The Role Of Brand Image In Mediating The Effect Of Electronic Word Of Mouth On Repurchase Intention Among Indonesian Consumers Who Use Coupang In South Korea

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) on repurchase intention, the effect of e-WOM on brand image, the effect of brand image on repurchase intention, and the mediating role of brand image among Indonesian consumers using Coupang in South Korea. The study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Data were collected via a questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS. The test results indicate that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention, with a path coefficient of 0.207, a t-statistic of 3.853, and $p < 0.001$. e-WOM also had a positive and significant effect on brand image, with a coefficient of 0.428, a t-statistic of 7.528, and $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, brand image had a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention, with a coefficient of 0.643, a t-statistic of 13.922, and $p < 0.001$. The results of the indirect effect test indicate that brand image mediates the effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention, with a coefficient of 0.275, a t-statistic of 6.443, and $p < 0.001$. The R^2 values of 0.183 for brand image and 0.570 for repurchase intention indicate that the model explains 18.3% and 57% of the variance, respectively. These findings underscore the importance of electronic word of mouth and brand image in driving repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers using Coupang in South Korea.

Keywords: *Electronic word of mouth, brand image, repurchase intention*

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Theme: Navigating The Future: Business and Social Paradigms in a Transformative Era.
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Introduction

Advances in information and communication technology have brought significant changes to business activities and consumer behavior. Advances in digital technology have driven a shift in transaction patterns from conventional commerce toward electronic commerce (e-commerce). Through e-commerce, consumers can search for information, compare products, read user reviews, and make purchases without having to visit a store in person. These conditions have made e-commerce platforms a vital alternative for meeting the needs of modern consumers.

Competition in the e-commerce business not only requires companies to attract new customers but also to retain those who have already made purchases. A company's success in retaining customers is closely tied to consumers' willingness to return to the same platform. Repurchase intention ( ) is a crucial aspect of consumer behavior because it reflects an individual's tendency to make future purchases.

Repurchase intention differs from an actual repeat purchase. Repurchase intention refers to a consumer's intention or tendency, whereas an actual repeat purchase is a transaction that has already taken place. In the context of e-commerce, repurchase intention can be influenced by various factors, such as previous purchasing experiences, perceptions of the brand, information received from other consumers, and evaluations of products and services. Therefore, companies need to understand the factors that can strengthen or weaken consumers' intention to make future transactions.

One relevant factor to examine is electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Mesra et al. (2021) define e-WOM as positive or negative statements made by prospective consumers—in this case, prospective students or former students—regarding a product or company via the internet. This information can be found in the form of product reviews, user comments, star ratings, recommendations on social media, discussion forums, and various digital communities.

In the e-commerce environment, e-WOM plays a crucial role because consumers cannot always see or inspect products in person before making a purchase. Consumers often rely on the experiences of other users to get a sense of product quality, how well the item matches its description, delivery speed, ease of transaction, and service quality. Reviews that are deemed relevant and trustworthy can help consumers reduce uncertainty when shopping online.

However, e-WOM does not always have the same impact on every consumer. Positive reviews have the potential to boost consumer confidence, while negative reviews can raise doubts about a product or platform. Consumers may also consider the credibility of the information source, the comprehensiveness of the review, their personal experiences, and how well the information aligns with their needs. Therefore, the influence of e-WOM on repurchase intent must be examined by considering the mechanisms that explain how digital information shapes consumers' perceptions of a brand.

One mechanism that can explain this relationship is brand image. Keller (1993) defines brand image as the perception of a brand as reflected through brand associations in consumers' memories. These associations are formed through experiences, information, marketing communications, and consumer interactions with the brand. Brand image can reflect consumers' evaluations of a brand's reputation, characteristics, benefits, and advantages compared to other brands.

In the context of e-commerce, brand image relates to consumers' perceptions of a platform's reputation, service reliability, ease of use, product variety, and shopping experience. Information received through e-WOM can strengthen or weaken these associations. Positive reviews deemed credible can foster a more favorable perception of the platform, while repeated negative reviews can lead to less favorable associations.

Brand image is further linked to repurchase intention. Consumers who hold a positive image of a platform are more likely to consider it for future transactions. Conversely, a poor

brand image may lead consumers to consider alternative platforms. However, a positive brand image does not always guarantee repeat purchases, as consumer decisions can also be influenced by price, needs, product availability, transaction experience, and other factors.The relationship between e-WOM, brand image, and repurchase intention becomes particularly intriguing when examined among consumers who use e-commerce platforms in their home countries. One relevant platform in this context is Coupang, an e-commerce platform operating in South Korea. Coupang serves as a case study to examine how digital information and brand perceptions relate to consumers' repurchase intentions.

Basnet et al. (2023) conducted a study on Coupang customer satisfaction among international students in Busan, South Korea. The study involved 127 students at Kyungsung University and examined the relationship between the modern 7P marketing mix and customer satisfaction. This study demonstrates that the Coupang customer experience in the context of international users has become a subject of academic research. However, it did not specifically examine e-WOM's effect on repurchase intention through brand image among Indonesian consumers.

Indonesian consumers living in South Korea represent an interesting group to study because they interact with a market environment, language, and shopping habits that differ from those in Indonesia. In meeting their daily needs, these consumers can utilize digital information, buyer reviews, recommendations from friends, and the experiences of community members to evaluate available products and services. The information obtained can shape their assessment of Coupang and influence their decision to shop on the platform again.

However, the behavior of Indonesian Coupang users in South Korea cannot be assumed to be the same as that of e-commerce users living in Indonesia. Differences in market environments, platform usage experiences, shopping habits, and information sources used can lead to differing evaluations. Therefore, research is needed to test whether e-WOM is related to repurchase intent and whether this relationship can be explained through brand image among this consumer group.

A study by Putri, Rizan, and Febrilia (2024) examined the influence of e-WOM on repurchase intention, with brand image and brand trust serving as mediating variables among Shopee e-commerce users in Jakarta. The study involved 264 respondents and reported that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on brand image and repurchase intention. Brand image was also reported to have a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. These findings demonstrate the relevance of the relationship between e-WOM, brand image, and repurchase intention in the context of e-commerce. A study by Sandra and Evanita (2025) also examined the relationship between e-WOM and repurchase intention, with brand image as a mediating variable, among ShopeeFood users in Padang. The study involved 153 respondents and reported a positive effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention, an effect of e-WOM on brand image, and an effect of brand image on repurchase intention. The study also reported an indirect effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention via brand image.

Additionally, Delviana, Sarwoko, and Hidayat (2023) examined the role of e-WOM in repurchase decisions, with brand image serving as a mediating variable among consumers of Marcks powder products in Malang. This study is relevant as a point of comparison because it positions brand image as the mechanism explaining the relationship between information from other consumers and repurchase behavior.

Although previous studies have discussed the relationships among these variables, contextual differences open opportunities for further research. First, there is a difference in the research subject, as this study focuses on Coupang, whereas previous studies examined Shopee, ShopeeFood, and cosmetic products. Second, there is a difference in the population, as this study specifically targets Indonesian consumers living in South Korea who use Coupang. Third,

this study focuses on testing the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between e-WOM and repurchase intention within this specific context.

These research gaps do not imply that the relationship between e-WOM, brand image, and repurchase intention has never been studied. On the contrary, this relationship has been examined in various contexts. The contribution of this study lies in retesting a model that already has a theoretical foundation on a different subject and consumer group. The research results are needed to determine whether the relationships found among e-commerce users in Indonesia are also supported by data from Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

To clarify the phenomena among the target group, this study should be supplemented with a pre-survey of Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea. The pre-survey can measure respondents' perceptions of digital reviews and recommendations, Coupang's image, and their intention to repurchase. The results must be presented based on the actual data collected from respondents, including the number of respondents, the time of the survey, the statements used, and the percentage of responses. Thus, the research findings are not based solely on theoretical assumptions but are also supported by an initial picture of field conditions. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention, the effect of e-WOM on brand image, the effect of brand image on repurchase intention, and the mediating role of brand image in the effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention among Indonesian Coupang users in South Korea.

The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of marketing management, particularly in the areas of digital marketing and consumer behavior. From a practical perspective, this study is expected to provide insights into the importance of managing consumer reviews and shaping brand image in fostering repurchase intention on e-commerce platforms. Based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled "The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Repurchase Intention Among Indonesian Consumers Using Coupang in South Korea".

Literature Review

2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) refers to communication among consumers via electronic media or the internet that contains information, experiences, opinions, reviews, and recommendations regarding products, services, or companies. This information can serve as a basis for consumers to evaluate a product or service and make purchasing decisions.

According to Moradi (2022), e-WOM involves the exchange of information via the internet—such as feedback, comments, blog posts, reviews, photos, and testimonial videos—which can influence information reception and consumer behavior.

Meanwhile, Haryono's (2022) study examines e-WOM through four dimensions—intensity, positive valence, negative valence, and content—and tests its relationship with online purchase intent.

Based on these perspectives, e-WOM in this study is defined as the perceptions of Indonesian Coupang users in South Korea regarding information, reviews, experiences, and opinions from other consumers conveyed through electronic media about Coupang, which can influence their evaluations and considerations regarding repeat purchases.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) Indicators

For this study, e-WOM can be measured using three indicators: intensity, valence of opinion, and content. All three adapt the e-WOM dimensions used in Haryono's (2022) study, with the positive and negative valence dimensions simplified into a single indicator: valence of opinion

1) Intensity

The frequency with which consumers encounter or read reviews, comments, and discussions about Coupang through electronic media.

2) Valence of Opinion
The tendency of other consumers' opinions regarding Coupang—whether positive or negative—as found through electronic media.
3) Content
The information contained in online reviews or comments about Coupang, such as user experiences, service quality, ease of shopping, and other information relevant to consumers.

2.2 Brand Image

Brand image is consumers' perception of a brand, formed through experiences, information, beliefs, and associations stored in consumers' memories. Brand image reflects how consumers recognize, evaluate, and distinguish a brand from its competitors.

Jiang et al. (2024) discuss the assessment of brand image through brand associations based on three aspects: favorability (positivity or positive evaluation), strength, and uniqueness. These associations can be formed from consumers' perceptions of the brand and the information communicated by the company.

Based on this concept, in a study of Coupang users in South Korea, brand image is defined as Indonesian consumers' perceptions and associations with Coupang as an e-commerce platform, as reflected in the strength of these associations, the uniqueness of its characteristics, and consumers' positive evaluations of the platform.

Brand Image Indicators

Referring to Jiang et al. (2024), the brand image variable in this study can be measured using the following three indicators.

1) Strength of Brand Associations
How strong and clear are the associations regarding Coupang stored in consumers' memories?
2) Uniqueness of Brand Associations
To what extent do consumers perceive Coupang as having characteristics that distinguish it from other e-commerce platforms?
3) Favorability of Brand Associations
To what extent are consumers' associations with Coupang viewed as positive and beneficial to them?

2.3 Repurchase Intention

Repurchase intention refers to consumers' desire or tendency to buy products or use services from the same provider again after a previous purchasing experience.

According to Wu, Widiatmo, and Riantama (2023), online repurchase intention relates to the likelihood that consumers will make repeat purchases via the internet in the future. The study measured repurchase intention through statements regarding consumers' plans and likelihood of shopping online again.

Meanwhile, the study by Pangestu and Setiyaningrum (2023) discusses repurchase intention in the context of e-commerce and examines the factors related to consumers' intentions to make repeat purchases.

Indicators of Repurchase Intention

Based on the measurement of repurchase intention in the study by Wu et al. (2023) and adjustments to the context of Coupang usage, the repurchase intention variable can be measured through the following four indicators.

1) Repurchase Intention

The consumer's desire to make another purchase through Coupang in the future.

2) Likelihood of Repurchase
   Consumers' tendency to choose Coupang again when making online purchases.
3) Repurchase planning
   Consumers' intention to use Coupang for their next transaction.
4) Continuance intention
   Consumers' desire to continue using Coupang as one of their shopping platforms in the future.

2.4 Relationships Between Variables

a. The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Repurchase Intention

e-WOM can provide information that helps consumers evaluate products and transaction experiences. Reviews deemed relevant and credible can reduce consumer uncertainty when considering future purchases. Conversely, negative reviews can raise doubts and reduce the desire to use the platform again.

Putri et al. (2024) reported a positive and significant effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention among Shopee e-commerce users in Jakarta. These findings serve as an empirical basis for testing the same relationship among Indonesian consumers using Coupang in South Korea.

Based on this discussion, e-WOM is hypothesized to influence repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

b. The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Image

Reviews and recommendations from other consumers are sources of information that can shape associations with a brand. Positive information deemed credible can reinforce positive perceptions, while negative information can lead to less favorable associations.

In the context of Coupang, reviews regarding shopping experiences, product quality, and service can influence consumers' evaluations of the platform. Putri et al. (2024) reported a positive and significant effect of e-WOM on brand image among Shopee users in Jakarta.

Thus, e-WOM is presumed to influence brand image among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

c. The Influence of Brand Image on Repurchase Intention

Brand image reflects consumers' perceptions and associations regarding a brand. A positive brand image can make a platform more likely to be considered in subsequent purchasing decisions. Conversely, a negative brand image may lead consumers to seek alternatives.

Putri et al. (2024) reported that brand image has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention among Shopee users in Jakarta. This relationship needs to be retested in the context of Coupang and Indonesian consumers living in South Korea.

Thus, brand image is hypothesized to influence repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

d. The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Repurchase Intention

e-WOM can influence repurchase intention through information consumers receive directly. Additionally, e-WOM can indirectly influence repurchase intention by shaping brand image.

Positive and credible information about Coupang can strengthen favorable brand associations. This brand image may, in turn, be linked to consumers' tendency to return to the platform. Conversely, negative reviews can create unfavorable perceptions and potentially reduce repurchase intention.

Sandra and Evanita (2025) reported that brand image mediates the effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention among ShopeeFood users in Padang. Putri et al. (2024) also found a significant relationship between e-WOM, brand image, and repurchase intention in the context of Shopee in Jakarta.

Although previous research findings support this model, the mediating role of brand image among Indonesian consumers using Coupang in South Korea still needs to be tested due to differences in the research subjects and population.

Based on the above discussion, brand image is hypothesized to mediate the effect of e-WOM on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

e. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between electronic word of mouth, brand image, and repurchase intention.

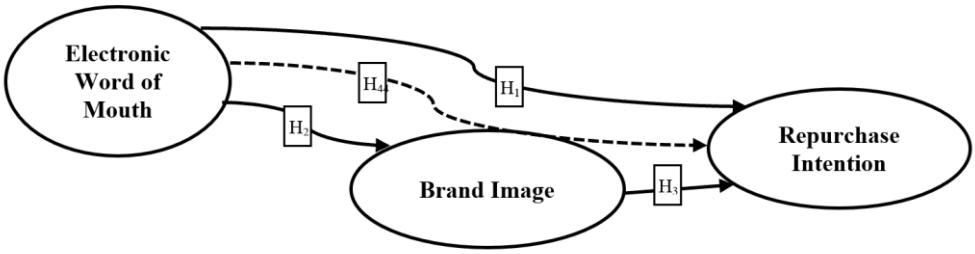


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

f. Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research, the hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

H2: Electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on brand image among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

H3: Brand image has a positive effect on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

H4: Brand image mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

Research Methodology

3.1 Type of Research

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationships among variables based on hypotheses derived from theory and prior research. Data were collected via a survey using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS.

3.2 Research Location and Subject

This study focuses on Indonesian consumers residing in South Korea who have made purchases through the Coupang e-commerce platform. The research variables include social media marketing (X1), electronic word of mouth (X2), brand image (Z), and repurchase intention (Y). Respondents must have been exposed to Coupang's social media marketing as well as electronic information or reviews about Coupang.

3.3 Population and Sample

The study population consists of all Indonesian citizens residing in South Korea who have made purchases through Coupang. Since the exact number of consumers meeting these criteria is unknown, the population is categorized as having an unknown size.
The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for populations of unknown size. Based on these calculations, the sample size was set at 196 respondents. Sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling approach.

3.4 Data Types and Sources

This study used primary data obtained from respondents' answers to a questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from scientific journal articles, research methodology books, and relevant publications that support the theoretical framework and research analysis methods.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected by distributing an online questionnaire in Indonesian. The questionnaire began with an explanation of the study's objectives, a consent form, and screening questions to ensure respondents met the study criteria. Prior to the main survey, readability and pilot tests were conducted to assess the clarity of the statements and the appropriateness of the indicators.

Results

41 Outer Model Analysis

The *Outer Model* analysis, using *the PLS algorithm*, yielded the following:

a.Validity Test

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Brand Image	Electronic Word of Mouth	Repurchase Intention
X1.1		0.799	
X1.2		0.808	
X1.3		0.878	
X1.4		0.813	
X1.5		0.802	
X1.6		0.811	
Y.1			0.741
Y.2			0.833
Y.3			0.697
Y.4			0.833
Y.5			0.795
Y.6			0.865
Y.7			0.790
Y.8			0.704
Z.1	0.764		
Z.2	0.721		
Z.3	0.846		
Z.4	0.828		
Z.5	0.877		
Z.6	0.789		

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, the results of the outer model test using factor loadings/outer loadings show that all indicators for each variable have loadings ≥ 0.60. This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and reliably. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire meet the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

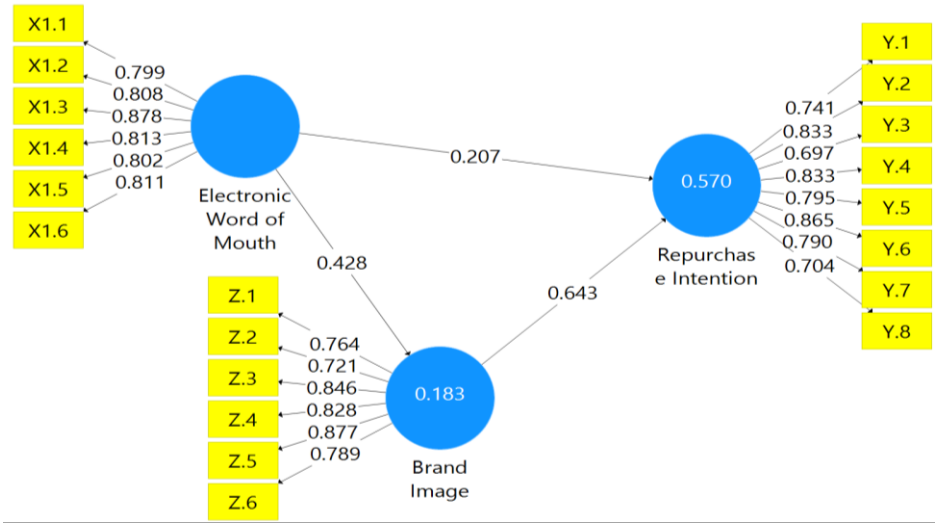


Figure 1. Outer Loadings

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image	0.891	0.900	0.917	0.649
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.902	0.903	0.924	0.671
Repurchase Intention	0.910	0.915	0.927	0.615

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable for measuring their respective constructs. Therefore, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in structural equation modeling.

a. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

When evaluating a model using PLS, the process begins by examining the R-squared value for each latent dependent variable. The table below presents the estimated R-squared values obtained using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R-Square Results

	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Brand Image	0.183	0.179
Repurchase Intention	0.570	0.566

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R-squared values for both dependent variables. For the brand image variable, the R-squared value is 0.183. This means that electronic word of mouth accounts for 18.3% of the variation; the remainder is explained by other variables outside the model. The R-squared value for repurchase intention is 0.570; this means that electronic word of mouth and brand image account for 57%; the remainder is attributed to other variables outside the model.

4.2 Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

a. Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effects Between Variables

Direct effects between variables can be seen in the *path coefficients*. The results of the data analysis show that the values of these direct effects are presented in the following table.

Table 4. *Path Coefficients* (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
Electronic Word of Mouth → Repurchase Intention	0.207	3.853	0.000	Accepted
Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Image	0.428	7.528	0.000	Accepted
Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.643	13.922	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 4 shows the following direct effect values:

1. Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention, with a t-statistic of 3.853 (above 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (below 0.05). This means that Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention because the p-value is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention (Ginting, 2023; Heryana & Yasa, 2020).
2. Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image, with a t-statistic of 7.528—above 1.96—and a p-value of 0.000, which is below 0.05. This means that Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant effect on Brand Image because the p-value is below 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which also found that Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image (Siddiqui et al., 2021).
3. Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention, with a t-statistic of 13.922 (greater than 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This means that Brand Image has a significant effect on Repurchase Intention because the p-value is less than 0.05. These findings are consistent with previous research, which indicates that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention (Harmawati & Dewanti, 2023; Bhakuni et al., 2021).

b. Indirect Effects Among Variables

Indirect effects between variables can be observed in the *specific indirect effects*. The data analysis results show that the values of the indirect effects are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Specific Indirect Effects*

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P-Values	Conclusion
Electronic Word of Mouth → Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.275	6.443	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effects between variables, namely: Electronic Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Repurchase Intention through Brand Image, with a t-statistic value of 6.443 (above 1.96) and a significance level of 0.000 (below 0.05). This means that Brand Image acts as a mediating variable between Electronic Word of Mouth and Repurchase Intention.

CONCLUSION

1. Electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.
2. Electronic word of mouth has a positive effect on brand image among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.
3. Brand image has a positive effect on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.
4. Brand image mediates the effect of electronic word of mouth on repurchase intention among Indonesian consumers who use Coupang in South Korea.

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