



# The role of electronic word of mouth on halal brand image and purchase intention in halal cosmetics

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## Article Info

### Article History

Received : 2023-11-26

Revised : 2023-12-12

Accepted : 2023-12-22

Published : 2023-12-25

### Keywords:

Altruism, moral obligation, e-WOM, halal brand image, purchase intention.

### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.20885/AJIM.vol5.iss2.art1>

### JEL Classification:

L82, M31, Z12

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### Paper type:

Research paper



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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study aims to determine the effect of altruism, moral obligation, and halal brand image on purchase intention for halal cosmetic products in Indonesia, mediated by e-WOM variables.

**Methodology** – This study uses a purposive sampling method to collect the data. The primary data was collected through questionnaires with criteria of Indonesian Muslims and following halal forum accounts on Instagram, such as @halskin, @halalcorner, @halalcornercommunity, @halalstyleid, and @lppommui.

**Findings** – Altruism positively but not significantly influences e-WOM, moral obligation positively and significantly influences e-WOM, e-WOM positively affects halal brand image and purchase intention, and halal brand image but does not significantly influence purchase intention.

**Implications** – This research is expected to provide directions and suggestions for further studies in the halal industry, especially with regard to the variables in this study. This research is also expected to help marketing managers see the response/reaction of potential customers to the halal brand image they have built so that they can strategize on the responses that already exist in this study. This study also suggests that halal cosmetic product companies can work with halal forums to discuss their products in halal forums. This aims to make people more aware of halal cosmetic products and increase their buying interest in them.

**Originality/Value** – This present study provides empirical studies that show that e-WOM can significantly influence HBI and PI because social media users can respond more positively when other consumers/social media users recommend the products.

### Cite this article:

Zahrah, A. W., Muslichah, I., & Nazarie, W. N. F. W. M. (2023). The role of electronic word of mouth on halal brand image and purchase intention in halal cosmetics. *Asian Journal of Islamic Management*, 5(2): 97-106  
<https://doi.org/10.20885/AJIM.vol5.iss2.art1>

## Introduction

The word halal comes from Arabic, meaning permissible or lawful (Sahir et al., 2016). A cosmetic product can be considered halal if it meets several requirements, such as ingredients set by Islamic law. The ingredients must be free from alcohol and animal-derived content and should not be used during cosmetic manufacturing. In addition to meeting the requirements of Islamic law, a halal cosmetic product must follow a rigorous scientific review process to produce safe products that use the best ingredients. Thus, halal cosmetic products are not only indicated for the Muslim community but also the wider community/global community (Khan et al., 2021).

Bayu (2022) stated that Islam is the major religion in Indonesia, with a Muslim population of 86.9%. The data were obtained from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Therefore, when discussing

halal cosmetic products, Sahir et al. (2016) argue that there is an increase in lifestyles that may focus on an Islamic orientation in Indonesia, such as the use of Islamic banks, starting to pay attention to whether a brand of cosmetics has MUI halal logo/certification, the development of the hijab fashion industry, and others.

There are many halal-certified cosmetic products, both from abroad and locally. There are 794 companies with 75,358 cosmetic products that have been halal-certified by LPPOM MUI (Pratiwi, 2021). This proves that many companies are realizing the importance of halal certification for their products, especially in the field of halal cosmetic products, which is experiencing an increasing trend.

Data obtained from the Dinar Standard and republished by Adisty (2022) state that Indonesia is the second largest consumer of halal cosmetic products and spends \$4.19 billion US dollars on halal cosmetic products.

The existence of social media is beneficial for companies to promote their products to a wider community. However, there are some disadvantages to social media, such as the mismatch between the goals of social media users and those of a company's marketers, where social media users use social media to connect and communicate with others. By contrast, marketers use social media to promote and sell goods (Zhu & Chen, 2015). With this difference in purpose, social media users will trust more reviews of the experience of using a product with a trusted person when they interact with social media, especially in the context of halal products. According to Fachrurazi et al. (2022), marketers focusing on halal products must be able to build a strong halal brand image. This aims to make potential Muslim consumers prefer their products to those of their competitors. Wilson and Grant (2013) mentioned that a person who makes decisions is based not only on functional and financial criteria but also on the match between the personality/image of a brand with their lifestyle, demographics, and identity.

Research on e-WOM usually discusses the factors/motivation of someone doing e-WOM and the effect of e-WOM itself. For example, research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) discussed the existence of altruism and moral obligation as a motive for someone to engage in e-WOM and the effect of e-WOM on halal brand image and purchase intention. The results of research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show that altruism and moral obligation have a positive and significant effect on e-WOM and e-WOM, which has a positive and significant effect on halal brand image and purchase intention. However, there is also research conducted by Torlak et al. (2012) said that e-WOM has no significant effect on purchase intention. Ali et al. (2017) found results that say that halal brand image had no significant effect on purchase intention.

Based on the data above, researchers found that in previous studies, inconsistent results and limited research were discussing the effect of e-WOM on halal brand image and buying interest in halal cosmetic products. Therefore, researchers want to study The Role of Electronic word-of-mouth on Halal Brand Image and Purchase Intention in Halal Cosmetics.

## Literature Review

### S-O-R Theory

This research refers to the S-O-R or Stimulus-Organism-Response theory, which explains the effects of environmental stimuli on feelings and behavioral responses (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2017). This theory also explains that different attributes of an environment can act as stimuli that impact the internal (psychological) state of individuals/organisms and encourage them to respond behaviorally (Islam et al., 2020).

The "stimulus" in this study is altruism and the moral obligation of a Muslim. In this case, both variables are expected to affect the halal brand image and purchase intention. The "organisms" in this study are people in Indonesia who are Muslim and follow halal forums on Instagram such as @halskin, @halalcorner, @halalcornercommunity, @halalstyleid, and @lppommui. Finally, the "responses" of this study are halal brand image and purchase intention.

This study replicates the research model (Figure 1) of Fachrurazi et al. (2022) with some modifications, as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Past Study on Halal Industry

No	Past Study	Present Study
1.	The research objectives of Fachrurazi et al. (2022) are to analyze the effect of e-WOM behavior on social media in building a halal brand image and its effect on purchase intention. In addition, Altruism and moral obligation are hypothesized as motivators to engage in e-WOM.	The current research aims to determine the effect of Altruism and moral obligation on e-WOM and examine the effect of e-WOM on purchase intention and halal brand image.
2.	The object of research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) is the halal industry in Indonesia	The object studied in the current research is halal cosmetic products in Indonesia.
3.	The results of research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show that there is a positive and significant relationship/influence between moral obligation and altruism on e-WOM, then e-WOM on halal brand image and purchase intention, and halal brand image on purchase intention. However, another study conducted by Ali et al. (2017) found that halal brand image has no significant effect on purchase intention. There are also research results that are in line with Fachrurazi et al. (2022) which state that brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention, namely research conducted by Ali et al. (2018).	The results of the current study show that altruism has no significant effect on e-WOM, moral obligation has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM, e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on halal brand image and purchase intention, and halal brand image has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intention.

## Hypotheses Development

### Altruism and Electronic Word of Mouth

According to Van Emmerik et al. (2005), altruism is defined as the desire to feel concern and empathy for others, which ultimately makes people think about the welfare and rights of others. According to Fachrurazi et al. (2022), altruism allows people to enter a forum/network on social media, which makes them feel more likely to be asked for help from others in a forum/network. The research results of Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show that altruism has a positive effect on e-WOM among Muslims on social media. The results of this study are also in line with those of Farzin and Fattahi (2018), who found that altruism positively influences e-WOM. Based on the results described above, the results of this hypothesis are as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: Altruism positively influences e-WOM.

### Moral Obligation and Electronic Word of Mouth

The exchange of information and knowledge from a member on a social networking site will strengthen their bonds on the social networking site because each member feels an obligation to share or exchange information and knowledge (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). Now the use of Social networks are not only used to communicate remotely but have also expanded to include the moral obligation for social media users to help other members of a community (Farzin & Fattahi, 2018). Meanwhile, according to Fachrurazi et al. (2022), moral obligations in the context of halal products encourage Muslim consumers to share their product experiences with other members. Farzin and Fattahi (2018) also assume that when someone has a strong sense of moral obligation, that person will find it easier to engage in e-WOM on online platforms. The results of research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show that moral obligation has a positive influence and motivates individuals to engage in e-WOM. Farzin and Fattahi (2018) also show positive results regarding the influence of moral obligation on e-WOM. Based on the results described above, the results of this hypothesis are as follows:

H<sub>2</sub>: Moral obligation positively influences e-WOM.

### Electronic Word of Mouth and Halal Brand Image

According to Ali et al. (2018), it is very important to build a halal brand image that will significantly affect consumers' buying interest. According to Molinillo et al. (2017), a responsible brand will strengthen consumer trust and loyalty, and in this case, a responsible brand is responsible for fulfilling halal requirements in the manufacture of a cosmetic product. The results of research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show that e-WOM has a significant influence on halal brand image. Research by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) is also supported by the results of Rahman et al. (2020), who also show positive results from the influence of e-WOM on brand image. Based on the results described above, the results of this hypothesis are as follows:

H<sub>3</sub>: e-WOM positively influences halal brand image.

### Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention

Research conducted by Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) found that e-WOM has a strong positive influence on purchase intention in the automotive industry. This is also in line with research in the cosmetics industry conducted by Sutanto and Aprianingsih (2016), who produced positive results by providing online reviews on consumer buying interest in cosmetic products in Indonesia. Research conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) also showed positive results and significantly affected purchase intention. However, e-WOM can also prevent consumers from buying products that may have poor quality or mistakes (Fachrurazi et al., 2022). Based on the results described above, the results of this hypothesis are as follows:

H<sub>4</sub>: e-WOM positively influences purchase intention.

### Halal Brand Image and Purchase Intention

In e-WOM, recipients of online reviews do not easily trust information from someone they consider to be less credible. If a source is considered to be incredible, they will ignore it and will not be influenced (López & Sicilia, 2014). Of course, this will greatly affect halal brand image (Fachrurazi et al., 2022). Brand image is an extrinsic factor when consumers assess a product before buying it (Wang, 2014). Consumers also usually buy brands that are well-known and have a good brand image to avoid the risk of discomfort when using a product (Wang, 2014). Therefore, a brand image, especially a halal brand image, is significant for Muslim consumers to buy halal cosmetic products. In terms of halalness, when a company states that it provides halal products, it must build a halal brand image to increase buying interest from Muslim consumers (Ali et al., 2018). Research results on the effect of halal brand image on buying interest from Fachrurazi et al. (2022) show a positive relationship between halal brand image and buying interest from Muslim consumers. These results also align with research conducted by Ali et al. (2018), who found that halal brand image has a positive effect on buying interest. Based on the results described above, the results of this hypothesis are as follows:

H<sub>5</sub>: Halal brand image positively influences purchase intention.

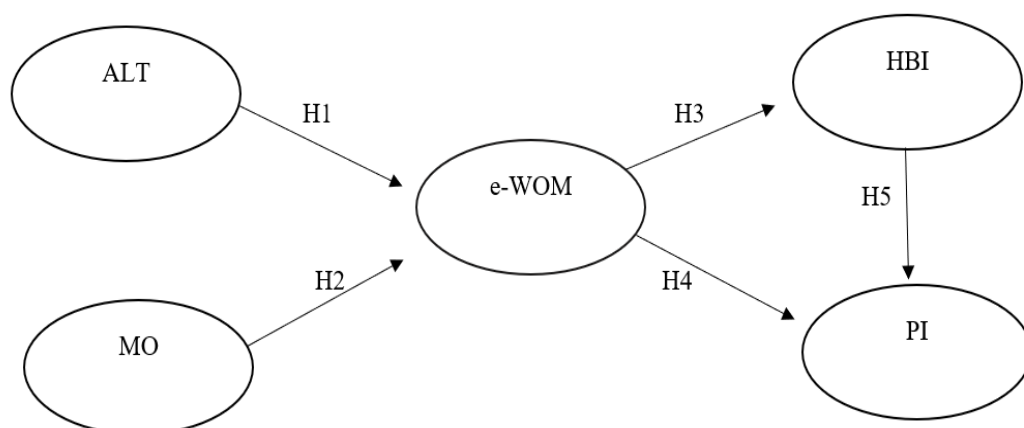


Figure 1. Research Model

## Research Methods

Quantitative methods were used in the present study. Primary data in this study were obtained from the answers of respondents who completed the questionnaires that had been distributed. This study used a purposive sampling technique with Indonesians who are Muslim, followed by halal forum accounts on Instagram, such as @halskin, @halalcorner, @halalcornercommunity, @halalstyleid, and @lppommui. Table 2 presents a brief profile of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Respondents Profile

Category	Frequency	(%)
<b>Religion</b>		
Islam	200	100%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	159	79,5%
Male	41	20,5%
<b>Age</b>		
<18	10	5%
18 – 22	121	60,5%
23 – 28	62	31%
29 – 33	3	1,5%
34 – 39	3	1,5%
40 – 44	1	0,5%
<b>Education</b>		
Junior High School	1	0,5%
Senior High School	126	63%
Diploma	8	4%
Bachelor	59	29,5%
Master	6	3%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	152	76%
Employee	5	2,5%
Private Employee	24	12%
Civil Servant	2	1%
Entrepreneur	10	5%
Other	7	3,5%
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
<2 M	116	58%
2-4 M	54	27%
4-6 M	15	7,5%
6-8 M	8	4%
>8 M	7	3,5%
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Central Java	13	6,5%
Special Region of Yogyakarta	15	7,5%
Jakarta	43	21,5%
East Java	28	14%
West Java	58	29%
Banten	6	3%
Sumatera	19	9,5%
Sulawesi	6	3%
Kalimantan	3	1,5%
Bali	1	0,5%
Nusa Tenggara	1	0,5%
Other	7	3,5%
<b>Halal Forum</b>		
@Halskin	80	40%
@halalcorner	93	46,5%
@halalcornercommunity	6	3%
@lppommui	17	8,5%
@halalstyleid	4	2%

## Results and Discussion

### Validity and Reliability Test

From the questionnaires that were distributed, 200 respondents answered and matched the criteria of this research. Furthermore, validity and reliability tests were conducted in this study. An indicator is declared valid when it has a factor loading value of  $> 0.5$  and is considered reliable when the construct reliability value exceeds 0.7, but reliability with a CR value of 0.60-0.70 is also acceptable provided that the validity value of the indicators in the model is good (Ghozali, 2017). Table 3 shows that all the data from the validity and reliability test results that have been tested can be declared valid and reliable.

**Table 3.** Validity and Reliability Test

Items	Loadings	CR
<b>Altruism</b>		0,833
People should be willing to help others who are less fortunate	0,69	
Helping people with their problems is very important to me	0,73	
People should be more charitable toward others in society	0,76	
People in need should receive support from others	0,80	
<b>Moral Obligation</b>		0,799
My conscience calls me to contribute and share on social media	0,69	
My decisions to share or not on social media is fully in line with moral conviction	0,73	
I feel morally obliged to share the halal experiences of a brand	0,78	
I feel morally obliged to help people in the online community	0,62	
<b>Electronic Word-of-Mouth</b>		0,690
I always share my experiences in using brands with other members of social media	0,65	
I always discussed the products/services offered with other members of the social media	0,64	
I intend to share my experiences in using brands more frequently in the future	0,67	
<b>Halal Brand Image</b>		0,868
My current halal brands are the best benchmark for halal commitments	0,68	
My current halal brands are the well reputed among other halal brands	0,79	
My current halal brands address all my halal concerns	0,80	
My current halal brands are trustworthy about halal promises	0,88	
<b>Purchase Intention</b>		0,878
I will also buy the current halal brands shortly	0,85	
I will buy the current halal brands rather than other halal brands	0,67	
I am likely to buy halal brands that are recommended by members of the social media	0,79	
I would like to buy halal brands that are recommended by members if I had the money	0,76	
I plan to buy halal brands recommended by members in the social media	0,77	

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

### Goodness of Fit Test

After conducting validity and reliability tests, the Goodness of Fit test was carried out by looking at the values of CMIN/DF, RMSEA, GFI, AGFI, TLI, and NFI. The results of the goodness-of-fit tests are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Goodness of Fit Test

Goodness of Fit Index	Standard	Results	Categories
CMIN/DF	5/<5	1,655	Good fit
GFI	>0,9	0,893	Marginal fit
RMSEA	0,05-0,08	0,057	Good fit
AGFI	>0,9	0,853	Marginal fit
TLI	>0,9	0,939	Good fit
NFI	>0,9	0,886	Marginal fit

## Hypotheses Test

In hypothesis testing, there are criteria such that hypotheses can be categorized as having a positive and significant effect. If it met the requirements with a Critical Ratio (C.R.) value above 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05. The results of the hypothesis tests are shown in Table 3.

**Table 5.** Hypotheses Test

Hypotheses	Paths			Estimates	C.R.	P	Results
H <sub>1</sub>	ALT	→	e-WOM	,085	,409	,683	Not supported
H <sub>2</sub>	MO	→	e-WOM	,837	3,892	0,000	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	e-WOM	→	HBI	,757	7,397	0,000	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	e-WOM	→	PI	,548	3,731	0,000	Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	HBI	→	PI	,243	1,664	,096	Not supported

## Discussion

According to Table 5, altruism has a positive but insignificant effect on e-WOM. This result can be seen from the estimated value of 0.085, which means that altruism has a positive effect, with a CR value of 0.409 and a p-value of 0.683, indicating that altruism has no significant effect on e-WOM. The results of this study are not in line with those of previous research by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) and Reimer and Benkenstein (2016), who state that altruism has a positive and significant influence on e-WOM.

The results of this study also show that H<sub>2</sub> is acceptable, or moral obligation has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM. This result can be seen from the estimated value of 0.837, which means that altruism has a positive effect, with a CR value of 3.892 and p-value of 0.000, indicating that moral obligation has a significant effect on e-WOM. The results of this study are in line with those of previous studies conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) and Farzin and Fattahi (2018), who found that moral obligation has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM.

Thus, H<sub>3</sub> of this study can be accepted, or it can be concluded that e-WOM has a positive and significant influence on halal brand image. These results can be seen from the estimated value of 0.757, which means that altruism has a positive effect; a CR value of 7.397; and a p-value of 0.000, which indicates that e-WOM has a significant effect on halal brand image. The results of this study are in line with those of research previously conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022) and Rahman et al. (2020), who state that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image.

E-WOM also has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention or it can be stated that H<sub>4</sub> in this study. These results can be seen from the estimated value of 0.548, which means that altruism has a positive effect, with a CR value of 3.731 and p-value of 0.000, indicating that e-WOM has a significant effect on purchase intention. This is also in line with the results of previous studies conducted by Fachrurazi et al. (2022), and Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), who state that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention.

The final result of this study found that H<sub>5</sub> cannot be accepted. It can be concluded that halal brand image has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intention. These results are obtained from the estimated value of 0.243, which means that the halal brand image has a positive effect; the CR value is 1.664, and the p-value is 0.096, which indicates that the halal brand image does not have a significant effect on buying interest. The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Ali et al. (2017), who state that halal brand image has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intention. However, the results of this study are also not in line with previous research conducted by Ali et al. (2018) and Fachrurazi et al. (2022), who state that halal brand image has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention.

## Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that two hypotheses cannot be accepted, namely H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> cannot be accepted. In this study, altruism has a positive but insignificant effect on e-

WOM ( $H_1$ ) and halal brand image has a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intention ( $H_2$ ). There are three accepted hypotheses:  $H_2$ : moral obligation has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM;  $H_3$ : e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on halal brand image; and  $H_4$ : e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This study shows that e-WOM has a significant influence on purchase intention, meaning that good reviews from a consumer about a halal cosmetic product will make other people interested in buying the product.

This research is expected to have both managerial implications and theoretical and academic implications. This research provides information about the factors that can influence buying interest in halal cosmetic products in Indonesia. This study also shows that online reviews (e-WOM) are very important in building a halal brand image and encouraging consumers to have a buying interest in halal cosmetic products. In this case, e-WOM can help potential consumers more easily determine the halal cosmetic products they will buy, where potential consumers can process and consider other consumers' reviews about a halal cosmetic product that they have used.

This study has several limitations that may be overcome by future research. First, purchase intention for halal cosmetic products can also be influenced by variables other than those used in this study. In this case, future research is expected to add other variables that may influence purchase intention for halal cosmetic products. Second, the majority of respondents in this study were women (79.5%), or were still very focused on women, where halal cosmetic products should not only be used by women but also by men. This is because cosmetic products are not just makeup, but also perfume, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, face wash, deodorant, and pomade. Those who use halal cosmetic products can also be men, but there are still very few men interested in participating in halal forums that discuss halal cosmetic products.

### Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude towards the Center for Management Development, Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Economics, Universitas Islam Indonesia for providing grants for this research.

### Author Contributions

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