



## The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement and Product Quality on Purchase Decisions of MS Glow Skincare Products in Bandung: The Mediating Role of Brand Image

**Serina Aulia**

Universitas Widyatama, Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, [serinaaul@gmail.com](mailto:serinaaul@gmail.com)

Corresponding Author: [serinaaul@gmail.com](mailto:serinaaul@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** This study explores the influence of celebrity endorsement and product quality on purchase decisions of MS Glow skincare products in Bandung, with brand image as a mediating variable. The research responds to the increasing popularity of local skincare brands in Indonesia and examines whether celebrity-driven marketing strategies remain effective in a competitive landscape. A quantitative approach was employed by distributing questionnaires to 150 female respondents aged 18–35 in Bandung. Data were analyzed using multiple regression and Sobel test with SPSS 21. The findings reveal that celebrity endorsement significantly enhances brand image, which in turn positively affects purchase decisions. However, celebrity endorsement has no direct effect on purchase decisions unless mediated by brand image. Conversely, product quality has a significant direct impact on purchase decisions but does not significantly affect brand image. These results highlight the importance of managing brand image and delivering high product quality to optimize marketing effectiveness. For brands like MS Glow, a balanced strategy combining emotional branding with functional excellence is essential to maintain consumer loyalty. This research contributes to the understanding of how marketing stimuli influence consumer behavior and suggests further exploration into digital engagement and sustainability perceptions in skincare branding.

**Keywords:** Purchase Decisions, Brand Image, Celebrity Endorsement, Product Quality

### INTRODUCTION

The skincare industry in Indonesia has grown remarkably over the past decade, driven by increased consumer awareness of skincare routines, digitalization of beauty content, and the rise of social media platforms that influence consumer behavior (Euromonitor International, 2023). According to ZAP Beauty Index (2024), 69% of Indonesian consumers now prefer local skincare brands over international ones due to improved quality, accessibility, and strong cultural relevance.

MS Glow, a leading Indonesian skincare brand, has capitalized on this trend through aggressive marketing and celebrity endorsement strategies. The brand collaborates with top Indonesian celebrities like Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina to promote its image and expand its reach. Such strategies align with McCracken's (1989) theory, which posits that celebrity

endorsements can transfer symbolic meaning and positively influence consumer perceptions. Moreover, Ohanian (1990) emphasizes the importance of celebrity credibility, attractiveness, and relevance to enhance brand associations.

However, recent reports by GoodStats (2024) suggest a decline in MS Glow's consumer preference ranking, indicating a possible gap between the promotional strategy and actual consumer purchase behavior. The brand dropped from first place in 2022 to fourth place in 2024 in the skincare category. This raises questions about whether celebrity endorsement remains a sufficient strategy in influencing purchase decisions or whether other factors such as product quality and brand image have become more decisive.

Product quality is an essential determinant of consumer behavior, especially in skincare, where trust and efficacy are crucial (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Consumers today are more informed and discerning, with greater attention to product ingredients, safety, and long-term benefits (Saxena, 2024). Research by Melpiana & Sudrajat (2022) found that quality often outweighs promotional efforts in influencing consumer loyalty and repurchase intention. Additionally, brand image plays a vital role in the decision making process. A strong and consistent brand image can act as a mediator that enhances the effectiveness of marketing communications and creates emotional bonds with consumers (Aaker, 2020; Chen et al., 2021). Erdogan (2010) highlights that the mediating role of brand image can significantly amplify the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior.

Given the competitive landscape and the dynamic nature of consumer preferences, particularly among millennials and Gen Z, understanding the interplay between celebrity endorsement, product quality, and brand image is essential for sustaining brand loyalty and improving purchase outcomes. Bandung, as a fashion and beauty-conscious city with a large population of young consumers, presents a strategic demographic for this investigation (BPS Bandung, 2022).

Thus, this study aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of celebrity endorsement and product quality on the purchase decisions of MS Glow skincare products, with brand image as a mediating factor. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to marketing strategies in the beauty industry.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey method to examine the relationship between celebrity endorsement, product quality, brand image, and purchase decisions of MS Glow skincare products in Bandung. The approach was chosen to provide empirical evidence on how specific marketing variables influence consumer behavior within a defined demographic group.

The population of this research consisted of female consumers in Bandung aged 18 to 35 years, a demographic recognized for its active engagement in skincare purchasing and responsiveness to beauty marketing campaigns. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that participants had either previously purchased or expressed interest in purchasing MS Glow products, thereby aligning the sample with the study's objectives. A total of 150 valid responses were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via both online platforms (e.g., social media, Google Forms) and offline engagements (e.g., beauty events, skincare outlets). The research instrument was developed based on established scales adapted from prior studies. The questionnaire measured four constructs: celebrity endorsement (attractiveness, credibility, and congruence), product quality (performance, safety, reliability), brand image (product image, user image, situational image), and purchase decision (need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, post-purchase behavior). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with 30 respondents prior to full deployment. Construct validity was assessed through Pearson product-moment correlation, with item total correlation values exceeding 0.30 considered acceptable. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency, yielding alpha values above the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all variables, confirming the instrument's reliability. Data were analyzed using SPSS 21. The analysis included descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity), multiple linear regression to assess direct effects, and Sobel test for mediation analysis. The use of the Sobel test was essential to determine the indirect influence of celebrity endorsement and product quality on purchase decisions through brand image.

This methodology ensures a rigorous and structured approach in testing the proposed hypotheses, allowing the study to draw credible and generalizable conclusions within the target population. The analytical framework also allows for future replication or extension by scholars interested in marketing dynamics within the beauty and personal care sector.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

#### **Celebrity Endorsement**

Celebrity endorsement is defined as the use of well-known individuals to influence consumer perceptions and behaviors (McCracken, 1989; Ohanian, 1990). Key dimensions include attractiveness, credibility, and congruence with the brand (Ohanian et al., 2024).

#### **Product Quality**

Product quality refers to consumers' evaluation of a product's ability to fulfill their needs, based on effectiveness, reliability, safety, and suitability (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Saxena, 2024).

#### **Brand Image**

Brand image is the perception held by consumers regarding a brand's identity and value proposition (Aaker, 2020). It is shaped by both symbolic and functional associations.

#### **Purchase Decision**

Purchase decision represents the final stage in a consumer's evaluation process, influenced by brand awareness, product satisfaction, and personal motivation (Zeithaml, 2015).

Based on previous research:

- 1) H1: Celebrity Endorsement positively affects Brand Image.
- 2) H2: Product Quality positively affects Brand Image.
- 3) H3: Brand Image positively affects Purchase Decision.
- 4) H4: Celebrity Endorsement positively affects Purchase Decision through Brand Image.
- 5) H5: Product Quality positively affects Purchase Decision through Brand Image.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study shed light on the nuanced and multi-dimensional relationships between celebrity endorsement, product quality, brand image, and purchase decisions in the skincare industry specifically within the context of MS Glow's marketing strategies in Bandung. Regression analysis confirms that celebrity endorsement has a significant positive effect on brand image ( $p < 0.05$ ). Public figures such as Raffi Ahmad and Nagita Slavina, who have a prominent media presence and personal credibility, significantly elevate MS Glow's brand perception in the minds of consumers. This supports McCracken's (1989) theory of meaning transfer, which posits that celebrities imbue the brands they endorse

with symbolic meaning. Consumers do not merely view these endorsements as superficial promotions; instead, they associate the endorsed brand with qualities such as elegance, success, modernity, and aspirational lifestyle, reinforcing the emotional dimensions of branding.

Nonetheless, product quality was not found to significantly influence brand image ( $p > 0.05$ ). This contradicts the assumption held by several earlier studies that suggest high-quality products directly enhance brand equity. In the context of MS Glow, consumers appear to separate their rational evaluation of product functionality from their emotional association with the brand. Product attributes such as performance, safety, and durability are acknowledged as important, yet these do not necessarily elevate symbolic perceptions of the brand. This finding illustrates a clear boundary in how consumers compartmentalize utilitarian and affective judgments, suggesting that in skincare particularly among younger consumers practical product satisfaction does not automatically translate into enhanced brand admiration.

In contrast, brand image is found to significantly impact purchase decisions ( $p < 0.05$ ). A strong, favorable brand image stimulates consumer trust, emotional attachment, and a sense of belonging key elements that drive purchasing behavior in beauty-related categories. Consumers are inclined to buy not only because of what the product does, but also because of what the brand represents to their personal and social identity. In industries where emotional resonance is high, such as cosmetics, this alignment between self-perception and brand symbolism becomes a decisive factor in the decision-making process.

Interestingly, celebrity endorsement by itself does not directly impact purchase decisions. However, its effect becomes statistically significant when mediated by brand image, as confirmed through the Sobel test ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the real value of celebrity endorsement lies in its ability to shape brand perception, which then facilitates consumer behavior. The implication is that endorsements, when strategically aligned with brand personality and communicated consistently, play a crucial role in shaping how the brand is valued. This supports Erdogan's (2010) framework which argues that brand image serves as a powerful conduit through which the influence of endorsements can materialize into actual purchase behavior.

On the other hand, product quality has a direct and significant impact on purchase decisions ( $p < 0.05$ ). This underscores that despite the symbolic allure of celebrity endorsements and emotional branding, the foundational element of repeat purchase behavior is rooted in product experience. Consumers in the study especially within the 18–35 demographic are highly aware of product ingredients, performance outcomes, and value-for-money considerations. This aligns with Saxena's (2024) observation that younger consumers, particularly Gen Z, place greater emphasis on efficacy and reliability than on superficial promotional narratives. In a competitive marketplace oversaturated with digital marketing and influencer campaigns, functional product superiority remains a critical differentiator.

These findings contribute to theoretical discourse by reinforcing the role of brand image as a mediating construct in the relationship between marketing communication and consumer decision-making. They also provide an empirical perspective on how emotional and rational paths in consumer cognition interact: while celebrity endorsements influence perception, it is brand image that activates emotional intent, and product quality that satisfies logical evaluation.

From a managerial standpoint, this study offers actionable recommendations for MS Glow and similar skincare brands. Rather than investing exclusively in celebrity campaigns, marketing managers should adopt a dual-focus strategy that leverages both emotional branding and functional excellence. Building a coherent, trustworthy brand image through authentic storytelling, consistent product performance, and responsive customer service will be key to cultivating long-term consumer loyalty. Brands should ensure that celebrities chosen for endorsements resonate with their brand's identity, target audience, and core values.

Furthermore, aligning communication channels especially on social media with brand promises and actual product performance is essential to minimize cognitive dissonance among consumers. The integration of sustainability themes and transparent product information may further enhance consumer confidence and contribute to brand differentiation in the evolving beauty industry landscape.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides comprehensive insights into how celebrity endorsement and product quality interact with brand image and purchase decisions within the skincare industry, focusing on MS Glow as a representative local brand. The results reveal that celebrity endorsement significantly contributes to enhancing brand image, which in turn plays a crucial mediating role in influencing consumer purchase decisions. However, endorsements alone are not sufficient to drive actual buying behavior unless accompanied by a strong and consistent brand image. This affirms the importance of emotional resonance and symbolic value in modern marketing communication.

Meanwhile, product quality emerges as a critical direct driver of purchase decisions, independent of brand image. This indicates that in an increasingly informed and critical market, consumers prioritize tangible product benefits such as safety, effectiveness, and reliability. The separation between symbolic perception and rational evaluation underscores the need for marketers to address both emotional and functional aspects of branding in a balanced manner. Theoretically, the study advances existing models by highlighting the dual-path influence of promotional strategies through both symbolic image-building and performance-based credibility. Practically, the findings emphasize that marketing strategies centered solely on celebrity visibility must be complemented by authentic brand narratives and high product standards. Brands must not only generate awareness but also cultivate trust and satisfaction through consistent delivery.

For MS Glow and similar companies, integrating these insights means optimizing endorsement strategies by selecting public figures who align with brand identity, while also investing in ongoing product innovation, transparency, and customer engagement. In doing so, brands can build sustainable loyalty and resilience in an increasingly competitive and value-driven skincare market. Future research is encouraged to explore additional mediators such as consumer trust, perceived value, or digital engagement, as well as comparative studies across different demographic segments and cultural contexts.

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