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## BRAND IMAGE AS A MARKETING STRATEGY FOR LOCAL SKINCARE PRODUCTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of brand image as a marketing strategy for local skincare products. In the digital era, social media has become one of the effective marketing tools to build and strengthen brand image among consumers. In addition, celebrity endorsement is also believed to provide added value to brand image because celebrities have a significant influence in shaping consumer perception and interest in a brand. This study uses a survey method involving respondents who actively follow a particular brand's social media and have an interest in products endorsed by celebrities. The results of the analysis show that social media marketing has a significant positive influence on brand image, especially when the content presented is relevant, interactive, and able to increase consumer engagement. In addition, celebrity endorsement also provides a positive contribution to brand image, especially when the selected celebrity has high credibility and an image that is in line with brand values. The findings of this paper contribute to seeing the combination of social media marketing strategies and celebrity endorsements as effective in building a strong and attractive brand image for consumers.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the skincare industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth. This development was triggered by the increasing public awareness of skincare and beauty trends that are increasingly prevalent on social media (Et.al, 2021). Consumers, especially the younger generation, are increasingly open to various choices of skincare products, both from international and local brands. Amidst the tight competition, local skincare products are now increasingly able to compete, even in some aspects have succeeded in winning the hearts of consumers. One of the main factors behind this success is the ability of local skincare products to build and maintain a strong brand image (Solikhah et al., 2024).

Brand image refers to consumer perceptions of a brand, which are formed through experiences and

information received (Annisca & Paramita, 2021). According to (Prayogi et al., 2023), brand image is a consumer's perception of a brand that is reflected in the associations they remember. In the context of skincare, brand image is very important because this product is directly related to the health and safety of consumers' skin. Trust in a brand is a major factor in purchasing decisions, and consumers tend to choose brands that are not only safe and of high quality, but also have an image that matches their values and preferences (Solikhah et al., 2023).

Local skincare brands in Indonesia utilize brand image as an effective marketing strategy. By building a positive image, local products can differentiate themselves from international competitors with big budgets and global reputations (Nurhasanah et al., 2021). Brand image-based marketing strategies allow local brands to highlight their strengths, such as natural Indonesian ingredients, more affordable prices, and product formulations that suit the characteristics of Indonesian skin. This brand image not only attracts new consumers but also maintains the loyalty of old consumers, which ultimately contributes to increased sales and market share.

In today's digital era, social media has become the main channel for building and spreading brand image. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube allow brands to introduce products directly, interact with audiences, and build interesting narratives around their brands (AL-AZZAM & AL-MIZEED, 2021; Moslehpour et al., 2021; Solikhah et al., 2023). Interesting and consistent content can create a positive image that makes consumers interested in trying the product. Collaborating with influencers or beauty bloggers is also an effective strategy, because brands can leverage consumer trust in recommendations from influential figures in the beauty industry, compared to traditional advertising (Hamdan & Aldhaen, 2024). Influencers help build a positive brand perception in a more personal and close way to their audience (Mookda et al., 2020; Omorodion & Osifo, 2019).

In addition to social media, the brand image of local skincare products is also formed through visual elements such as unique and aesthetic packaging design, logos, and visual identities (Hanaysha, 2022). An attractive design increases the appeal of the product and helps consumers remember the brand. Some local brands even adopt eco-friendly packaging to attract consumers who care about sustainability issues. This shows that brand image also includes the values carried by the brand, which are relevant to modern consumers who care about the environment (Solikhah, 2024). Product quality and benefits are important elements in forming a brand image. Skincare consumers are usually loyal to brands that meet their expectations and deliver real results. Therefore, local skincare brands need to ensure that their products match the claims made. Good product quality builds a positive reputation and encourages consumers to recommend the product. Quality that is in line with the brand promise can strengthen brand image and increase consumer loyalty (Kanwel et al., 2019).

Research on brand image as a marketing strategy for local skincare products is relevant considering the high competition in this industry. Local skincare brands need to continue to innovate to create and maintain an image that is attractive and trusted by consumers. A strong brand image not only attracts consumers but also builds emotional connections that can increase loyalty (Schirmer et al., 2018). Amidst the diverse choices of skincare products on the market, consumers often choose brands with images that match their values and identities. Thus, building a positive brand image is a long-term investment for local skincare brands to maintain their existence and develop their position in this industry. This study contributes to determining marketing strategies by utilizing product brand images. The importance of brand image as a marketing strategy for local skincare products shows a shift in modern consumer behavior that increasingly prioritizes values, trust, and identity in choosing products (Nurhasanah et al., 2021).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand image is now one of the main elements in cross-industry marketing strategies, including in the local skincare industry. Brand image plays a significant role in shaping consumer perception and increasing product competitiveness in the market (Krishnamurthy & Kumar, 2018). In the skincare industry, which has recently been increasingly colored by the emergence of local brands, brand image has proven to be able to attract consumer interest and strengthen their loyalty to the product. Many studies have highlighted the importance of brand image in marketing local skincare products, especially regarding the factors that form

a strong brand image and its influence on consumer loyalty. In general, brand image refers to the perceptions and associations that consumers have towards a brand. (Foroudi et al., 2019) defines brand image as "a collection of associations and perceptions embedded in a brand, which can provide a competitive advantage and build consumer loyalty." In the context of skincare, brand image is very important, considering that these products are directly related to the health and appearance of consumers' skin. Therefore, consumers usually pay close attention to aspects of quality, safety, and the level of trust they feel towards a brand before deciding to buy. This is in line with the findings of (Annissa & Paramita, 2021), which confirms that brand image is able to provide emotional and functional value for consumers, especially for products that touch on health aspects such as skincare.

In recent years, the skincare industry in Indonesia has grown rapidly, triggered by increasing public awareness of skincare and widespread beauty trends on social media. The emergence of many local brands provides more choices for consumers. In order to compete with international brands that have a global reputation, local skincare brands need to build a positive and credible brand image in the eyes of consumers. This brand image not only functions to attract new consumers, but also maintains their loyalty, which in turn can increase overall sales (Solikhah et al., 2023).

In marketing skincare products, brand image is often used as a strategy to differentiate local brands from international brands. Many local brands utilize natural ingredients typical of Indonesia, more affordable prices, and environmentally friendly packaging designs as advantages highlighted in their brand image. (Kaushal & Ali, 2020) states that brand image can shape consumer perceptions of products and help brands highlight advantages that competitors do not have. In this case, local brands use brand image to create differentiation that can attract the attention of consumers who are looking for products that are not only safe but also in accordance with local values and needs.

A strong brand image can help local skincare brands attract consumers by highlighting the quality and uniqueness of the product. (Gunawan, 2022) in his research showed that local skincare brands that successfully build a positive brand image tend to have a higher level of consumer loyalty. In addition, consumers are also more likely to recommend products that they consider to be of high quality to others, thus indirectly expanding the market through word of mouth. This study confirms that a strong brand image can create a long-term impact on consumer perception and has the potential to increase sales.

H1 : Social Media Marketing has a significant positive effect on Brand Image

In the digital era, social media has become one of the main channels in building and spreading brand image. (Et.al, 2021) found that social media allows brands to interact directly with consumers and create authentic narratives about their products. Visual platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are very effective for skincare brands to introduce products, share skincare tips, and display user testimonials. The use of social media allows brands to create interesting and interactive content, so that consumers can get to know and feel connected to the brand better.

Collaboration with influencers and beauty bloggers has also become an important strategy in building brand image. Research by (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021) shows that consumers are more likely to trust recommendations from influencers who are considered authentic compared to traditional advertising. Influencers not only introduce products to their followers but also provide a more personal and intimate impression, thus forming a positive perception of the brand. Collaboration with influencers is very effective in the beauty industry, where consumers often seek opinions and first-hand experiences from people they trust (Misra et al., 2019).

Packaging design and visual identity also play an important role in forming brand image. An attractive and unique design can increase the appeal of the product and make it easier for consumers to recognize the brand easily. According to (Annissa & Paramita, 2021), visual elements such as packaging, logos, and brand identities can provide an important first impression for consumers. In the skincare industry, several local brands are now also adopting environmentally friendly packaging designs, along with increasing consumer concern for sustainability issues. This step not only attracts consumers' attention but also shows that brand image can reflect the values carried by the brand, which are relevant to modern consumers who care about the environment (SOLIKHAH, 2022).

In the skincare industry, product quality and the benefits offered are also essential aspects in forming

a positive brand image. Consumers tend to be loyal to brands that succeed in fulfilling their product claims. (Qalati et al., 2021) states that product quality that is in accordance with the brand's promise will help build a good reputation and encourage consumers to recommend the product. Effective and high-quality products can create a closer emotional connection between the brand and the consumer, strengthening the overall brand image.

For example, local skincare brands that are able to show real results from their products will be more trusted and remembered by consumers. This trust is the foundation of a strong brand image, which has an impact on long-term consumer loyalty. In many cases, good product quality can even overcome negative perceptions that may arise from other aspects such as price or distribution (Wijaya & Annisa, 2020).

H2 : Celebrity Endorsement has a significant positive effect on Brand Image

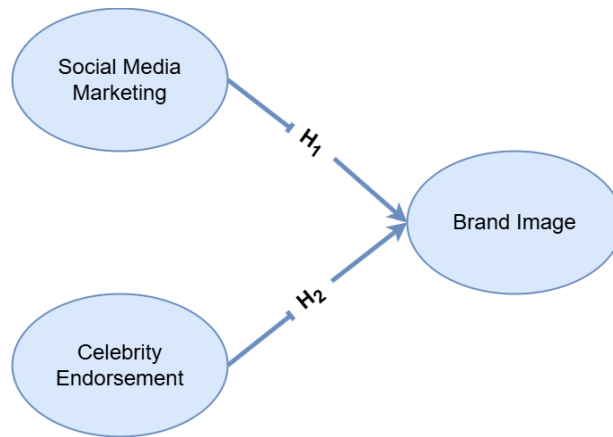


Figure 1 Mechanism of the Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Celebrity Endorsement on Brand Image

### 3. METHODS

This type of research is quantitative explanatory. The object of this study is local skincare products. The sample in this study was selected using a purposive sampling technique (Abi Anggito, 2018; Kuantitatif, 2016). The sample in this study was 154 respondents, from 154 respondents, 127 respondents were obtained who filled in completely. The type and source of data used in this study are primary data. The primary data obtained in this study are in the form of questionnaire results distributed to respondents who are the research sample (Silalahi, 2006). The data analysis used is SEM through the assistance of the SmartPLS 4.0 program.

Table 1 Operational Definition of Variables

| Variable               | Operational Definition  | Indicator   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Celebrity Endorsement  | Celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy in which a celebrity who has certain popularity, reputation and attractiveness is used to promote a product or brand. | 1. Trustworthiness.<br>2. Expertise.<br>3. Attractiveness.                  |
| Sosial Media Marketing | Social media marketing is a marketing strategy that uses social media platforms to promote products, services, or brands to a wider audience.                       | 1. Quality content.<br>2. Interesting content.<br>3. Frequency of activity. |
| Brand Image            | Brand image is the perception or image that consumers have of a brand, which is formed from the experiences, knowledge, and impressions they have about the brand.  | 1. Brand strength.<br>2. Brand superiority.<br>3. Brand uniqueness          |

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before being analyzed, a validity and reliability test was first carried out on the distribution of the questionnaire. Using the SmartPLS 4.0 program, a test was carried out on the factor loading value of each indicator as an analysis tool to assess the level of data validity in this study. If the factor loading value of an indicator is less than 0.4, the indicator can be removed from the research model, while if it is greater than 0.7, the indicator is considered good (Haryono, 2017). The results of the validity test show that all items are valid because they have a Loading Factor value > 0.5 so that the item is removed from the analyzed model.

Table 2 Final Validity Test Results

| Variable                     | Item | Loading Factor | Information |
|------------------------------|------|----------------|-------------|
| Celebrity Endorsement (CE)   | CE1  | 0.848          | Valid       |
|                              | CE2  | 0.900          | Valid       |
|                              | CE3  | 0.847          | Valid       |
| Sosial Media Marketing (SMM) | SMM1 | 0.863          | Valid       |
|                              | SMM2 | 0.837          | Valid       |
|                              | SMM3 | 0.752          | Valid       |
| Brand Image (BI)             | BI1  | 0.901          | Valid       |
|                              | BI2  | 0.907          | Valid       |
|                              | BI3  | 0.851          | Valid       |
| Acceptable Limits            |      | > 0.5          | Accepted    |

The validation test shows valid results because the loading factor values obtained from variables have an overall value of > 0.5 so that the data can be accepted, so all items can proceed to the next stage of analysis. By measuring the composite reliability value, one can determine reliability by looking at the output results in SmartPLS 4.0. If the composite reliability value is more than 0.7 and the recommended Cronbach's alpha value is greater than 0.6, then the variable can be said to be very good (Ghozali, 2008).

Table 3 Reliability Test Results

| Variable                     | Item | Construct Reliability | AVE   |
|------------------------------|------|-----------------------|-------|
| Celebrity Endorsement (CE)   | CE1  | 0.899                 | 0.749 |
|                              | CE2  |                       |       |
|                              | CE3  |                       |       |
| Sosial Media Marketing (SMM) | SMM1 | 0.859                 | 0.671 |
|                              | SMM2 |                       |       |
|                              | SMM3 |                       |       |
| Brand Image (BI)             | BI1  | 0.917                 | 0.786 |
|                              | BI2  |                       |       |
|                              | BI3  |                       |       |

The results of reliability testing on the research questionnaire show that the value of construct reliability for all items is  $\geq 0.70$ . Apart from that, the research also obtained a value for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each item  $\geq 0.50$ . So the results of reliability testing on the research questionnaire show reliable results. Therefore, the data obtained can be processed further for model testing.

Testing Research Model Path Analysis

In PLS, weight estimation for latent variable score components is obtained based on the inner model and the outer model is the relationship between indicators and their constructs. Structural model testing is carried out to test between configurations. The results of the evaluation of the structural model of this research are as follows.

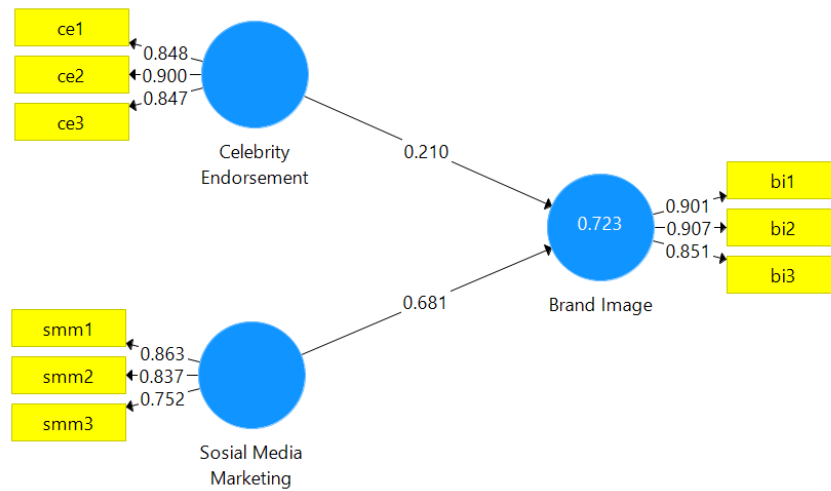


Figure 2 SmartPLS 4.0 Structural Model

Furthermore, decision making to determine whether to accept or reject the hypothesis is based on the resulting significance probability, the value of the significance level is  $\alpha = 5\%$  (0.05) (Ghozali, 2008). The research results are presented in the following table.

Table 4 Path Model Significance Test Results

| Variable         | Original Sample (O) | Sample average (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T-Statistic ( O/STDEV) | P     | Information |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------|
| CE $\square$ BI  | 0.210               | 0.218              | 0.108                      | 1.945                  | 0.052 | Rejected    |
| SMM $\square$ BI | 0.681               | 0.670              | 0.106                      | 6.441                  | 0.000 | Accepted    |

The results of the significance test in Table 4 show that Celebrity Endorsement have a effect on Brand Image but not significance ( $0.052 > 0.05$ ), so  $H_1$  is rejected. Furthermore,  $H_2$  is accepted, which Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on Brand Image ( $0.000 > 0.05$ ).

#### 4.1. Discussion

##### 4.1.1. The positive influence of celebrity endorsement on brand image

The results of testing the first hypothesis, namely the influence of the celebrity endorsement variable on purchasing decisions, show a positive but not significant path coefficient value. Celebrities who are chosen as endorsers are often direct representatives of the brand, so their image can influence consumer perceptions of the brand. If celebrities have a good reputation, relevance to the target audience, and a lifestyle that matches the brand's values, they can help create a more attractive, modern, and aspirational brand image (Solikhah & Rizky, n.d.). In industries such as fashion, beauty, or food, consumers tend to associate celebrity characteristics, such as confidence or a luxurious lifestyle, with the products they endorse, thereby strengthening the brand's appeal in the market (Omorodion & Osifo, 2019). However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in building brand image depends heavily on the fit between the celebrity and the brand (Wachyuni & Priyambodo, 2020). If the celebrity is not relevant to the brand's values or audience, the message conveyed can feel inauthentic and reduce the brand's credibility in the eyes of consumers (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020). In addition, the risk of negative associations also needs to be considered, because scandals or controversies involving celebrities can damage the brand's image. Therefore, the selection of celebrities must be done carefully to ensure that their images can strengthen the brand image positively and are consistent with the brand's long-term goals.

This study is in line with previous research conducted by (Mookda et al., 2020) which discussed that

although celebrity endorsement has the potential to improve brand image, its influence is not always statistically significant. This is due to various factors, such as the inconsistency between the celebrity and the brand represented or the low relevance between the message conveyed by the celebrity and the needs of consumers. In addition, research by (Misra et al., 2019) also found that although celebrities can create positive associations, other elements such as product quality, consumer perceptions of the brand, and additional marketing strategies often play a greater role in building brand image. Therefore, this insignificant positive influence emphasizes the importance of a more comprehensive marketing strategy integration.

#### **4.2. The positive influence of social media marketing on brand image**

The results of testing the second hypothesis, namely the influence of the social media marketing variable on brand image, show a positive path coefficient. With its wide reach and high interactivity, social media allows brands to create a consistent and relevant image with their audience. Through visual content, brand stories, and direct interactions with consumers, brands can effectively convey their values, personality, and uniqueness. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok also provide space for brands to showcase innovations, collaborations, and creative campaigns that strengthen the brand image as modern, responsive, or relevant to trends (Hanaysha, 2022). This is especially crucial for brands targeting the younger generation who are active on social media. In addition, social media marketing allows brands to build brand image through direct engagement with consumers. Interactions such as responding to comments, conducting surveys, or running campaigns that involve the audience create a sense of closeness and trust (Et.al, 2021). These activities help shape a positive perception of the brand as a caring and responsive entity. However, the effectiveness of social media marketing is highly dependent on consistency and content strategy. If the brand fails to maintain the quality of communication or shows an inconsistent image, efforts to build brand image can be disrupted. Therefore, social media marketing must be strategically designed to create authentic consumer experiences and support long-term brand image (Le et al., 2019).

One of the previous studies that explains the positive and significant influence of social media marketing on brand image is a study conducted by (Et.al, 2021). The study found that marketing strategies through social media, such as interactive content, responsive communication, and the use of relevant platforms, significantly improve consumer perceptions of brands. This is due to the ability of social media to create direct interactions between brands and consumers, thereby increasing emotional involvement and trust in the brand.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Social media marketing, through creative content, direct interaction with the audience, and relevant campaigns, helps create a brand image that is modern, innovative, and connected to consumer needs. On the other hand, celebrity endorsement strengthens brand appeal by associating the product with a public figure who has high credibility and influence, thereby increasing consumer trust and interest. The combination of social media marketing and celebrity endorsement has proven effective in strengthening brand image, especially for local skincare products competing in a competitive market. This strategy not only helps build brand awareness but also creates deep emotional and aspirational connections with consumers. However, the success of this strategy depends on the consistency of brand communication and the relevance between celebrities, social media content, and brand values. Therefore, local skincare companies need to design an integrated marketing strategy to maximize the positive impact on brand image and support business sustainability.

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