

Influence of Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign and Brand Image on the Purchasing Decisions of Dear me Beauty Cosmetic Products

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Abstract:- One of the marketing communication strategies that local Indonesian cosmetic brands are currently focusing on is diversity and inclusion especially in the gender dimension known as Gender-Neutral Marketing. On this basis, this research aims to determine the effect of gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaign and brand image on purchase decisions of Dear Me Beauty’s cosmetic products. The type of research used is quantitative research with a sample size of 100 respondents who have met the sample criteria. Sampling was carried out using the Non-probability Sampling method with Purposive Sampling. Data analysis in this research used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). First, the results demonstrate that gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaign has a positive influence on the purchase decision of Dear Me

Beauty's cosmetic products. Second, the findings revealed that brand image has a positive and significance influence on the purchase decision of Dear Me Beauty’s cosmetic products.

Keywords:- Brand Image, Cosmetics, Gender, Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign, Purchase Decision.

I. INTRODUCTION

The beauty industry stands out as one of the most competitive sectors globally, characterized by the continual influx of new brands and products each year. This phenomenon imposes limitations on new brands, hindering their penetration and differentiation in the market (True Finance, 2023).

Table 1 Cosmetics Industry Revenue

Region	Revenue(in US\$)	CAGR(2023-2027)
World	103.80	4.84%
Asia	42.75	4.97%
Indonesia	1.84	5.63%

As delineated in the table, Indonesia exhibits a higher Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) compared to the global segment, reinforcing the notion that the cosmetic segment holds a substantial market value in the beauty industry, positioning Indonesia as the fastest-growing cosmetic market in Asia.

Despite this growth, the beauty industry has undergone rapid transformation in recent years: categorized into four areas from 2020 to 2040 (Azuma, 2021). Three of these areas represent a sustained expansion of existing

phenomena: e-commerce, the rapid rise of regional cosmetic marketing movements (such as Korea's “K-Beauty”), and environmental sustainability. The fourth transformative area, still in its early developmental stage, pertains to gender-neutral products.

Indonesian local cosmetic brands have strategically prioritized diversity and inclusion, specifically addressing facets such as race, ethnicity, gender, and age. This emphasis is grounded in an understanding of the broader beauty standards and the varied ethnic composition within

Indonesia. Going beyond considerations of race and ethnicity, numerous local cosmetic brands have actively embraced inclusivity by eschewing gender-based product categorizations, a phenomenon commonly referred to as Gender-Neutral Marketing.

One notable example of a brand implementing gender-neutral marketing in Indonesia is Dear Me Beauty. The brand employs its foundation products as a vehicle for gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaigns, incorporating male models in product photos. The concept of gender-neutral marketing revolves around addressing consumer needs such as values, personality traits, and lifestyle, while steering clear of perpetuating traditional gender roles (Bula, 2022). Social stigmas and conventional perceptions associated with masculinity have contributed to the perception of male cosmetics use as being feminine. According to data from Global Industry Analysts (2021), the global male beauty care market was valued at around US\$141 billion in 2020 and is anticipated to reach US\$183 billion by 2027, marking it as one of the rapidly expanding sectors in consumer marketing. Recognizing this growth potential, companies are progressively challenging traditional gender stereotypes by introducing brands labeled as unisex or defying conventional gender norms (Sultana & Shahriar, 2017).

Despite the favorable reception to Dear Me Beauty's gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaign, featuring male models in cosmetic products, the brand's sales performance remains relatively subdued when compared to other local cosmetic brands that has similar strategies.

Table 2 7 Most Used Local Beauty Brands in Indonesia

Brand	Market share
Wardah	48%
Emina	40%
Make Over	22%
Somethinc	19%
Purbasari	15%
Y.O.U Beauty	14%
Dear Me Beauty	11%

The table above indicates that Dear Me Beauty holds a market share of only 11%, compared to the local cosmetic brand Somethinc, which also employs a similar gender-neutral marketing strategy.

Based on the presented data and information, the author is motivated to conduct a study titled “The Influence of Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign and Brand Image on the Purchasing Decisions of Dear Me Beauty Cosmetic Products”. The research aims to (1) analyze whether gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaigns influence the purchasing decisions of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products and (2) examine the impact of Brand Image on the purchasing decisions of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Inclusive Marketing*

Inclusive marketing is a practice aimed at enhancing the representation and participation of all societal groups in the marketing and advertising materials created by an organization.

Demographic markers indicative of inclusivity encompass age, gender, ethnicity, race, marital status, religion, physical and mental capabilities, and socioeconomic standing. As posited by (Dimitrieska et al. 2019), inclusivity involves an openness to individual disparities, ensuring each person experiences a sense of inclusion and respect. This entails empowering individuals as they are and acknowledging their distinctive attributes. Traditional marketing campaigns often perpetuate stereotypes and neglect the viewpoints of marginalized groups. Inclusive marketing endeavors to showcase diverse perspectives, particularly those historically sidelined. By making marketing decisions through an inclusive lens, companies can genuinely and positively portray the diversity of their audience and the global landscape.

Previous research on diversity and inclusivity in advertising indicates that more diverse and inclusive brand communication influences consumer perceptions and values towards the brand (Jacobsson & Friberg, 2021). Furthermore, findings from research by (Licsandru & Cui, 2018) suggest that featuring a variety of ethnic and racial groups in brand communication serves as an effective means to convey a more inclusive message, contributing to customer well-being and marketing success.

➤ *Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign*

As a component of inclusive marketing, gender-neutral marketing focuses on consumer needs such as values, personality traits, and lifestyle, avoiding the sale of products that force consumers into traditional gender roles (Bula, 2022). The historical reluctance towards men's concern for their appearance can be traced back to prevailing definitions of hegemonic masculinity and the societal stigmas surrounding homosexuality in numerous cultures. Consequently, while many men may wish to engage with cosmetics, they may refrain from doing so openly due to prevailing social norms. Despite the absence of a specific gender association, the utilization of cosmetics by men is often perceived as a feminine practice that challenges conventional notions of masculinity.

In the historical trajectory of men's cosmetic use, evidence dates back to ancient Egypt, where Pharaohs, predominantly male figures, were documented wearing thick eyeliner—a practice that underscored the social norm and empowerment of male masculinity during that era. However, a perceptual shift occurred in the 18th century, with a redefined understanding of masculinity steering men away from cosmetics to preserve their perceived manliness. Stigmatization against men wearing makeup subsequently gained prevalence. In the 20th century, a resurgence in men's cosmetic use emerged, often manifesting as an act of

rebellion and intentional defiance of social norms for self-expression (Briones, 2022).

In the 21st century, the current generation exhibits greater openness and acceptance of cosmetics as an artistic form unrestricted by specific gender affiliations. Beyond initiatives by major beauty brands, the influence of pop culture icons plays a pivotal role in reshaping the perception of cosmetics into a gender-neutral concept. The burgeoning men's beauty care market reflects a broader paradigm shift in how marketers address gender, with gender neutrality becoming a salient concern across various industries. An increasing number of Millennial and Generation Z consumers adopt gender-neutral identities and consumer behaviors. Generation Z, constituting 32% of the global population with 2.5 billion individuals, is anticipated to quadruple its purchasing power to approximately US\$33 trillion by 2030 (Schroders Wealth Management, 2021).

Post the advent of the "Me Too" movement—a global social initiative supporting survivors of sexual violence—society has become more receptive to diverse sexual orientations and less tolerant of entrenched sexist gender norms (Poggi, 2018). Brands adhering to simplistic and outdated gender stereotypes risk cultivating a negative brand image. Therefore, in the realm of beauty, advertising campaigns centering on gender-neutral themes are viewed as the future of consumer behavior movements, representing both an issue and a trend.

According to (Puolakka & Najem, 2020) and (Nykänen, 2019), indicators of gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaigns include:

- Awareness
- Importance
- Purchase Intent

➤ *Brand Image*

Brand image is “how a brand is perceived by consumers” (Aaker, 1996, cited in Bian & Moutinho, 2009, p. 193). Brand image entails descriptions of consumer associations and beliefs regarding a specific brand (Tjiptono & Chandra 2015). Thus, the better the brand image of a product, the higher the purchasing decision by consumers. A positive brand image is not easily obtained by marketers today. Consumers no longer buy products solely for their utility and style but also to identify with the brand (Qin, 2019, p. 365). Some brands send signals about social status or uphold specific values that consumers want to express. As Qin (2019, p. 364) suggests, brand image can be built by promoting specific values, ethics, etc. Furthermore, researchers have shown that consumers are more likely to trust a company's goods and services if they have a positive impression of the brand (Lien et al. 2015).

Brand image components as cited by Sangadji and Sopiiah (in Hadiani & Nurfadilah, 2017), include support, strength, and unique brand associations. Additionally, according to (Eslami, 2020; Haase et al., 2018; Kim &

Chao, 2019) in Salsabila & Apriliyanty, 2022, brand image indicators include:

- Reliability
- Good reputation for diversity and inclusivity
- Likable brand
- Unique brand

➤ *Purchase Decision*

Purchase decision is a consumer decision influenced by financial economics, technology, politics, culture, product, price, location, promotion, physical evidence, people, and process. This shapes a consumer's attitude to process information and draw conclusions resulting in a purchasing decision. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2016:177), a purchase decision is part of consumer behavior—the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations choose, buy, use, and how goods, services, ideas, or experiences satisfy their needs and desires.

From various definitions, purchase decision is a concept of consumer behavior for individuals, groups, or organizations in assessing and selecting from various available alternatives and determining the most advantageous choice. Purchase decision indicators according to (Assauri, 2015), including:

- Confidence in a product
- Ability to recommend it to others
- Intention to repurchase

➤ *Relationship Between Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1) and Purchase Decision (Y)*

According to a study by McKinsey (2018), “48% of Gen Z say they appreciate brands that do not classify items as for men or women”. As a result, the shift in perceptions toward gender neutrality has also translated into a new shift in product and brand marketing. This relationship is supported by previous research by (DAE & HAN, 2022) where the study explains that gender-neutral marketing affects cosmetic purchase decisions in South Korea and will be a marketing trend in the future. Additionally, research conducted by (Isabel & Vieira, n.d.) shows that consumer familiarity with unisex products and involvement in the category positively influence consumer purchase decisions.

- *H1: Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign Positively Influences Purchase Decisions for Dear Me Beauty Cosmetic Products.*

➤ *Relationship Between Brand Image (X2) and Purchase Decision (Y)*

Brand image is a set of memories existing in consumers' minds about a brand, whether positive or negative. A positive brand image benefits manufacturers in becoming more recognized by consumers. In other words, consumers will choose to buy products with a good brand image. Conversely, if the brand image is negative, consumers tend to consider more careful when buying products. Therefore, the purchase decision of products by

customers is presumed to be influenced by the brand image of a brand. This result supports previous research by (Salsabillah & Wardani, 2023), which states a positive influence between brand image and purchase decisions.

- *H2: Brand Image Positively Influences Purchase Decisions for Dear Me Beauty Cosmetic Products.*

III. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The data analysis in this research employs the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). PLS is a structural equation model based on components or variance measured using manifest variables as indicators to depict latent variables that

cannot be directly measured. The population in this study consists of consumers who have made purchases of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products in Java Island. Sampling in this research utilizes non-probability sampling, where elements of the population do not have a probability of being chosen as sample subjects. For this study, the method used is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling.

The selection of purposive sampling is based on creating a sample that represents the characteristics of the population under study. The criteria applied include consumers who understand that the Dear Me Beauty brand implements a gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaign, have made purchases of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products, and reside in Java Island, Indonesia.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Research model was analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0, a software that relies on the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique.

➤ Outer Loading

Table 3 Outer Loading (Mean, STDEV, T-Values)

	Factor loadings (> 0.7)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)
X1.1 Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign	0.754	0.749	0.070	10.803
X1.2 Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign	0.791	0.781	0.076	10.412
X1.3 Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign	0.816	0.823	0.052	15.773
X2.1 Brand Image	0.876	0.876	0.027	32.138
X2.2 Brand Image	0.694	0.678	0.104	6.652
X2.3 Brand Image	0.874	0.870	0.035	24.894
X2.4 Brand Image	0.787	0.779	0.061	12.892
Y1.1 Purchase Decision	0.904	0.901	0.025	36.561
Y1.2 Purchase Decision	0.926	0.927	0.019	47.925
Y1.3 Purchase Decision	0.925	0.925	0.018	51.225

Outer Loading Based on the outer loading table above, all reflective indicators on the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) variables show factor loadings (original sample) greater than 0.50 and/or significant (T-Statistic value greater than $Z \alpha = 0.05$ (5%) = 1.96). Therefore, the estimation results for all indicators have met convergent validity or are considered valid.

➤ Validity Test

Table 4 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average variance extracted (> 0.5)
Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1)	0.658
Brand Image (X2)	0.620
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.844

The next measurement model is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), indicating the amount of variance in the indicators contained by its latent variable. An AVE value > 0.5 indicates good validity for latent variables. The AVE testing results for the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1), Brand Image (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) variables show values > 0.5. Therefore, overall, the variables in this study can be considered valid.

➤ Reliability Test

Table 5 Composite Reliability

	Composite reliability (rho_a)
Gender-neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1)	0.830
Brand Image (X2)	0.844
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.942

The construct reliability measured by the composite reliability value indicates that a construct is reliable if the composite reliability value is above 0.70, signifying that indicators are consistent in measuring their latent variables. The Composite Reliability testing results indicate that the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1) variable is 0.830, the Brand Image (X2) variable is 0.844, and the Purchase Decision (Y) variable is 0.942. All three variables show Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70, indicating the reliability of all variables in this study.

➤ Path Analysis

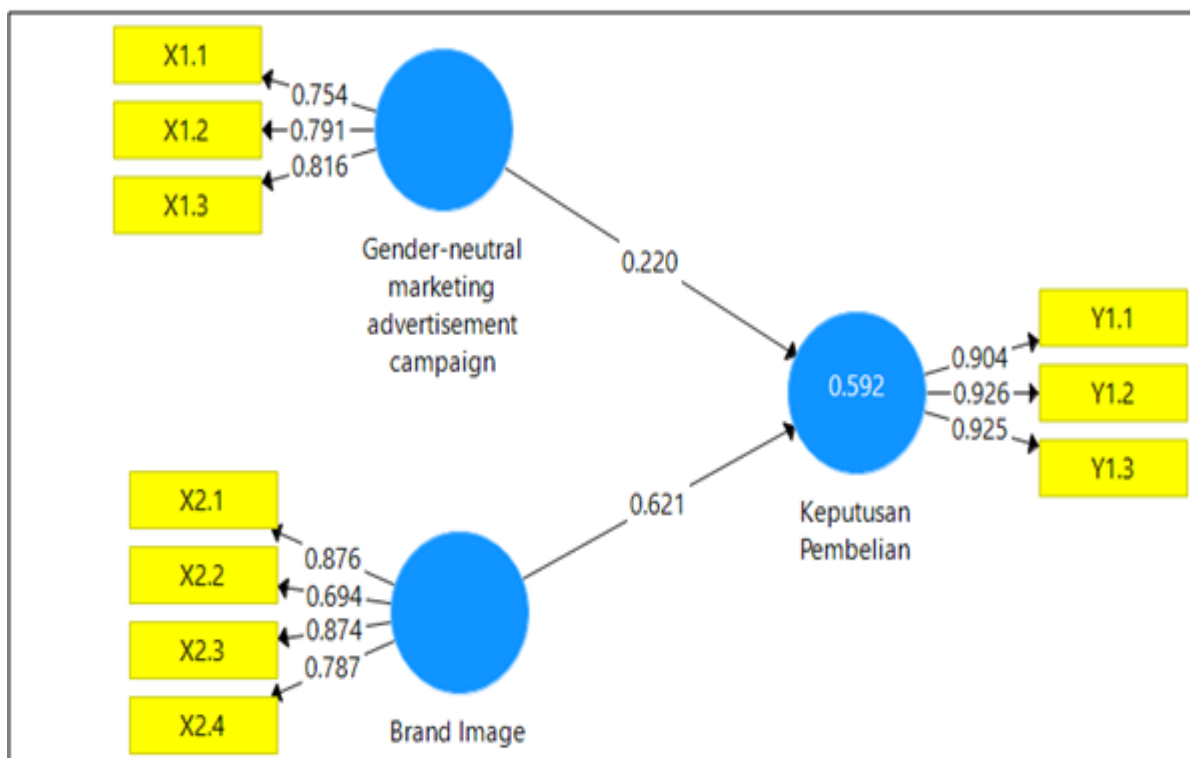


Fig 1 Path Diagram

From the PLS output diagram above, the values of the factor loading for each indicator located above the arrow between variables and indicators can be observed. Additionally, the coefficients of the path (path coefficients) above the arrow line between exogenous variables towards endogenous variables can be seen. Furthermore, the R² values inside the circle of the endogenous variable (Purchase Decision) can also be observed.

➤ R-Square (R²)

Table 6 R-Square (R²)

	R ²
Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1)	
Brand Image (X2)	
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.592

The R² value is 0.592. This can be interpreted as the model's ability to explain the Purchase Decision phenomenon influenced by independent variables, namely Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign and Brand Image, with a variance of 59.2%. The remaining 40.8% is explained by other variables outside this study (other than Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign and Brand Image).

➤ *Hypothesis*

After confirming the measurement model's reliability and validity, the structural model is evaluated, with a focus on estimating path coefficients as suggested in SEM literature. The T-statistic value is used to test whether there is a significant difference between two groups or populations.

Table 7 Path Coefficients (Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values)

	Path coefficients (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics ((O/STERR))	P-value
Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.220	0.219	0.082	2.694	0.007
Brand Image (X2)) -> Purchase Decision (Y)	0.621	0.625	0.075	8.260	0.000

Hypothesis 1: It is suspected that Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign has a positive influence on the Purchase Decision of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products and can be accepted. The path coefficient is 0.220, and the T-statistic value is 2.694 > 1.96 (from the $Z\alpha = 0.05$ table) or P-Value 0.007 < 0.05, with significant (positive) results.

Hypothesis 2: It is suspected that Brand Image has a positive influence on the Purchase Decision of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products and can be accepted. The path coefficient is 0.621, and the T-statistic value is 8.260 > 1.96 (from the $Z\alpha = 0.05$ table) or P-Value 0.000 < 0.05, with significant (positive) results.

➤ *Discussion*

• *Influence of Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1) on Purchase Decision (Y)*

Based on the conducted research concerning the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign variable, the most impactful indicators influencing purchasing decisions is the interest in purchasing products from a gender-neutral brand, which in this study has Dear Me Beauty as the object of research. Purchasing interest, as a key indicator, can be construed as consumers expressing a preference and heightened interest in acquiring products not designated for a specific gender. The rationale lies in the notion that both women and men can readily use a product without adherence to specific gender norms, given the interchangeable nature of beauty and body care products, which offer similar benefits to consumers. Dear Me Beauty, in its implementation of a gender-neutral marketing strategy, strategically employs young and middle-aged men with diverse skin tones as models for its cosmetic foundation products. This approach not only generates curiosity but also enhances purchasing interest among consumers by dismantling the stigma associated with cosmetics as exclusively feminine and divorced from traditional gender norms. This is evident from the factor loading of 0.816, the highest among the three indicators of the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign variable.

The findings of this research are consistent with a study by (Chang & Han, 2022), where the research elucidates that gender-neutral marketing significantly influences the purchasing decisions of cosmetics in South

Korea. This substantiates the claim that gender-neutral marketing advertisement campaign is a pivotal factor influencing customer purchase decisions. Consequently, it is imperative for the Dear Me Beauty brand to consistently uphold and maintain its gender-neutral marketing campaign to ensure that consumers retain a lasting memory of the campaign, aligning with the vision and mission of Dear Me Beauty.

• *Influence of Brand Image (X2) on Purchase Decision (Y)*

The analysis results of the Brand Image variable reveal that the most influential indicator on the purchase decision is reliability, boasting a factor loading of 0.876—the highest among the three indicators of the Brand Image variable. This outcome implies that Dear Me Beauty is perceived as a reliable brand within its industry, suggesting that the brand image cultivated by Dear Me Beauty instills confidence in consumers, positioning it as a preferred choice for a local cosmetic brand when compared to similar competitors. The advantage of shaping a brand image as one that upholds inclusivity is underscored by the provision of a diverse range of foundation colors suitable for the skin tones of Indonesian consumers. Furthermore, the utilization of models representing various ethnicities, races, skin tones, ages, and genders in Indonesian society exemplifies the incorporation of inclusivity values by Dear Me Beauty, serving as a testament to reminding every Indonesian woman to embrace confidence in their unique beauty.

Purchasing interest as an indicator can be interpreted as consumers preferring and being more interested in buying products that are not categorized for a specific gender. Both women and men can consume a product without being tied to a specific gender norm, as beauty and body care products are interchangeable due to their similar benefits for consumers. Dear Me Beauty has implemented a gender-neutral marketing strategy, manifested by using young and middle-aged men with diverse skin tones as models for its cosmetic foundation products. This step not only sparks curiosity but also increases purchasing interest for consumers by eliminating the stigma that cosmetics are only for women and not associated with traditional gender norms. This is evident from the factor loading of 0.816, the highest among the three indicators of the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign variable.

V. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of the conducted research yield noteworthy conclusions: the Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign (X1) significantly impacts the purchase decisions of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products. A positive correlation is observed, indicating that the efficacy of Dear Me Beauty's gender-neutral marketing advertising campaign for its cosmetic products directly influences consumers' likelihood to decide in favor of purchasing said products. Additionally, the research findings affirm that the Brand Image (X2) plays a crucial role in shaping the purchase decisions related to Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products. Consequently, a positive and well-crafted brand image by the Dear Me Beauty brand corresponds to an elevated propensity for consumers to opt for its cosmetic products.

Several recommendations are proffered for consideration in decision-making processes, aiming to enhance consumer purchases of Dear Me Beauty cosmetic products. Firstly, Dear Me Beauty could extend the implementation of a gender-neutral marketing campaign to other product lines, such as skincare products. Beyond featuring male models solely for foundation cosmetic products, the incorporation of such models for diverse items like eyebrow pencils, primers, lip balms, and face palettes is suggested. Additionally, the adoption of gender-neutral narratives should be contemplated in the context of marketing communication strategies. The reinforcement of Dear Me Beauty's brand image as a local beauty brand championing inclusivity values, encapsulated in the tagline "empower through beauty that's inclusive, honest, and cruelty-free," should be prioritized. This strategic emphasis aims to establish Dear Me Beauty as the foremost brand in consumers' minds when contemplating the purchase of local cosmetic products. The more robust the formation of the brand image as an inclusive local beauty brand by Dear Me Beauty, the higher the likelihood of favorable purchase decisions by consumers.

Furthermore, for future research considerations, it is recommended to explore additional variables beyond those presented in this study, broadening the scope and depth of insights into the dynamics influencing consumer behavior in the cosmetic industry.

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➤ *List of Abbreviation*

- SEM : Structural Equation Modeling
- PLS : Partial Least Squares

DECLARATIONS

A. List of abbreviations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEM : Structural Equation Modeling • PLS : Partial Least Squares
Ethics approval and consent to participate	Not applicable
C. Consent for publication	Not applicable
D. Availability of data and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The [Rachma Yasin] repository [SmartPLS 3.0 Data Processing Result 1] • The [Rachma Yasin] repository [SmartPLS 3.0 Data processing result 2]
E. Competing interests	The authors declare that they have no competing interests
F. Funding	Not applicable
G. Authors' contributions	R.Y conducted the research and the major contributor in writing the manuscript. N.W & R.A revised and gave suggestions to the research. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.
H. Acknowledgements	Not applicable
I. Authorship/author's information	<p style="text-align: center;">First/main author</p> <p>Rachma Yasin is an undergraduate in Management. She is currently a final-year student at Universitas Pembangunan “Nasional” Veteran Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Her research work focuses on future consumer behavior, marketing, branding, and gender. “The Influence of Gender-Neutral Marketing Advertisement Campaign and Brand Image on the Purchasing Decisions of Dear Me Beauty Cosmetic Products” journal is submitted as a requirement for a bachelor’s degree.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Corresponding author</p> <p>Nuruni I. K. Wardani is a lecturer of management specialize in marketing at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Wardhani has published various journal articles, having interests in the areas of branding, marketing, customer satisfaction, and purchase decision.</p> <p>Reiga R. Ariescy is a lecturer of management at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Jawa Timur, Indonesia. Ariescy has published various peer-reviewed journal articles. His research interests are in the areas of green marketing, digital marketing, e-commerce, and financial technology.</p>