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GHEI' BINTANG ISSUE



The Store's Reputation on Consumer Purchase Intention Mediated by Trust through Interpersonal Communication and Word of Mouth

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Abstract

This research investigates the influence of store reputation on consumer purchase intention, with trust as a mediating variable, analyzed through interpersonal communication and word of mouth. The study is grounded in the context of increasing consumer awareness and the role of trust and reputation in shaping buying decisions, particularly in the skincare product market. The objective of this study is to examine whether store reputation directly affects purchase intention and whether this effect is mediated by consumer trust. This study employs a quantitative research method, using primary data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents residing in Gadu Barat Village who are users of DRW Skincare products. The sampling technique applied the Slovin formula, and data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The variables investigated include store reputation, consumer trust, and purchase intention. The findings reveal that store reputation has a positive and significant influence on both consumer trust and purchase intention. However, consumer trust does not have a significant effect on purchase intention and therefore does not mediate the relationship between store reputation and purchase intention. These results highlight the dominant role of reputation in driving consumer decisions, independent of the trust variable. The implications suggest that businesses should focus on building and maintaining a strong brand reputation to enhance consumer interest, regardless of intermediary trust factors.

Keywords: Store Reputation, Purchase Intention, Consumer Trust, Interpersonal Communication, Word of Mouth.

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Introduction

DRW Skincare is a cosmetics company founded by Dr. Wahyu Tri Asmara in 2014 in Purworejo, Central Java, as a response to the widespread circulation of illegal beauty creams containing harmful substances such as mercury. Initially, the products were personally developed by the founder for his wife's needs and later used by his patients, eventually evolving into a well-recognized brand, particularly across Java and surrounding regions. In East Java, especially in Sumenep Regency, DRW Skincare has a substantial customer base, with Gadu Barat Village serving as a key distribution point through a network of beauty consultant agents.

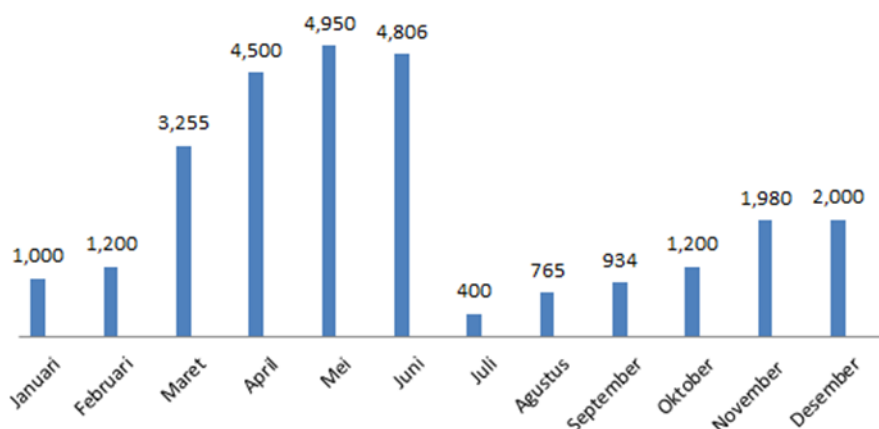


Figure 1. Sales Chart of DRW Skincare from January to December 2024

Source: DRW Skincare Store in Gadu Barat Village (2024)

Despite its extensive distribution network, DRW Skincare's sales chart shows significant fluctuations. According to the sales data, a sharp decline occurred in July, marking the lowest point in the past year. In contrast, April to June 2023 saw the highest sales, largely driven by intensive promotional activities. This phenomenon indicates that consumer purchase intention for DRW Skincare remains highly volatile and sensitive, pointing to potential issues in key aspects such as brand reputation, consumer trust, and communication strategies.

Purchase intention is one of the main indicators in determining a product's market success. In this context, it is crucial for DRW Skincare to understand the factors that influence consumer purchase intention, such as brand reputation, trust in the product, and the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and word of mouth in disseminating product information. Consumer preferences and needs are essential foundations for marketing strategy formulation, as consumers tend to choose products that not only meet their needs but are also trusted and recommended by others.

One of the primary aspects that can shape or hinder purchase intention is consumer trust. According to (Rosdiana, S., Hidayat, R., & Sari, 2022), trust is a crucial factor that determines whether consumers will continue with their intention to purchase a product. Trust is built through the alignment of consumer expectations with the actual product experience, as well as honest and transparent communication from the producer. When a producer offers guarantees regarding product quality or after-sales service, it enhances the consumer's sense of security and confidence.

The issues faced by DRW Skincare in Gadu Barat Village highlight a mismatch between consumer expectations and the actual experience, especially concerning product guarantees. Damaged or defective products cannot be returned, leading to consumer dissatisfaction and a decline in trust towards the company. This affirms that trust is not built solely through

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communication, but also through consistent actions that align with the brand's values and promises.

This decline in trust also affects DRW Skincare's brand reputation in the eyes of consumers. Brand reputation reflects the accumulation of consumer perceptions regarding the company's quality, reliability, and commitment to customer satisfaction. According to (Fajri, M., Lestari, D., & Harahap, 2022), reputation reflects whether a company is considered trustworthy and customer-oriented. When this perception is disrupted, it directly impacts purchase intention—especially in the digital era, where information spreads rapidly through interpersonal communication and word of mouth.

Interpersonal communication and word of mouth play a strategic role in shaping consumer perceptions. Consumers tend to trust recommendations from close associates or those with direct product experience. Therefore, the quality of interaction between consumers and DRW Skincare's sales agents or beauty consultants becomes crucial in building reputation and stimulating purchase intention through trust.

This study is motivated by the urgency to understand the dynamics between reputation, trust, and consumer purchase intention within a local market context that is heavily influenced by informal communication. Previous research has primarily focused on the direct relationship between reputation and purchase intention, without considering the mediating role of trust or the influence of interpersonal communication and word of mouth as contributing factors. Thus, this study aims to fill that gap by examining how mediation mechanisms and communication influence consumer purchasing decisions.

This research also offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on the mediating role of trust in the relationship between reputation and purchase intention, as well as how interpersonal communication and word of mouth strengthen or weaken this influence. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for cosmetics business actors—particularly DRW Skincare—in formulating more targeted communication and reputation-building strategies to enhance consumer trust and increase sales.

In conclusion, this study is not only relevant to addressing the current issues faced by DRW Skincare in Gadu Barat Village, but also provides a scientific foundation for a broader understanding of how reputation, trust, and communication affect consumer purchasing behavior in the beauty industry.

Literature Review

1. Store Reputation

Reputation is the collective perception of consumers regarding the credibility and quality of a store. According to (Fajri, M., Lestari, D., & Harahap, 2022), reputation reflects the view that a company or store is trustworthy and shows concern for its customers. Reputation is shaped by consumer experience, service quality, and the communication conducted by the store with its customers ((J. W. Satzinger, R. B. Jackson and S. D. Burd, 2011), in (Damayanti, N. A., Susanti, R. A., & Ramadhani, 2023)). A good reputation encourages consumers to consider purchasing, as it is believed to meet expectations.

2. Consumer Trust

Trust is the consumer's belief that the store will fulfill its promises, both explicitly and implicitly. (Firdayanti, 2013) explains that trust arises from consumers' perception of the store's consistency and reliability in delivering satisfaction. Trust becomes a crucial element in forming a long-term relationship between consumers and the store (Rosdiana, S., Hidayat, R., & Sari, 2022).

DOI:**3. Word of Mouth and Interpersonal Communication**

Word of mouth (WOM) is a form of informal communication between consumers about their experiences with a product or service. According to (Rumondang, A., Sudirman, A., Kusuma et al., 2020) in (Fina, R., Pratiwi, D. R., & Sukmawati, 2023), electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is a major force in the digital era, as it can influence potential customers' perceptions quickly and broadly.

Interpersonal communication, as a direct form of communication between individuals, plays a vital role in building trust. Warm, honest, and open interaction between a store and its customers can strengthen emotional connections that foster loyalty and purchase intention.

4. Consumer Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the tendency or intention of consumers to purchase a product. (Assael, 1998) in (Stansyah, A., Fatimah, N., & Putra, 2023) states that purchase intention is formed from a combination of perceptions, needs, information, and experiences. Reputation and trust—formed through interpersonal communication and WOM—contribute significantly to this decision.

Based on the existing literature, it can be concluded that store reputation, consumer trust, and communication through e-WOM are three important and interrelated elements that influence purchase intention. Previous studies have examined these variables individually; however, few have comprehensively integrated the relationships between them—especially in the context of trust mediation and the role of interpersonal communication. Therefore, this study offers a novelty by positioning trust as a mediating variable between store reputation and purchase intention, while also considering the contributions of e-WOM and interpersonal communication as supporting elements in shaping consumer perceptions.

Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach, which emphasizes the collection and analysis of numerical data to explain certain phenomena. This method is employed to measure the effect of the independent variable—store reputation—on the dependent variable—consumer purchase intention, with consumer trust as the mediating variable. The objective of this study is to identify the causal relationships among these variables in the context of DRW Skincare consumers in Gadu Barat Village. The research was conducted from November 6 to 14, 2023.

The research was carried out in Gadu Barat Village, Sumenep Regency, which is an active distribution area for DRW Skincare products through the beauty consultant store "Afifah DRW Skincare." This location was chosen due to the high usage of DRW Skincare products among the local community, thus offering a relevant context to examine store reputation, consumer trust, and purchase intention toward the product.

The population in this study comprises all DRW Skincare consumers who shop at the Afifah DRW Skincare store in Gadu Barat Village. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample, which is a method that involves selecting respondents based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The criteria for respondents in this study included:

- (1) being at least 18 years old, and
- (2) being active users of DRW Skincare products.

To determine the number of samples, the researchers used the Slovin formula, which is commonly applied when the population size is known and a margin of error is set—in this case, 10%. Based on a known population of 4,950 users, the calculated sample size was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (1)$$

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$$n = \frac{4.950}{1 + 4.950 (0,1)^2}$$

$$n = 100$$

100 respondents were selected as the sample for this study.

Data collection was conducted through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale to the 100 selected respondents. The data collected were then analyzed using SmartPLS version 4.0, which allows for the simultaneous analysis of causal relationships between latent variables. The testing model included validity testing, reliability testing, and path analysis to assess both the direct and indirect effects of reputation on purchase intention, with trust as the mediating variable.

Results and Discussion

Result

The initial analysis was carried out through outer model testing to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The convergent validity test showed that all indicators of the variables—reputation, purchase intention, and consumer trust—had loading factor values above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators are valid and accurately represent their respective constructs. Additionally, the discriminant validity test through cross-loading values showed that each indicator had the highest value on the construct it was intended to measure compared to other constructs, confirming that the research instruments met discriminant validity requirements.

Reliability testing was then conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha results showed that all constructs had values above 0.70: reputation (0.875), purchase intention (0.796), and consumer trust (0.738), indicating good internal consistency. The Composite Reliability results supported this finding, with each construct scoring above the 0.70 threshold: reputation (0.915), purchase intention (0.868), and consumer trust (0.852). Thus, all constructs were declared reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Structural Model Evaluation

The inner model evaluation was conducted to observe relationships between variables in the structural model. Based on the coefficient of determination (R-square), the purchase intention variable had an R² value of 0.714, meaning 71.4% of the variance in purchase intention can be explained by reputation and trust, indicating a strong model. Meanwhile, consumer trust had an R² value of 0.510, indicating that 51% of its variance is explained by reputation—suggesting a moderate model. The effect size (F-square) test showed that reputation had a strong influence on both purchase intention (1.125) and consumer trust (1.040), while the influence of trust on purchase intention was very weak (0.004).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted through analysis of direct and indirect effects using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4.0. The direct effect test results showed that reputation has a positive and significant influence on both purchase intention ($t = 9.627$; $p < 0.001$) and consumer trust ($t = 16.983$; $p < 0.001$), supporting the first and second hypotheses. However, consumer trust does not significantly affect purchase intention ($t = 0.497$; $p = 0.619$), thereby rejecting the

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third hypothesis. This finding suggests that although store reputation builds consumer trust, that trust does not significantly encourage purchase intention in this context.

The indirect effect test, which evaluated the mediating role of trust between reputation and purchase intention, showed insignificant results. With a coefficient of 0.034, t-statistic of 0.487, and p-value of 0.626 (> 0.05), it can be concluded that consumer trust does not mediate the relationship between store reputation and purchase intention. This implies that store reputation is more effective when it directly influences purchase decisions, rather than through trust. These findings reinforce the importance of reputation as the primary factor in shaping consumer buying intentions, even though interpersonal communication and word of mouth are also relevant in the consumer dynamics of DRW Skincare in Gadu Barat (Najiatun, Wulandari, N., Hidayat, N., Arifah, H. K. N., Khan, H. A. U., & Rohmayati, N. S., 2025).

Discussion**1. Relationship Between Reputation and Consumer Purchase Intention**

Statistical analysis shows that reputation has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention. This is evidenced by a t-statistic of 9.627, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, reputation is proven to be an important factor in increasing interest in DRW Skincare products in Gadu Barat. The better the reputation, the greater the consumer's tendency to buy. Conversely, a declining reputation may reduce consumer willingness to make purchases.

This finding aligns with (Damayanti, N. A., Susanti, R. A., & Ramadhani, 2023), who stated that reputation plays a key role in shaping purchase intention. A positive reputation enhances consumers' confidence in a product's quality and credibility. However, these results differ from (Sandy, M., & Iskandar, 2022), who found that on the Blibli platform, reputation had no significant effect on purchase intention—indicating that the impact of reputation may vary depending on the context or platform.

Conceptually, reputation serves as a positive signal to both internal and external parties about an entity's credibility. In marketing, it can be considered a guarantee of quality, ultimately influencing consumer purchasing behavior.

2. Relationship Between Reputation and Consumer Trust

The analysis also showed that reputation has a positive and significant relationship with consumer trust. With a t-statistic of 16.983 and a p-value of 0.000, it is clear that the better a brand or company's reputation, the greater the consumer's trust. A positive reputation indicates that the company or brand is reliable and capable of meeting customer expectations, as observed in the case of DRW Skincare in Gadu Barat.

This finding is supported by (Halizah, N., Rahman, M. A., & Lubis, 2022), who stated that the reputation of companies such as Shopee enhances consumer trust, as it is believed to provide services and products according to expectations. However, (Aisyah, D., & Engriani, 2019) found that in the case of Tokopedia, reputation did not significantly affect trust due to consumer perceptions of its features and popularity, which did not strongly support the formation of trust.

Therefore, a good reputation should be regarded as a valuable asset, as it lays the foundation for long-term consumer trust and behavior.

3. Relationship Between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention

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Unlike the previous two relationships, consumer trust did not significantly influence purchase intention. This is indicated by a t-statistic of 0.497 and a p-value of 0.619, which exceed the significance threshold. This suggests that even if consumers trust a brand to some degree, this trust does not necessarily lead to an intention to buy.

This finding supports (Damayanti, N. A., Susanti, R. A., & Ramadhani, 2023; Susanti, 2022), who stated that trust is not the only or primary factor in determining purchase intention. Other factors such as promotions, needs, or even brand popularity can also influence consumer decisions. In contrast, (Aisyah, D., & Engriani, 2019) found the opposite in Tokopedia, where trust significantly influenced purchase intention.

In the context of DRW Skincare in Gadu Barat, consumers may already have a positive perception of the product without needing to be explicitly driven by trust. In other words, the brand's strong reputation alone is enough to generate interest in buying, even if trust is not the main driver.

4. Mediating Role of Consumer Trust Between Reputation and Purchase Intention

The mediation test results show that consumer trust does not serve as a mediating variable between reputation and purchase intention. This is indicated by a t-statistic of 0.487 (less than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.626 (greater than 0.05). Hence, even though reputation influences trust and also influences purchase intention, trust does not act as a bridge connecting the two.

This aligns with (Ramadhanti Agil Aulia, 2023), who stated that consumers tend to base purchasing decisions more on reputation derived from customer testimonials and reviews rather than personal trust in the brand. In the case of DRW Skincare, this makes sense, as the brand is already well-known and considered trustworthy by local consumers, so buying decisions are more influenced by brand reputation and visibility (Rahman, H., Abidin, R. Z., & Hidayat, N., 2025).

However, this differs from (Shahnaz, 2022), who found that trust plays a significant mediating role between reputation and purchase intention. In other contexts, trust emerges as a result of good reputation and further drives purchasing decisions.

Conclusions and Practical Implication

Reputation has been proven to play an important role in influencing consumers' purchase intention toward DRW Skincare, both directly and through the enhancement of trust. However, in this study, trust does not significantly affect purchase intention and cannot act as a mediator between reputation and purchase intention. Therefore, strategies to increase purchase intention should focus more on strengthening brand reputation through interpersonal communication and positive word of mouth within the local community—especially in Gadu Barat Village.

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