The Effect of Interactive Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth on Brand Awareness of Somethinc Products

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, there has been a notable increase in the number of smartphones and mobile operators providing affordable internet services (Prahiawan et al., 2021). The advancement of information and communication technologies, such as the internet, has brought about significant changes in habits, lifestyles, and social behaviors across various aspects of life (Arimbi et al., 2023). According to data from the 2022 Susenas Survey (BPS, 2023), 66.48 percent of Indonesia's population had accessed the internet in 2022, compared to 62.10 percent in 2021. This high internet usage reflects an environment of information openness and the public's acceptance of technological advancements, contributing to a shift towards an information-based society. The increasing number of internet users in Indonesia is closely linked to the rapid development of mobile phones. In 2022, it was recorded that 67.88 percent of the population owned a mobile phone, marking an increase from 65.87 percent in 2021. The internet has introduced social media, which in turn fosters social interaction. A significant portion of smartphone users spends their time on social media platforms. At the beginning of 2022, there were 191 million social media users in Indonesia, an increase of 21 million, or approximately 12.6% of the total population (Febriyanti & Hasbi, 2023).

According to Afifah et al. (2023), consumer habits in using social media have undergone significant changes. Social media has shifted traditional word-of-mouth marketing to electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Indrawati et al., 2022). Social media often influences brand reputation, both positively and negatively (Taylor, 2019), with e-WOM reflecting the perceptions and thoughts embedded in consumers' minds about a brand. The introduction of TikTok Live in 2019 allowed users to stream live to their followers, providing an opportunity for real-time interaction with their audience, who could also engage with each other through the comment section. This phenomenon has prompted businesses to adopt more effective marketing strategies, such as leveraging social media platforms for promotional activities. As time progresses, society has

become increasingly aware of its need for personal appearance, particularly in facial and skin care. A face and skin that appear soft, radiant, and healthy have become a distinct attraction for many individuals. This has led companies in the skincare industry to compete in releasing various product lines for facial and skin care, thereby generating a high demand for such products. The variety of personal care products available makes it easier for consumers to find quality items that meet their specific needs and desires. In this competitive industry, skincare businesses strive to improve product quality while maintaining affordable prices to effectively compete in the market (Puspitasari, 2022). Moreover, businesses must have a deep understanding of their consumers' preferences in order to develop effective and innovative strategies that can capture consumer interest. Local brands tend to drive more impulsive purchasing behavior than global brands. The higher level of impulsivity towards local brands is influenced by the perception that local brands are more closely associated with consumers' lifestyle, values, preferences, and behaviors (De Vries & Fennis, 2021). In an increasingly competitive market, every business needs a sound and effective strategy to enhance consumer purchase interest through brand awareness (Arimbi et al., 2023). Brand awareness refers to a potential buyer's ability to recognize or recall a brand. A well-established brand can attract consumers to purchase its products and enable the company to compete effectively with other businesses selling similar products. Effective marketing communication through integrated marketing allows a company to sell products that represent its brand (Sugeng, 2022). Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is a marketing communication planning concept that adds value to a comprehensive plan, assessing the strategic role of various communication disciplines. Communication between the public and potential customers uses various media, such as advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotions, direct marketing, interactive marketing, and electronic word of mouth (Arimbi et al., 2023). Somethinc is a popular local skincare brand that has garnered significant attention. It is halal-certified, meets international standards, and has become one of the top brands across various social media platforms, such as TikTok, where it has an audience of 57.3 million, making it highly popular (Shafa & Hidayat, 2022). Additionally, it achieved the top position in the largest skincare market share on the digital platform Shopee Indonesia within just two years (PAPER, 2022). This success is attributed to Somethinc's active presence on social media, where it has built a community through educational content, interactive quizzes, and engaging giveaways. The brand also collaborates with trusted influencers to expand its reach and build brand credibility. Moreover, Somethinc has launched relatable campaigns that foster a deeper connection

with consumers. Furthermore, Somethinc continues to innovate its products and services by offering unique skincare solutions that cater to consumer needs. These developments reflect a shift in consumer behavior, where there is an increasing reliance on online interactions when selecting skincare products. Through effective marketing strategies, Somethinc has successfully leveraged this trend to enhance its visibility and expand the local skincare market. Strategies such as interactive marketing and electronic word of mouth have played a significant role in building brand awareness for Somethinc.

Based on data from Google Trends over the past five years, Somethinc still ranks lower compared to other brands such as Wardah, Ms Glow, Emina, and Avoskin (Figure 1). Additionally, the number of Instagram posts using the Somethinc hashtag remains relatively low, ranking third with 132 thousand posts, far behind Wardah with 1.3 million posts, Ms Glow with 9 million posts, Emina with 343 thousand posts, and Avoskin with 87.2 thousand posts. This presents a challenge for Somethinc to maintain its presence while simultaneously increasing brand awareness. The question is: which strategy is most effective in enhancing brand awareness to sustain its market share? Research and data analysis are crucial in identifying the most impactful strategies for increasing brand awareness of Somethinc products.
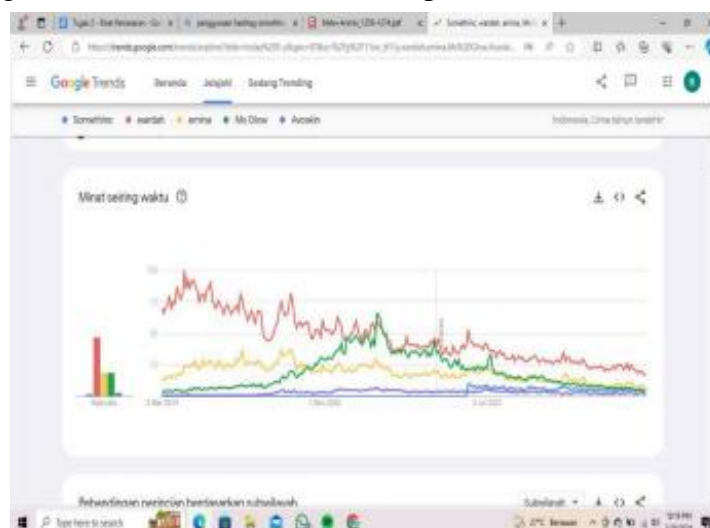
Trend Analysis of The Last 5 Years (2019-2024)

This study aims to identify the impact of Interactive Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on the brand awareness of Somethinc, in order to maintain the brand's established dominance and popularity. Kotler and Keller define interactive marketing as online activities aimed at influencing all actions intended to market or promote a product (Hasan, 2023). This includes online programs specifically designed to engage customers or potential customers, with the direct or indirect goal of increasing

awareness, as well as driving product and service sales. Word of Mouth (WOM) refers to the communication of a product or service in face-to-face interactions with a limited reach. However, this communication can now be conducted online, thereby expanding its reach—this is referred to as electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM). According to Thurau in Lestari (2021), e-WOM involves positive or negative statements made and expressed by consumers through social media to the public about a product. Before making a purchase, consumers often seek information shared by others on social media, blogs, online discussion forums, shopping reviews, and more.

This study comprehensively examines the impact of interactive marketing and e-WOM, considering various platforms and strategies, to provide a more holistic understanding of how online marketing strategies can enhance brand awareness. The focus of this research is on Somethinc, a rapidly growing local brand. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the effectiveness of online marketing strategies for local brands in Indonesia. The findings of this research can assist Somethinc and other local brands in developing more effective online marketing strategies to boost brand awareness.

The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the concept of brand awareness within the context of online marketing, particularly in terms of consumer interaction through interactive marketing and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) strategies. This understanding will focus on how interactive marketing and e-WOM strategies can enhance brand awareness. This will be achieved through an in-depth analysis of consumer interactions with brands across various online platforms. By integrating these concepts, the study aims to expand existing marketing theories by incorporating the concepts of brand awareness, interactive marketing, and e-WOM. This integration will lead to the development of a new, more comprehensive framework for understanding consumer interactions and building brand awareness in the digital age. Therefore, this research is expected to provide an important theoretical foundation for further development in the skincare literature.

This study highlights the importance of digital interaction in strengthening brand awareness, particularly through interactive marketing and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). With a deeper understanding of how interactive marketing and e-WOM influence brand awareness, companies can adapt their marketing strategies to achieve more effective results. For example, focusing on more targeted social media

marketing activities such as the use of photos, videos, live streaming, and optimally leveraging e-WOM through communities can significantly enhance brand awareness. Therefore, this research provides valuable insights for marketers in the local skincare industry on how to build strong brand awareness and encourage consumers to share their experiences using local skincare products across various platforms.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Brand Awareness

According to Murthi and Rao in Omoruyi & Chinomona (2019), brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are familiar with the functions, values, quality, uniqueness, image, and characteristics of a particular brand or service. According to Sasmita & Suki (2015), "Organizations with high brand awareness gain a competitive advantage and enjoy opportunities for successful extensions, resilience against promotional pressures, and the creation of barriers to competitive entry." Product quality, customer satisfaction, and the perceived value of the brand play a crucial role in the brand awareness of advertised products. Brand awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a particular brand belongs to a specific product category (Ramadayanti, 2019).

Brand awareness plays a crucial role in the success of a company. When brand awareness is high, the presence of the brand is tangible and noticeable. A brand with high brand awareness is typically driven by several factors, including extensive advertising to the public, a presence that has withstood the test of time, long-term brand existence, the ability to meet consumer needs and expectations, and a wide distribution reach, making it easier for consumers to access the product (Yacub & Mustajab, 2020). Trust and customer loyalty are key factors in determining the success of a business organization. According to Salamandic et al. (2014), customers who are aware of a brand tend to be more loyal and less influenced by price alone. Therefore, brand awareness can help build a strong brand name.

2.2. Interactive Marketing

According to Morissan in Pasharibu et al. (2020), unlike traditional communication channels (such as conventional advertising), which only allow for one-way communication, interactive marketing enables users to perform various functions, such as receiving and modifying information and images, asking questions, answering, and making purchases.

According to Kotler & Keller in Pasharibu et al. (2020), interactive marketing refers to online activities and programs that engage consumers to enhance product image or increase sales of products or services. Research by Petit et al. (2019) states that interactive marketing utilizes various virtual and augmented reality solutions to encourage people to make purchases or consume products.

2.3. Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is defined as the dynamic and ongoing exchange of information between potential, current, or former consumers about products, services, brands, or companies, with many individuals and institutions involved via the internet (Ismagilova et al., 2019). This form of communication has become increasingly important with the rise of online platforms, making it one of the most influential sources of information on the web (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). According to Ayunita & Muskita in Wangsa et al. (2022), eWOM on social media is conducted through product reviews, recommendations to other consumers, or simply by sharing experiences (testimonials).

According to Robinson & Dobele (2022), eWOM is considered a highly significant source of information for consumers. In the context of empirical research, factors influencing eWOM can be grouped into three key elements aligned with communication processing elements: source, receiver, and message. Due to the nature of eWOM communication, information processing becomes more complex, especially with the differences in how information is processed by novice versus experienced consumers. The success of eWOM on social media platforms is influenced by how much the recipient of the eWOM feels a sense of similarity with the sender. Furthermore, eWOM has a significant impact on the sales of new products in the market. In terms of eWOM metrics, the quantity of eWOM is more influential on sales than eWOM sentiment. It is important to note that negative eWOM does not always harm sales; however, a high variation in negative eWOM can pose a risk to sales performance (Rosario et al., 2016).

2.4. Previous Research on the Effect of Interactive Marketing on Brand Awareness
Based on the research by Arimbi et al. (2023), Interactive Marketing has a positive influence on the Brand Awareness of Skintific products. This is supported by the study conducted by Bulandari & Manalu (2020), which states that Interactive Marketing

significantly impacts the Brand Awareness of KUROGI. Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is:

H1: Interactive Marketing has a significant impact on the Brand Awareness of Somethinc products.

2.5. Previous Research on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Brand Awareness
The research by Pamungkas (2023) states that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has a positive influence on the Brand Awareness of Kopi Kenangan. Similarly, the study by Gustari et al. (2022) indicates that Electronic Word of Mouth significantly affects the Brand Awareness of Deenay scarves in Garut Regency. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2: Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant impact on the Brand Awareness of Somethinc products

3. METHODOLOGY

Based on previous research and the theories that have been discussed, the research model designed is as follows.
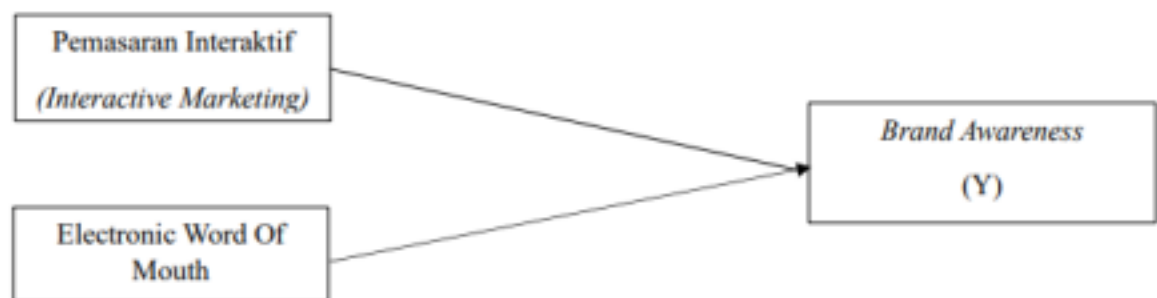
This research is quantitative in nature, utilizing a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. A Likert scale consisting of five response options, where a score of 1 represents "strongly disagree" and a score of 5 represents "strongly agree," is used in the questionnaire. The population of this study consists of the general public in Tangerang, and the sample includes skincare enthusiasts aged 14-35 years in Tangerang. This study employs the sample-to-item ratio theory, as it allows for a quick estimate of the required sample size (Memon et al., 2020). The minimum sample size for this study is 360, and the data will be analyzed using SPSS.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Whiston in SÜRÜCÜ & MASLAKÇI (2020) defines validity as a test that determines the suitability of data according to the purpose of the measurement tool. The

use of a validated measurement tool ensures that the findings obtained from the analysis are valid. An indicator is considered valid if each AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value is greater than 0.5. The results of the validity test are presented in the table below.

Table 1 Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	AVE	Result
Interactive Marketing (X_1)	IM2	0,810	Valid
	IM3	0,847	Valid
	IM4	0,812	Valid
	IM5	0,840	Valid
	IM6	0,810	Valid
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) (X_2)	EWOM1	0,801	Valid
	EWOM2	0,772	Valid
	EWOM3	0,876	Valid
	EWOM4	0,883	Valid
	EWOM5	0,856	Valid
	EWOM6	0,834	Valid
Brand Awareness (Y)	BA1	0,560	Valid
	BA2	0,695	Valid
	BA3	0,732	Valid
	BA4	0,679	Valid
	BA5	0,808	Valid
	BA6	0,793	Valid

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Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

The results of the validity test in Table 1 show that the variables of interactive marketing, electronic word of mouth, and brand awareness have AVE values greater than 0.5. This proves that the statements on the research indicators meet the data validity requirements.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing refers to the stability of the measurement tool used and its consistency over time. In other words, reliability testing determines the ability of the measurement instrument to produce the same results when applied at different times. A reliability test is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.70. However, other literature suggests that this value can be tolerated down to 0.60 for descriptive and explanatory research (SÜRÜCÜ & MASLAKÇI, 2020). The results of the reliability test are presented in the table below.

Table 2 Reliability Test Results

Variable	*Cronbach's Alpha*	Result
Interactive Marketing (X_1)	0,879	Reliable
Electronic Word of Mouth (X_2)	0,914	Reliable
Brand Awareness (Y)	0,804	Reliable

Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

The results of the reliability test in Table 2 show that the variables of interactive marketing, electronic word of mouth, and brand awareness have a significant impact, as evidenced by Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70. This indicates that the statements on the research indicators meet the data reliability requirements.

Classical Assumption Test

According to Purnomo (2016), classical assumption tests are used to determine the presence or absence of residual normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity in a regression model. A linear regression model is considered good if it meets several classical assumptions, namely, normal residuals, no multicollinearity, no autocorrelation, and no heteroscedasticity. These classical assumption tests are necessary to ensure that the regression model produces unbiased estimates and that the testing is reliable and verifiable.

Normality Test

According to Ghozali (2016), the normality test is used to determine whether the residual values are normally distributed. A good regression model is one that has

residual values that are normally distributed. The way to detect this is by examining the spread of the data along the diagonal axis in the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals, which serves as the basis for decision-making. If the data points are scattered around and follow the diagonal line, then the regression model is considered normal and suitable for predicting the independent variables; otherwise, it is not.

Figure 1 Normality Test Results
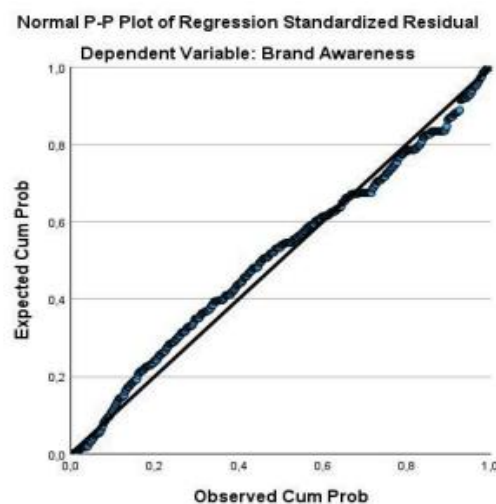
Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

Based on Figure 1, the results of the normality test show that the P-Plot indicates the data are spread around the diagonal line, and the points follow the diagonal line. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model is valid and suitable for use in the study, as it meets the normality assumption.

Multicollinearity Test

According to Mardiatmoko (2020), multicollinearity refers to a situation where there is a near-linear relationship between independent variables in a regression model. A regression model is said to experience multicollinearity if there is a linear relationship among some or all of the independent variables. The purpose of the multicollinearity test is to examine whether there is any correlation between the independent variables in the regression model. If the tolerance value is ≥ 0.10 or the VIF (Variance Inflation

Factor) is ≤ 10, then multicollinearity is considered to occur (Ghozali, 2016).

Figure 2 Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients[a]

| Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	,798	,152		5,260	<,001		
	Interactive Marketing	,374	,044	,394	8,491	<,001	,531	1,884
	Electronic Word of Mouth	,371	,047	,363	7,817	<,001	,531	1,884

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in Table 3, it can be seen that interactive marketing and electronic word of mouth have tolerance values smaller than 0.10 and VIF values smaller than 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity in the regression model.

Heteroskedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test aims to examine whether there is unequal variance of residuals between one observation and another in a regression model. This can be assessed by observing a scatterplot and conducting the Glejser test. If the value of $r >$ 0.05, then heteroscedasticity does not occur, and if $r < 0.05$, heteroscedasticity is present (Ghozali, 2016).

Figure 3 Heteroskedasticity Test Results
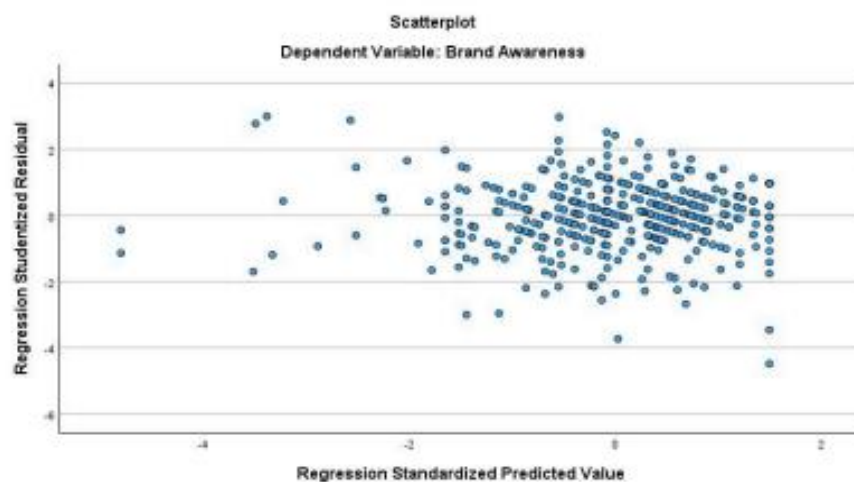
Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

From the scatterplot, it can be observed that the points are spread out without clustering in one area, indicating that heteroscedasticity does not occur.

Model Feasibility Test (F-Test)

The F test is used to determine whether the independent variables, together, have a significant effect on the dependent variable (Mardiatmoko, 2020). The hypotheses are:

- H_0: There is no joint effect of X_1 and X_2 on Y.
- **Ha**: There is a joint effect of X_1 and X_2 on Y.

Decision criteria:

- H_0 is accepted if the significance is > 0.05 (no effect).
- **Ha** is rejected if the significance is < 0.05 (effect present).

Figure 6 Model Feasibility Test (F-Test)

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	102,048	2	51,024	211,133	<,001^b
	Residual	109,475	453	,242		
	Total	211,523	455			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic Word of Mouth, Interactive Marketing

Based on the results of the simultaneous test in Figure 6, the significance value is < 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that interactive marketing and electronic word of mouth, together, have a significant effect on brand awareness.

Hypothesis Test (T-Test)

According to Mardiatmoko (2020), the t-test in multiple regression is used to determine whether each independent variable has a significant partial effect on the dependent variable. The hypotheses are:
- H_0: There is no partial effect of X_1 and X_2 on Y.
- **Ha**: There is a partial effect of X_1 and X_2 on Y.

Decision criteria:

- H_0 is accepted if the significance is > 0.05 (no effect).
- H_0 is rejected if the significance is < 0.05 (effect present).

Figure 7 *Hypothesis Test (T-Test) Results*

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	,798	,152		5,260	<,001
	Interactive Marketing	,374	,044	,394	8,491	<,001
	Electronic Word of Mouth	,371	,047	,363	7,817	<,001

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: Results of Data Analysis Using SPSS (2024)

Based on the results of the partial test in Figure 7, the significance value for the effect of interactive marketing (X_1) on brand awareness (Y) is < 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that interactive marketing (X_1) has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness (Y) of Somethinc products. The findings indicate that higher levels of interactive marketing will increase brand awareness for Somethinc products, as seen in Somethinc's regular marketing efforts through TikTok Live and Shopee Live, which facilitate interaction between the audience and the host. The more frequent these interactions occur, the greater the increase in brand awareness. Previous research has also shown that interactive marketing via social media and influencers can boost brand awareness (Juliamida et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the significance value for the effect of electronic word of mouth (X_2) on brand awareness (Y) is < 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness (Y) of Somethinc products. Thus, the hypothesis is supported. The findings indicate that higher levels of electronic word of mouth, such as comments on social media posts or reviews by Somethinc product users on e-commerce platforms, will increase brand awareness for Somethinc products. The more frequently Somethinc products are discussed on digital platforms, the higher the brand awareness will be. This result is also supported by previous research, which states that electronic word of mouth and brand awareness have a positive and significant relationship (Azizan et al., 2023).

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

1. The effect of interactive marketing (X_1) on brand awareness (Y) has a positive coefficient value of 0.374 and a significance value of < 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. This result means that H1 is accepted, indicating that interactive marketing has a significant effect on brand awareness for Somethinc products.

2. The effect of electronic word of mouth (X_2) on brand awareness (Y) has a positive coefficient value of 0.371 and a significance value of < 0.001, which is also lower than 0.05. This result means that H2 is accepted, indicating that electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on brand awareness for Somethinc products.

Based on the results of the analysis and conclusions, the following recommendations are provided for the relevant parties:

1. It is recommended that researchers and practitioners in Indonesia consider the findings of this study as a valuable reference in optimizing interactive marketing strategies through rapidly advancing, popular, and reliable digital platforms. They should focus on creating engaging content and interacting with audiences on social media through comments, feedback, and online discussions to foster an interactive consumer experience. Furthermore, Somethinc Indonesia is advised to enhance its efforts by producing viral content to increase brand awareness of Somethinc products.

2. Future research should explore in greater depth the strategies of interactive marketing, electronic word of mouth, and brand awareness, with a broader scope, as well as increasing the population and sample size for more responsive results.