

# The Influence of Product Quality, Brand Image, and Word-of-Mouth Recommendations on Purchasing Decisions

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**Abstract**—This study aims to analyze the influence of product quality, brand image, and word-of-mouth recommendations on the decision to purchase Wardah cosmetics in Purwokerto. This study involved 120 students from Muhammadiyah University Purwokerto, Jenderal Soedirman University, and UIN Saizu Purwokerto who had used Wardah cosmetics, using a purposive sampling method. Data analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of SmartPLS version 3.0 through external and internal model evaluation. The validity ( $AVE > 0.5$ ) and reliability (Composite Reliability  $> 0.7$ ) test results showed that all instruments were valid and reliable. The research results were tested based on the path coefficient value and P value ( $< 0.05$ ). The results show that product quality, brand image, and word of mouth recommendations have a positive and significant effect on the decision to purchase Wardah cosmetics in Purwokerto. The contribution of this study lies in the integration of the word of mouth variable into the cosmetic purchase decision model, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the role of consumer-to-consumer communication in influencing purchase decisions, particularly for local cosmetic products among students.

**Keywords:** Product Quality; Brand Image; Word of Mouth; Purchase Decisions

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of modern lifestyles has driven an increase in women's demand for cosmetic products. The desire to look beautiful, attractive, and confident has made cosmetics an integral part of daily activities. This condition has triggered the growth of the cosmetics market in Indonesia, which continues to increase year after year, with women as the largest consumer segment. As demand increases, competition in the beauty industry has become increasingly fierce. Therefore, cosmetic companies are required to be able to implement the right marketing strategies, particularly in pricing, and to continue to innovate in order to meet consumer needs and preferences amid the rapid development of the industry (Uzzahra, 2024).

The increasing demand for cosmetics has led to fiercer competition in the beauty industry. Various cosmetic brands, both local and international, are competing to offer products with their own characteristics and advantages. In Indonesia, brands such as Make Over, Emina, Wardah, Sariayu, and Viva are part of the dynamic competition in the cosmetics market. This situation provides consumers with many alternatives in choosing products that suit their needs and preferences. The process of selecting cosmetic products is closely related to consumer behavior, namely all activities related to searching for, selecting, purchasing, and using goods and services (Rahayu & Febriansah, 2024).

The intense competition in the cosmetics industry requires companies to employ appropriate marketing strategies to create a competitive advantage. Marketing strategies are not only related to product availability but also oriented towards building consumer value and trust. In the cosmetics industry, commonly implemented strategies include improving product quality, strengthening a solid brand image, and utilizing word of mouth as an efficient marketing communication tool. These strategies play a crucial role in influencing how consumers perceive and shape their purchasing decisions. (Rohmah, 2024). The following chart shows the top cosmetic brands for the first quarter of 2025, with Wardah ranked second.

**Table 1.** Cosmetics Sales Chart for the First Quarter of 2025

No	Product	Presentase
1	Skintific	4,1%
2	Wardah	2,97%
3	Glad2Glow	2,51%
4	Hanasui	1,52%
5	Maybeline	1,47%
6	MS Glow	1,36%
6	Somethinc	1,23%
7	Skin1004	0,98%
8	Make Over	0,98%
9	Garnier	0,85%

Source: [www.GoodStats.com](http://www.GoodStats.com)

The sales chart shows the dynamics of competition among cosmetic brands in Indonesia. Based on the graph, the development of the ten leading cosmetic and beauty care brands in Indonesia during the first quarter can be seen, marked by the position of Wardah cosmetic products in second place with a percentage of 2.97. This data shows that competition

between cosmetic brands is increasingly competitive and dynamic, so that each brand is required to continue to maintain and improve its sales performance (Ashfiya, 2025).

One cosmetic brand that strives to maintain its competitiveness amid this fierce competition is Wardah. Wardah is a halal cosmetic brand produced by PT Paragon Technology and Innovation and was founded in 1995. Wardah's main strengths lie in its halal certification and its commitment to providing safe, high-quality cosmetic products tailored to the needs of Indonesian women's skin. Wardah has produced a wide range of high-quality halal cosmetic products, such as powder, eyeshadow, BB cream, lipstick, lip cream, concealer, moisturizers, and facial cleansers (Nurmalasari & Istiyanto, 2021).

Wardah cosmetics is known as a brand that offers high-quality products at affordable prices. Wardah products are well-received by consumers because they are considered to effectively care for the skin and meet the needs of its users. Additionally, Wardah has successfully understood the characteristics and demographics of its consumers and offers products tailored to market needs, enabling it to identify the right market segments. This positions Wardah as a significant competitor to other cosmetic brands in the national cosmetic market (Rohmah, 2024).

Keberhasilan Wardah juga tercermin dari berbagai pencapaian yang diraih. Wardah dilaporkan menempati peringkat pertama di Indonesia untuk kategori produk pelembap wajah, perawatan kulit, dan make-up pada tahun 2018, serta peringkat ketiga untuk produk pembersih wajah. Selain itu, Wardah berhasil mempertahankan posisinya sebagai merek teratas dalam ajang Top Brand Award selama periode 2020 hingga 2022. Transformasi Wardah dari merek yang mencari celah pasar menjadi salah satu pemimpin pasar kosmetik nasional menunjukkan efektivitas strategi pemasaran yang diterapkan (Rohmah, 2024).

In the process of making cosmetic purchasing decisions, consumers consider various factors. Cosmetics used daily not only serve to enhance appearance, but also to care for and maintain skin health. Therefore, consumers tend to choose products that provide the best quality and satisfaction. Factors that influence purchasing decisions include product quality, brand image, and word of mouth (Fitria et al., 2025).

The main factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions include product quality. If a company has superior product quality, its products will have a longer life cycle, and consumers will likely continue to buy those products (Hanum & Rahmani, 2022). Product quality is very important for buyer decisions. If quality is guaranteed, buyers will not hesitate to purchase the product. Quality must ensure that buyers benefit from their purchase. Here, the role of producers in developing and innovating products must continue. Research on products desired by consumers should be a top priority; products are considered to meet consumer needs only if they provide tangible benefits to users (Dharma et al., 2025). These findings are in line with the results of previous studies by Intan & Widayarsi, (2024); Ristianti & Iriani, (2020), which indicate that product quality contributes positively and significantly to purchasing decisions. However, research conducted by Feronicha, (2024); Wowor et al., (2021) found that product quality does not have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

The second factor that can influence a person's decision to buy cosmetics is the brand. Because brand image has an emotional effect on the relationship between customers and goods, brand image is often used by buyers as a basis for making purchasing decisions. Brand image is formed by data collected from various sources consistently. This information is based on impressions, thoughts, and experiences that a person has had (Ginting et al., 2015). Kotler et al. (2024) say that brand image is the perception of a brand as described by the brand associations that exist in consumers' memories. Kotler et al. (2024) state that brand image must be built through all available media in a sustainable manner, and that the message can be conveyed through symbols, media or visuals, atmosphere, and events. As stated in Ayuningtyas & Atmanto, (2024); Rahmaniah & Salim, (2024); Ristianti & Iriani, (2020), brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, research conducted by Wowor et al., (2021) reveals that brand image does not affect purchasing decisions.

Similarly, word of mouth is a factor that influences purchasing decisions. According to Octavia et al., (2023), word of mouth is an activity that provides information about the assessment or opinion of a product or service to people close to the consumer about whether the product or service is suitable for use by consumers. As stated in the theory, word of mouth influences purchasing decisions (Octavia et al., 2023). Research conducted by Melindawaty & Istikomah, (2024); Sintia et al., (2024) concluded that word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, research conducted by Al Qusaeri et al., (2024); Setiowati & Farida, (2024) revealed that word of mouth does not influence purchasing decisions.

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumers' decisions to purchase Wardah cosmetic products, one of the rapidly growing local cosmetic brands in Indonesia. Consumers have many choices of brands with different features and benefits amid increasingly fierce competition in the cosmetics industry. As a result, it is important to know which components most influence their decision-making process. Product quality, brand image, and word of mouth (WOM) are the three main factors considered to have a significant influence in this study. One important factor in making purchasing decisions is product quality. Wardah is known for its safe, halal products that are tailored to Indonesian women's skin. However, consumers' perceptions of product quality may vary, so this study aims to determine whether the main factors influencing their decision to purchase products are indeed the main factors in their decision to purchase products.

This study is an extension of previous research conducted by Ristianti & Iriani, (2020) on the influence of product quality and brand image on consumer purchasing decisions regarding Nature Republic in Surabaya. The main difference in this study is the addition of a new independent variable, namely word of mouth, which is taken from the study by

Octavia et al., (2023) , and the expansion of the object of study to include Wardah cosmetic products. This study aims to examine in greater depth the factors that influence purchasing decisions, particularly in the growing cosmetics market.

This research is expected to provide theoretical benefits in strengthening the marketing management literature on halal cosmetic consumer behavior. Practically, the findings provide strategic recommendations for manufacturers to understand consumer preferences at the academic level, in order to maintain customer loyalty amidst the onslaught of global cosmetic brands.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 Methodology

This study aims to ensure that its findings can be widely applied to the entire population, thus requiring accurate representation of the population characteristics in the sample (Sugiyono, 2022). The population in this study consisted of active students at Muhammadiyah University Purwokerto, Jenderal Soedirman University, and UIN Saizu Purwokerto who had used Wardah cosmetics. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which resulted in 120 students. To determine the representative sample size from the population, this study also used the Slovin formula with an error tolerance of 5%. Based on the calculation using the Slovin formula, the sample size was determined to be 120 respondents, who were then used as the research sample.

Purposive sampling is a technique of selecting data sources based on several considerations (Sugiyono, 2022). The researcher only considered students who had used Wardah cosmetics. This study was quantitative in nature. Data was collected from questionnaires using Google Forms filled out by respondents. The questionnaire instrument was designed with statements appropriate to the research objectives and hypotheses and was measured using a Likert scale.

Data analysis in this study used a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method through SmartPLS software. This method was chosen because it is capable of analyzing causal relationships between latent constructs while simultaneously evaluating the quality of measurement instruments. The measurement model was evaluated by testing the validity of indicators through outer loading values, internal reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, and convergent validity through Average Variance Extracted (AVE). In addition, discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell–Larcker criteria to ensure that each construct was unique and that there was no overlap in measurement between variables (Hair et al., 2022). After the measurement model was declared to meet the criteria, the analysis continued with the evaluation of the structural model to test the relationship between the research variables. This evaluation was carried out by assessing the coefficient of determination (R Square and Adjusted R Square) to determine the ability of the independent variables in explaining the dependent variables. Next, hypothesis testing was conducted by analyzing the path coefficient and its significance through the bootstrapping procedure. This method was used to ensure the strength and direction of the influence between variables in the research model statistically (Hair et al., 2022).

#### 2.1.1 Target Population and Sampling Technique

The reason for using this technique is that the population in this study is campuses with a known student population. The population at the three universities in Purwokerto is unknown.

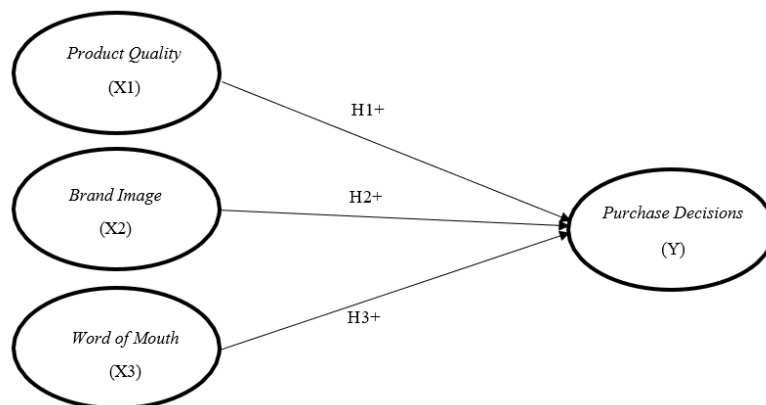
This study applied purposive sampling as part of the non-probability sampling method. This technique was deliberately chosen considering that the population of students in the Purwokerto area is unknown. Based on the predetermined research criteria, a total sample of 120 students was obtained. The respondents were distributed across three higher education institutions, namely 67 students from Muhammadiyah University Purwokerto, 33 students from Jenderal Soedirman University, and 20 students from UIN Saizu Purwokerto.

The uneven distribution of respondents across the three universities was due to differences in student accessibility and response times during the data collection period. Using purposive sampling, the number of participants from Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto was more dominant due to higher information penetration and respondent willingness in that environment. Despite the unequal proportions, the total of 120 respondents was still deemed valid and representative as it met the minimum sample quota according to the Slovin formula to describe the consumer behavior of female students in Purwokerto.

### 2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study is structured as a systematic, structured, and rational framework to explain the relationship between the variables studied. This framework serves as an analytical foundation that integrates relevant theories, previous research findings, and scientific logic in understanding the relationship between the variables studied. Through this conceptual framework, the research is directed to provide a clear picture of the relationship patterns and mechanisms of influence between the variables that are the focus of the study.

In this conceptual framework, it is explained that independent variables are assumed to have both direct and indirect effects on dependent variables. The relationships between variables are formulated based on a strong theoretical foundation so that they can be used as a reference in formulating hypotheses and conducting data analysis. The visualization of the relationships between variables in this research conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework

### 2.3 Research Hypothesis

Based on the framework in Figure 1, the hypotheses in this study are as follows:

H1: Product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

H2: Brand image has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

H3: Word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Test Results

The test results include respondent characteristics, outer loading test, outer model, Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, AVE, Fornell-Lacker test, R Square test, and hypothesis testing.

#### 3.1.1 Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics provide basic information about the identities of the students participating in this study. This analysis aims to provide demographic context for the research findings on the influence of product quality, brand image, and word of mouth on purchasing decisions. The following table shows the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics.

**Table 2.** Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
Gender	Woman	113	94,17
	Man	7	5,83
Age	17–20 year	54	45,00
	21–25 year	66	55,00
University of Origin	Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto	67	55,83
	Universitas Jenderal Soedirman	33	27,50
	UIN Saizu Purwokerto	20	16,67
Have you ever used Wardah products	Yes	120	100,00
Are you currently using Wardah products	Yes	120	100,00
Have you purchased Wardah products in the last month	Yes	120	100,00
Frequency of purchasing Wardah products	Every two weeks	72	60,00
	Once a month	48	40,00
Most frequently purchased Wardah product categories	Skincare	51	42,50
	Body care	34	28,33
	Makeup	26	21,67
	Hair care	9	7,50
Length of time using Wardah products	< 3 month	12	10,00
	3 month – 1 year	48	40,00
	1 – 3 year	60	50,00
Number of types of Wardah products used	1 type	6	5,00
	2–4 type	66	55,00

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frekuensi (n)	Persentase (%)
	4-5 type	36	30,00
	> 5 type	12	10,00

Based on Table 2, the characteristics of respondents in this study were dominated by women at 94.17%, indicating that the majority of respondents were the main consumers of Wardah cosmetic products. In terms of age, the largest number of respondents were in the 21–25 age group at 55.00%, reflecting the young adult age group that is active in the use and purchase of cosmetic products. In terms of university origin, most respondents came from Muhammadiyah University Purwokerto at 55.83%, indicating the dominance of respondents from that university. All respondents had used and were currently using Wardah products and had made purchases in the last month (100%), indicating a very high level of consumer engagement with the Wardah brand. Based on purchasing behavior, the most dominant purchase frequency was every two weeks at 60.00%, with the most widely used product category being skincare at 42.50%. Additionally, the majority of respondents have been using Wardah products for 1–3 years (50.00%) and use 2–4 types of Wardah products (55.00%), indicating that respondents are active users with relatively high usage experience.

### 3.1.2 Test Outer Model

An outer model evaluation was conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument in measuring each variable. This testing included convergent validity (factor loadings and AVE), discriminant validity, and construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability). The results of the measurement model testing are presented in the following Figure 2:

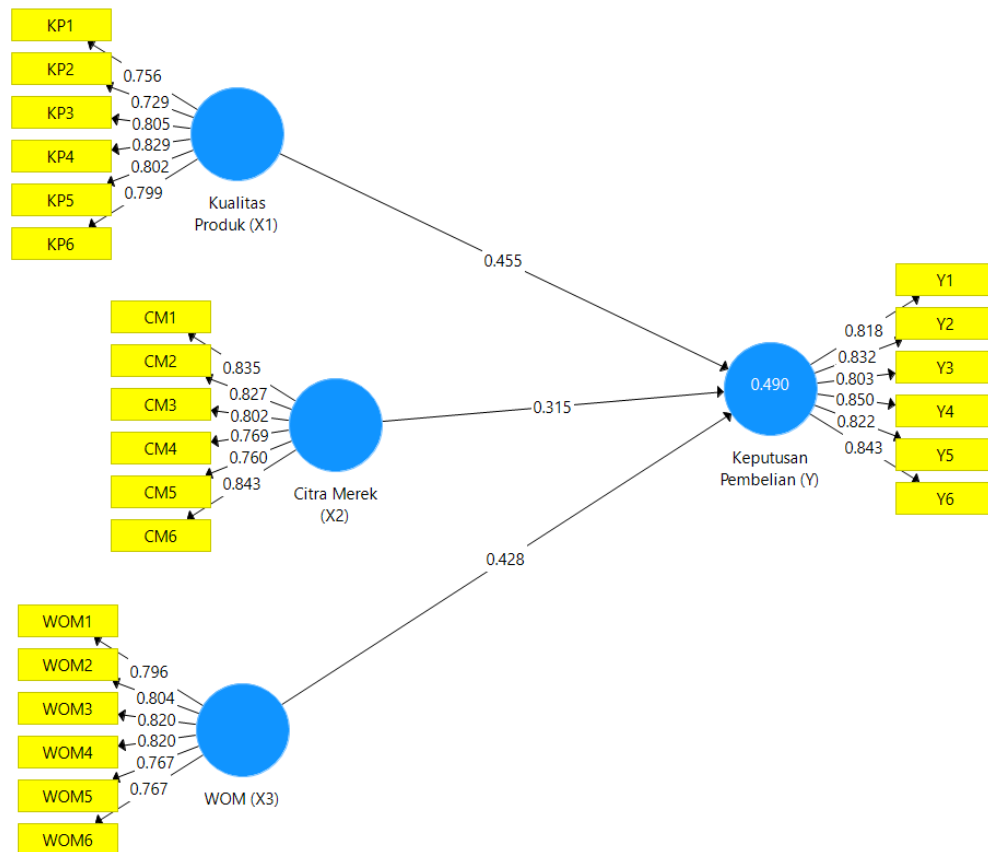


Figure 2. Outer Model

### 3.1.3 Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, Outer Loading

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, Outer Loading

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Indicator	Outer Loading
Kualitas Produk (X1)	0,877	0,907	0,620	KP1	0,756
				KP2	0,729
				KP3	0,805
				KP4	0,829
				KP5	0,802

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Realibility	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Indicator	Outer Loading
Citra Merek (X2)	0,894	0,918	0,651	KP6	0,799
				CM1	0,835
				CM2	0,827
				CM3	0,802
				CM4	0,769
				CM5	0,760
WOM (X3)	0,885	0,912	0,634	CM6	0,843
				WOM1	0,796
				WOM2	0,804
				WOM3	0,820
				WOM4	0,820
				WOM5	0,767
Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,908	0,929	0,686	WOM6	0,767
				Y1	0,818
				Y2	0,832
				Y3	0,803
				Y4	0,850
				Y5	0,822
				Y6	0,843

Based on Table 3, the results of model testing in run 1 measurements using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, all constructs in this study have met the recommended reliability and validity criteria. The internal reliability of the constructs was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with the stipulation that an acceptable value is above 0.70 (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). The test results show that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values that exceed this limit, so it can be concluded that the indicators in each construct have good internal consistency and reliability. Composite Reliability is considered superior in the context of PLS-SEM because it does not assume equal indicator weights, thus providing a more accurate reliability estimate (Ghozali & Latan, 2020).

Furthermore, convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value with a minimum criterion of 0.50, indicating that the construct was able to explain more than half of the variance of its indicators (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). The test results showed that all constructs had AVE values above this threshold, thus fulfilling convergent validity. In addition, testing the validity of indicators through outer loading shows that all indicators have values above the recommended minimum criterion of 0.70, or are still within an acceptable range as long as reliability and AVE are met (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). This indicates that each indicator has a strong contribution in representing the latent construct being measured and that there are no indicators that need to be eliminated from the model.

### 3.1.4 Fornell-Lacker test

The Fornell-Larcker test was conducted to assess discriminant validity by comparing the square root of the AVE of each construct to its correlation with other constructs. The model is declared valid if the square root of the AVE is higher than the correlation between the variables. The following are the test results.

**Table 4.** Fornell-Lacker

	X1	X2	X3	Y
X1	0,787			
X2	0,007	0,807		
X3	-0,046	0,062	0,796	
Y	0,438	0,344	0,427	0,828

Based on the results of the discriminant validity test in Table 4 using the Fornell–Larcker criteria, it can be concluded that all constructs in this study have met the discriminant validity criteria, because the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct is greater than the correlation value between other constructs (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). This indicates that each construct has an adequate level of differentiation and is able to better explain its own indicators compared to other constructs in the model, so that there is no overlap in measurement between variables.

### 3.1.5 R Square Test

The R-Square test is conducted to measure the ability of independent variables to explain the variance of the dependent variable. This value indicates the predictive power of the constructed structural model. The results of the R-Square test are presented in the following table.

**Table 5.** R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Y	0,490	0,477

The Adjusted R Square assessment in Table 5 shows good results. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.477 for Purchase Decision identifies that 477% of the variation in the variable can be explained by the independent variable. Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, the Adjusted R Square value indicates that the model has a good level of stability and does not experience bias due to the number of predictor variables used. Thus, this research model can be said to have moderate to strong explanatory power, so that the variables of Product Quality, Brand Image, and Word of Mouth together make a significant contribution in explaining purchasing decisions, while the rest are influenced by factors outside this research model (Ghozali & Latan, 2020).

### 3.1.6 Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure to evaluate the significance of the relationships between variables in the structural model (inner model). This test used path coefficient values, T-statistics (> 1.96), and P-values (< 0.05) as parameters. The complete results of the hypothesis testing are presented in the following table:

**Table 6.** Hypothesis Test

Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
X1 -> Y	0,455	7,383	0,000
X2 -> Y	0,315	5,581	0,000
X3 -> Y	0,428	6,952	0,000

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in Table 6, it can be seen that Product Quality (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Word of Mouth Recommendations (X3) have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions (Y). The effect of product quality on purchasing decisions is indicated by a coefficient value of 0.455 with a T-statistic value of 7.383 and a P value of 0.000, which shows that the better the product quality perceived by consumers, the higher the tendency for consumers to make purchasing decisions. In addition, brand image also has a significant effect on purchasing decisions with a coefficient value of 0.315, a T-statistic value of 5.581, and a P value of 0.000, which shows that a positive perception of the brand can increase consumer confidence in choosing products. Meanwhile, word-of-mouth recommendations show a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions with a coefficient value of 0.428, a T-statistic value of 6.952, and a P value of 0.000, indicating that recommendations and information from other consumers play an important role in driving purchasing decisions. Overall, these results indicate that product quality is the most dominant variable in influencing purchasing decisions, followed by word-of-mouth recommendations and brand image.

The conclusion that the influence of Word of Mouth (0.428) is almost equal to product quality (0.455) is an interesting anomaly in the consumer behavior of students in Purwokerto. This phenomenon indicates a paradigm shift, where the effectiveness of product functions is no longer the only primary consideration, but must be validated by social testimonials. For students, the risk of purchasing cosmetics is not only financial but also social; therefore, recommendations from peers or opinion leaders (influencers) serve as a form of risk mitigation. The fact that "what others say" is almost as important as "how the product works" indicates that in the Purwokerto academic environment, Wardah cosmetics are not just beauty commodities, but part of a group identity built through collective conversations and community trust.

## 3.2 Discussion

### 3.2.1 The Influence of Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions

In the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), product quality influences purchasing decisions through attitude toward behavior. Consumer perceptions of product quality shape beliefs about the benefits and outcomes of purchasing. When product quality is perceived as high, consumers' attitudes toward purchasing behavior become positive, thereby increasing intention and ultimately driving purchasing decisions. Conversely, low perceived product quality will shape negative attitudes and decrease purchasing decisions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). These findings are also in line with Intan & Widayari, (2024); Ristianti & Iriani, (2020), who state that product quality has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, thereby strengthening the position of product quality as an important determinant in consumer behavior. Therefore, companies need to maintain consistent product quality so that positive consumer attitudes are maintained and encourage sustainable purchasing decisions.

### 3.2.2 The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

Brand image influences purchasing decisions because it shapes consumers' attitudes toward behavior in the decision-making process. Consumers' perceptions, associations, and experiences with a brand will influence their evaluation of their behavior in purchasing that product. When brand image is perceived as positive, trustworthy, and in line with the values held by consumers, attitudes toward purchasing behavior become more positive, thereby increasing intention and ultimately driving purchasing decisions. This relationship is in line with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which

asserts that attitude is the main determinant in the formation of purchasing intention and behavior. The results of this study are in line with Ayuningtyas & Atmanto, (2024); Puspanada & Widyasari, (2024); Rahmaniah & Salim, (2024); Ristianti & Iriani, (2020) who found that brand image has a significant effect on purchasing decisions, indicating that brand image is an important psychological factor in building consumer trust and preference. Thus, consistent efforts to strengthen brand image become a relevant strategy in driving purchasing decisions.

### 3.2.3 The Influence of Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions

The test results show that word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. These findings indicate that recommendations and experiences of other consumers play a strong role in influencing purchasing behavior. From a TRA perspective, word of mouth plays a role in shaping subjective norms, namely social pressure that influences individuals to adjust their behavior to the views of others who are considered important. When consumers receive positive information from their social environment, the tendency to follow such purchasing behavior will increase. These findings are in line with Melindawaty & Istikomah, (2024); Sintia et al., (2024), who state that word of mouth has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, confirming that social factors are important determinants of consumer behavior. Therefore, companies need to create positive customer experiences in order to generate word of mouth that supports purchasing decisions.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study comprehensively answer the research objectives by proving that product quality, brand image, and word of mouth have a positive and significant influence on Wardah cosmetics purchasing decisions among female students in Purwokerto. These findings provide important benefits in strengthening the Theory of Planned Behavior, where purchasing decisions are proven to be born from the integration of positive attitudes towards product quality and subjective norms reinforced by brand reputation and social recommendations. Practically, companies can utilize these findings by integrating innovative quality control and customer testimonial-based communication strategies to maintain loyalty in a competitive market. However, this study has limitations in its geographical scope, which only covers the Purwokerto area and female students as subjects, so generalizing the results to broader demographic groups should be done with caution. As a closing reflection, the practical application of this study suggests that marketing managers should not only focus on the physical attributes of the product, but also actively manage organic conversations on social media to build a sustainable consumer trust ecosystem in the future. To address these limitations, future research should expand the geographical and demographic scope beyond Purwokerto to improve generalizability, while also exploring additional variables such as digital marketing or brand loyalty to provide a more holistic view. Furthermore, subsequent studies are encouraged to employ more proportional sampling techniques to ensure an even distribution across institutions and consider longitudinal approaches to capture the evolving nature of social influence and consumer behavior in the beauty industry.

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