



The Mediating effect of brand image on the relationship between internal incentives, sales promotion, and sales performance: a case study of WOM Finance

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Article history:</i> Received Jul 30, 2026 Revised Aug 15, 2026 Received Aug 26, 2026 <i>Keywords:</i> Brand Image; Financial Services Industry Financing; Internal incentives; Refinancing; Sales Performance; Sales Promotion.	In the competitive financing sector, inconsistencies between marketing efforts and actual sales highlight a critical gap regarding brand perception. This study investigates the direct and indirect effects of internal incentives and sales promotion on sales performance, evaluating brand image as a mediator. A quantitative approach was employed, surveying 127 respondents (Marketing Agent Officers (MAOs), Branch Agency Heads (BAHs), dan Credit Marketing Officers (CMOs), dan Branch Marketing Heads (BMHs)) at WOM Finance. Data from Likert-scale questionnaires were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The sampling technique employed in this study is accidental sampling (convenience sampling). The choice of convenience sampling was based on considerations of ease and speed. This method is frequently selected when the population is relatively accessible, yet drawing a truly random sample is not feasible. The results demonstrated that internal incentives ($\beta=0.272$, $p=0.017$) and external promotion ($\beta=0.211$, $p=0.008$) significantly improved sales performance. Furthermore, brand image directly enhanced sales ($\beta=0.366$, $p=0.029$) and significantly mediated the impacts of both internal incentives ($p=0.033$) and promotion ($p=0.037$) on sales performance. These findings suggest that integrating internal employee motivation with external promotional efforts optimizes sales performance primarily by strengthening the corporate brand image, providing a holistic and robust framework for strategic marketing integration in the financial services industry. <i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC license.</i>



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1. INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly fierce competition, companies face significant challenges in boosting their sales performance. Key factors influencing sales performance include corporate governance and human resource optimization, particularly through internal

and external marketing strategies. Effective internal incentive programs as part of internal marketing—can serve as a primary driver for enhancing employee morale and achieving sales targets. Similarly, external sales promotions play a crucial role in attracting consumer interest and strengthening the company's brand image (Akanbi, 2024).

Internal marketing, implemented through internal incentive programs, plays a crucial role in boosting employee motivation to meet sales targets, thereby directly impacting the company's sales performance. Incentives awarded to employees or sales teams based on sales achievements can enhance productivity, as staff feel valued for their efforts and contributions. However, while internal incentives have the potential to improve performance, the relationship between incentive programs and sales achievements is not always linear. Consequently, a mediating variable is required to bridge the influence of internal incentive programs on sales performance: the company's brand image (Ahmad, 2025).

Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of brand image in building customer loyalty and creating differentiation within highly competitive markets. Many firms are beginning to allocate resources to strengthen their brand image through more integrated marketing strategies, encompassing both internal and external marketing efforts. Furthermore, research indicates that a strong brand image can enhance the effectiveness of sales promotions and directly contribute to achieving higher sales figures.

Data for the period of March 2025 (202503) shows a 13.20% increase in incentives provided, accompanied by a 9.65% rise in sales units and an 8.97% increase in financing volume. These results align with theoretical expectations regarding the positive impact of increased incentives on sales; specifically, the additional incentives were expected to directly motivate sales personnel to boost their output in terms of both units sold and the total value of new financing generated (Amstrong, 2017).

However, internal data from WOM Finance regarding the motorcycle refinancing marketing team's performance over the past three years reveals a discrepancy between the internal incentive amounts awarded and the actual sales units and financing volumes achieved (Cavaliere, 2021). Actual data highlights a mismatch between the monetary value of internal incentives and performance outcomes (Munthe, 2024). For instance, in June 2024, despite a 9.82% reduction in internal incentives compared to the previous month, both unit sales and financing volume actually increased—showing growth rates of 0.71% for units and 0.72% for financing volume (Ahmed, 2020).

This phenomenon demonstrates that internal incentives do not always correlate directly with desired sales performance outcomes (Amstrong, 2021). It suggests that the internal incentives provided to employees may not be sufficiently effective in driving them to meet sales targets, or that other factors influencing sales performance have not yet been optimized (Dessler, 2020). Consequently, further analysis is required regarding the effectiveness of internal incentives in boosting sales performance, as well as the factors that influence employee motivation to perform at their peak (Adirinekso, 2021).

Available data reveals a gap between underlying theory and actual implementation in the field. Failure to identify the discrepancies among internal incentives, external promotions, and brand image places the company at risk of a significant decline in sales performance, leading to unfavorable outcomes. This inevitably impacts profitability and revenue, thereby threatening the company's financial stability. Furthermore, a persistent and unchecked decline rapidly tarnishes the company's image in the eyes of consumers and drives up employee turnover (Hamid, 2019). This results in a loss of top-tier talent capable of helping the company navigate its instability. Moreover, ineffective internal incentives and external promotions can damage the company's reputation and standing within the industry, causing it to lose its rightful bargaining power in the market (Baskoro, 2021).

To address this issue, research is being conducted on how to optimally leverage internal incentives and external promotions, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. Previous studies indicate that managing a strong, consistent brand image can enhance the positive impact of external promotions on sales performance (Keller, 2020). Research has also demonstrated that providing incentives aligned with employee motivations can significantly boost product sales performance. Consequently, the proposed solution involves a development model that links internal incentives, external promotions, and brand image to sales performance. This model accounts for the interrelationships among these variables, enabling an optimal dynamic between incentives, promotions, and sales outcomes.

To address this issue, research is being conducted on how to optimally leverage internal incentives and external promotions, with brand image serving as a mediating variable (Hayati, 2025). Previous studies indicate that managing a strong, consistent brand image can enhance the positive impact of external promotions on sales performance (Bilgin, 2018). Research has also demonstrated that providing incentives aligned with employee motivations can significantly boost product sales performance (Rahardja, 2021). Consequently, the proposed solution involves developing a model that links internal incentives, external promotions, and brand image to sales performance (Sudarman, 2023). The model accounts for the interrelationships among these variables, enabling an optimal dynamic between incentives, promotions, and sales outcomes (Brahmana, 2020).

The aforementioned phenomenon inspired the researcher to conduct a study titled "The Influence of Internal Incentives and Promotion on Sales Performance, with Brand Image as a Mediating Variable, at the Financing Company WOM Finance." This topic is significant for business practitioners, as many companies still struggle to effectively plan and manage the interrelationships among these three activities. Consequently, the researcher hopes this study will provide insights valuable to both academia and the business world that companies can utilize to formulate more integrated marketing strategies. This makes the research highly relevant and beneficial, particularly for companies seeking to develop more efficient and effective marketing strategies to boost sales performance.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The inconsistency between marketing efforts and sales outcomes in the financing sector highlights an empirical gap regarding the role of brand perception. This study aims to examine the direct and indirect effects of internal incentives and sales promotions on sales performance, with brand image serving as a mediator. This quantitative study involved 127 Marketing Agent Officers (MAO), Branch Agency Heads (BAH), Credit Marketing Officers (CMO), and Branch Marketing Heads (BMH) at WOM Finance. Questionnaire data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis results demonstrate that internal incentives ($\beta=0.272$, $p=0.017$) and external promotions ($\beta=0.211$, $p=0.008$) have a positive and significant impact on sales performance. Brand image directly affects sales performance ($\beta=0.366$, $p=0.029$) and significantly mediates the influence of internal incentives ($p=0.033$) and promotions ($p=0.037$) on sales performance. In conclusion, integrating internal employee motivation with external promotional efforts optimizes sales performance by strengthening brand image; thus, these findings provide a tactical foundation for developing integrated marketing strategies within the financial services industry.

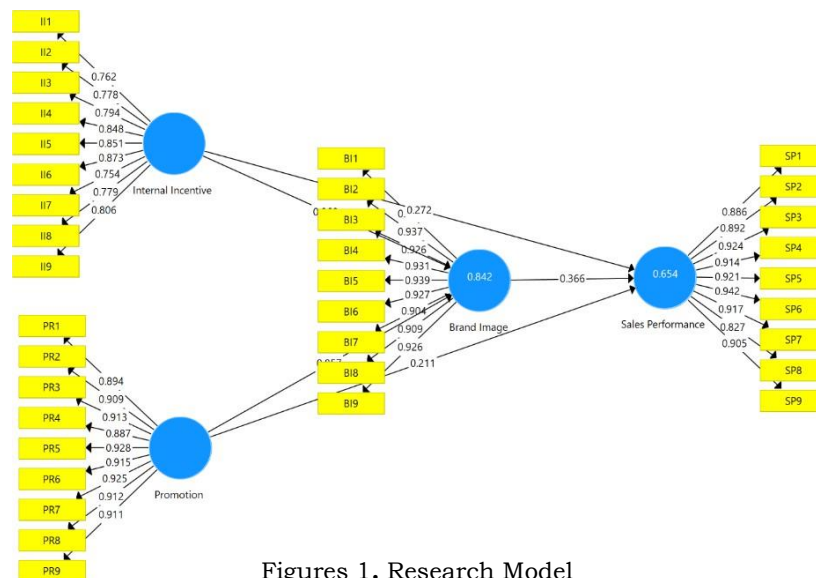
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

WOM Finance is a company operating in the financing sector, specializing in motorcycle refinancing and new motorcycle financing products. The company offers both

conventional and digital loan facilities to meet the public's need for quick access to funds. WOM Finance provides financing secured by the vehicle ownership document (BPKB). Two types of refinancing facilities are available: one for two-wheeled vehicles and another for four-wheeled vehicles.

a. Outer Model Testing

The suitability of the research model construct with the data characteristics was tested with the help of SmartPLS software version 4. The research model whose influence will be tested can be seen in the following figure:



Figures 1. Research Model

In this study, validity tests were conducted, including convergent validity tests and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to ensure that the research instrument was able to measure what should be measured.

b. Validity test

Table 1. Validity test

Indicator	Outer Loading	Information
BI1	0.885	Valid
BI2	0.937	Valid
BI3	0.926	Valid
BI4	0.931	Valid
BI5	0.939	Valid
BI6	0.927	Valid
BI7	0.904	Valid
BI8	0.909	Valid
BI9	0.926	Valid
II1	0.762	Valid
II2	0.778	Valid
II3	0.794	Valid
II4	0.848	Valid
II5	0.851	Valid
II6	0.873	Valid
II7	0.754	Valid
II8	0.779	Valid
II9	0.806	Valid
PR1	0.894	Valid

PR2	0.909	Valid
PR3	0.913	Valid
PR4	0.887	Valid
PR5	0.928	Valid
PR6	0.915	Valid
PR7	0.925	Valid
PR8	0.912	Valid
PR9	0.911	Valid
SP1	0.886	Valid
SP2	0.892	Valid
SP3	0.924	Valid
SP4	0.914	Valid
SP5	0.921	Valid
SP6	0.942	Valid
SP7	0.917	Valid
SP8	0.827	Valid
SP9	0.905	Valid

Based on the results of the indicator validity test, all indicators were found to be valid. This is because all indicators had outer loading scores above 0.7, thereby meeting the minimum requirement for outer loading scores.

c. Construct Validity Test

Table 2 . Construct validity test

Variable	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance Information
Brand Image	0.847	Valid
Internal Incentive	0.650	Valid
Promotion	0.829	Valid
Sales performance	0.816	Valid

Based on the construct validity test results, it is evident that all variables have AVE scores above 0.5. This indicates that all construct variables in this study possess good construct validity.

d. Discriminant Validity Test

Table 3. Discriminant validity test

Variabel	Brand Image	Internal Incentive	Promotion	Sales performance
Brand Image	0.921			
Internal Incentive	0.811	0.806		
Promotion	0.917	0.866	0.910	
Sales performance	0.780	0.751	0.782	0.904

Based on the above, it is evident that all items demonstrate discriminant validity according to their cross-loading values. The cross-loading value for each item is indicated in bold. Therefore, it is concluded that the variable constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

e. Reliability test result

Table 4. Reliability test result

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composi te Reliability	Information
Brand Image	0.977	0.980	Good Reliability
Internal Incentive	0.932	0.943	Good Reliability
Promotion	0.974	0.978	Good Reliability

Sales performance	0.972	0.976	Good Reliability
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Based on the construct reliability test results, the Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability scores for all variables exceeded 0.7, indicating that all variables possess a good level of reliability.

f. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2) Test

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Image	0.842	0.839
Sales performance	0.654	0.646

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination (R^2) test, the R-squared score for brand image was 0.842, indicating that the influence of the independent variables on brand image is 84.2%. Meanwhile, the score for sales performance was 0.654, indicating that the influence of the independent variables on sales performance is 65.4%.

g. Predictive Relevance Test (Q^2)

Table 6. Predictive Relevance Test (Q^2)

Variable	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Brand Image	1143.000	337.386	0.705
Internal Incentive	1143.000	1143.000	
Promotion	1143.000	1143.000	
Sales performance	1143.000	540.709	0.527

Based on the Q-square test results, the brand image q-square score was 0.705 and the sales performance q-square score was 0.527. This indicates that the research model has good predictive relevance because it has a score above 0.

h. Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ($ O/STDEV $)	P Values
Brand Image -> Sales performance	0.366	2.174	0.029
Internal Incentive -> Brand Image	0.068	2.857	0.002
Internal Incentive -> Sales performance	0.272	2.528	0.017
Promotion -> Brand Image	0.857	11.695	0.000
Promotion -> Sales performance	0.211	2.137	0.008

Based on the hypothesis testing results for direct effects, the p-values obtained are as follows: (a) Brand image on sales performance: 0.029 (<0.05) – significant effect. A strong brand image can enhance trust, customer loyalty, and the likelihood of repeat purchases, ultimately leading to improved sales performance. Previous research indicates that brand image has a positive influence on marketing and sales performance. Sudarman and Lailla (2023) demonstrated that brand image significantly affects marketing performance. This finding is reinforced by Hayati et al. (2025), who showed that brand image significantly boosts marketing performance. (b) Internal incentive on brand image: 0.002 (<0.05) – significant effect, These findings suggest that effective management of internal strategies can shape a positive brand perception. Furthermore, in a study on factors influencing pharmaceutical purchasing decisions, Ahmad (2025) found that brand image is shaped by internal corporate factors related to quality,

reliability, and the consistency of the value communicated to consumers. Consequently, internal incentives—as a component of internal marketing—influence a company's brand image. (c) Internal incentive on sales performance: 0.017 (<0.05) – significant effect. A structured incentive program not only impacts performance but also helps reduce turnover and attract high-quality talent. Therefore, it is crucial for HR professionals to understand the different categories of such programs before implementing them. Numerous empirical studies indicate that internal marketing and internal incentive programs have a significant positive impact on both sales and marketing performance. Saeedinejad (2016) demonstrated that rewarding, staff development, and organizational vision—as dimensions of internal marketing—significantly influence the performance of sales staff. Similar findings were reported by Basyazicioglu & Akdogan (2018) and Baskoro, Widjaja, & Sudarmadji (2021), showing that internal marketing activities enhance salesperson performance, both directly and through internal psychological mechanisms, (d) Promotion on brand image: 0.000 (<0.05) – significant effect, Previous research demonstrates that external sales promotions have a significant impact on brand image. Helmi et al. (2022), Bilgin (2018), and Setyadi et al. (2022) show that advertising and sales promotions positively influence brand image, although the mediating role of brand image is not always significant. (e) Promotion on sales performance: 0.008 (<0.05) – significant effect, Previous research consistently indicates that external sales promotions have a positive and significant impact on sales performance. Sajowa (2025) found that consumer promotions and trade promotions can significantly enhance business performance. Similar results were reported by Omoruyi et al. (2025), who demonstrated that sales promotions positively influence sales turnover and organizational profitability.

i. Testing the Mediation Effect

Table 8. Testing the Mediation Effect

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Internal Incentive -> Brand Image -> Sales performance	0.025	2.796	0.033
Promotion -> Brand Image -> Sales performance	0.313	2.047	0.037

Based on the hypothesis testing results for the indirect or mediation effect, the p-values obtained are as follows: (a) Internal incentive on sales performance via brand image: 0.033 (<0.05); the effect is significant. Previous research supports the role of brand image as a mediator in the relationship between internal strategies and performance. Sudarman and Lailla (2023) demonstrated that brand image mediates the relationship between marketing strategy and marketing performance—either fully or partially—indicating that the impact of internal strategies on performance operates through the formation of brand image. Furthermore, research by Çelik et al. (2024) showed that corporate image acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between internal marketing and employee performance. Although the context involved employee performance, these findings reinforce the argument that corporate or brand image serves as a crucial mechanism bridging the influence of internal marketing on performance. (b. Promotion on sales performance via brand image: 0.037 (<0.05); the effect is significant. Previous research indicates that brand image is frequently examined as a mediating variable in the relationship between external promotions and marketing outcomes. Setyadi et al. (2022) and Angeline et al. (2023) demonstrated that brand image mediates the impact of sales promotions on purchasing decisions and marketing performance.

Thus, it can be concluded that the brand image variable mediates the effect of promotion on sales performance, and brand image mediates the effect of internal incentive on sales performance.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research and data analysis conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn: Internal incentives have a positive effect on sales performance. This implies that internal marketing enhances the performance of sales personnel, both directly and through internal psychological mechanisms, Promotions have a positive effect on sales performance regarding motorcycle refinancing financing. This means that sales promotions targeted directly at consumers and the external market—such as price discounts, loyalty programs, coupons, and other promotional activities—can increase sales volume and accelerate product turnover in the market, Internal incentive programs have a positive effect on brand image regarding motorcycle refinancing financing. This indicates that internal marketing incentives serve not only to boost employee performance but also play a role in shaping a positive perception of the company's brand. Employees motivated by internal incentive programs tend to provide better customer service, which ultimately enhances the company's image in the eyes of consumers, Promotion has a positive effect on brand image in motorcycle refinancing financing. This means that consistent and engaging promotions can build positive brand associations in the eyes of consumers. Innovative promotional programs that offer added value to consumers can enhance the company's reputation and brand appeal, thereby strengthening brand image, Brand image has a positive effect on sales performance in motorcycle refinancing financing. This means that a strong brand image can boost trust, customer loyalty, and the likelihood of repeat purchases, ultimately leading to improved sales performance, Brand image mediates the relationship between internal incentives and sales performance in motorcycle refinancing financing. This means that well-managed internal incentives create organizational alignment, which in turn shapes a positive consumer perception of the brand (brand image). This positive brand image then contributes to increased trust, loyalty, and company sales performance, Brand image mediates the relationship between external sales promotions and sales performance in motorcycle refinancing financing. This means that effective sales promotions can strengthen brand perception in the minds of consumers (brand image), subsequently driving purchasing decisions and boosting sales performance. This study aims to examine the influence of internal and external sales promotion incentives on sales performance in motorcycle refinancing, with brand image serving as a mediating variable. Addressing phenomena identified in previous research and existing theoretical gaps, this study focuses on exploring the relationship between internal and external marketing strategies and their impact on sales performance as reflected through the company's brand image.

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