

Building Consumer Purchase Intention through Social Media and eWOM: The Role of Brand Image

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Abstract

In today's competitive digital market, consumer purchasing decisions are heavily shaped by online platforms, particularly for high-involvement products such as laptops. This study investigates the effects of social media marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on purchase intention, with brand image as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach with deductive reasoning was employed, collecting survey data from 112 respondents in Semarang (18+ years old, active social media users with exposure to Acer content). Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that social media marketing and eWOM both significantly enhance brand image ($\beta = 0.152, p = 0.034$ and $\beta = 0.803, p < 0.001$, respectively). Social media marketing also has a strong direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.537, p < 0.001$), whereas the direct effect of eWOM on purchase intention is not significant ($\beta = 0.229, p = 0.085$). However, eWOM significantly increases purchase intention indirectly via brand image (indirect effect = 0.178, $p = 0.014$). Brand image itself positively influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.222, p = 0.012$). These findings indicate that brand image fully mediates the impact of eWOM on buying decisions, while social media marketing drives purchase intention both directly and through image. The model explains a substantial portion of variance in both brand image and purchase intention. This study contributes to digital marketing literature by highlighting the mediating role of brand image and confirming the direct impact of social media marketing. Practically, the results suggest that laptop companies should strengthen social media strategies and encourage positive eWOM to reinforce brand image and thereby boost consumer purchase intention.

Keywords: Brand Image, Consumer Behavior, Electronic Word-Of-Mouth, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of pervasive digital connectivity, consumer purchasing decisions have undergone a profound transformation, compelling businesses to rethink their engagement strategies. Rapid technological advancements have fueled the proliferation of sophisticated products, particularly in the smartphone and laptop markets. Indonesia, ranked among the top four countries with the largest smartphone user base globally (Wijayaa et al., 2021), offers a promising landscape for technology manufacturers. Consumers are increasingly empowered and informed, relying heavily on digital channels, especially social media and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as primary sources of product information and purchase influence, surpassing traditional recommendations. Social media is not only a platform for interaction but also an effective, cost-efficient marketing medium that enables companies to better understand consumer preferences and design suitable products (Faisal & Ekawanto, 2022). Beyond promotional functions, social media serves as a crucial platform to shape purchase intentions through enhanced brand perception (Ali & Naushad, 2023). In the context of technology markets, eWOM has been shown to significantly influence both brand image and purchase intention, with brand image occasionally acting as a mediator, although findings remain mixed (Al Qaimari et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2024; Mariantika & Nuryakin, 2023).

Within this evolving digital paradigm, the laptop industry has witnessed notable shifts in consumer behavior. Acer, a leading laptop brand in Indonesia, demonstrates significant market penetration with 79.2% brand recognition and 23% usage (Katadata, 2023). However, despite

this visibility, Acer faces a strategic challenge: a gap between its market presence and the effective execution of digital branding initiatives. This research is grounded in the insight that strong brand image, supported by effective use of social media marketing and eWOM, can close this strategic gap and strengthen Acer's market position. To address the problem, the study plans to empirically test how these digital marketing variables influence consumer purchase intention, with brand image as a mediating factor.

Semarang, one of the major cities in Central Java with over 3 million residents, represents a promising market. Its population actively uses platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to gather product information before making purchasing decisions. This presents a valuable opportunity for brands to engage consumers through content strategies and eWOM-driven campaigns. This diverse urban sample suggests strong generalizability within the city. Semarang's consumers thus provide an ideal case for examining digital purchase behavior: their high mobile and internet penetration means social media and eWOM are likely to play prominent roles in their decision-making. The specific focus on Semarang allows the study to account for local market factors (such as community-driven eWOM and prevalent social platforms) that may influence Acer's purchase dynamics in ways different from other regions.

A strong brand image, as a key intangible asset, shapes consumer perceptions and purchase decisions by creating favorable associations in consumers' minds (Armawan et al., 2023). Previous research highlights the positive role of social media marketing (SMM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in strengthening brand image and enhancing purchase intention (I Gusti Ayu Natasya Pramadhea Putri, 2025; Salhab et al., 2023). Several studies confirm these relationships, showing that SMM and eWOM influence purchase intention either directly or indirectly through brand image. For example, (Ali & Naushad, 2023) found that SMM significantly improved brand image, which fully mediated its effect on purchase intention. Similarly, (Armawan et al., 2023) demonstrated that both SMM and eWOM directly affected purchase intention, with eWOM also exerting an indirect effect through brand image. (Savitri et al., 2022) further revealed that SMM enhances brand image, which fully mediates its influence on purchase intention.

Conversely, other studies report inconsistent results. (Mariantika & Nuryakin, 2023) found that eWOM directly affected purchase intention without mediation by brand image, while (Zahid & Ruswanti, 2024) observed that eWOM influenced purchase intention only indirectly through brand image. Complementary findings from (Faisal & Ekawanto, 2022) indicate that SMM positively impacts brand awareness, brand image, and purchase intention, with partial mediation by both awareness and brand image. Similarly, (Nabilla & Saputro, 2025) and (Bibi et al., 2025) confirm that SMM and online reviews (eWOM) significantly enhance brand image, which subsequently strengthens purchase intention.

Despite these insights, limited research has explored how different eWOM tie strengths, such as strong ties (relatives and friends) versus weak ties (strangers), shape consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Yang, 2022). Recent studies also emphasize that authentic and diverse eWOM can build consumer trust and positively influence purchasing behavior (Bui et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to empirically investigate the influence of social media marketing and eWOM on consumer purchase intention, with brand image as a mediating variable, focusing on Acer laptop consumers in Semarang, Indonesia. The research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it will clarify the inconsistent findings in prior studies and address the underexplored context of high-involvement technology products. Practically, the study is expected to help Acer and other technology brands design more effective digital marketing strategies, optimize brand image, and enhance competitiveness in dynamic digital markets.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sampling Design and Respondent Criteria

This study adopted a quantitative research design with a deductive approach to examine how social media marketing, eWOM, and brand image affect consumers' purchase intentions for the Acer brand in Semarang. Quantitative research involves collecting numerical data and statistically testing hypotheses. According to (Sugiyono, 2019), quantitative studies are grounded in a deductive logic, meaning they begin with theoretical frameworks and hypotheses which are then tested with empirical data. Similarly, (J. F. Hair et al., 2019) emphasize that a deductive, quantitative approach uses structured data to confirm theoretical relationships. Thus, this study formulated hypotheses based on existing theory and prior literature, and then empirically tested them using survey data.

A sample represents a smaller group drawn from the population that shares specific characteristics and a defined quantity. (Sugiyono, 2019). To define the sample, several inclusion criteria were used: participants must reside in Semarang, be at least 18 years old, actively use social media, and have accessed or interacted with Acer-related content on these platforms. Since the total population was undetermined, the sample size was estimated using the formula by (Lemeshow, 1990) at a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error because it is acceptable in exploratory consumer behavior research when population size is unknown, balancing statistical precision with feasibility (J. F. Hair et al., 2019):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{E^2}$$

$$n = (1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)) / 0.1^2 \quad n = (3.8416 \times 0.25) / 0.01 \quad n = 0.9604 / 0.01 \quad n = 96.04$$

n = required sample size

Z = z value for the desired confidence level

p = expected population proportion (if unknown, can use 0.5 to get the maximum sample size)

E = desired margin of error

where is the z-value at the 95% confidence level (1.96), with p = 0.5 is used in the absence of prior estimates, yielding the maximum sample size and E = 0.1. The result was n = 96.04, which was rounded to 100 respondents to ensure an adequate sample. The final dataset consisted of 112 respondents, exceeding the minimum requirement to anticipate potential incomplete responses and to enhance the reliability of the findings, as oversampling is a common practice in survey research.

Conceptual Framework

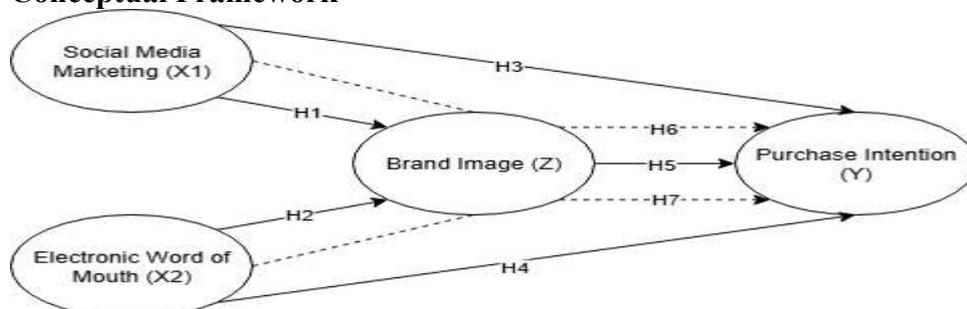


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework that depicts the interrelationships among the study variables. Social Media Marketing (X1) and Electronic Word of Mouth (X2) function as independent variables that affect Purchase Intention (Y), both directly and indirectly, through Brand Image (Z) as the mediating construct. Within this framework, Brand Image plays a crucial role in clarifying how Social Media Marketing and eWOM shape consumer purchase intentions.

Consequently, seven hypotheses (H1–H7) are formulated to test both the direct and mediated effects proposed in the model. By outlining these linkages, the framework provides a systematic foundation for guiding the research design and analysis, ensuring consistency between objectives and methods, and facilitating empirical testing of how digital marketing factors influence consumer behavior toward the Acer brand in Semarang.

Research Hypothesis

Based on the model above, the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand image.

H2: eWOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image.

H3: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H4: eWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H5: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

H6: Social media marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention through brand image.

H7: eWOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention through brand image.

Data Collection and Analysis Method

Data collection was conducted using a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, with the survey link shared via Instagram and WhatsApp. The questionnaire comprised two sections: (1) demographic questions and (2) statements measuring the constructs of Social Media Marketing (Kim & Ko, 2012), eWOM and Brand Image (Shadrin et al., 2019), and Purchase Intention (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). All responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. A distinct pilot test was not carried out because the constructs and measurement items had previously been widely implemented and validated in peer-reviewed research. To ensure validity, this study relied on these established instruments, while empirical validation was achieved through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) along with reliability assessments using Construct Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) within the SEM framework. This procedure safeguarded measurement accuracy and reliability while keeping the research process efficient.

To confirm respondents' actual exposure to Acer content, the survey included initial screener items. For instance, respondents were asked if they had seen any Acer advertisements or posts on social media platforms. This filter ensured that participants were not merely general social media users, but had genuine interaction with Acer-related digital marketing or eWOM content.

The data were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via Amos. SEM-Amos was selected over covariance-based SEM because of the study's exploratory nature, relatively small sample size, and the focus on prediction (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022). SEM-Amos is well-suited for models where the primary goal is to maximize explained variance in the dependent constructs (purchase intention) and where the data may not meet strict normality assumptions. Indeed, SEM-Amos can provide reliable results with smaller samples, as it iteratively optimizes both the measurement and structural models (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022). This aligns with guidelines that recommend SEM-Amos for studies emphasizing prediction and involving complex models or composite constructs (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022). Measurement reliability and validity were assessed through confirmatory factor analysis within the PLS framework, ensuring that all constructs met the recommended criteria (outer loadings >0.70, AVE >0.50, CR >0.70).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Findings

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their behavioral patterns related to social media use, which form the context for interpreting the subsequent structural model findings. A total of 112 respondents participated in the survey (respondents number who filled out the form), all of whom met the inclusion criteria of residing in Semarang, being at least 18 years old, and actively using social media. This age threshold is consistent with ethical research guidelines classify individuals below 18 as minors who must obtain parental or guardian consent to participate. Furthermore, adult consumers are more likely to have independent decision making capacity in purchasing laptops, making them a more relevant target group for studying purchase intentions.

Table 1. Respondent Distribution by Age

Age		
	Frequency	Percent
18-20	7	6.3
21-25	75	67.0
25-30	11	9.8
31-35	8	7.1
36-40	3	2.7
41-45	4	3.6
46-50	1	.9
51-55	3	2.7
Total	112	100.0

The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents were aged between 21–25 years (67.0%), followed by those aged 25–30 years (9.8%) and 31–35 years (7.1%). A smaller portion fell within the older age groups, ranging from 36–55 years. This distribution reflects the dominant representation of younger, digitally native consumers, which aligns with the study’s focus on digital marketing and online behavior.

Table 2. Respondent Distribution by Gender

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	76	67.9
Female	36	32.1
Total	112	100.0

In terms of gender, 67.9% of the respondents identified as male and 32.1% as female, indicating a gender imbalance that may reflect either the specific engagement with the Acer brand or broader gender trends in tech consumption within the sample region.

Table 3. Respondent Distribution by Domicile

Domicile		
	Frequency	Percent
Subdistrict Banyumanik	12	10.7
Subdistrict Pedurungan	6	5.4
Subdistrict Candisari	3	2.7
Subdistrict Semarang Barat	11	9.8
Subdistrict Semarang Selatan	4	3.6

Subdistrict Semarang Tengah	3	2.7
Subdistrict Gunungpati	35	31.3
Subdistrict Semarang Utara	7	6.3
Subdistrict Mijen	6	5.4
Subdistrict Tembalang	8	7.1
Subdistrict Ngaliyan	7	6.3
Subdistrict Tugu	1	.9
Subdistrict Semarang Timur	3	2.7
Subdistrict Gajahmungkur	3	2.7
Subdistrict Genuk	3	2.7
Total	112	100.0

Regarding residence, participants came from a diverse range of sub-districts within Semarang. The most represented area was Subdistrict Gunungpati (31.3%), followed by Semarang Barat (9.8%), Banyumanik (10.7%), and Tembalang (7.1%). The distribution shows a fairly wide geographic representation within the city, increasing the generalizability of the findings to the Semarang urban population.

Table 4. Respondent Distribution by Social Media Usage

Daily Social Media Usage		
	Frequency	Percentage
< 1 jam/day	6	5.4
1-5 jam/day	60	53.6
6-10 jam/day	34	30.4
> 10 jam/day	12	10.7
Total	112	100.0

In terms of daily social media use, most respondents reported spending between 1–5 hours per day on social media platforms (53.6%), followed by 6–10 hours (30.4%), more than 10 hours (10.7%), and less than 1 hour (5.4%). This high level of engagement underscores the appropriateness of focusing this study on social media marketing and eWOM as key determinants in shaping brand perceptions and purchase behavior.

These descriptive findings provide a contextual overview of the target population, establishing a foundation for evaluating how social media marketing and eWOM affect brand image and purchase intention in a digitally engaged consumer segment.

Outer Model and Validity Assessment

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the measurement model, focusing on convergent validity as well as the precision and consistency of the items. This analysis examined whether each observed variable accurately corresponded to its latent construct.

According to (J. F. Hair et al., 2019), convergent validity is established when the loading factors for all indicators exceed 0.5, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct surpasses 0.5. In this study, factor loadings for all indicators exceeded the threshold, confirming their validity. Additionally, the AVE values for each construct were above the recommended level: SMM = 0.723; eWOM = 0.809; Brand Image = 0.851; and Purchase Intention = 0.718.

All indicators had factor loadings greater than 0.5, indicating that they validly represent their respective constructs and can be included in the structural model.

Table 5. Validity Test Results (CFA Loadings)

Path	Estimate	Description
PI1 <--- Purchase Intention	0.770	Valid
PI2 <--- Purchase Intention	0.732	Valid
PI3 <--- Purchase Intention	0.742	Valid
SMM11 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.707	Valid
SMM10 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.617	Valid
SMM9 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.845	Valid
EWOM6 <--- EWOM	0.824	Valid
EWOM5 <--- EWOM	0.810	Valid
EWOM4 <--- EWOM	0.769	Valid
BI6 <--- Brand Image	0.861	Valid
BI5 <--- Brand Image	0.840	Valid
BI4 <--- Brand Image	0.822	Valid
SMM8 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.791	Valid
SMM7 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.840	Valid
SMM6 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.746	Valid
SMM5 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.751	Valid
SMM4 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.718	Valid
SMM3 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.784	Valid
SMM2 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.717	Valid
SMM1 <--- Social Media Marketing	0.740	Valid
EWOM3 <--- EWOM	0.795	Valid
EWOM2 <--- EWOM	0.823	Valid
EWOM1 <--- EWOM	0.832	Valid
BI3 <--- Brand Image	0.730	Valid
BI2 <--- Brand Image	0.756	Valid
BI1 <--- Brand Image	0.754	Valid

All indicators had factor loadings greater than 0.5, indicating that they validly represent their respective constructs and can be included in the structural model.

To further support the model's assumptions, diagnostic testing was performed. The normality test based on skewness and kurtosis values showed that the data distribution met the assumption of normality, as values remained within ± 2.58 . The outlier test using Mahalanobis Distance indicated no multivariate outliers, as all calculated distances were less than the critical threshold of 341.395. The multicollinearity test showed that the determinant value of the correlation matrix was 676.935, well above zero, indicating no signs of multicollinearity.

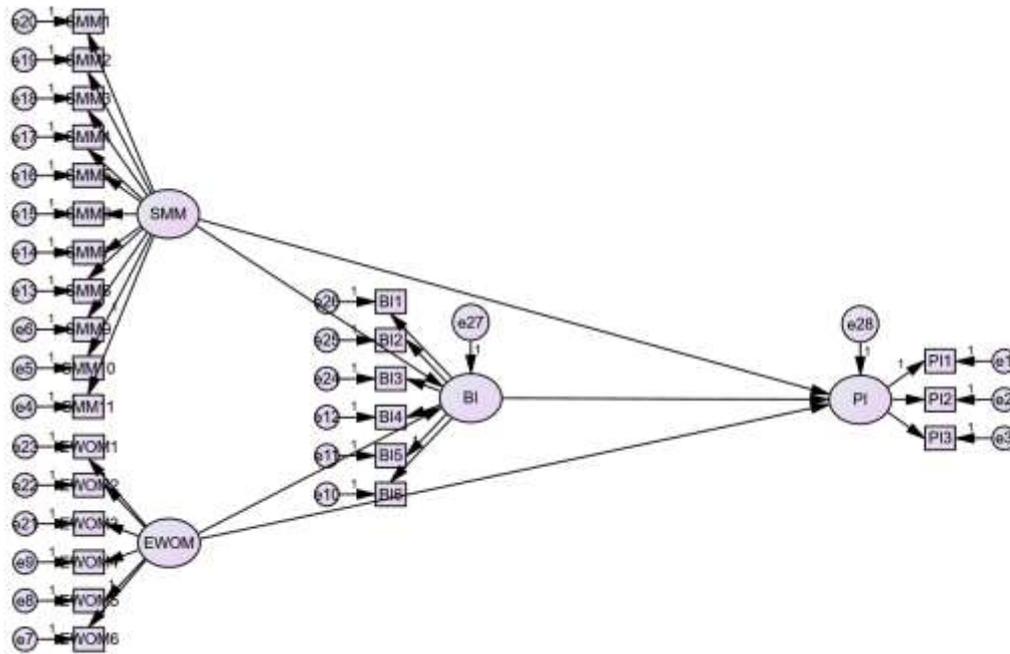


Figure 2 Full Structural Equation Model Output from AMOS

Reliability Assessment

Reliability was assessed using Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to (Ghozali, 2013), CR should exceed 0.7 and AVE should exceed 0.5. All four constructs met these criteria:

Table 6. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Construct Reliability	Average Variance Extracted	Conclusion
Social Media Marketing	0.867	0.723	Reliable
eWOM	0.903	0.809	Reliable
Brand Image	0.917	0.851	Reliable
Purchase Intention	0.865	0.718	Reliable

Goodness of Fit (GOF) Evaluation

The overall model fit was assessed using various Goodness of Fit (GOF) indices recommended for SEM analysis in AMOS 24. The results show that GFI = 0.745, AGFI = 0.691, CFI = 0.906, TLI = 0.894, IFI = 0.907, PNFI = 0.723, and PCFI = 0.808—all fall within acceptable or good fit criteria. Although the Chi-square value resulted in a significance level of $p = 0.000$, which traditionally suggests poor fit, this measure is highly sensitive to sample size. The RMSEA was 0.084, indicating a marginal fit but still within acceptable thresholds. Moreover, the ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) was 1.775, indicating a good fit (cutoff < 2).

Table 7. Model Fit Assessment

Goodness Of Fit Index	Cut Of Value	Hasil Model SEM	Description
Chi-square	$p > 0,05$	0,000	Not fit

Non Centrality Parameter (NCP)	Deviation of sample covariance matrix and fitted Chi-square	224,861	Fit
Root Mean Square Error of Approx (RMSEA)	Browne dan Cudeck (1993) < 0,08	0,084	Marginal Fit
Goodness Fit of Index (GFI)	> 0,60	0,745	Fit
Adjusted Goodness Fit of Index (AGFI)	> 0,60	0,691	Fit
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> 0,90	0,810	Marginal Fit
Parsimoni Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0,60 – 0,90	0,723	Fit
Parsimoni Comparative Fit Index (PCFI)	0,60 – 0,90	0,808	Fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	>0,90	0,906	Fit
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	>0,90	0,907	Fit
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) atau NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index)	>0,90	0,894	Marginal Fit
CMIN/DF	< 2	1,775	Fit
PRATIO	0,60 – 0,90	0,892	Fit

In total, 10 out of 13 indices demonstrated acceptable or good fit, supporting the adequacy of the model. Therefore, the structural equation model can be considered reliable for further hypothesis testing and interpretation.

Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

Table 8. Direct Hypothesis Test Results

Path	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Description
Brand Image <--- Social Media Marketing	0.152	0.072	2.121	0.034	Significant
Brand Image <--- EWOM	0.803	0.087	9.190	***	Highly significant
Purchase Intention <--- Social Media Marketing	0.537	0.093	5.772	***	Highly significant
Purchase Intention <--- EWOM	0.229	0.133	1.722	0.085	Not significant
Purchase Intention <--- Brand Image	0.222	0.144	2.549	0.012	Significant

Based on the hypothesis test results in Table 4 above, the following results are obtained:

H1 Influence of Social Media Marketing on Brand Image

The results show that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image (C.R. 2.121 > 1.96; P = 0.034 < 0.05) with an estimated coefficient of 0.152. This indicates that enhancing social media marketing activities effectively strengthens consumers' positive perceptions of the Acer brand. This finding is consistent with (Ali & Naushad, 2023; Armawan et al., 2023; Savitri et al., 2022; Utari et al., 2023), which also highlight the role of social media content in brand-building. In the context of Semarang, this effectiveness may be attributed to high social media penetration and consumers' preference for informative, interactive promotional content.

H2 Influence of EWOM on Brand Image

EWOM has a highly significant positive effect on Brand Image (C.R. 9.190 > 1.96; P < 0.001) with a coefficient of 0.803. This suggests that positive reviews, recommendations, and

online discussions greatly contribute to shaping a strong brand image for Acer. The result is in line with (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2025), who emphasized that EWOM is a powerful driver of brand perception. In the local market, peer recommendations appear to be a more trusted information source than formal advertisements.

H3 Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention

Social Media Marketing has a positive and highly significant influence on Purchase Intention (C.R. 5.772 > 1.96; $P < 0.001$) with an estimate of 0.537. These findings are consistent with prior studies (Ali & Naushad, 2023; Moslehpour et al., 2021; Utari et al., 2023). This means that marketing activities on social media not only build brand image but also directly drive consumers' willingness to purchase. Exposure to creative promotions, brand interactions, and relevant content on social platforms increases consumers' likelihood of making a purchase.

H4 Influence of EWOM on Purchase Intention

EWOM does not have a significant direct effect on Purchase Intention (C.R. 1.722 < 1.96; $P = 0.085 > 0.05$). Although the coefficient is positive (0.229), the impact is not statistically strong enough. This differs from some prior studies (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Moslehpour et al., 2021) that found a direct effect. In this study's context, Acer consumers in Semarang may require additional reinforcing factors—such as brand quality perception—before deciding to purchase, even after receiving positive EWOM.

H5 Influence of Brand Image on Purchase Intention

Brand Image exerts a positive and significant effect on Purchase Intention (C.R. 2.549 > 1.96; $P = 0.012 < 0.05$) with a coefficient of 0.222. This indicates that the better the brand image perceived by consumers, the higher their purchase intention. This finding aligns with prior research (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Moslehpour et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2025), reinforcing the importance of brand image in driving purchase behavior.

The results of the indirect hypothesis test, which examine the mediating role of Brand Image, are presented in Table 4. This analysis is crucial for understanding whether Brand Image acts as a bridge through which Social Media Marketing and EWOM influence Purchase Intention.

Table 9. Indirect Hypothesis Test Results

Path	Estimate	C.R.	P	Description
Purchase Intention <--- Brand Image <--- Social Media Marketing	0.033	1.630	0.103	Not significant
Purchase Intention <--- Brand Image <--- EWOM	0.178	2.456	0.014	Significant

Based on the hypothesis test results in Table 5 above, the following results are obtained:

H6 Influence of Social Media Marketing on Purchase Intention through Brand Image

No significant mediating effect of Brand Image is found in the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Purchase Intention (C.R. 1.630 < 1.96; $P = 0.103 > 0.05$). These findings are contrasts with prior studies (Ali & Naushad, 2023; Savitri et al., 2022) This suggests that Social Media Marketing is strong enough to directly influence purchase intention, making the mediating role of brand image less prominent.

H7 Influence of EWOM on Purchase Intention through Brand Image

The results of the hypothesis testing demonstrate that there is a significant influence of EWOM on Purchase Intention through Brand Image, with a C.R. value of 2.456 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.014 (< 0.05). This means that EWOM significantly influences Purchase Intention indirectly through Brand Image. An *estimate* value of 0.178 indicates that an increase in EWOM will lead to an increase in Purchase Intention through Brand Image by 0.178. These findings are consistent with studies by (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023; Moslehpour et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2025) that highlight the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Social Media Marketing and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on Purchase Intention, with Brand Image as a mediating variable, in the context of the Acer laptop brand in Semarang. The findings reveal that social media marketing positively and significantly affects both brand image ($\beta = 0.152$, $p = 0.034$) and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.537$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, eWOM significantly enhances brand image ($\beta = 0.803$, $p < 0.001$) but has no significant direct effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.229$, $p = 0.085$). Importantly, brand image positively influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.222$, $p = 0.012$) and mediates the relationship between eWOM and purchase intention: the indirect effect of eWOM on purchase intention via brand image is 0.178 ($p = 0.014$). By comparison, the indirect effect of social media marketing on purchase intention through brand image is small and not significant (estimate = 0.033, $p = 0.103$). These results contribute to the literature by highlighting the distinct roles of Social Media Marketing and eWOM in shaping consumer behavior in the Indonesian digital market. The study implies that marketers, particularly Acer, should not only focus on strengthening social media strategies to build brand image and drive purchase intention directly but also actively encourage consumers to share positive reviews to leverage the indirect effect of eWOM through brand image. Despite these contributions, several limitations should be noted. First, the sample size was relatively small and restricted to 112 respondents, which may constrain the statistical power of the findings. Second, the study focused solely on consumers in Semarang, which limits geographic generalizability within Indonesia's diverse market contexts. Third, only one mediating variable is brand image that was tested, whereas other psychological factors such as trust, perceived value, or consumer engagement might further enrich the explanatory model. Lastly, data were collected using self-reported surveys, which may be subject to social desirability or recall bias. Future research should therefore broaden the sampling frame across multiple cities or regions, employ larger and more representative samples, incorporate additional mediating or moderating constructs, and apply mixed-method approaches to capture deeper consumer insights. In sum, this research underscores that brand image plays a pivotal mediating role, clarifying how social media marketing and eWOM collectively shape purchase intention, a key contribution to advancing the understanding of digital consumer behavior in emerging markets. Ultimately, this study provides both theoretical clarification and practical guidance, offering marketers a strong message: in a digitally driven consumer environment, brand image is the decisive link that turns online exposure into actual purchase intention.

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