



Unveiling Key Drivers of Consumer Purchase Decisions in the Evolving Cosmetics Industry

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of brand image, word-of-mouth (WOM), and competitive advantage on purchasing decisions in the cosmetics sector, focusing on CRRANTE products at Mutiara Permai Cantika Cosmetics Store, Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia. Utilizing a quantitative, causal-associative approach, data were collected from 96 respondents through purposive random sampling. The analysis included validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, determination analysis, as well as F-test and t-tests to evaluate the simultaneous and partial effects of the independent variables on purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that brand image, WOM, and competitive advantage have a positive and statistically significant impact on purchasing decisions both individually and collectively. These results emphasize the importance of fostering a strong brand image, leveraging positive WOM, and maintaining a competitive edge to influence consumer behavior effectively. This research contributes to the field of international marketing by providing valuable insights into consumer decision-making processes within a highly competitive local cosmetics market. It offers practical implications for businesses aiming to strengthen their market position and academic value for further exploration of purchasing dynamics in similar contexts.

Keyword: Brand Image, Word of Mouth, Competitive Advantage, Repurchase Decision

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid globalization of markets has intensified competition across various industries, including the cosmetics sector. This dynamic and competitive business environment demands innovative marketing strategies to ensure the survival and growth of firms (Amrita, Suryawan, et al., 2024). Companies are now compelled to rethink their approaches to product development, market positioning, and customer engagement to maintain a competitive edge. Effective marketing strategies and the ability to identify emerging market opportunities are pivotal for sustaining market presence and driving consumer purchase decisions (Amrita, Mandiyasa, et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the cosmetics industry has experienced remarkable growth, fuelled by a vast population of over 275 million people, representing an attractive consumer base (Qablina, 2024). The industry caters not only to women but also increasingly to men, reflecting evolving societal norms and consumer preferences. With competition intensifying, businesses must prioritize creating a positive brand image, leveraging word-of-mouth (WOM) communication, and maintaining competitive advantages. According to Kotler et al. (2024), brand image represents a critical asset that influences consumer perception and fosters long-term loyalty. A strong brand identity differentiates products in a crowded market, enhancing recognition and trust. Similarly, WOM communication, rooted in consumer experiences, significantly impacts purchasing behavior by influencing perceptions of product quality and reliability (Mothersbaugh & Hawkins, 2016).

Consumer behaviour, as described by Lamb et al. (2014), reflects the processes through which individuals make purchase decisions. This behaviour is shaped by a complex interplay of psychological, cultural, and situational factors, which companies must understand to optimize their marketing efforts. Effective consumer engagement strategies, including innovations in product offerings and targeted marketing campaigns, are critical for encouraging purchase decisions and building lasting relationships with consumers.

This study focuses on Mutiara Permai Cantika Cosmetics Store in Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia, a retail business that offers a diverse range of cosmetic, skincare, body care, and hair care products. The store, known for its tagline “Complete, Best Price, Friendly Service,” has established itself as a trusted retailer since its inception in 2011. Among the products sold is the CRRANTE brand, known for its natural, fruit- and plant-based ingredients and certified by Indonesia’s BPOM, ensuring product safety and quality. Despite its reputation for excellent service and product diversity, the store has witnessed a decline in CRRANTE product sales from 2019 to 2021, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of Products Sold at Mutiara Permai Cantika Cosmetics Store

No	Product Brand	Number of Products Sold Per Year			Total
		2019	2020	2021	
1	Safi	4,510	2,502	3,870	10,882
2	Himalaya	2,658	903	1,890	907,548
3	Mizzu	2,091	812	1,506	815,597
4	Inez	6,920	4,901	3,105	14,926
5	Mustika Ratu	6,531	3,307	4,786	14,624
6	Loreal	3,409	1,120	806	810,529
7	Garnier	3,095	2,205	1,800	7,100
8	You	3,098	2,876	3,450	9,424
9	Emina	6,810	4,901	3,481	15,192
10	Sariayu	7,021	5,601	4,401	17,023
11	Latulipe	6,618	4,821	3,491	14,930
12	Dearme Beauty	4,870	2,435	3,509	10,814
13	Wardah	4,981	2,435	3,676	11,092
14	Crrante	5,592	3,321	3,418	12,331
15	Make Over	7,948	6,689	5,543	20,180
16	Pixy	8,914	5,762	6,009	20,685
17	Somethinc	5,721	4,827	3,378	13,926
18	MS Glow	976	879	931	2,786

Source: Mutiara Permai Cantika Cosmetics Store (2023)

This decline indicates potential issues, such as unmet consumer expectations and intensified competition. Preliminary interviews with customers revealed dissatisfaction with certain CRRANTE products. Complaints ranged from hair care products causing dryness to unpleasant scents in specific items, as well as concerns over high prices and unsuitable packaging sizes. These issues have negatively influenced brand image, word-of-mouth (WOM), and competitive advantage, ultimately affecting purchasing decisions.

While prior research has explored similar variables, the findings have often been inconsistent. For example, Handi et al. (2022) reported a significant positive effect of WOM on purchasing decisions, whereas Subana (2019) found no such relationship. Similarly, Rosanti et al. (2021) identified a significant positive effect of brand image on purchasing decisions, in contrast to Ananta et al. (2024) and Foster (2016), who observed no impact of brand image in certain contexts. Additionally, studies by Prayudi and Oktaviani (2023) and Haudi et al. (2022) highlighted mixed outcomes concerning the influence of competitive advantage on purchasing decisions. These discrepancies underscore the need for further investigation to clarify the roles of these variables in consumer decision-making.

By addressing these research gaps, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour within the cosmetics sector. It offers valuable insights for international marketing scholars and actionable strategies for practitioners to enhance brand positioning and competitive performance in a challenging market environment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour involves the processes individuals go through in selecting, purchasing, and using products or services. Solomon et al. (2012) defines it as actions related to acquiring and consuming products, including the decision-making process. Schiffman et al. (2013) emphasizes its role in planning and choosing products to meet needs and desires. Kotler et al. (2024) identify key factors influencing consumer behaviour: cultural, social, personal, and psychological. Cultural elements like subcultures and social class, along with social influences such as family and reference groups, shape consumer preferences and behaviours. Consumer behaviour can be rational or irrational. Rational behaviour is driven by practicality, focusing on utility, quality, and price (Dwiastuti & Isaskar, 2012), while irrational behaviour is influenced by promotions and prestige, often disregarding actual needs. Understanding these behaviours is essential for businesses to create effective marketing strategies.

Brand Image, Word of Mouth, and Competitive Advantage on Purchasing Decisions

Suryawan, Handayani, et al. (2023) define purchasing decisions as a process influenced by factors such as economic, technological, cultural, and promotional elements, which shape consumer attitudes and guide their product choices. Stofkova (2022) further explains that consumer behavior involves both physical activities (direct interactions in the purchasing process) and mental activities (evaluating products based on personal criteria). Kotler and Armstrong (2008) highlight several key indicators in the purchasing decision process: 1) the

stability of the decision after receiving product information, 2) deciding to purchase based on the preferred brand, 3) purchasing because the product meets personal desires and needs, and 4) buying due to recommendations from others. These factors provide valuable insights into the cognitive and emotional processes that drive consumer purchasing behavior.

Research by Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) confirms that brand image and word of mouth significantly impact purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that brand image, word of mouth, and competitive advantage collectively influence purchasing decisions. Thus, the study proposes:

H1: Brand Image, Word of Mouth, and Competitive Advantage positively and significantly affect Purchasing Decisions simultaneously.

Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

According to Kotler et al. (2024), brand image refers to the consumer's overall perception of a brand, shaped by both positive and negative associations stored in memory. Malik et al. (2012) further defines brand image as the perceptions and beliefs that consumers hold about a brand, as reflected in the associations formed in their memory. A strong brand image can provide a competitive advantage by influencing consumer preferences and creating differentiation in the marketplace. Cheng-Hsui Chen (2001) identifies three key indicators of brand image: 1) favorability of brand association, 2) strength of brand association, and 3) uniqueness of brand association.

This is corroborated by the study of Rosanti et al. (2021), which found that brand image significantly and positively affects purchasing decisions. Building on the insights from these studies, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: Brand image positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions.

Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions

As stated by Suryawan, Putri, et al. (2024), word of mouth (WOM) refers to the marketing activity in which information about a product or service is

communicated from one consumer to another, often with the intent of promoting or selling a brand. Kotler et al. (2024) and Suryawan, Sumerta, et al. (2023) further define WOM communication as verbal, written, or electronic communication among individuals that pertains to the advantages or experiences related to the purchase or use of a product or service. According to Ali (2020), WOM can be measured using three key indicators: 1) discussing positive experiences and product quality, 2) recommending the product to friends and family, and 3) encouraging others by persuading friends and inviting family.

This is supported by the research of Handi et al. (2022), which found that WOM was positively categorized and had a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Building on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Word of mouth positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions.

Competitive Advantage on Purchasing Decisions

Hajar and Sukaatmadja (2016) define competitive advantage as a strategy to outperform competitors. Kotler et al. (2024) describe it as an advantage over competitors, achieved either by offering lower prices or by providing more benefits that justify higher prices, thereby delivering greater value to consumers. Afuah (2009) further emphasizes that in today's highly competitive environment, the goal of every organization is to outperform its competition and secure new customers. Competitive advantage can be assessed through three main indicators: 1) competitive pricing, 2) operational flexibility, and 3) strong customer relationships, as outlined by Hajar and Sukaatmadja (2016).

This view is supported by Prayudi and Oktaviani (2023), whose study found that competitive advantage strategies significantly influence purchasing decisions. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Competitive advantage positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions.

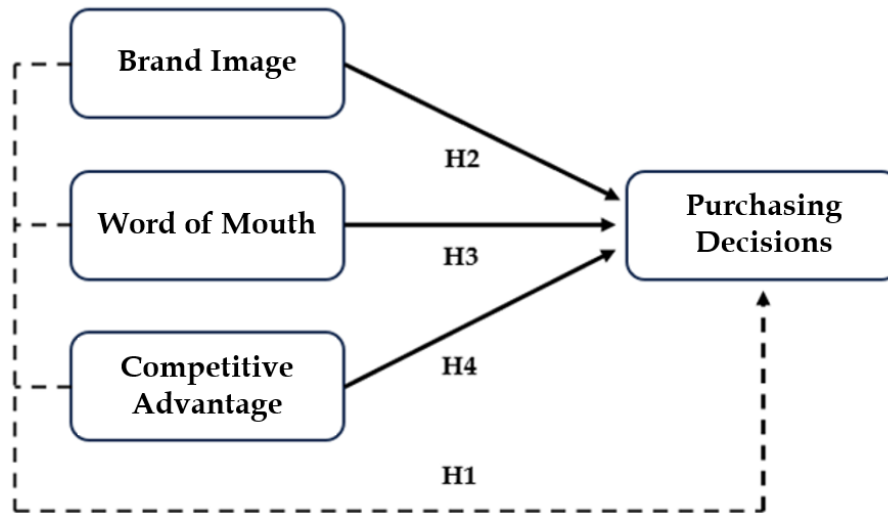


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Theoretical review and previous research findings

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework, highlighting the key factors, which are brand image, word of mouth (WOM), and competitive advantage, that influence consumer purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry.

III. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research design based on the positivist philosophy, commonly used for analyzing a specific population or sample. Sugiyono (2019) outlines that quantitative research involves collecting data through research instruments, which is then analyzed using statistical methods to test pre-established hypotheses. The study adopts a causal associative research approach, as suggested by Sugiyono (2019), focusing on examining the relationships between two or more variables.

The target population consists of consumers from the Mutiara Permai Cosmetics Store in Gianyar, whose specific characteristics are not easily identifiable. The researcher utilized Purposive Random Sampling, selecting individuals based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives, such as those aged 17 or older and who have previously made purchases at the store. Given the unknown exact population size, the sample size is calculated using the formula proposed by Riduwan and Akdon (2013) to ensure statistical reliability.

$$n = \left(\frac{Z_{\alpha/2} \sigma}{e} \right)^2$$

Where:

- n = the number of samples
- $Z_{\alpha/2}$ = Z-value from the standard normal distribution at a 5% significance level (1.96)
- σ = the standard deviation of the population (0.25, based on standard recommendations)
- e = margin of error (set at 5% for this study)

Applying the above parameters, the sample size calculation results in:

$$n = \left(\frac{(1,96)(0,25)}{0,05} \right)^2$$

$$n = 96$$

Following the calculation based on the formula provided by Riduwan and Akdon (2013) above, the sample size for this study was determined to be 96 individuals, ensuring that the results of the study are representative of the target population.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity and Reliability Tests

Table 2. Recapitulation of Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	Correlation Coefficient	Status
Brand Image	X1-1	0.788	Valid
	X1-2	0.870	Valid
	X1-3	0.884	Valid
Word of Mouth	X2-1	0.784	Valid
	X2-2	0.816	Valid
	X2-3	0.743	Valid
Competitive advantage	X3-1	0.844	Valid
	X3-2	0.857	Valid
	X3-3	0.815	Valid
Purchasing Decisions	Y1-1	0.613	Valid
	Y1-2	0.694	Valid
	Y1-3	0.661	Valid
	Y1-4	0.672	Valid

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on the presentation in Table 2 above, the results of the instrument testing indicate that all statement items from the four variables under investigation are valid (with coefficients exceeding 0.30), thus confirming that all items in the instrument (questionnaire) are considered valid.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Brand Image	0.804	Reliabel
Word of Mouth	0.681	Reliabel
Competitive advantage	0.788	Reliabel
Purchasing Decisions	0.777	Reliabel

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on the presentation in Table 3 above, the results of the instrument testing indicate that the questionnaire items for the three variables under investigation demonstrate good reliability (with Cronbach's Alpha correlation coefficient exceeding 0.60). Therefore, the research instrument (questionnaire) is deemed valid for use and can be distributed to the target sample in this study.

Classical Assumption Tests

Table 4. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		96
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	0.0000000	.0000000
	2.5043707	.91622860
Most Extreme	0,082	.059
Differences	0,045	.059
	-0,082	-.054
Test Statistic		0.082
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.112 ^c

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on the analysis results in Table 4, it can be observed that the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded an asymp. Sig value of 0.112, which is greater

than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data in this study follow a normal distribution.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std.	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3.640	1.135		3.207	0.002		
Brand Image	0.253	0.127	0.086	1.992	0.049	0.507	1.974
Word of Mouth	0.381	0.132	0.122	2.898	0.005	0.538	1.859
Competitive Advantage	2.399	0.127	0.815	18.938	0.000	0.513	1.948

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on Table 5, it is shown that there are no independent variables with a tolerance value greater than 0.10, nor any independent variables with a VIF value exceeding 1.0. This indicates the absence of multicollinearity issues or a strong correlation between the independent variables. Consequently, the model's independent variables are deemed appropriate for further analysis without concerns of multicollinearity bias.

Table 6. Heteroskedasticity Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.240	0.720		4.502	0.000
Brand Image	-0.073	0.081	-0.131	-0.913	0.364
Word of Mouth	-0.028	0.083	-0.047	-0.341	0.734
Competitive Advantage	-0.030	0.080	-0.053	-0.373	0.710

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on Table 6, it is shown that the models for X1, X2, and X3 have significance values greater than 5% or 0.05. This indicates that the independent variables used in this study do not have a significant impact on the dependent variable, which is the absolute error. Therefore, this study is free from heteroscedasticity issues.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.640	1.135		3.207	0.002
	Brand Image	0.253	0.127	0.086	1.992	0.049
	Word of Mouth	0.381	0.132	0.122	2.898	0.005
	Competitive Advantage	2.399	0.127	0.815	18.938	0.000

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on Table 7, the multiple linear regression equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 3.640 + 0.253 X1 + 0.382 X2 + 2.399 X3$$

The multiple linear regression equation shows that when Brand Image (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), and Competitive Advantage (X3) are zero or unchanged, the Purchase Decision (Y) is 3.640. Brand Image (X1) positively affects the Purchase Decision with a coefficient of 0.253, meaning a one-unit increase in Brand Image (X1) raises the Purchase Decision by 0.253, while keeping the other variables constant. Word of Mouth (X2) also positively impacts the Purchase Decision, with a coefficient of 0.381, indicating a one-unit increase in Word of Mouth (X2) results in a 0.381 increase in the Purchase Decision. Finally, Competitive Advantage (X3) has the strongest positive influence, with a coefficient of 2.399, meaning a one-unit increase in Competitive Advantage (X3) leads to a 2.399 increase in the Purchase Decision, holding the other variables constant.

Determination Analysis

Table 8. Determination Analysis Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.955a	0.912	0.910	2.545

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The R Square value of 0.912 (see Table 8) indicates that 91.2% of the Purchase Decision in the cosmetics industry is influenced by the variables Brand Image, Word of Mouth, and Competitive Advantage, while the remaining 8.8% is influenced by other unexamined variables. This indicates that the model strongly explains the factors influencing purchase decisions in the cosmetics sector.

Simultaneous Significance F-test

Table 9. F-test Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6208.130	3	2069.377	319.526	.000b
	Residual	595.828	92	6.476		
	Total	6803.958	95			

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The table value for F is $F(0.05; 3; 96) = 2.70$. Subsequently, ANOVA table reveals an F-value of 319.526 (see Table 9). Since the calculated F-value of 319.526 is significantly greater than the table value of 2.70 and the significance level is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, it can be concluded that, collectively, the variables Brand Image, Word of Mouth, and Competitive Advantage (X3) have a significant effect on the Purchase Decision at a 5% significance level.

Partial Significance t-test

Table 10. t-test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.640	1.135		3.207	0.002
	Brand Image	0,253	0.127	0,086	1.992	0,049
	Word of Mouth	0.381	0.132	0.122	2.898	0.005
	Competitive Advantage	2.399	0.127	0.815	18.938	0.000

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

To assess the significance level (α), a value of 5% (0.05) was applied, and the degrees of freedom (dF) were calculated as $(n-k) = 96 - 3 = 93$, yielding a critical t-value (t-table) of 1.66 at (0.05; 93). Since the calculated t-values for all independent variables exceed the critical t-value, the results are statistically significant.

Hypothesis testing indicates that Brand Image positively and significantly influences Purchase Decision, with a t-value of 1.992 and a significance value of 0.049. Word of Mouth also has a positive and significant impact on Purchase Decision, with a t-value of 2.898 and a significance value of 0.005. Competitive Advantage exhibits the strongest positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision, with a t-value of 18.938 and a significance value of 0.000. Among the independent variables, Competitive Advantage has the most substantial impact on Purchase Decision, followed by Word of Mouth and Brand Image.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examines the impact of brand image, word-of-mouth (WOM), and competitive advantage on purchasing decisions for CRRANTE products at Mutiara Permai Cantika Cosmetics Store in Gianyar, Bali, Indonesia. The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that these variables positively influence purchase decisions, with Competitive Advantage having the strongest effect, followed by Word of Mouth and Brand Image. The model explained 91% of the variance in consumer decisions, underscoring the relevance of these factors in shaping consumer behavior.

Practically, businesses in the cosmetics sector should focus on strengthening Brand Image through quality, trust, and positive associations to influence consumer preferences. Leveraging Word of Mouth via social media, influencer partnerships, and customer reviews is crucial for building brand awareness and loyalty. Additionally, maintaining a Competitive Advantage through innovation, competitive pricing, and strong customer relationships is key for sustained market leadership.

Furthermore, future research could explore additional factors such as pricing strategies, product quality, and emotional connections with consumers. The role of digital transformation, e-commerce, cultural differences, regional preferences, and sustainability practices like eco-friendly packaging and cruelty-free products are also promising areas for investigation. Longitudinal studies could further examine how consumer perceptions and behaviours evolve over time in response to market and societal shifts.

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