

A Holistic Approach to Evaluating Wardah Cosmetics E-PR Impact on Brand Perception



Author Notification
12 October 2023
Final Revised
29 October 2023
Published
31 October 2023

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To cite this document:

Siregar, A., & Widiastuty, D. M. . (2023). A Holistic Approach to Evaluating Wardah Cosmetics E-PR Impact on Brand Perception. *International Journal of Cyber and IT Service Management*, 3(2), 144–152. Retrieved from <https://iast.iaic-publisher.org/ijcitsm/index.php/IJCITSM/article/view/138>

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34306/ijcitsm.v3i2.138>

Abstract

In the rapidly developing digital era, the role of internet media, especially through Cyber Public Relations (E-PR) practices, has become crucial for companies in building brand images and expanding market share. This study explores the influence of E-PR on the brand image of Wardah Cosmetics, a leading cosmetics company. Through a mixed method approach, this research explores the impact of E-PR on consumer perceptions of the Wardah brand. Data was collected through quantitative analysis which was then deepened with qualitative analysis. The research results show that Wardah's E-PR activities have a significant influence on its brand image. The main contribution of this research is to open new insights regarding Cyber Public Relations strategies in the context of the cosmetics industry. The finding that online search sites and social media play a central role in strengthening brand image suggests a new direction for PR practitioners. The implications of this research include strategic guidance for other cosmetic companies in utilizing E-PR effectively. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach that combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, opening the door for in-depth research on the relationship between E-PR and consumer perceptions. Thus, this research enriches the public relations literature and provides a basis for the future development of more sophisticated and targeted E-PR practices.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Cyber Public Relations, Cosmetic Industry, Internet Communication, Online Reputation

1. Introduction

The development of technology and information in the current era of globalization has caused significant changes in various aspects of life, from information, culture, technology, information, politics, social to economics [1]. In the economic sector, for example, technology has become a "tool" in the midst of increasingly dynamic business competition [2]. Every company is required to be able to take advantage of technological developments in building a good brand image to its entire public [3]. It is believed that a good brand image will encourage and increase sales volume and company image [4].

This task, building a good brand image, is primarily carried out by a public relations person, where he "must be able" to take advantage of ongoing developments in information and communication technology, one of which is by implementing what is called Cyber Public Relations (E-PR) [5]. By definition, Cyber Public Relations is public relations activities carried



out via the internet, starting from publication activities to customer relations management [6]. So, E-PR is an application or application of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) devices for Public Relations purposes [7].

By utilizing the internet, product information, for example, can be packaged, especially in visual form, so that its physical appearance and beauty can really be displayed. Another advantage is that users/the public have the freedom to access the information they want. The internet gives its users the option to search for information without structure. There are no provisions that require how internet users must search for information and where to start.

In 2015, Wardah cosmetics was determined to be the most popular cosmetics in Indonesia [8]. MarkPlus conducted a survey with respondents of 1,183 women aged 15-59 years in 18 cities throughout Indonesia. The survey results showed that 37.8% of respondents stated that Wardah was their favorite cosmetic brand, followed by Pixy (10.1%), Sari Ayu (8.7%) and Viva in fourth position (www.marksplus2015.com) [9]. A year later, Wardah was also included in several nominations (personal care category) as top brand (www.topbrand-award.com). The survey was conducted in major cities in Indonesia and involved more than 2400 respondents, as an awards event for the best brands in Indonesia. Apart from that, Wardah cosmetics is also one of the cosmetic brands in Indonesia which is 100% halal to use [10].



Figure 1. Wardah Cosmetic
(source: <http://www.wardahbeauty.com>)

This achievement shows that Wardah's brand image has succeeded in being recognized and recognized by the public and consumers [11]. Therefore, it can be said that the brand image that Wardah has built has been ingrained in the minds of its consumers, namely as a cosmetic product that is halal, safe, affordable (price) and of good quality [12].

2. Research Method

This research adopts a mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative aspects in an explanatory mixed-method design [13]. The population that is the focus of this research is visitors to Tangerang Mall, with an average number of visitors per day reaching 59,889 people in June 2017. In the sampling process, a non-probability sampling method was used, namely a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities for each person. population members to be selected as samples. In this research, the type of sampling used was incidental sampling, with a total sample of 100 visitors to Tangerang Mall who were selected.

The research began with collecting quantitative data which was then analyzed thoroughly. This step is followed by qualitative data collection which deepens the previous findings. The results of the qualitative analysis are used to provide additional insight into the phenomena that emerge from the quantitative results. With this approach, in-depth research was conducted to explore the impact of Wardah Cosmetics' E-PR on brand perception, ensuring that the quantitative and qualitative aspects complement each other, providing richer insights, and strengthening the research conclusions regarding the research title, "A Holistic Approach to Evaluating Wardah Cosmetics E-PR Impact on Brand Perception."

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Marketing Communications

Marketing communications is an effort to convey messages to the public, especially consumers, regarding the existence of a product or service on the market [14]. Marketing communications is a term used to explain the flow of information about products from marketers to consumers [15]. Marketers use advertising, direct marketing, publicity, sales promotions, direct selling, to provide the information they expect and thus influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Marketing communications can be stated as communication activities aimed at conveying messages to consumers using various media, with the hope that these activities can achieve predetermined goals. Marketing communications aims to achieve three stages of change aimed at consumers.

a) Knowledge Change Stage

Consumers know the existence of a product, for what purpose the product is made and for whom the product is intended. The message conveyed does not show any more important information about the product. Verbal and nonverbal communication messages are directed at bombarding product information, starting from brands, functions, uses, packaging, product user figures. This stage is then called the awareness stage.

b) Attitude Change Stage

Attitude describes a relatively consistent assessment, feeling and tendency of a person towards an object or idea. The stages of attitude change referred to are related to the influence of marketing communications on consumer assessment of a product, including three stages: cognitive, affective and cognitive.

c) Behavior Change Stage

Behavioral changes are aimed at preventing consumers from switching to other products and getting used to using them.

The main purpose of marketing communications is to disseminate information (informative communication), influence consumers to make purchases or attract consumers and remind audiences to make repeat purchases. This means that marketing communications aims to cause cognitive effects (forming awareness of certain information), affective effects (giving influence to do something) and cognitive effects (shaping the audience's pattern of subsequent behavior).

2.1.2 New Media

New media is a term used for the emergence of digital, computer, or networked information and communication technology at the end of the 20th century [16]. Most technologies described as new media often have the characteristics of being manipulable, networked, dense, interactive and impartial [17]. In simple terms, new media is media that is formed from interactions between humans and computers and the internet in particular and includes the web, blogs, online social networks, online forums and others that use computers as the media [18].

The presence of new types of media has expanded and changed the way people communicate. Social media such as Facebook, Path, Instagram and YouTube are new types of media which are included as online media [19]. These new types of media allow people to talk, participate, share and create networks online. Intensive communication actions through media can be carried out between users. People can feel more comfortable, open and honest in conveying messages. Through new media, a person can also express certain emotions they are experiencing or express themselves (self-disclosure, the same as face-to-face. Self-disclosure is intentional communication through verbal behavior that explains one's experiences or feelings.

New media is a "place" where all communication messages are decentralized and audience involvement in the communication process is increasing. Furthermore, new media gives rise to changes in the field of digitalization and then other important changes: (1) digitalization and convergence of all aspects of media; (2) increased network interactivity and connectivity; (3) mobility and delocation of sending and receiving (messages); (4) adaptation of publications and audience roles; (5) entrance to access information on the Web or access the Web itself; and finally (6) fragmentation and dissolution of media institutions.

The main characteristics that mark the differences between new media and old (conventional) media based on the user's perspective. The first is interactivity which is indicated by the user's initiative regarding offers from the source or sender. Second, social presence is experienced by users where a sense of personal contact with other people is created through the use of a medium [20]. New media can bridge differences in frames of reference, reduce ambiguity, provide signals that are more sensitive and personal. Third, it is used for entertainment and enjoyment. Fourth, privacy is associated with the use of the chosen medium and/or content. Lastly, personal (personalization) where the content and use of media is personal (unique).

2.1.3 Public Relations

Every function and task of Public Relations is to organize publications/disseminate information through various media about organizational activities or events that are appropriate for the public to know [21]. Publication is an important tool both in the promotional mix and in the PR mix because it is one of the component relationships that plays a large role in supporting promotional success.

A public relations person is required to be able to carry out four main functions. First, the communicator, namely as a spokesperson for the organization, PR communicates intensively through the media and community groups. Second, relationship, namely the ability to build positive relationships between the institution it represents and the internal or external public [22]. Third, backup management, namely providing management support/supporting the activities of other departments such as marketing, operations, engineering, finance and personnel in order to create common goals within a framework of the company's main goals. Fourth, good image maker, namely creating a company image and positive publicity (achievements, reputation) as well as being the main goal in carrying out public relations management to build the company's image.

Structurally, because PR is an integral part of the company, it carries out one of the modern management functions inherent in corporate management function. This means that PR can play a role in carrying out reciprocal communication with the aim of creating and maintaining an attitude of mutual understanding, mutual trust, creating goodwill, gaining public support and creating a positive corporate image.

Therefore, public relations can contribute to the strategic management process in two ways, namely managing its activities strategically and carrying out its duties as part of the strategic management of the entire organization by conducting environmental surveys as well as helping to define the mission, goals and objectives of the organization.

2.1.4 Cyber Public Relations

Publication channels through conventional media, including television and newspapers, are no longer adequate and need to be complemented by the use of internet media or cyber media (Cyber Public Relations) with its various advantages [23]. By utilizing internet media or carrying out Cyber Public Relations activities, public relations can increase access to services and provide information to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

By definition, Cyber Public Relations is a public relations activity carried out via the internet, starting from publication activities to customer relations management. So Cyber Public Relations is an application or application of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) devices for Public Relations purposes.

E-PR is a PR (Public Relations) initiative that uses internet media as a means of publicity. In Indonesia, PR initiatives are better known as CyberPublic Relations. If described, E-PR can be interpreted as follows [24]. E is electronic. The "e" in E-PR is the same as the "e" before the words mail or commerce which refer to internet electronic media. Given the popularity

and multi-functionality of internet media, this media is also used by PR actors to build brands and maintain trust.

P is public. "Public" here refers not only to the public, but to the consumer market. Public also does not refer to just one type of consumer market, but various markets or public audiences. Internet media can make it easier for us to reach them more quickly or vice versa, make it easier for them to reach us, starting from micro communities or niche markets to hypermarkets.

R is relations. Relations is a relationship that must be maintained between the market and business [25]. That is the key to market trust so that business is successful. Interestingly, through the internet media, one-to-one relationships can be built quickly because of the interactive nature of the internet. This is of course different from conventional publics where the public is reached by one-to-many communication. That is why the internet has become the most powerful, fast and widespread media for building relationships to date.

Cyber Public Relations activities can produce what are called 3Rs for organizations/companies: (1) relations, namely being able to interact with various target audiences in order to build relationships and the company's image; (2) reputation, which is the most important asset in business. E-PR is the art of continuously building an online reputation; and (3) relevance, namely making online PR initiatives relevant to corporate public targets.

In terms of potential, there are at least six potentials that can be utilized through cyber public relations: (1) Constant Communication, where PR can reach its public throughout the world, something that cannot be done by any media other than the internet; (2) Fast Response, where Cyber PR actors can get a fast response regarding an existing problem; (3) Global Market, which bridges geographic gaps, making it easier for PR to communicate with global markets throughout the world at relatively low costs; (4) Interactive, where feedback can be obtained easily through the social media used; (5) Two-Way Communication, where a strong and useful relationship between an agency or organization and its public can be built; (5) Economical, that is, it can help agencies or organizations save costs.

Meanwhile, there are many Cyber Public Relations (E-PR) activities that companies/organizations can carry out to achieve their goals: company websites, publicity on search sites (Google, Yahoo), online press releases, autoresponders on email, electronic business cards on email, E-Newsletter, Mailing list/Forum on the company website, and forums.

Meanwhile, various types of cyber media that can be used by E-PR practitioners are: Websites, Email, Internet Forums (Bulletin Boards), Peer-to-peer, Blogs, Wikis, Messaging applications, Internet Broadcasting, The RSS, MUDs and Social Media (social media).

2.1.5 Brand Image

Brand image is a brand image as part of a brand that can be recognized but cannot be pronounced, such as a symbol, special letter or color design, or customer perception of a product/service that the brand represents [26]. Brand image is also a concept created by consumers for subjective reasons and personal emotions.

This means that brand image is the image or impression that a brand creates in the minds of customers. Placing a brand image in consumers' minds must be done continuously so that it remains strong and can be received positively. When a brand has a strong and positive image in the minds of consumers, the brand will always be remembered and the possibility of consumers buying the brand in question is very large.

Brand image measurement is subjective. So, there are no standard provisions for measuring brand image. Brand image measurement can be done based on the aspects of a brand: strength, uniqueness and favorableness.

a) Strengthness

Strength (strength) is a variety of physical advantages possessed by a brand and not found in other brands. This brand superiority refers to the physical attributes of the brand so that it is usually considered an advantage over other brands, such as the physical product, the function of all product facilities, price, appearance of the supporting facilities of the product.

b) Uniqueness

Uniqueness is a characteristic that is inherent in a product and differentiates it from other brands, for example the variety of services usually provided by a product, price variations of the products concerned and differentiation in the physical appearance of a product.

c) Favorite

Favorability refers to the brand's ability to be easily remembered by consumers, such as the ease of pronunciation of the brand, the ability of the brand to remain in the mind of customers, the suitability between the impression of the brand in the minds of customers and the image desired by the company for the brand in question.

3. Findings

The results of this research have two categories, namely quantitative and qualitative. Based on quantitative research results, the average user of Wardah products is young women aged 16-25 years (61%), 26-35 (21%), 36-45 (11%), and 46-55 (7%).). From this data, it can be said that Wardah product users are dominated by young people. This means that Wardah has its own market segmentation for its cosmetic products amidst the dynamic and intense competition that exists.

Table 1. Age of Respondents

No	Age	Amount	Percentage
1	46-55	7 People	7%
2	36-45	11 People	11%
3	26-35	21 People	21%
4	16-25	61 People	61%
Jumlah		100 People	100%

Based on the results of hypothesis testing (Partial Test) with t-table values, it shows that the company website (X1) does not have a significant effect (7%), online search sites (X2)(Google, Yahoo) have a significant effect (41%), online press releases (X3) has a significant influence (9%), email autoresponder (X4) does not have a significant influence (4%) and finally social media (X5) has a significant influence (38%).

The results of the analysis regarding the relationship between E-PR and product brand image, namely the coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.500, shows that 50% of all independent variables (company website, online search site publicity, online press releases, email autoresponders, social media) are related significant impact on brand image, while the remainder (50%) is influenced by other factors not examined in this research. For example, as can be seen from visitors to Tangerang City Mall who know about Wardah cosmetics from events held by Wardah, sales promotions, discounts, or word of mouth.

In the F Test (Simultaneous Test), the results show that the company website, publicity on online search sites (Google, Yahoo), online press releases, autoresponder emails, social media, simultaneously have a significant effect on brand image. These results are in accordance with the E-PR theory put forward by Onggo (2004) which states that internet media can be used to build relationships between companies and their public. More specifically, E-PR can be used as a strategy to build and maintain global brands in the era of globalization.

Meanwhile, from the results of qualitative research conducted through interviews with

several PR experts, of the five independent variables used only online search sites and social media were related to Wardah's E-PR activities. By utilizing these two aspects (online search sites and social media), today's PR practitioners must be able to understand the signs of the times, the era of globalization, and be supported by advances in sophisticated information technology. This means that developments in information and communication technology must be utilized for the purposes of conveying messages, obtaining information and monitoring technological, economic and political developments globally.

By utilizing online search sites and social media, consumers can easily search for information on Wardah cosmetic products. If consumers need more in-depth information about the Wardah cosmetic products they are looking for, consumers can of course access the Wardah website which provides official and in-depth information about its various products. Apart from that, consumers can also take advantage of the question and answer service via email that has been provided if they still encounter unclear information related to Wardah cosmetic products.

It's just that, on the company website, even though the appearance/design is good and modern, unfortunately the news channels available are rarely updated. When this research was conducted, the latest news was news released in 2016. In fact, this section should also receive attention so that the news presented can remain up-to-date.

Despite these shortcomings, the brand image built through Wardah's cyber public relations activities is already good in the minds of its consumers. This can be seen, for example, from the opinions of respondents who stated that they found out about Wardah's new products through social networks, especially Instagram. In this way, consumers continue to follow developments in Wardah products. Kapferer stated that if a brand is communicated well to the right target, the brand will be able to produce a strong brand image while also reflecting a clear brand identity.

Thus, apart from making it easier for consumers to access information about Wardah cosmetic products, Wardah's cyber public relations activities also have an impact on the company's brand image, both directly and indirectly. In this case, PR can easily reach a wider public in terms of presenting information, although this process does not guarantee emotional closeness between PR and the company's public. This means that emotional closeness is delayed in nature where feedback cannot be obtained immediately.

However, E-PR activities certainly have more benefits if used properly and correctly. For example, by adhering to the principles of information transparency, honesty in conveying information about the products/services offered, speed in responding to feedback provided. If these three things are ignored, it is not impossible that it will cause consumer distrust in the product and reduce the company's brand image which is already well ingrained in the minds of its consumers.

4. Conclusion

In this research, the results of the analysis conclude that various aspects of Wardah Cosmetics' cyber public relations (E-PR), including the company website, online searches, publicity via search engines (Google, Yahoo), online press releases, email autoresponders, and social media, together play an important role in shaping the brand image. As much as 50% of this influence on brand image can be attributed to these factors. In particular, online search sites and social media emerged as highly significant factors. These results indicate that consumers' ease of access to Wardah product information via the internet can positively influence their perceptions of the brand.

Based on these findings, we provide several suggestions to Wardah Cosmetics to maintain and improve their brand image. First, companies need to focus more on increasing E-PR activities, especially on aspects that are still weak such as company websites, online press releases, and email autoresponders. By optimizing their online presence through these platforms, Wardah Cosmetics can strengthen and deepen their positive image in the eyes of consumers and stakeholders. In addition, we recommend that Wardah Cosmetics consider further research using other variables not used in this study. This approach can produce more

varied and dynamic insights into the influence of E-PR on brand image. In addition, the use of more diverse research samples can enrich research results and provide valuable contributions to previous research, both those directly related to this research and other research that has been conducted previously. By taking these steps, Wardah Cosmetics can strengthen their brand position in the minds of consumers and ensure continuity and positive growth in the competitive cosmetics market.

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