



Role of Product Placement, E-WOM, and Brand Awareness on Purchase Decision

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history :

Received : 7/10/2024
Revised : 19/12/2024
Published : 31/12/2024



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Volume : 4
No. : 2
Halaman : 117 - 126
Terbitan : Desember 2024

Terakreditasi [Sinta Peringkat 5](#)
berdasarkan Ristekdikti
No. 72/E/KPT/2024

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh product placement pada Drama Korea dan electronic word of mouth terhadap purchase decision dengan brand awareness sebagai mediasi pada Permen Kopiko. Jenis penelitian adalah eksplanatori dengan pendekatan kuantitatif untuk mengetahui hubungan antar variabel. Data dari 380 responden dikumpulkan melalui survey dengan teknik non-probability sampling. Karakteristik responden yaitu berumur diatas 17 tahun, pernah menonton Drama Korea yang terdapat iklan Kopiko, pernah membeli produk kopiko dan pernah membaca review Kopiko melalui internet. Metode analisis menggunakan pendekatan SEM-PLS melalui pengujian inner dan outer model. Pengujian hipotesis diuji menggunakan SmartPLS dengan memperhatikan hasil uji t pada bootstrapping. Hasil pengujian menunjukkan bahwa product placement tidak berpengaruh terhadap purchase decision. Namun, *electronic word of mouth* dan *brand awareness* berpengaruh positif terhadap purchase decision. Selain itu, *product placement* dan *electronic word of mouth* berpengaruh positif terhadap *brand awareness* dan *brand awareness* dapat memediasi pengaruh *product placement* dan *electronic word of mouth* terhadap *purchase decision*.

Kata Kunci: Penempatan Produk, Elektronik Word Of Mouth, Kesadaran Merek

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of product placement on Korean Drama and electronic word of mouth on purchase decision with brand awareness as mediation on Kopiko Candy. This type of research is explanatory with a quantitative approach to determine the relationship between variables. Data from 380 respondents were collected through surveys with non-probability sampling techniques. The characteristics of respondents are over 17 years old, have watched Korean dramas that have Kopiko advertisements, have bought Kopiko products and have read Kopiko reviews via the internet. The analysis method uses the SEM-PLS approach through inner and outer model testing. Hypothesis testing was tested using SmartPLS by paying attention to the results of the t test on bootstrapping. The test results show that product placement has no effect on purchase decision. However, electronic word of mouth and brand awareness have a positive effect on purchase decision. In addition, product placement and electronic word of mouth have a positive effect on brand awareness and brand awareness can mediate the effect of product placement and electronic word of mouth on purchase decision.

Keywords: Product Placement, Electronic Word of Mouth, Brand Awareness

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A. Introduction

The Korean Wave has now spread quickly and easily around the world, including in Indonesia. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu, symbolises the rapid growth of the Korean cultural industry and the export of its cultural products, including television shows (drama series, variety shows), music (K-pop), films, animation, online games, smartphones, fashion, cosmetics, food, and lifestyle since 1997 (Yoon *et al.*, 2017). In Indonesia, the spread of pop culture from Korea began in 2002 with the airing of the first South Korean drama series or K-Drama on Indonesian television stations (I. P. Putri *et al.*, 2019). According to Regina Kim in www.elle.com.sg, Korean dramas are TV shows written by South Koreans that cover a variety of genres ranging from science fiction, romance, horror, period drama, and others with limited episodes between 16 and 24. Korean dramas have long been in demand by some people in Indonesia, supported by data from research company Jakpat throughout 2022 which shows that Korean dramas are the top choice of digital entertainment users in Indonesia. Jakpat's research in 2022 showed that 72% of the 1,109 respondents using digital entertainment services watched South Korean films or TV series through streaming services. The increasing use of social media and the internationalisation of Korean dramas support this popularity (Chandra, 2023). Netflix states that South Korea is the second largest supplier of popular programmes after the UK and Spain ([Bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com)).

Korean dramas that are popular around the world create a new model in product marketing through product placement, which is placing products in television shows or films to gain exposure (Belch & Belch, 2021). According to Soobum Lee from Incheon National University, product placement first appeared in Korean dramas in 2010. Product placement is common in Korean dramas, with South Korean networks earning \$114 million from product placement in 2018, a 15% increase from the previous year. One brand that frequently appears in Korean dramas is Subway, such as in 'Descendants of the Sun', 'Goblin', 'Crash Landing on You', 'Record of Youth', 'It's Okay to Not Be Okay', and 'Hotel DeLuna'. One of the first Indonesian brands to advertise in Korean dramas using this strategy was Kopiko. In addition to the spread of the Korean Wave, the advancement of the internet has allowed word-of-mouth to evolve into electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which includes communication through online media (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Consumers seek product reviews from fellow consumers over the internet which spread quickly in the form of both positive and negative reviews, which occur naturally when people share their experiences (Selvi, 2016). Korean dramas often spark online discussions on aspects of the drama, supported by Vincenzo's inclusion in the list of most mentioned Korean dramas on Twitter in 2021 (Dongs, 2021).

Although research on product placement and e-WOM has been widely conducted, the relationship between these factors and purchasing decisions is still unclear. Several studies have shown that product placement and e-WOM have a positive effect on purchasing decisions, while another research shows the opposite (Fadhila *et al.*, 2023; Irfansyah, 2023). We suspect that brand awareness can mediate the relationship between product placement, e-WOM and purchasing decisions. According to the five-stage model of the consumer buying process, consumers who have strong brand awareness of a brand tend to prefer that brand when making purchasing decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The ability of consumers to recognize or remember a brand in various situations indicates their brand awareness (Widayat *et al.*, 2022). The results of this study are expected to contribute to science, especially in understanding the role of brand awareness in mediating the relationship between product placement, e-WOM, and purchasing decisions and also for companies. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between product placement, e-WOM and purchasing decisions with brand awareness as a mediator in Kopiko products from PT Mayora Indah, which was the first to carry out product placement in Korean dramas (Iqlima & Saraswati, 2022).

The Influence of Product Placement on Purchase Decisions

One of the factors contributing to the success of product placement is the strategic placement of products that align with the narrative. Another research demonstrates a significant positive relationship between product placement and purchase decisions (Luthfianur & Listiani, 2020). Product placement that aligns with the storyline, thereby making the audience

indirectly aware of the brand and increasing their attention, can encourage consumers to make purchase decisions (Sholikha & Soliha, 2024). Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H1: Product placement (X1) significantly affects purchase decision (X3).

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has a direct and significant relationship with purchasing decisions. Consumers often search for product reviews on the Internet, and e-WOM significantly influences their purchasing decisions (Mandasari et al., 2023; Oktaviani et al., 2022). e-WOM communication aids consumers in determining their product choices prior to making purchases. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H2: Electronic word of mouth (X2) significantly affects purchase decision (X3)

The Influence of Product Placement on Brand Awareness

According to the 2022 Amazon Ads and Environics Research report, 79% of global consumers are more likely to buy from brands whose values align with theirs. Brand awareness is important because it helps develop a strong identity. Companies can increase brand awareness through advertising, including product placement, which can have a strong influence if linked to the main character or storyline, thereby creating interest and building brand awareness (Blakeman, 2018). Another research also found the influence of product placement on brand awareness. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward (Nadeak & Setiawan, 2023):

H3: Product placement (X1) significantly affects brand awareness (Y).

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Awareness

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) from consumers who have purchased products can increase brand awareness (Widiyan & Sienatra, 2024). Good reviews of products have great power to increase brand awareness. The higher the e-WOM value, the greater the influence on brand awareness (S. Putri & Putri, 2023). Informative, accurate, and trustworthy e-WOM will make consumers and potential consumers remember and analyze the brand. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H4: Electronic word of mouth (X2) significantly affects brand awareness (Y)

The Influence of Brand Awareness on Purchase Decisions

Brand awareness has an important role in helping consumers get the desired benefits or uses from products. Thus, brand awareness is the main factor that increases the possibility of someone choosing a product from a particular brand. This finding is in line with another research, who explain that the more consumers understand a brand, the greater the potential for consumers to make purchase decisions (Febrian et al., 2024). This research concludes that brand awareness significantly influences purchase decisions. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H5: Brand awareness (X3) significantly affects purchase decision (Y)

The influence between Product Placement and Electronic Word of Mouth on Purchase Decisions is mediated by Brand Awareness

If there are other variables that act as mediators between the two variables, the relationship between product placement, a type of advertising, and purchase decisions should improve (Widayat et al., 2022). Advertising plays an important role in increasing brand awareness by creating advertisements that are attractive to consumers. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) can influence consumers in building brand awareness, making it easier for them to remember and recognize brands among competitors, thus making purchasing decisions easier (Citrasumidi & Pasaribu, 2023). Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H6: Product placement (X1) significantly affects purchase decision (Y) which is mediated by brand awareness (Z)

H7: Electronic word of mouth (X2) significantly affects purchase decision (Y) which is mediated by brand awareness (Z)

B. Methodology

This research-approach is quantitative, by examining a certain population group or sample with an explanatory research type. The sample of this study was taken from a population that met the criteria using a

purposive sampling technique, namely respondents who had watched Korean dramas containing Kopiko advertisements, read Kopiko product reviews on the internet or social media, and bought Kopiko products. This study uses Roscoe's Theory to determine the sample size, which ranges from 5 to 10 times the number of statement items (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). So, the number of samples used in this study was 380 respondents (10 x 38 items = 380). This study uses data sources in the form of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from a questionnaire using a Likert scale. Secondary data used in this study were books, references, electronic media, journals, publications, and previous research. The data analysis method in this study used a structural equation model (SEM) and least squares (PLS) with validity, reliability, and hypothesis tests (bootstrapping).

C. Result And Discussion

Gender

Based on the data obtained, of the 380 respondents in this study, there were 283 female respondents and 97 male respondents. In percentage terms, 74% of respondents were female and 26% of respondents were male. This comparison suggests that the female gender dominates Korean drama audiences.

Age Range

In this study, respondents will be grouped according to their age range: 18–20 years, 21–25 years, 26–30 years, and over 30 years. Based on the data obtained, of the 380 respondents who took part in this research, there were 70 (18%) respondents aged 18–20, 179 (47%) respondents aged 21–25, 72 (19%) respondents aged 26–30, and 16 (16%) respondents aged over 30 years.

Occupation

In this research, students were the dominant group with the highest contribution, reaching 175 respondents (46%). Private employees came next with 116 respondents (31%), followed by entrepreneurs with 64 respondents (17%), civil servants (PNS) with 13 respondents (3%), and other groups with 12 respondents (3%).

Income

Most respondents, 173 out of a total of 380 (46%), have expenses of Rp1,000,000–Rp2,500,000 per month. Furthermore, 122 respondents (32%) have expenses of Rp2,500,000–Rp5,000,000 per month, and 47 respondents (12%) have expenses of less than Rp1,000,000 per month. Meanwhile, 38 respondents or 10% have expenses of more than Rp5,000,000 per month.

Outer Model

The outer model test in SEM PLS is to describe the relationship between latent variables and their indicators (Hair et al., 2022). Researchers using SmartPLS use this test to evaluate the validity and reliability of their research instruments.

Validity

Validity tests as the degree to which the indicators of a construct collectively measure their intended outcomes (Hair et al., 2022). Validity testing is carried out by measuring convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Convergent Validity

The data is declared valid if the outer loadings of all items exceed 0.7 and the AVE exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2022). The Outer Loading and AVE Result reveals that we obtained these outer loadings by eliminating items PP7, PP8, EWOM1, BA1, PD5, and PD11, which were invalid in the first stage due to their outer loading values below 0.7. Apart from that, the table also shows that all variables in this study have an AVE value of more than 0.5. This states that the manifest variable is able to explain the latent variable well and is a valid measurement instrument in this research.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test, using the Fornell-Lacker criterion value, reveals that all indicators in each variable can serve as measurement instruments in this research. This can be seen from the root AVE > latent variable correlation (Fornell & Larcker in Hair et al., 2022). The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Result demonstrates the validity of all research instruments, with the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) value being less than 0.90 (Hair et al., 2022). Therefore, all research instruments can be used as measurement instruments in this research.

Reliability

Based on the reliability test results in Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability results, it is known that the composite reliability and Cronbach alpha values for each variable have a value of > 0.7, so it can be concluded that this research questionnaire is reliable and consistent, and the research can be continued to the next stage (Ghozali & Latan, 2021).

Inner Model

Table 5. R Square Result

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BA	0,267	0,263
PD	0,502	0,498

The R-Square test on brand awareness yielded a result of 0.267 in the table above, corresponding to 27% of the purchase decision variable. Meanwhile, 73% is described as a variable outside the model. The R2 value for the brand awareness variable is considered moderate for this model based on the theory of Ghozali and Latan. The R-Square test value for the purchase decision variable is 0.502, or 50% of the brand awareness variable. Meanwhile, 50% is explained as a variable outside the model. According to Ghozali's theory, the R2 value of the purchase decision variable indicates a model with an intermediate value. The greater the R2 value, the better the structural equation between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Table 6. Predictive Relevance (Q2) Result

	Q ²
BA	0,147
PD	0,293

Q2 is used to validate the model's predictive ability. The quantity Q2 is valued within the range 0 < Q2 < 1. The smaller the difference between the predicted value and the original value, the greater the Q2 criterion, and thus, the greater the level of accuracy and predictive relevance of the model (Hair et al., 2022).

Goodness of Fit (GoF)

$GoF : \sqrt{AVE} \times \sqrt{R^2}$

$GoF : \sqrt{0,593} \times \sqrt{0,380}$

$GoF : 0,479$

The GoF value into several levels, specifically 0.10 (low GoF), 0.25 (moderate GoF), and 0.36 (high GoF). Based on the calculation results, GoF has a good (large) value above 0.36.

Discussion

The results of research instrument testing show that product placement cannot influence purchase decisions. The findings from previous research can be used as a reference for rejecting the hypothesis because, in this research, there was no influence of product placement on purchase decisions (Fadhila et al., 2023). The hypothesis's lack of influence becomes evident when Kopiko's product placement fails to effectively integrate

into the drama narrative. If Kopiko only appears as a background element without significant development, the audience may not pay much attention. This can reduce the potential to influence purchase decisions. A lack of emphasis can also arise if the product placement is not significantly involved in character interactions or plot development.

Other results show that EWOM has a strong effect on purchasing decisions. This study strengthens the findings from another research stated that a positive and significant effect of EWOM on purchasing decisions (Pratiwi & Maskur, 2023; Rohmah *et al.*, 2023). These results confirm that consumers place a high value on the positive recommendations or reviews that Kopiko products receive through EWOM. Based on the questionnaire answers, many respondents know that Kopiko is a delicious and high-quality candy. Consumer trust in the opinions of fellow consumers through positive comments can be an important factor in shaping purchasing decisions. Based on this research, it can be concluded that Korean drama viewers buy Kopiko candy because of positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations.

The same results show that product placement plays a role in increasing brand awareness. This finding reinforces the previous research (Herawan & Erdiansyah, 2023). This research explains that strategic product placement in the context of media broadcasts can effectively influence consumer perceptions and ultimately increase product brand awareness. This suggests that Kopiko's product placement marketing strategy in several Korean drama titles effectively fosters brand understanding and recognition among Korean drama viewers. Respondents in this study considered Kopiko as a candy brand that is quite familiar. Therefore, when Kopiko products appeared in Korean dramas, brand exposure increased significantly. In addition, viewers who frequently encounter Kopiko products through product placement tend to recognise the brand more.

Further findings show that EWOM affects brand awareness and indicates that it can increase brand knowledge in the mass media. This means that the more informative the EWOM of a product, the greater the consumer brand awareness of the product (Widayat *et al.*, 2022). Kopiko consistently appears in several Korean drama titles which can increase the frequency of brand exposure. The intensity of EWOM increases because some Korean drama titles that contain Kopiko products get positive reviews and comments. The fact that Kopiko is an Indonesian brand that successfully promotes its products through placement in Korean dramas can further increase awareness of the Kopiko brand. Based on respondents' answers to the opinion balance indicator in electronic word of mouth, they feel that positive reviews that go viral among audiences, especially in the social media era, can reinforce positive EWOM, create buzz around the brand, and ultimately can increase brand awareness.

In addition, this study also proves that brand awareness affects purchasing decisions. Previous research showed a positive and significant effect of brand awareness on purchasing decisions, so these findings are consistent (Chaerillya *et al.*, 2023; Febrian *et al.*, 2024). Respondents' answers placed the brand recognition indicator in the good category with the highest score. In this case, Kopiko's easy-to-remember logo increases recall, thus facilitating purchasing decisions. A high level of brand awareness increases the likelihood of Kopiko being 'top of mind' when respondents consider buying candy products.

Viewers who feel familiar with the Kopiko brand through product placement tend to feel more comfortable to choose Kopiko when they are at the purchase decision stage. This study concludes that respondents who watch Korean dramas believe that brand awareness generated from product placement can influence their purchasing decisions. Therefore, there is an indirect effect of product placement on purchasing decisions mediated by brand awareness. The results of this study reflect the successful mediation of brand awareness, which shows that the direct effect of product placement on purchasing decisions is not significant. The strong relationship between product placement and purchasing decisions suggests that brand awareness can mediate this relationship. These results support previous studies which prove the influence of brand awareness on purchasing decisions (Alfarez *et al.*, 2024; Awuy *et al.*, 2024).

Finally, this study found that brand awareness is able to mediate the effect of EWOM on Kopiko purchasing decisions. This result is in accordance with previous research which shows that brand awareness mediates the positive and significant influence of EWOM on purchasing decisions (Citrasumidi & Pasaribu, 2023). Based on the respondents' answers, some decided to buy Kopiko candy after seeing positive reviews or recommendations from others. Positive EWOM can increase brand awareness of the Kopiko brand because the information reaches a wider audience through electronic media. With increased brand awareness, audiences

become more familiar and recognise Kopiko products which will influence purchasing decisions. When a conversation occurs through EWOM that motivates the purchase of Kopiko candy. The target audience becomes more familiar with the Kopiko brand and ultimately decides to buy Kopiko candy.

Table 7. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Result
H1	0,009	0,011	0,033	0,279	0,781	Rejected
H2	0,195	0,196	0,049	3,995	0,000	Accepted
H3	0,342	0,338	0,079	4,315	0,000	Accepted
H4	0,260	0,264	0,070	3,697	0,000	Accepted
H5	0,599	0,603	0,041	14,532	0,000	Accepted

Sumber: Data Penelitian (2023)

Table 8. Special Indirect Effect (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Result
H6	0,205	0,204	0,050	4,115	0,000	Accepted
H7	0,156	0,159	0,042	3,712	0,000	Accepted

D. Conclusions

There is a relationship between product placement variables and brand awareness, indicating that Kopiko's product placement marketing strategy in several Korean drama titles is able to increase brand understanding and recognition among the audience. In addition, the relationship between the electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) variable and brand awareness shows that positive reviews of the Kopiko brand on social media can strengthen positive e-WOM, create buzz around the brand, and increase brand awareness. However, there is no correlation between Kopiko's product placement in Korean dramas and viewer purchase decisions, likely due to a lack of optimization in the use of product placement in marketing strategies. On the other hand, there is a connection between e-WOM and purchase decisions, where Korean drama viewers buy Kopiko because of positive reviews and recommendations from e-WOM. The relationship between brand awareness and purchase decisions shows that the higher the brand awareness, the higher the urge to buy Kopiko. Brand awareness can mediate the influence of Kopiko's product placement in Korean dramas on purchase decisions, as e-WOM stimulates Kopiko purchases, and viewers with greater brand familiarity ultimately make the purchase. Similarly, brand awareness can mediate the influence of e-WOM on purchase decisions, leading audiences familiarized with Kopiko through product placement to choose Kopiko more confidently.

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