THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH, BRAND IMAGE, BRAND AWARENESS ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF PALETAS WEY ICE CREAM

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a key platform for consumers to share product experiences and obtain information in today's digital era. This study examines how brand awareness, brand image, and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) influence consumers' intention to purchase Paletas Wey ice cream. Purposive sampling and a quantitative approach were used to find respondents who knew Paletas Wey through offline retailers or social media. An online survey was used to collect data, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method was applied for analysis. The findings show that brand image and brand awareness have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, and that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on both variables. The majority of variation in consumer purchase intentions can be explained by this model. This research suggests that brand familiarity, brand image, and online reviews play an important role in shaping consumer purchase intentions.

Keywords: *Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Brand Image; Brand Awareness;
Purchase Intention; Social Media*

INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has brought significant transformations in various aspects of life, ranging from technology, economy, to people's communication patterns. These advancements not only improve living standards, but also change the way consumers interact with information and products. Today, to stay relevant in the rapidly evolving social dynamics, people rely heavily on information circulating on social media (Bilgin, 2018). Digital platforms have become the main space where various forms of content are generated by users, ranging from statuses, comments, conversations in social groups, to complex interactions in the form of likes, shares, tags, hashtags, emoticons, videos, and ratings (Romão et al., 2019).

The development of information technology has led to the emergence of the electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) phenomenon, which plays a crucial role in consumer decisions, especially in food and beverage products (Henning-Thurau et.al, 2004). Social networking sites such as Twitter with 319 million users and Instagram with 600 million users have created a digital ecosystem that allows consumers to exchange opinions and experiences related to products. These platforms not only facilitate communication between consumers, but also enable direct interaction with brands (Bilgin, 2018). This phenomenon is all the more relevant given that 84% of consumers research on the internet before making a purchase, and many of them share their personal experiences with products online (Kazmi & Mehmood, 2016).

The credibility of word-of-mouth or honest testimonials from consumers has been shown to be more effective in shaping consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions compared to conventional marketing communications (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). This is in line with changes in people's mindsets driven by globalization and technological advances, including in rural areas, which increase awareness of modern lifestyles in choosing food and beverages (Mohanapriya et al., 2019).

In an increasingly dynamic market competition, how consumers perceive a brand plays a vital role in influencing purchasing decisions (Aeker, 1996). Modern consumers are increasingly paying attention to the impressions and experiences they get from certain products, both visually and emotionally (Aeker, 1996). A successfully built brand image can create exclusive perceptions and provide its own appeal (Aeker, 1996). The stronger the impression instilled, the more likely the product is to stick in the minds of consumers and become the first choice when making a purchase (Mohanapriya et al., 2019).

On the other hand, in the era of fast-paced information, the ability of a brand to be easily recognized is one of the keys to winning the competition appeal (Aeker, 1996). Products that frequently appear in various digital channels and are widely discussed have a greater chance of being remembered by consumers (Bilgin, 2018). Repeated exposure, whether in the form of positive reviews, recommendations, or social interactions on digital media, makes a brand more familiar and psychologically close (Henning-Thurau et.al, 2004). . This aspect is especially important in fast-consuming product categories such as food and beverages, where purchasing decisions are often influenced by short memories and recent exposures (Bilgin, 2018).

Even though a number of studies have looked at the connection between E-WOM, brand image, and purchase intention, there are still issues with studies that look at all four factors at once, particularly when it comes to Indonesian ice cream products. According to the study by Alrwashdeh et al. (2019), E-WOM significantly and favorably influences brand image and purchase intention. In the meantime, Bilgin (2018) highlights that social

media marketing is inexpensive yet efficient in raising brand recognition and image among a diverse group of social media users.

Research by Novia et al. (2022) showed that E-WOM, brand image, brand awareness, and purchase intention have a simultaneous positive influence in the context of skincare products in Indonesia. The study confirms the importance of the influence of E-WOM in shaping brand image and increasing purchase intention through increasing brand awareness. Similar findings were also obtained in Jalilvand & Samiei's (2012) study which found that E-WOM has a significant effect on brand image and purchase intention in the automotive industry in Iran.

However, not all studies show consistent results regarding the influence of these variables. Some studies actually show that the relationship between these variables is not always significant or even has no direct effect. Even in cosmetic products, a study by Suci et al. (2022) on the Avoskin brand shows that E-WOM has no effect on purchase intention, while brand image has a significant effect. These conflicting findings indicate that the influence of E-WOM, brand image, and brand awareness on purchase intention is contextual and strongly influenced by product characteristics.

The healthy lifestyle trend has encouraged the emergence of various food product innovations that prioritize natural ingredients and are safe for consumption. Paletas Wey is present as one of the ice cream industry players that offers more value through the use of 100% real fruit without additional preservatives or artificial colors, and has obtained halal certification and BPOM permits. By involving local farmers as partners in providing raw materials, this product not only emphasizes quality, but also carries the value of sustainability and community empowerment. Despite having different characteristics from conventional ice cream, the dynamics of market competition and the increasingly diverse consumer preferences demand strategies that go beyond product excellence.

Given that the lifestyle food and beverage market in Indonesia continues to increase and the majority of consumers search for information on the internet before buying (Kazmi & Mehmood, 2016), reviews of food products such as ice cream in the form of online reviews and recommendations have great potential in shaping consumer purchase intentions. How a brand is known, talked about and remembered by consumers often determines their purchase intention (Keller, 2013). Therefore, understanding factors such as electronic word of mouth, brand image, and brand awareness is important in explaining purchasing decisions for Paletas Wey ice cream products.

The purpose of this study is to examine how electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) affects consumer intention to buy Paletas Wey products, how brand image affects this intention, and how brand awareness affects this intention. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to knowledge about consumer behavior, especially with regard to e-WOM, by developing a model that can explain how e-WOM affects brand image and purchase intention and how brand image and brand awareness affect purchase intention in Indonesian ice cream products. purchase intention, brand image, and brand awareness in relation to regional ice cream products. By optimizing the role of e-WOM, brand image, and brand awareness to stimulate consumer purchase intention, strengthen brand value, and increase Paletas Wey's digital presence in the market, the practical findings of this study can help businesses especially Paletas Wey design more successful digital marketing strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES
Purchase Intention
Purchase intention basically reflects a person's tendency to purchase a product or service in the future. This concept is very important in the study of consumer behavior because it can predict the real actions that consumers will take (Ajen, 1991). Kotler & Keller (2016) explain that consumers with high purchase intentions generally already have a special interest in certain products and have considered various factors before making a final decision. Sukoco et al. (2020) added that purchase intention is a crucial stage in the decision-making process which is strongly influenced by consumer evaluations and attitudes towards the brand or product. Consumers who have positive perceptions-both in terms of quality, price, and brand image-will show a greater tendency to make purchases.

In the context of Theory of Planned Behavior, Ajzen (1991) asserts that intention is the main determinant of actual behavior which is influenced by attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived control. Astuti & Management (2013) identified four dimensions of purchase intention, namely transactional interest (desire to buy), referential interest (recommend), preferential interest (brand preference), and exploratory interest (seeking further information).

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)
Electronic Word of Mouth has changed the way consumers share experiences and opinions about products or services through digital platforms Hennig-Thurau (2004). Hennig-Thurau (2003) defines e-WOM as any positive or negative statement made by customers about a product or company that can be accessed by others via the internet. The uniqueness of e-WOM lies in the credibility of information that is considered more objective than direct promotion from the company Hennig-Thurau (2004). Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) emphasized that the power of e-WOM lies in its ability to shape public opinion quickly due to its viral nature and ability to reach a very wide audience. Goyette et al. (2010) classified e-WOM into four main dimensions: positive e-WOM (supportive content), negative e-WOM (criticism or complaints), intensity (frequency of dissemination), and content (message quality). In today's digital era, e-WOM is a strategic element that companies cannot ignore because information circulating online is often more trusted by consumers than traditional marketing communications.

Brand Image
Brand image is a mental representation of consumers towards a brand that is formed through various interactions and experiences (Aeker, 1993). Keller (1993) explains that brand image is a perception of a brand that is reflected through associations stored in consumer memory, including attributes, benefits, and attitudes towards the brand. The formation of this image comes not only from the direct experience of consumers, but also from marketing communications and information from third parties. Aaker (1997) asserts that a strong, positive, and unique brand image is able to differentiate a brand from its competitors and create long-term customer loyalty. The dimensions of brand image according to Aaker (1997) consist of attribute associations (product characteristics), benefit associations (functional or emotional benefits), and attitude associations (overall assessment). Brand image plays a strategic role in attracting and retaining consumers because it can strengthen quality perceptions, increase trust, and ultimately influence consumer purchase intentions.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the main foundation in building relationships between consumers and certain brand (Aeker, 1991). Aaker (1991) defines brand awareness as the ability of consumers to recognize or remember a brand in a particular product category. This concept reflects the level of consumer familiarity with the brand and serves as the basis for the formation of further brand associations. Consumers with high brand awareness will more easily identify and consider the brand in the decision-making process, especially in markets with many alternative choices (Aeker, 1991). Aaker (1991) and Keller (2008) divide brand awareness into two dimensions: brand recognition (the ability to recognize brands with the help of clues) and brand recall (the ability to remember brands spontaneously without help). Without brand awareness, consumers will not consider a brand in the product selection process, so increasing brand awareness is a top priority in marketing strategy.

Hypothesis

Electronic Word of Mouth has become an integral component in digital marketing strategies due to its significant contribution to brand image formation. Jalilvand (2013) explains that e-WOM relies on a high level of customer satisfaction to ensure positive reviews are widespread over the internet. In the context of products that offer hands-on experiences such as ice cream, it is crucial to provide consistent and high-quality service in order to encourage positive statements from consumers. Research by Alrwashdeh et al. (2019) on smartphone brands and Ahmad et al. (2020) on airline e-tickets shows that e-WOM has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. Based on this theoretical and empirical basis, a hypothesis is formulated:

> *H1: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a positive effect on brand image on Paletas Wey products.*

It is widely recognized that online platforms - especially social media - have a significant impact on how people use goods and services. Gelfand (2013), through his empirical study, showed that social media messages are an important resource for customers when making decisions about what to buy. To create effective communication networks, digital marketing innovations encourage companies and social media influencers to work more closely together (Al Rawashdeh et al., 2019). This helps develop consumer purchase intentions and decisions.

> *H2: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a positive effect on purchase intention on Paletas Wey products.*

Because it conveys the value and quality of the product, which can trigger customer interest, brand image is critical to a company's success. According to Priyanthi & Kerti (2020), decisions and intentions to buy follow an overall assessment that fosters favorable sentiments towards brand reputation. According to research by Wijaya (2013), brand image is an important determinant of the quality of goods or services and has a favorable and significant impact on purchase intention. Shahrinaz, Kasuma, and Yacob (2016) also found similar results in their research in Malaysia.

> *H3: Brand Image has a positive effect on purchase intention on Paletas Wey products.*

Customers' decision-making process is influenced by brand awareness, which aids in identifying brands in particular product categories (Tariq et al., 2017). According to Wijaya (2013), the factor that most affects consumers' intentions to buy Apple

smartphone products is brand awareness. Customers' purchasing intentions are influenced by their opinions of the quality of goods and services, which are shaped by brand awareness. In their study of Taiwanese cellular phone businesses, Chi, Yeh, and Yang (2009) also discovered that purchase intention is positively impacted by brand awareness.

H4: Brand awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention on Paletas Wey products.

METHOD

Customers familiar with the Palitas Wai ice cream brand constituted the study population. Using purposive sampling method. The purposive sampling method is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are intentionally chosen based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives. This method allows researchers to select respondents who can provide the most relevant and useful information for the study (Etikan et al. 2016). The sample was selected based on the following criteria: Research participants must be at least 17 years old, have seen or are familiar with the Palitas Way brand, have read social media reviews about the product, and are willing to purchase it. According to Hair et al. (2019), the sample size is 170 sample, times the number of indicators used in the research model.

Using the Google Forms platform, an online survey was used to collect primary data. Using SmartPLS software, the data analysis method combines the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)(Hair et al. 2014). Convergent validity, reliability, path coefficient, model goodness of fit (GoF), predictive relevance, coefficient of determination (R^2), and hypothesis testing are some of the tests used in this study to evaluate the relationship between variables in the research model. (Hair et al. 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

This study collected data through an online questionnaire distributed through Google Form via social media to respondents who were interested in buying Paletas Wey ice cream products. The data collection period lasted from May 26 to June 9, 2025, and successfully collected 170 respondents with a 100% response rate, which means that all questionnaires distributed were returned completely without corrupted data. that the majority of respondents in this study were female, as many as 105 people (61.8%). This reflects that women tend to be more active in seeking information about food or beverage products such as ice cream on social media, and are more responsive to visual content and consumer reviews circulating on digital platforms such as Instagram.

In terms of age, most of the respondents were in the age range of 21-25 years, as many as 86 people (50.6%). This age range falls into the category of the younger generation who are very active in using social media and have a high interest in new culinary trends, including natural ice cream products such as Paletas Wey. In terms of occupation, 89 respondents (52.4%) worked as private employees. This shows that the majority of respondents have a steady income and tend to have a consumptive lifestyle that supports their interest in premium products, especially those associated with a healthy and natural lifestyle.

Meanwhile, based on the category of income per month, the most respondents have an income in the range of >3 million - 5 million, as many as 87 people (51.2%). This group generally has sufficient purchasing power and tends to be open to trying new

products, especially products that are perceived to have high quality value and attractive aesthetics such as Paletas Wey.

Validity Test and Reliability Test
Convergent Validity
The results of the convergent validity test for all constructs are presented in Table 1, which shows that all indicators meet the required threshold values, indicating that the measurement model demonstrates adequate convergent validity. Convergent validity testing shows that all indicators have an outer loading value above 0.7, with the highest value in the WOM6 indicator (0.898) and the lowest in KM1 (0.716). These results confirm that all indicators are valid and reliable for measuring their respective constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is above 0.5, with Electronic Word of Mouth reaching 0.653, Purchase Intention 0.608, Brand Image 0.595, and Brand Awareness 0.566.

Table 1
Outer Loading

	Electornic Word Of Mouth	Image Brand	Brand Awareness	Intention Buy	Description
WOM1	0.795				Valid
WOM2	0.754				Valid
WOM3	0.815				Valid
WOM4	0.798				Valid
WOM5	0.781				Valid
WOM6	0.898				Valid
CM1		0.819			Valid
CM2		0.777			Valid
CM3		0.741			Valid
CM4		0.756			Valid
CM5		0.762			Valid
KM1			0.716		Valid
KM2			0.786		Valid
KM3			0.746		Valid
KM4			0.725		Valid
KM5			0.787		Valid
NB1				0.780	Valid
NB2				0.772	Valid
NB3				0.754	Valid
NB4				0.813	Valid
NB5				0.778	Valid

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

All outer loading values on each indicator have met the criteria for convergent validity, which has a value above 0.7. Outer loading reflects the correlation between indicators and the constructs they measure (Hair et al. 2014). Based on the results in table 1, the correlation value of each indicator to the Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Intention variables is proven to be higher than its correlation to other constructs.

Based on the results presented in table 2, the values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceed the recommended thresholds, indicating that each construct in this study meets the criteria for reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2
Construct Reliability and Validity

Indicator	Average Variance Extracited (AVE)
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0.653
Brand Image	0.595
Brand Awareness	0.566
Purchase Intention	0.608

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

Since each construct in this model has a value greater than 0.5 based on the AVE results above, it can be said that each construct meets the requirements of convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity
The Fornell-Larcker Criterion technique is used to assess discriminant validity (Hair et al, 2014). This technique states that a concept has good discriminant validity if its AVE square root value is higher than its correlation with other constructs in the model (Hair et al, 2104).

Table 3
Fornell Lacker Criterion

	Electronic Word Of Mouth	Brand Image	Brand Awareness	Purchase Intention
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0.808			
Brand Image	0.470	0.771		
Brand Awareness	0.684	0.482	0.753	
Purchase Intention	0.748	0.579	0.702	0.780

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

The discriminant validity test using the Fornell-Larcker criterion shows that all constructs have the highest correlation value with themselves compared to other constructs. Electronic Word of Mouth has a value of 0.808, Purchase Intention 0.780, Brand Image 0.771, and Brand Awareness 0.753. These results confirm that each construct can be clearly distinguished from the other constructs in the model.

Reliability Test
Reliability testing is sought using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability approaches (Hair et al, 2014). The results of the reliability analysis for each construct are presented in Table 4, which shows that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency among the indicators.

Table 4
Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Electronic Word Of Mouth	0.893	0.896	0.918	0.653
Brand Image	0.830	0.835	0.880	0.595
Brand Awareness	0.810	0.819	0.867	0.566

Purchase Intention	0.839	0.839	0.886	0.608

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

Reliability testing shows excellent Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs, with the lowest value on Brand Awareness (0.810 for Cronbach's Alpha) and the highest on Electronic Word of Mouth (0.893 for Cronbach's Alpha). All values are above the 0.70 threshold, indicating good internal consistency.

R Square

R Square testing is carried out to determine how much the independent variable is able to explain the dependent variable in the model (Hair et al, 2014).

The results of the coefficient of determination for each endogenous variable are presented in Table 5, showing the extent to which the independent variables contribute to the variation of the dependent variables within the model.

Table 5
R Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand Image	0.220	0.216
Purchase Intention	0.667	0.661

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

Based on this table, the R Square value for the brand image variable is 0.220, which means that the electronic word of mouth variable accounts for 22% of the variance in brand image, while the remaining 78% comes from the influence of other studies. The R Square value for the purchase intention variable is 0.667, which means that the electronic word of mouth, brand image, and brand awareness variables contribute 66.7% of the variance in purchase intention, while the remaining 33.3% comes from the influence of other studies.

Predictive Relevance (Q Square)

Predictive relevance testing aims to determine how good the observation value produced by the model is and the estimation of its parameters. It is known that if the Q Square value is greater than 0, it can be said that the model has predictive relevance (Hair et al, 2014).

The results of the Q Square analysis for each endogenous variable are presented in Table 6, which illustrates the predictive capability of the research model along with the RMSE and MAE values as supporting indicators.

Table 6
Predictive Relevance

	Q^2 predict	RMSE	MAE
Brand Image	0.207	0.904	0.723
Purchase Intention	0.608	0.634	0.494

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

Based on the table, the Q^2 value for the Brand Image variable is 0.207 and for Purchase Intention is 0.608. Both values are greater than 0, which means that the model has relevant predictive ability for these variables. In addition, the RMSE (Root Mean Square Error) and MAE (Mean Absolute Error) values are also presented to support the

evaluation of model predictions. RMSE and MAE show the amount of prediction error, where the smaller the value, the better the prediction accuracy of the model. the RMSE and MAE values for the Purchase Intention variable are lower than those for Brand Image, which indicates that the model's prediction of Purchase Intention is more accurate.

Goodness of Fit Model
The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of the PLS model indicates how well it fits data. If the SRMR value is less than 0.10, the PLS model is considered to have satisfied the Goodnes of Fit model criterion; if it is less than 0.08, the model is considered to be perfectly fitted (Hair et al, 2014).

The results of the Goodness of Fit evaluation for the structural model are presented in Table 7, which summarizes the SRMR, d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI values obtained from the analysis

Table 7
Goodness Of Fit Model

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.069	0.074
d_ULS	1.110	1.280
d_G	0.410	0.421
Chi-square	395.920	399.707
NFI	0.802	0.800

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

Based on the table, the SRMR value is 0.069 for the Saturated Model and 0.074 for the Estimated Model. Both values are below the 0.10 threshold, so it can be concluded that the model has met the criteria for goodness of fit.

In addition to SRMR, other indicators such as d_ULS and d_G also show a value that is not too large, which is 1.110 and 0.410 for the saturated model, respectively, and 1.280 and 0.421 for the estimated model. Chi-square values of 395.920 and 399.707 are still within reasonable limits for PLS-SEM-based models, and NFI (Normed Fit Index) values of 0.802 and 0.800 are above the minimum threshold of 0.80 which indicates that the model has a fairly good level of fit.

Inner Model Test
The structural model testing in the model will involve testing the significance of direct effects and testing indirect effects for each exogenous and endogenous variable. In PLS analysis, if the test result has a p value greater than 0.05, then the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable. Conversely, if the p value is less than 0.05, the independent variable has a significant influence on the dependent variable. (Hair et al, 2014).

Table 8
Inner Model

	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Results
Electronic Word of Mouth -> Brand Image	0.470	0.050	9.299	0.000	H1 accepted
Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0.233	0.052	4.514	0.000	H2 accepted
Electronic Word of Mouth -> Purchase Intention	0.442	0.063	6.971	0.000	H3 accepted
Brand Awareness -> Purchase Intention	0.287	0.072	3.981	0.000	H4 accepted

Source: Processing with SmartPLS, 2025

The results of testing the inner model show that all paths of influence in this study are positive and significant. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) has a significant effect on purchase intention (t = 6.971; p = 0.000) and brand image (t = 9.299; p = 0.000), which indicates that positive online reviews can strengthen brand perception while increasing consumers' desire to buy. Brand awareness was also shown to have a significant effect on purchase intention (t = 3.981; p = 0.000), as well as brand image on purchase intention (t = 4.514; p = 0.000). Thus, the stronger the E-WOM, brand awareness, and brand image, the greater the consumer purchase intention of Paletas Wey ice cream products.

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image
The analysis results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image. This finding indicates that the more positive reviews consumers receive through digital platforms, the better their perception of the Paletas Wey brand will be. This is in line with the views of Dwidienawati et al. (2020) which states that E-WOM is not just ordinary information, but a reflection of personal experience and subjective consumer judgment that can strengthen perceptions of a brand.

The characteristics of E-WOM, which are considered more credible because they come from real consumer experiences, make it more effective in shaping brand image compared to traditional marketing communications. Research by Novia et al. (2022) in the context of skincare products in Indonesia also supports this finding, where E-WOM is proven to have a positive impact in forming a strong brand image in the minds of consumers. Similarly, Jatmiko et al, (2023) study on Shopee application users found that reviews from previous consumers are a major consideration in shaping brand perceptions.

These findings provide important practical implications for Paletas Wey, where active and strategic management of E-WOM can be key in building a positive brand image. Companies need to understand that modern marketing communication is no longer one-way, but involves active consumer participation through various digital platforms.

Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Intention
Data analysis revealed that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. This result indicates that consumers' positive perception of the Paletas Wey brand will increase their desire to make a purchase. This finding strengthens the concept put forward by Wijaya (2013) that brand image is a collection of expectations and

information collected by consumers about a product, which plays a vital role in forming purchase intentions.

This relationship is in line with the brand equity framework which explains that brand image can be the main bridge to purchasing decisions. When consumers have positive perceptions of aspects such as quality, reputation, and brand credibility, they tend to be more confident in making purchasing decisions. Shahrinaz et al, (2016) research on smartphone products in Malaysia and the study of Novia et al. (2022) on the Indonesian skincare industry provides strong empirical support for this finding.

In the context of Paletas Wey, brand image can be built through communication of key values such as naturalness of ingredients, flavor innovation, and high hygiene standards. A consistent and authentic communication strategy will strengthen the influence of brand image on purchase intention, so that consumers are not only motivated to buy but also recommend products to others.

Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention

The test results show that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. This finding confirms that digital reviews from other consumers are able to increase trust and encourage purchase intentions for Paletas Wey products. Jalilvand (2013) explains that E-WOM has high credibility because it comes from authentic consumer experiences, so it is more trusted than conventional advertising.

Research by Alrwashdeh et al. (2019) on smartphone consumers in Cyprus and the study of Ahmad et al. (2020) on online airplane ticket purchases provides empirical support consistent with these findings. In the food and beverage industry, especially ice cream, E-WOM is particularly relevant because consumers tend to rely on the experiences of others to assess aspects of product taste, quality, and satisfaction before making a purchase.

This finding reinforces the understanding that E-WOM serves as an effective peer-to-peer marketing channel due to its authentic and relatively unbiased nature. This creates a stronger basis of trust than official communication sources from brands. Practically, Paletas Wey can harness the power of E-WOM by encouraging positive testimonials on social media, increasing transparency in customer interactions, and providing an easily accessible feedback platform.

Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention

Data analysis shows that Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention. These results indicate that the level of consumer recognition of the Paletas Wey brand is positively correlated with the likelihood of them making a purchase. In accordance with the views of Pantea (2019), brand awareness affects the consumer decision-making process by increasing their consideration of brands in certain product categories.

This finding is supported by research by Chi et al. (2009) in the Taiwanese telecommunications sector and the study of Tariq et al. (2017) which shows the direct effect of brand awareness on consumer purchase intention. Research by Novia et al. (2022) in the context of skincare also strengthens empirical evidence of this relationship. High brand awareness creates strong associations in consumer memory, thereby increasing the probability that the brand is considered and selected when consumers need products in the same category.

These results enrich the consumer behavior literature by showing that brand awareness not only serves as a market recognition tool, but also becomes the foundation

for the formation of overall brand equity. Brand awareness characterized by recall and familiarity facilitates the formation of positive associations and quality perceptions, which further influence purchase intentions. For Paletas Wey, this indicates the importance of a marketing strategy that not only focuses on product promotion, but also on increasing brand visibility and recognition through various integrated communication channels.

Overall, the findings of this study make a significant theoretical contribution in understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior in the digital age, while offering practical insights for the development of effective marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry, particularly premium ice cream products such as Paletas Wey.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the results of the analysis using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, this study concluded that Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), brand image, and brand awareness have a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intentions for Paletas Wey ice cream products on Instagram. E-WOM not only has a direct impact on purchase intention, but also plays a role in shaping a strong brand image. A positive brand image creates perceptions of quality and trust in the product, while brand awareness increases the likelihood of consumers considering and choosing the product. These three variables support each other and form a model that is able to explain consumer behavior comprehensively, showing that digital interactions and consumer perceptions are decisive in the purchase decision-making process in the social media era.

This study has limitations in the number of variables used and online data collection techniques that may not represent the entire population evenly, so for future research it is recommended that adding variables that play a mediating or moderating role, such as trust in the brand as a mediator between E-WOM and purchase intention, or promotional attractiveness as a moderator in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention, in order to expand the scope of analysis, as well as using more diverse questionnaire distribution methods both online and offline so that the results are more representative.

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