).

H2: E-WoM has a positive and significant effect on brand image

Brand image is a key factor influencing consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions. A strong and positive brand image reflects trust, credibility, and perceived quality, which can encourage consumers to choose a product. Prior studies indicate that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention (Tariq et al., 2017; Putra & Pramudana, 2018; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

H3: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention

Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly through brand image. Information obtained from online reviews is processed by consumers and contributes to the formation of brand perceptions. A positive e-WoM enhances brand image, which in turn increases consumer confidence and purchase intention. Several studies have confirmed that brand image significantly mediates the relationship between e-WoM and purchase intention (Ariesi & Suprapti, 2022; Suyoga & Santika, 2018; Andreana & Giantari, 2023).

H4: Brand image positively and significantly mediates the effect of e-WoM on purchase intention.

2. Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative design to examine the relationships among electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), brand image, and purchase intention through hypothesis testing. The research was conducted in Denpasar, which was selected

due to its large population and high internet penetration rate, making it a relevant setting for analyzing digital-based consumer behavior. The object of the study focuses on prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay skincare products, particularly in assessing how online reviews influence brand perception and stimulate purchase intention. The research variables consist of e-WoM as the independent variable, brand image as the mediating variable, and purchase intention as the dependent variable, all measured using indicators adopted from previous studies (Sugiyono, 2022; BPS Bali Province, 2024; Alshreef et al., 2023; Putri & Sienatra, 2023; Andreana & Giantari, 2023).

The population of this study comprises prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay in Denpasar who have never made a purchase, with an unknown population size. A sample of 110 respondents was determined using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, based on criteria such as a minimum education level of senior high school, having sensitive skin, prior exposure to online product reviews, and residency in Denpasar. The data used include both quantitative and qualitative data derived from respondents (primary data) as well as literature and digital platforms (secondary data). Data collection was conducted through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms with a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was subsequently tested for validity and reliability to ensure its appropriateness and consistency (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Sugiyono, 2022; Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023).

The data analysis techniques include both descriptive and inferential analysis using Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. This analysis involves evaluating the outer model to assess indicator validity and reliability, as well as the inner model to examine causal relationships among variables and the model's predictive power through R^2 and Q^2 values. Hypothesis testing is conducted based on significance values (p -values), while mediation analysis is used to determine the role of brand image in the relationship between e-WoM and purchase intention whether it is full, partial, or non-mediating. The PLS-SEM approach is chosen due to its flexibility, ability to handle complex models, and robustness in producing valid results even with relatively small sample sizes (Ghozali & Kusumadewi, 2023; Hair et al., 2022; Sugiyono, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

Overview of La Roche-Posay

La Roche-Posay is a dermatological skincare brand originating from France and operating under the L'Oréal Group (Miracle, 2022). The brand is globally recognized for its focus on developing skincare products specifically for sensitive skin, using a dermatology-based approach supported by clinical testing (Farage, 2019). La Roche-Posay offers a wide range of skincare product lines, including cleansers, moisturizers, and sunscreens, designed to address various skin concerns. The brand officially entered the Indonesian market in 2021 and is positioned as a premium dermatological skincare brand (L'Oréal, 2021).

One of the most widely used products is La Roche-Posay Cicaplast Baume B5+ Soothing Balm, which is formulated to help soothe sensitive skin and restore the skin barrier (L'Oréal, 2021). The high level of consumer interest in this product is reflected in the number of reviews it has received on e-commerce platforms. This product has obtained the highest number of reviews compared to similar products, reaching approximately 92.5 thousand reviews (La Roche-Posay Official Shop, 2025), significantly exceeding other sensitive-skin moisturizers.

The large volume of reviews indicates a high level of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) activity surrounding the La Roche-Posay brand. These consumer reviews serve as an important source of information for prospective consumers in evaluating product quality and effectiveness, while also playing a crucial role in shaping the brand image of La Roche-Posay in consumers' minds. Therefore, La Roche-Posay is selected as the research object due to its relevance in examining the effect of e-WoM on brand image and its implications for consumer purchase intention, particularly in the context of sensitive skincare products.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Respondents.

Variable	Classification	Number (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
Education Level	Senior High School/Vocational School	41	37.27
	Diploma	22	20.00
	Bachelor's Degree	37	33.64
	Postgraduate	10	9.09
	Total	110	100
Occupation	Student	42	38.18
	Civil Servant (PNS)	21	19.09
	Private Employee	34	30.91
	Entrepreneur	13	11.82
	Others	0	0.00
	Total	110	100
Monthly Income/Allowance	< IDR 1,000,000	13	11.82
	IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 3,999,999	49	44.55
	IDR 4,000,000 – IDR 7,999,999	31	28.18
	≥ IDR 8,000,000	17	15.45
	Total	110	100
Media for Viewing Product Reviews	Instagram	24	21.82
	TikTok	31	28.18
	Website	4	3.64
	YouTube	8	7.27
	E-commerce	43	39.09
	Total	110	100

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents, with a total sample of 110 individuals, all of whom are female. The findings indicate that prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay skincare products in Denpasar are predominantly those whose highest educational attainment is senior high school/vocational high school (SMA/SMK). This suggests that female consumers at this educational level tend to exhibit a higher purchase intention toward La Roche-Posay skincare products.

The majority of prospective consumers are students with a monthly income/allowance ranging from IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 3,999,999, indicating that La Roche-Posay attracts consumers who have sufficient financial capability to purchase skincare products within the mid-to-high price range.

Based on the media used to access product reviews, most respondents reported that they more frequently view reviews of La Roche-Posay products through TikTok compared to other platforms. This finding highlights that TikTok plays a dominant role as a primary medium in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchase decisions for La Roche-Posay skincare products.

Description of Research Variables

Table 2. Categories of Variable Description.

Mean Score	Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM)	Brand Image	Purchase Intention
1,00 – 1,80	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
1,81 – 2,61	Low	Low	Low
2,62 – 3,42	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
3,43 – 4,23	High	High	High
4,24 – 5,04	Very High	Very High	Very High

Source: Processed by the author

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM)

The data processed by the researcher indicate that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) for the La Roche-Posay brand falls into the high category, with an average score of 4.19, reflecting strong consumer engagement and trust in online reviews. The highest score is observed in the role of reviews in enhancing purchase confidence (4.31; very high), followed by the intensity of review searching (4.28; very high), suggesting that consumers actively utilize online information prior to making a purchase. Meanwhile, the activity of reading reviews as a consideration (4.17; high) confirms that online reviews serve as an important reference in decision-making. Although the lowest score is found in attention to review valence (4.00; high), this indicates that consumers do not solely focus on positive or negative aspects, but also consider the relevance of the information to their personal needs.

Brand Image

The data processed by the researcher show that the brand image of La Roche-Posay is categorized as high, with an average score of 4.18, reflecting positive consumer perceptions of quality, benefits, safety, and the overall brand. The highest score is found in perceived product quality (4.25; very high), followed by product benefits (4.22; high), indicating that consumers perceive the brand as superior and aligned with their skin needs. Meanwhile, attitudes toward the brand (4.16; high) confirm generally positive consumer perceptions of La Roche-Posay. Although the lowest score is observed in the safety aspect (4.10; high), this suggests that safety is considered a basic standard, while quality and benefits play a more dominant role in shaping brand image.

Purchase Intention

The data processed by the researcher indicate that consumers' purchase intention toward La Roche-Posay products falls into the high category, with an average score of 4.16, reflecting a strong tendency to purchase and use the products. The highest score is found in the intention to use the product (4.33; very high), followed by the desire to purchase (4.15; high), indicating consumer commitment and trust in the brand. Meanwhile, interest in purchasing in the future (4.09; high) suggests the potential for sustained purchasing behavior, supported by a positive brand image and product review information. Although the lowest score is found in the consideration aspect (4.06; high), this indicates that most consumers have moved beyond the evaluation stage and are at a stronger stage of purchase intention.

Results of Data Analysis

This study employs inferential statistical analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS analysis

is used to explain relationships among latent variables that cannot be directly measured. Therefore, each variable is measured through a number of indicators obtained from the research instrument in the form of a questionnaire. Based on the modeling stages described previously, the structural equation model in this study is presented in Figure 1.

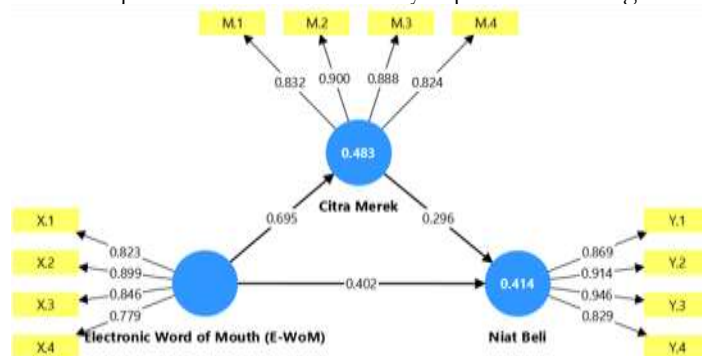


Figure 1. Structural Equation Model of the Study.

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Results of Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

- 1) Convergent validity

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X)	X1	0.823
	X2	0.899
	X3	0.846
	X4	0.779
Brand Image (M)	M1	0.832
	M2	0.900
	M3	0.888
	M4	0.824
Purchase Intention (Y)	Y1	0.869
	Y2	0.914
	Y3	0.946
	Y4	0.829

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 3, all indicators for each variable have outer loading values above 0.70, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity. In the electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) (X) variable, indicator X₂ has the highest outer loading value among the indicators, at 0.899, indicating that it is the strongest indicator in reflecting the Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X) variable. In the brand image (M) variable, indicator M₂ has the highest outer loading value of 0.900 compared to the other indicators, suggesting that it most strongly represents the brand image (M) variable. Furthermore, in the purchase intention (Y) variable, indicator Y₃ has the highest outer loading value at 0.946, making it the most dominant indicator in reflecting the Purchase Intention (Y) variable. Therefore, all indicators in this study are considered valid and capable of adequately reflecting their respective measured variables.

2) Discriminant validity

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Test Results.

Indicator	Brand Im- age (M)	Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X)	Purchase Inten- tion (Y)
M1	0.832	0.666	0.529
M2	0.900	0.656	0.497
M3	0.888	0.504	0.481
M4	0.824	0.542	0.465
X1	0.583	0.823	0.605
X2	0.586	0.899	0.454
X3	0.612	0.846	0.506
X4	0.540	0.779	0.453
Y1	0.382	0.482	0.869
Y2	0.614	0.697	0.914
Y3	0.522	0.500	0.946
Y4	0.486	0.486	0.829

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Discriminant validity is considered satisfactory when the values exceed 0.70, indicating that the latent variables can serve as appropriate comparisons within the model. Based on Table 4, the test results show that discriminant validity has been very well established. This is evidenced by the cross-loading values of each indicator on its respective variable being higher than those on other variables, with all values exceeding 0.70. Therefore, the assessment of discriminant validity using the cross-loading approach in this study can be considered valid.

In addition to cross-loading, discriminant validity can also be evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A model is considered adequate if each construct has an AVE value greater than 0.50. The results of the discriminant validity test based on AVE values are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Test Results.

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image (M)	0,742
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X)	0,702
Purchase Intention (Y)	0,794

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 5, the results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicate that all variables brand image, electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), and purchase intention have AVE values greater than 0.50. Therefore, the validity test based on AVE values meets the required criteria and can be considered valid.

3) Composite reliability

Table 6. Composite Reliability Test Results.

	Cronbach's Al- pha	Composite Reliabil- ity
Brand Image (M)	0,884	0,920
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X)	0,857	0,904
Purchase Intention (Y)	0,913	0,939

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Based on Table 6, the results of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability calculations for the variables of brand image, electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), and purchase intention

all exceed 0.70. Therefore, all constructs in this study meet the reliability criteria and can be considered reliable.

Results of Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The inner model, or structural model, describes the causal relationships among latent variables based on theoretical foundations. It is used to explain and predict cause-and-effect relationships by evaluating the R-square and Q-square values ($Q^2 > 0$) to assess the predictive capability and the model’s adequacy in explaining the contribution of independent variables to dependent variables.

1) R-Square

Table 7. R-Square Test Results.

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Brand Image (M)	0,483	0,478
Purchase Intention (Y)	0,414	0,403

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The data in Table 7 show that the R-square value for the Brand Image (M) variable is 0.483, with an adjusted R-square of 0.478. This value falls into the moderate category, indicating that 48.3% of the variation in brand image can be explained by the independent variables in the model, while the remaining 51.7% is influenced by other factors outside the study.

Furthermore, the R-square value for the Purchase Intention (Y) variable is 0.414, with an adjusted R-square of 0.403, which is also categorized as moderate. This indicates that 41.4% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by the variables included in the re-search model, while the remaining 58.6% is influenced by other factors not included in the model.

2) Predictive relevance (Q^2)

Predictive relevance (Q^2) is used to assess the model’s ability to predict endogenous latent variables based on information from exogenous variables, where a Q^2 value greater than 0 indicates predictive relevance. The calculation results show a Q^2 value of 0.698 ($0 < Q^2 < 1$), indicating that the model has good predictive relevance. This finding also suggests that 69.8% of the variation in purchase decisions can be explained by brand image and purchase intention, while the remaining 30.2% is influenced by other variables outside the model.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. Direct Effect Test Results.

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Brand Image (M) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.296	0.295	0.080	3.707	0.000
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X) → Brand Image (M)	0.695	0.697	0.048	14.548	0.000
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.607	0.611	0.054	11.335	0.000

Source: Processed Data, 2026

Table 8 presents the p-values and t-statistics of each variable, which can be explained in detail as follows:

1) Hypothesis 1 (Effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention)

The p-value for testing the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. The t-statistic value is 11.335, exceeding 1.96, while

the coefficient is positive at 0.607. This indicates that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

2) Hypothesis 2 (Effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on brand image)

The p-value for testing the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on brand image is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. The t-statistic value is 14.548, exceeding 1.96, and the coefficient is positive at 0.695. This indicates that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

3) Hypothesis 3 (Effect of brand image on purchase intention)

Table 9. Indirect Effect Test Results.

Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistic	P-Value
Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) (X) → Brand Image (M) → Purchase Intention (Y)	0.205	0.206	0.058	3.540	0.000

Source: Processed Data, 2026

4) Hypothesis 4 (The mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) and purchase intention)

The p-value for testing the indirect effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention through brand image is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. The t-statistic value is 3.540, exceeding 1.96, while the indirect effect coefficient (original sample) is positive at 0.205. This indicates that brand image significantly mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is accepted. However, since the direct effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention remains significant, the type of mediation is partial mediation

Mediation Effect Testing

The determination of the mediation type was conducted by analyzing the significance of direct effects among variables based on the approach proposed by Hair et al. (2021). The results show that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) significantly affects brand image, brand image significantly affects purchase intention, and e-WoM also significantly affects purchase intention (p-value < 0.05). These findings indicate that brand image acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between e-WoM and purchase intention among prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay skincare products. Furthermore, since the direct effect of e-WoM on purchase intention remains significant after including the mediating variable, the type of mediation identified is partial mediation.

Discussion of Research Findings

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) on Purchase Intention

The results of the study indicate that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay skincare products. This is evidenced by a path coefficient value of 0.607, a t-statistic of 11.335, and a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than 0.05. These findings support the first hypothesis, indicating that e-WoM positively influences purchase intention. Thus, the better the information, reviews, and recommendations shared by consumers through digital media, the higher the purchase intention among prospective consumers.

Electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) is a form of marketing communication that occurs through the internet, where consumers share experiences, opinions, and evaluations of a product or brand. Such information can be found across various digital platforms, including social media, discussion forums, and e-commerce platforms. In the context of consumer behavior, information obtained through e-WoM is often considered more credible because it originates from real consumer experiences, thereby influencing consumer attitudes and perceptions toward a product.

Based on consumer behavior theory, information received from the external environment influences the purchasing decision-making process. This information is cognitively processed by consumers, forming specific attitudes toward the product. When consumers

receive positive reviews through e-WoM, their attitudes toward the product tend to become more favorable, ultimately increasing their purchase intention.

These findings also support the Theory of Planned Behavior, which explains that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is influenced by attitudes and information obtained prior to action. When prospective consumers receive positive reviews about La Roche-Posay products through digital platforms, their attitudes become more favorable, thereby increasing their intention to purchase.

In the context of skincare products such as La Roche-Posay, consumers tend to be more cautious when selecting products due to their direct impact on skin health. Therefore, consumers actively seek information regarding product quality, safety, and user experiences before making a purchase decision. Positive online reviews can enhance consumer trust in the product.

These results are consistent with previous studies (Angelina & Widaningsih, 2025; Arta & Yasa, 2019; Azhar et al., 2024; Candra & Suparna, 2019; Putri & Sukawati, 2019), which found that e-WoM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) on Brand Image

The results show that electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on the brand image of La Roche-Posay. This is indicated by a coefficient value of 0.695, a t-statistic of 14.548, and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These findings suggest that the more positive reviews, recommendations, and experiences shared through digital media, the better the brand image perceived by prospective consumers. Conversely, negative information may weaken brand image.

This finding aligns with consumer behavior theory, which explains that information received by consumers is psychologically processed and shapes perceptions of a brand. These perceptions develop into a brand image that reflects how consumers evaluate a product. In the context of skincare products, e-WoM plays a crucial role in shaping brand image due to the high level of trust required.

Positive user experiences regarding product effectiveness, safety, and quality can strengthen positive brand perceptions. Furthermore, La Roche-Posay is widely recognized as a dermatologist-recommended brand suitable for sensitive skin, which is often reinforced by online reviews and recommendations.

These findings are consistent with prior studies (Fazrin et al., 2024; Nashiroh et al., 2025; Putra & Secapramana, 2025; Rusiana et al., 2023; Yuliani & Panasea, 2025), which confirm that e-WoM significantly influences brand image.

The Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

The results indicate that brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay products. This is evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.296, a t-statistic of 3.707, and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These findings support the third hypothesis.

Brand image reflects how consumers perceive a brand based on their experiences, information, and perceptions. A positive brand image enhances consumer trust in product quality. Consumers tend to choose products from brands with strong reputations, as these are perceived to better meet their needs.

For skincare products, consumer trust is especially critical due to their direct impact on skin health. Therefore, a strong brand image plays a vital role in increasing consumer confidence and purchase intention.

These results are consistent with previous studies (Hamidun & Sanawari, 2018; Kumar et al., 2024; Putri & Sukawati, 2019), which found that brand image positively and significantly affects purchase intention.

The Mediating Role of Brand Image in the Relationship Between e-WoM and Purchase Intention

The hypothesis testing results indicate that brand image significantly mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on purchase intention. This is shown by an indirect effect coefficient of 0.205, a t-statistic of 3.540, and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Thus, the influence of e-WoM on purchase intention occurs both directly and indirectly through brand image formation.

From a consumer behavior perspective, purchase intention emerges through psychological processes involving information search, perception formation, and evaluation. e-WoM

serves as a key information source that shapes consumer perceptions and subsequently brand image.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen), behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this context, brand image affects consumer attitudes, which in turn influence purchase intention.

The findings suggest that e-WoM does not directly influence purchase intention but first shapes consumer perceptions, which develop into brand image. A positive brand image enhances consumer trust and increases the likelihood of purchase.

Given that skincare products are high-involvement products, consumers actively seek information before purchasing. Positive reviews regarding effectiveness, safety, and user experiences contribute to forming a favorable brand image.

Ultimately, a positive brand image strengthens consumer trust and encourages purchase intention. These findings confirm that brand image plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between e-WoM and purchase intention (Asdiana & Yasa, 2020; Andreana & Giantari, 2023; Kusumayani et al., 2025)..

4. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) on brand image and purchase intention, as well as the mediating role of brand image among prospective consumers of La Roche-Posay skincare products. Based on the results of data analysis using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. The more positive the reviews and recommendations shared through digital media, the higher the consumers' purchase intention.
- b. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant effect on brand image. Information shared through digital platforms can shape positive brand perceptions.
- c. Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. A stronger brand image increases consumer trust and purchase intention.
- d. Brand image significantly mediates the effect of e-WoM on purchase intention. This indicates that e-WoM influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly through brand image formation.

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